

- + + + What LIBERTARIAN education is all about...
- + + + Detailed criticism of traditional theories, both conservative and "progressive"...
- + + + Why R.S. Peters is a sterile bureaucrat...
- + + + Old Models of Education: What the Gardener said to the Potter
- + + + Why "child-centred" education is NOT the answer...
- + + + Why Tommy Really Isn't Reading...
- + + + Why schools may need to be abolished...
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- + + + The Politics of Liberation...28 point programme for Free Education.

ALL OVER THE WORLD,
THE SCHOOL HAS AN
ANTI-EDUCATIONAL
EFFECT ON SOCIETY

**THE
GREAT
BRAIN
ROBBERY!**



anarchy editors

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part 1



A NOTE TO THE READER--COERCIVE CONTROL , PHYSICAL AND MENTAL .

Comprehensives, the public schools, grammar traditions, streaming vs. setting prefect systems, assessment methods, discipline techniques, R.I. compulsory games, school uniform, manpower investment, blah, blah, etc. Take your seats for the next round! In the Red Corner we have Brian Simon and Brian Jackson... Hooray, hooray! In the Black Corner we have Messrs Cox and Dyson... Boo, Boo!

And so the merry-go-round continues. Vital issues in some ways. But the goodies will never win until the debate is shifted away from the ground laid down by the enemy. Only when the fight centres round the cardinal issue of Freedom--freedom to learn--will the various minor controversies fall into place, into the bargain as it were.

This pamphlet-cum-book has the ambitious aim of completely shifting the terms of the debate in educational circles.

PART ONE begins by trying to demolish the Big Name in current educational philosophy, R.S. Peters.

It is important to realise that Peters is not a reactionary but a semi-liberal, semi-progressive, semi-technocrat-equalitarian, semi-conservative elitist! In other words--a typical example of the current educational consensus, bogged down as it is in a mass of contradictions, as we shall see. The whole scene is stagnant and needs a bloody great bomb under it to start things moving again in the direction of radical educational reform.

I chose to attack "ETHICS AND EDUCATION" merely because it was compulsory reading in my education course! But a similar critique could have been done for Bantock or any of the other sawdust gurus of the training colleges. Although they may differ on points, their ideas are virtually indistinguishable when compared with the ideas discussed in this pamphlet.

PART TWO attempts to answer the question: "If you are so much against the school system status quo, what would you put in its place?" In suggesting alternative I have relied heavily on recent developments in Educational Ideas in the States, where thousands of students and teachers are really excited by what they see as a complete breakthrough; I too see the new developments as a real breakthrough; and my aim in this pamphlet is to turn people in this country on to the totally new way of looking at education that the breakthrough involves.

IN PART THREE I discuss strategy for changing our whole way of educating kids and adults. I do not discuss tactics much, more--the chief intermediate demands we might be making and the weak points we should be attacking. Part Three also contains a fraternal but detailed criticism of the Rank and File group and Left-Progressives generally, and some groping suggestions for libertarian practice in a normal college of education where radicals are often pretty isolated.

This booklet is for all interested in education (obviously!), but particularly for practicing teachers and teacher-trainees. More particularly still, it is aimed at (horrible phrase!) all who hate corporal punishment. (If you dig corporal punishment then I don't think there's much I can say.)

Good, so you hate beating too.

Many student teachers do. But after a year of teaching, after ten years.... what then? The percentage of liberal teachers drops dramatically. Many who have been ardent opponents of corporal punishment end up using the cane or reporting boys for the Head to do their dirty work.

Now for a confession: at school I refused to become a prefect, on the grounds that it would involve beating boys. Then I went for a

year's voluntary service overseas--the latest in finishing schools for the English middle classes! During my year I taught in a secondary school in Ghana. By the end of my year I had physically assaulted a boy for not doing what he was told. I had threatened boys with the Head (the stick). What's more, I had so accepted the logic of the schooling process, that I approved of the cane theoretically as well!

So I'm not writing this from any position of moral superiority. At several points I will appear to be making unreasonable attacks on teachers for brutality, lack of respect for young people, etc. But I am fully aware of the fantastic pressures of the classroom. I have succumbed to them myself. I can sympathise with frustrated and unfriendly teachers, even as I attack them. Because I am really attacking their role. I will really be attacking the crazy idea of bottling thirty kids up in one classroom with a Someone in charge, and expecting either him to remain liberal and progressive or them to remain lively and independent.

Oh, of course, some do retain their integrity: 5%, say, after five years of teaching in a secondary school. Those with special gifts for gaining the interest and admiration of kids. Another ten percent appear to retain their values, but only appear. They are the ones who are teaching the 'bright' children, the 'good' kids---the ones who have been brainwashed into obedience already! "Brainwashed into obedience already"---surely that's a bit extreme?

I don't think so. There are always two ways of controlling kids: one way is physical, the other is mental. The physical way is cruder but often more honest. Working class mums use it when Johnny plays in puddles. "Hey, Johnny,

(bif) don't you go splashing in the wet." Johnny doesn't any more, but he still knows who he is -- basically a boy who likes to play in puddles. And when mum isn't looking.....

Middle-class mothers use a more subtle form of control. By words. "Johnny, you'll hurt mummy if you get your nice shoes all muddy. Nice boys don't like playing in nasty puddles. You really don't like playing in nasty puddles and getting all horrid and wet, do you now, Johnny?"

This subtle form of emotional blackmail can often do more psychological harm than any quick-tempered cuff. The middle class mother is able to put her controls right into the centre of her child's personality. She controls his image of himself (a nice boy) by redefining "nice boys" as boys who don't play in puddles.

Later on, the teacher takes over. He or she tells the class how they really love painting, doing sums, or whatever he wants to get them to do next. So by the time they are older they no longer know what they want any longer. Their 'they', their 'I's' have been implanted with Authority's ideas of who they ought to be. And therefore, being "good" pupils, they are easily controllable. Grammar school teachers can teach French and History without compelling them physically, because someone else has already done it (mentally) for them! Then the products of this pathetic process become neurotically fixated on the only thing they can do well, pass exams in French language, say, study it at university and eventually go back again to the safety of the school environment -- to teach French language! (All the time having to stifle the uneasy semi-conscious realization that they are missing something, but all the time too insecure to ditch all the self-image-capital that they have invested in their particular specialism.)

So, you see, if you are against corporal punishment, you ought also to be against mental coercion, in my opinion. Either way, coercion of some sort is very much part of the school system, which is what I'm out to criticise.

But please realise: THIS BOOK HAS CONSEQUENCES FOR YOU! Treat this book as a letter from a friend or from an enemy. Throw it away, burn it, write and tell me your objections, do anything; but please REACT! Please don't put it on a "Theory" pedestal of unrealistic ideas, available somewhere in your mind ready for spouting back to fool "progressive" college tutors with, until such time as you have served your time and can enter the 'real' world of 'practical' education with a stupid piece of paper saying that you're 'qualified'.

So decide now whether you are going to go through with this, please. By going through with it I do not mean 'believe every word of it'. I mean grapple with it and criticise it ruthlessly. But first enter into it. -- Because at times it will almost certainly seem pretty fantastic, far too idealistic, utopian science fiction even. But keep reading and it will come right back to you.

Will you be among the many who start out "progressive" in theory but who end up reactionary in practice? Will you end up a tired hack, aged forty, always complaining in the staff room about how bad your kids are, with no prospects except destructive boredom ahead of you? Will you adopt the phony 'realism' of the defeated that is really a mask for despair and cynicism. (For the opposite of true idealism is not realism, but cynicism.)

Don't say "it can't happen to me". It will probably happen to lots of us -- unless we fight!! Our ideals aren't enough; we've got to understand. We've got to act against structures. And to help us we need a theoretical understanding, both of the system we are out to change, and of the sort of system we propose to replace it by.

process and praxis

Suddenly some men in white coats jump on you to take you off to an asylum. You call for help and resist -- maybe even violently. All to no avail: in the eyes of the hospital attendants it just proves what a nut you really are. "Hear that, Bill, say's he's as sane as you or I; well, why's he banging on the back of the van then if he's not a luny?"

Nothing infuriates us more than having someone discount our reasons for doing something. If your parents didn't like your preference for pop music or your staying out late, then what did they say? "Oh, you're just going through a phase!" Misunderstanding can be unintentional (eg the policeman thinking "that chap's got a bad cough") or it can be intentional, if not conscious: "he's just going through a phase". In the latter case, this very denial of your praxis is itself the praxis of the denier.

There are two ways of looking at what somebody does: you can see it either as process or praxis (or a bit of both). By process we mean the idea of everything happening to you, everything being caused by something else, not being able to help it: like getting tuberculosis and having to cough. Cogs in a machine.

But there's also PRAXIS. Suppose you are standing guard in a burglary job and along comes a copper. What do you do. You cough. In this case a warning cough would be a sensible thing to do in the situation, it would mean something, although without understanding the situation you wouldn't understand the cough. Process can be accounted for by impersonal causes. But a piece of praxis is definable only by what it's intended to achieve. It is projected out into the world as the actor sees the world.



If someone wants to keep you down or put you down the best way of doing it is to make non-sense of your praxis. to take your meaning out of your action and give it his own meaning.

What separates humans from dumb animals is our capacity for praxis -- meaningful action appropriate to our situation, intended either to change it or to help us to adapt to it. People like being treated as persons and they know and hate it when they are treated as things. Wherever praxis is reduced to process we can speak of reification: thingification, reducing a person to the level of a dumb animal or a thing; Reification takes place in bureaucracies

which try (logically) to reduce their personnel to parts of a machine.

It also takes place in more subtle ways: Reduction of a Person to an interesting psychological case -- aren't children funny? -- is exhibited in the following little tale by Paul Goodman:

"When the child in the story said, 'but the Emperor has no clothes!' the newspapers and broadcasts surely devoted many columns to describing the beautiful new clothes and also mentioned the interesting psychological incident of the child. Instead of being proud, his parents were ashamed; but on the other hand they received \$10,000 in sympathetic contributions toward his rehabilitation, for he was a newsworthy case. But he had a block in reading."

When your parents said, "Oh, you're just going through a phase", you probably protested and said: "I can decide for myself. When I need your advice I'll ask for it. For goodness sake, stop treating me like a child."

In our society, "being treated like a child" means being reified, having our praxis denied, being explained out existence, in short -- NOT being treated like a PERSON.

It will be the purpose of this pamphlet to suggest that a child shouldn't be treated "like a child" either. Even if they only decide to ask for help from an adult, children are persons and can decide for themselves to do this.

peters and kant

(1) Peters Use of Kant

In the first section of "Ethics and Education", Peters defines what he sees Education as involving. Among other things it involves, Peters says, respect for persons. In the second section he attempts to justify this and other moral principles. After discussing different theories of moral justification, he finally seeks a rational basis for moral principles in what he calls "The situation of practical reason."

The situation of practical reason is person A. asking person B to give him his reasons for doing or not doing something.

For this situation to really work (1) A should be seriously committed to finding out what he should do. He must be able



"I shall be glad when I've grown up."

to "listen to reason and submit seriously to the conditions of the discussion." (p165) (Who defines "the conditions of the discussion", who defines "seriously"?) According to Peters this ability to weigh and balance abstract principles means having been educated into "worthwhile activities." This supposedly won't happen naturally as the child grows up but needs the attention of people in authority and therefore

this condition of being able to listen to reason leads (for Peters) to the principle of Authority. Moreover, (2) if A doesn't have or doesn't receive reasons for a proposed change of course then he continues as before (the principle of "no distinction without relevant differences", from which Peters also draws the principle of Equality.) Also, (3) if A wants to be helped, he must accord B freedom to say what he really thinks A should do (principle of Freedom). Finally, (4) A and B must respect each other as persons (principle of Respect for Persons) (p209)

This last principle is crucial to the whole "what-am-I-to-do-and-why?" situation. For instance, suppose Peters asks me how he should discipline wayward students and I tell him the whole concept of formal educational "discipline" is an abortion, giving reasons. In this case, if he puts me down as "just a child" or as a "pathological rebel" without countering my reasons with his reasons, he is denying my praxis. If I sense that, then I will be unwilling to go on explaining my reasons, which in any case he has probably categorized as unreason. By not ascribing praxis to my reply, he shuts himself off from the message my words contain, and from the possibility they might be of use to him in his situation.

Peters' introduction of Kant's "situation of practical reason" therefore makes sense. His respect-for-persons principle seems to tally closely with seeing people as agents of praxis.

(2) Peters non-use of Kant

Peters' highly selective application of this principle of respect for persons is an entirely different matter, however.

With minor criticisms, Peters' idea of education is easily reconciled with the national status quo in education. Having basically accepted our whole hierarchical educational system in Part 1, he then introduces his fine principles in Part 2 to justify some sets of activities and relationships within this set-up. Instead of starting from the idea of treating the other as an end in himself and building his definition of education up from there, he does exactly the opposite. He starts from education -- or rather schooling -- as it is as an end in itself and only introduces the idea of respect for persons in very limited contexts, where its teeth are drawn as it were. Peters' liberal ideas function as a "nice" gloss that everyone can agree to in the abstract. This is because Peters refuses to apply his idea of respect for persons whenever it comes up against the status quo. In this way Peters takes the sting out of a highly critical concept.

For instance, Peters never has the teacher asking his children "What am I to do?" Nor does he allow the children to ask: "Why should we do this?" Rather the teacher first works out his policies by talking with people like Peters (who are Educated and count) and then applies them to his pupils (who are uneducated and therefore don't count).

Likewise, Peters doesn't apply his ideas of treating persons as ends in themselves outside classroom. Factory Managers see "their" workers as so many "hands". The State uses its police and soldiers and bureaucrats, treating them as cogs in a big Machine. Present day Industry and the machinery of the State would collapse if people were treated as ends in themselves for only five minutes.

Since we are living in a society which treats people as things, is it not likely that the State will also want to deal with schools for its own ends? When we examine the pressures of the envi-

ronment on the schools, this is exactly what we see. Listen to this editorial from "Teachers World", (Jan. 65):

"It is no good expecting children suddenly and spontaneously to adopt rigorous standards of performance at school leaving age. We are constantly told, by employers, that the schools are not preparing children adequately for work. Their complaints concern simple things which lie within our powers to remedy.

"In industry and commerce, good timekeeping matters, and regular attendance at work. Obedience matters; both safety and efficiency requires that instructions are obeyed. Will to work is paramount; accuracy is essential; perseverance is desirable.

"The development of necessary industrial qualities is our job. It is too late when youngsters enter work. It is too late when children move to secondary schools. A lifetime of work-habits has to be instilled whilst children are of primary school age."

Higher up the system we find talk of education as a "national investment" in "human capital."

To be sure, Peters is unhappy about many of the pressures of the business men and the State on education. Schools shouldn't just teach what will be useful to State or Business. Peters insists that some activities are worthwhile in themselves.

True, on page 145 he hints it may be necessary to "sell" Higher Education to "hard-headed businessmen" on grounds of how useful it is to outside ends. But he himself believes that education is its own end, that it is good in itself.

Since the middle ages, more and more subjects have split off from the Arts and now justify themselves by how useful they are, not by how true or beautiful or good they are in themselves.

As long as capitalism continues, the Technocratic utility perspective (everything reduced to an instrument towards some other goal) is going to spread more and more. Suppose the "hard-headed businessmen" Peters mentions do a survey which shows that "production" of more graduates is a foreign literature doesn't really lead to higher exports. What will Peters do then? Liberal humanists like Peters are going to have less and less room for which to appeal against the

tide of Technocracy, because it's the Technocrats who hold the purse strings. Moreover, Peters cannot go on the offensive, because the social base of Cambridge aristocrats and Chelsea intellectuals who might support him is so tiny.

This is the reason why Peters avoids asking the question "Is the Government treating the schools as ends in themselves?" The question is crucial because only if education is seen as an end in itself, will the schools be free to treat their children as ends in themselves. Yet Peters never applies his Kantian idea in this direction.

models of education

- (a) Pottery making
- (b) Gardening
- (c) Training animals
- (d) Initiation (Peters)
- (e) Dialogue and Free Association.

(a) and (b)

In chapter one Peters deals with different schools of education with their different models. Peters plays one model (the potter with clay model) off against another (the gardening model). He describes "child centred" education as merely a revolt against certain excesses of the potters. Maybe this is true. But to discuss present day libertarian education only in terms of the gardening model is quite false.

Firstly, the plant analogy is misleading because of its individualism: Plants can't learn from each other, but children definitely do, generating their own sub-culture which adults are rarely aware of.

Secondly, the analogy creates an unwarranted gulf between adult and child. Big plants and small plants or old

gardeners and young gardeners: these distinctions are of the right order. But gardeners and plants creates an infinite superiority and an infinite inferiority.

Thirdly, plants are passive; children are active. The gardening model still leaves the educator with all the initiative-to respect or not to respect, to help or not to help. This ignores that although plants can't make a move vis-à-vis the gardener, children can. It is too easy to feel holy attitudes of respect towards plants. Nothing is holier than the sacrificial ram, bound just before the slaughter. Respect for persons is harder because it involves respect for the other's initiative over against you. The child is (or should be) able to complain or depart. Plants just have to wait to be watered or not; but children can ask for water and if you don't give them any - or give them poison - they can go and look for water. The gardening model emphasises growth which makes it preferable to the clay model. But children can also grow as regards their wills; their independence can grow.

The potter had his hands constantly controlling the clay. Along came the horticulturalists and shouted "Hands off"! This was an advance, but the model is still inadequate.

Yes, the child should be "left alone" in onesense. But he or she will not let you alone. He ***** will talk with you, and when you can no longer help him he will move on. If you try to control him, even in subtle ways ("of course you enjoy washing dishes, Johnny"), he will not be fooled. He will be sensitive to your insensitivity and has the right to remove himself from your company. The task of adults is not to have no influence on the child, as the "hands off" cry suggests. It is rather to make sure that the child can escape any influence you may have on him if he wants to.

(c) The third model is animal training. It is the basis of the ideas of writers such as B. F. Skinner. Skinner is a Behaviourist who has done a lot of work training rats. Animals are mobile. Unlike plants, animals can run away. But not when Skinner trains them! His basic piece of apparatus is a box which the animal is put into and can't escape from.

All three models have this in common. There is a reduction of persons to the sub-human

level. As we saw in the first section, persons are agents of praxis: they can have intentions and can act on the world in terms of their intentions. Clay and plants can't. Rats can have a kind of praxis only when not imprisoned in Skinner boxes.

Almost the only valuable idea one gets from Skinner is the importance of circumstances in the development of children. Skinner's ideas are founded on the idea of "conditioning" by means of rewards and punishments. It is often argued that just by being there adults must be "conditioning" the child. This is at once true and misleading. In Skinner's learning situations the person doing the conditioning has sole control over the rewards: the animal can't choose which "reinforcers" he wants. Conditioning here means total control. But "conditioning" can also mean influence. Influence means that the animal or child can escape from the learning situation. Of course, adults cannot help "conditioning" (influencing) children, but it does not follow that therefore adults may as well "condition" (control) children.

(d) Peters own model is the Priest initiating the uninitiated into special knowledge. Peters several times criticises animal training models of education. Nevertheless when we explore religion we often find human/animal metaphors: eg, fishers/fish, shepherd/flock, etc. The knowledge which the priest has is revealed knowledge: it is only priests who have access to such special knowledge. The position of the rat in the Skinner box is quite similar to the person being initiated into religion: one waits for pellets of food, the other for "spiritual sustenance". Neither has access to these resources for himself

Super-human/human preserves the same gulf as human/sub-human. The implications of revealed knowledge are that the faithful could not have worked it out on their own. But for God and his priests they would remain in benighted ignorance. The uninitiated may be seen as agents of praxis as regards everything else; but intellectually their praxis must always fall short. All models which minimize the praxis of the other are liable to involve compulsion. Peters stresses the intellectual superiority of the teacher in such a way as to justify controlling the child (see the section "Cognitive Wedge") His position is somewhat like an intellectual Behaviourism, close to the rat model for all

the apparent differences.

(E) DIALOGUE AND PARTICIPATION

Finally we come to the only model we think is adequate. Surprise! Surprise! The child is a PERSON. Unlike plants, people are mobile: they can wander into a zone of activity and wander out. Unlike rats, unlike congregations during sermons and unlike students in lectures, persons can talk back.

One main way persons affect each other is through talk. Dialogue is the basis of all worthwhile education. To be sure, older persons may have more to contribute than younger persons. But there is a presumption in favour of equality which is absent in the trainer or priest models: the child is presumed to have something worthwhile to contribute even if not very much at first. His praxis is not denied until after some initiation rite such as getting a degree, when, hey presto!, his praxis is suddenly recongnised. Right from the start his praxis is recognised and this helps it develop. Two-way communication is possible whenever the child wants to. We have several times criticised the other models for their immobility: the child must be able to wander off when he no longer wants to be conditioned by any particular adult. Precisely because he can't help being "shaped" (modelled) by those he meets, he should be free to choose those influences (models) that are all the time shaping him. He should be free to choose gravitate wherever he needs to, whenever he likes. He should even be free to adopt extra parents and go and live with them. Children need a multiplicity of models: warm friendly adults who accept having them around the place. With dialogue we must emphasize free association.

Here is Paul Goodman on education:

"My own bias is that education is going on spontaneously anyway; it is itself part of the kaleidoscope of society. Youngsters are imitating and identifying, aspiring to grow up, asking why, demanding show me how. Adults are demonstrative, helpful, ideal or seeking to mould, exploit, or get a following. Spontaneous learning-and-teaching can be more or less efficient; it may be better or worse for its participants; but as with any other exciting function, the burden of proof of its defects lies on those who would interfere with it!" ("Compulsory

Mis-education" and "The Community of Scholars", Vintage, 1962). (p. 111)

Goodman is here invoking one of Peters' own principles - "no distinction without relevant differences". Peters restricts its operation to the question of equality, yet fails/refuses to apply it in any situation where it might lead to anything faintly radical. Again we see how Peters non-use of Kant is more significant than his use of Kant.

It is important to realise that the libertarian conception of education is NOT child-centred. This comes out in another piece from Goodman in favour of what he calls incidental education:

"To be educated well or badly, to learn by a long process how to cope with the physical environment and the culture of one's society, is part of the human condition. In every society the education of the children is of the first importance. But in all societies both primitive and highly civilised, until quite recently most education of most children has occurred incidentally. Adults do their work and other social tasks; children are not excluded, are paid attention to, and learn to be included.

The children are not "taught". In many adult institutions, incidental education is taken for granted as part of the function: families and age-statuses, community labour, master-apprentice arrangements, games and plays, prostitution and other sexual initiation, religious rites and churches. In Greek paideia, the entire network of institutions, the polis, was thought of as importantly an educator.

Generally speaking this incidental process suits the nature of learning better than direct teaching. The young see real causes and effects, rather than pedagogic exercises. Reality Obviously "child-centred" is here being used in a special way. I have no objection to a general other-centredness or sensitivity to others as a moral precept. However, most child-centredness is not sensitive to the child in all his or her needs for autonomy in a safe environment--hence the reason why people say child-centred education and not normal living and relating. It is on these grounds that I have identified the main-stream of child-centred theory with the Plant analogy and not with the dialogue/participation/free association themes of general sensitivity. However, the situation is confused by the number of libertarians who mean the latter, but who call themselves "child-centred" (Goodman for example). (See also Section 14, Part 1)

is often complex, but the young can take it by their own handle, at their own times, according to their own interests and initiative. MOST IMPORTANT, THEY CAN IMITATE, IDENTIFY, BE APPROVED OR DIS-APPROVED, CO-OPERATE AND COMPETE, WITHOUT THE ANXIETY OF BEING THE CENTRE OF ATTENTION; there is socialisation with less fear, or submission." ("Anarchy", 107, Jan. 1970)

Children are People and the only satisfactory models are participation and dialogue in free face to face situations. This is precisely the scene set for the question of practical reason. Yet Peters does not see the full implications of the situation he himself has introduced.

This is because he separates his theory of education from his justification of moral principles: he plays off an inorganic analogy (clay) with an organic (plant) analogy, "synthesizes" the two to arrive at an intellectual version of the animal model (Priest with uninitiated). Only then does he bring on a human situation (two persons face to face) to justify educational theories worked out in terms of sub-human analogies! The Priest may ask his fellow guests what to do! But he certainly doesn't ask his "flock".

the state, society, and the individual

We saw earlier, how ineffectual liberals are in challenging the Powers that be. Because of this weakness, Peters is prepared to do a sort of deal with the Capitalist State: Peters will agree to some time being

spent on training if the State sets aside some time for "pure" education of the child for his or her own sake. Peters accepts that the aims of individual development must be "set alongside the State's requirement for training in skills and citizenship." (p135) (To avoid a showdown with Technocracy, he hastily adds that the two goals are "not necessarily" incompatible!)

Peters writes that the schools should "consider the interests of children and what is in their interest and have regard also for the public interest" (p167, my underlining)

I would want to rewrite this as follows: "education should consider the interests of children and what is in their interest and, in so doing, have regard also for society's interest." Although the interests of the State may be advanced by compelling children away from what interests them, it is not possible to advance Society's interests in this way. It is only by concentrating on the fullest development of individual capacity that, into the bargain as it were, one is of any use to "society". Some may think that this will lead to individuals developing themselves at the expense of society.

"What guarantees", they ask, "can society have that they will not grow into selfish isolated geniuses?" The answer is that attempting to guarantee that by compulsion people are unselfish is in fact the surest way of making them selfish. Human nature is not such that the more the individual gets the less society gets. Children do not need to be made social. They are social already, inherently social, inescapably social.

By leaving people in the freest circumstances, their social instincts can develop. This does not happen in a corner on their own. Moral values emerge in the members of a playgroup in and out of their day to day functioning and relating. For example, the child who knocks other children's bricks over finds that they knock his constructions down in retaliation. The child who doesn't share his toys gradually learns that others won't share their toys with him. If a bully emerges, the other children band together and refuse to play with him. However, when adults intervene to make the bully "behave", it stops the development of the children's own powers to stick up for themselves. When adults try to force their children to share their toys, they inhibit the children's own tendencies toward respect for

the other and co-operation.

Therefore, children do not need to be lectured at or forced to co-operate. Co-operation is the end goal of healthy human functioning.

A.S. Niell said it best:

"I believe that it is moral instruction that makes the child bad. I find when I smash the moral instruction a bad boy has received, he becomes a good boy...."

To ask a child to be unselfish is wrong. Every child is an egoist and the world belongs to him. When he has an apple his one wish is to eat that apple. The chief result of mother's encouraging him to share it with his little brother is to make him hate his little brother. Altruism comes later, comes naturally - if the child is not taught to be unselfish. It probably never comes at all if the child has taught to be unselfish. By suppressing the child's selfishness, the mother is fixating that selfishness for ever." (Summerhill) Man is a social animal. Peters either ignores the part children play in each other's development, or suggests that this part is generally harmful.

People like to contribute to the workings of their group and to know that they are valued by their group. Children who have learned to interact well in small groups and at school, will also come to interact fruitfully with the wider society. As their education proceeds they will naturally begin to direct it to helping society. They will want to build dams and write articles and care for sick people when they grow up. Because they are social individuals, they will want to fulfill their individual talents in ways that benefit society.

(The shift away from science which so worries the technocrats does not prove that people should be forced to be useful to society. It may prove the opposite since it is possible that it stems from the consequences of children being stuffed with science "in the national interest", when they themselves had no interest at that point in being useful to society).

Peters sees the business of developing oneself as mainly the opposite to the business of being useful to society. This is indeed true of class society, where the intellectual and the lord are feeding off the working class as they develop their private talents.

The Arts/Science split, the work/play split is a product of class society. The useful and the beautiful need not be opposed. Science and Technology could be beautiful. Art could express itself in everyday life and work for ordinary people. The arts/science split does not exist in "human nature" as such. In a classless society (which does NOT mean a society where we would "all be the same") the individual would have ample opportunities to fulfill himself in ways which helped other individuals fulfill themselves.

An education system which strikes the sort of bargain R.S. Peters comes close to advocating (eg. morning: useful work/ afternoon: beautiful self-development) is liable to find the morning stretching until two, until three, until four o'clock! Moreover, it can merely perpetuate the sickness of class society. Society and the individual

integration through diversity

The last section emphasised that the individual is social, tending naturally to contribute to his society. It is now time to emphasise that he makes this contribution not by suppressing or exploiting himself for the sake of society, but by being most himself.

Personality development. The individual is a slightly different person vis-a-vis his father, and vis-a-vis his various friends. This is because in different relationships different parts of our personality can unfold. Quite often, children get "crushes". crushes occur when one part of their personality has been kept down in relationships with persons A,B and C. Along comes D with some of the right qualities and the child falls for him/her; the qual-

ities he admires in D are the very qualities which the child has within himself waiting to emerge. If D doesn't come along the child should be free to move among a number of warm friendly adults, so that he can gravitate towards D.

Moreover, once the child develops his relationship to D, he becomes more his (A,B,C,D,...Z) self. People who are most themselves can allow others the psychological space to become most themselves as well. The more the child individuates himself, the more he contributes to his group and society, because the members of his group or society can now individuate themselves in relation to him. So again we see how wrong it is to think of the interests of the individual as having to be

NOTE: Advance Warning!

As the argument goes forward readers will several times want to argue back at me: "But that is to assume a utopian society". I can only assure the reader that he is only partly right and ask him to have the matter out with me at a later point.

somehow balanced against the interests of society. To suppress a child's talents, to suppress a child's personality, is a crime against all his contacts as well.

Informal Communication: Many children are scolded by teachers when they help each other in class. This is quite wrong. In many ways children learn far more from each other than from teachers. In "The Language and Lore of the Child" and "Children's Games in Street and Playground", the Opies catalogue literally thousands of rhymes and games which children teach each other. Even now, the reader will probably be able to remember the chants he picked up in the playground far better than the pieces of verse contained in his primary school English books. (It is significant how ignorant teachers are about the culture of children; children are a conquered people, the conquered peoples' culture is always ignored/despised by the Master Race).

Very often, to teach children as a class is a great waste of all the informal learning and teaching among children. What's the point of telling your chum about the film you saw yesterday, if he saw it yesterday too? But if he was visiting a factory, then you can swap experiences.



Here again we see that, the more diversity of experience the group contains, the more the group contains, the more all the members of the group stand to gain. Each different child expands the environment of the other children by his own differentness. To standardise a child's experiences is to impoverish the child's friends as well.

Let us conclude this section and the previous one by quoting from Sir Percy Nunn, whose book "Education: Its Data and First Principles", for all its faults, shows up the mediocrity of "Ethics and Education" published fifty years later.

"We shall stand throughout on the position that nothing good enters in-

to the human world except in and through the free activities of individual men and women, and that educational practice must be shaped to accord with that truth. This view does not deny or minimise the responsibilities of a man to his fellows; for the individual life can develop only in terms of its own nature, and that is social as truly as it is self-regarding." (P.2)

"Developed conduct almost always includes a social reference, for it issues from a self-permeated with social factors." (P. 248)

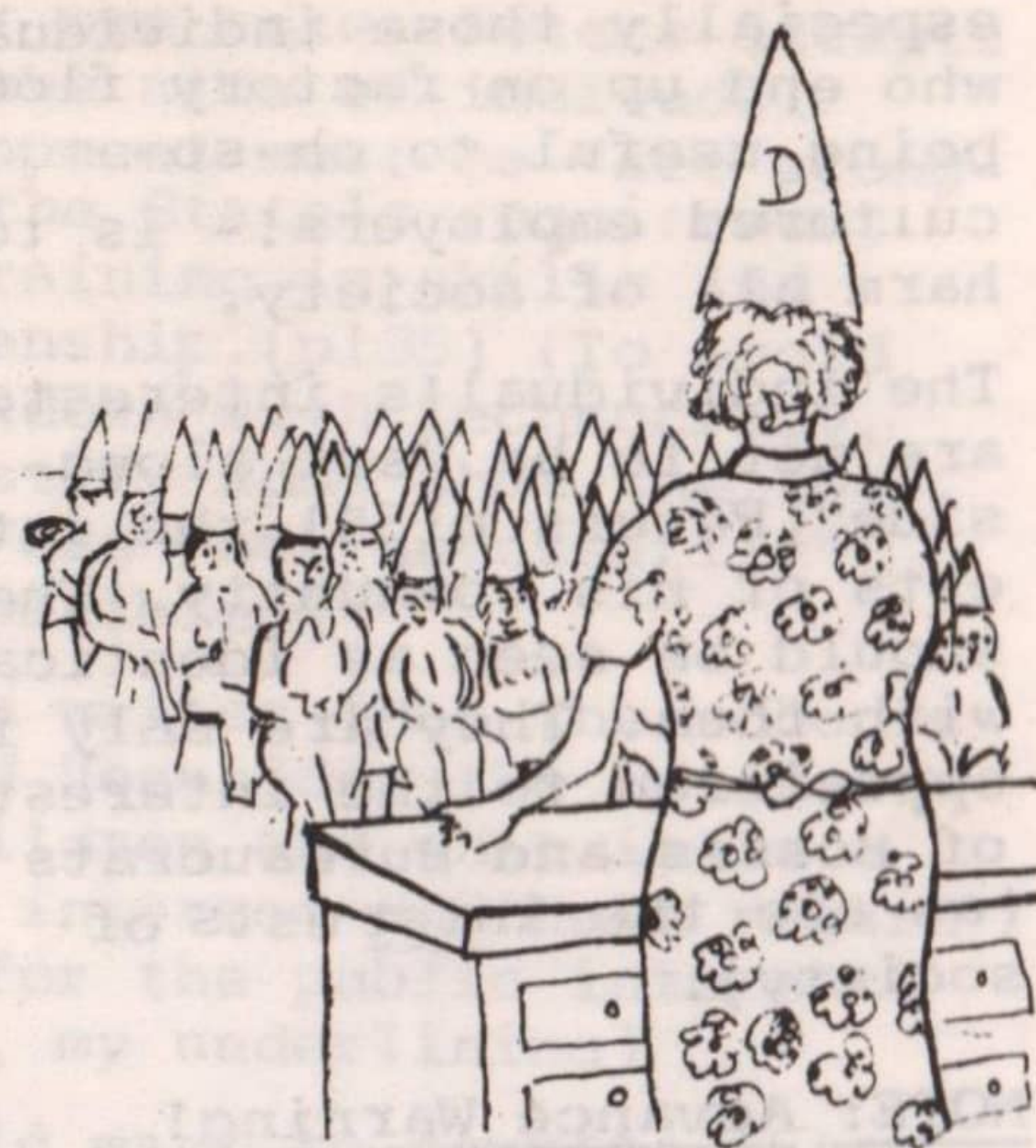
This view (social individual-in-society) runs completely counter to Peters' individual-and-society attitudes. The only development or integration Peters can imagine takes place as the result of Authority (The State). He completely lacks the concept of society; that is - of integration through diversity.

the definition of the situation

Teachers in sixth forms and colleges often complain how hard it is to get their students to realise that there may be many valid interpretations of, say, the Russian Revolution. How is it that a whole class of students that are so different in other respects, can come to think that there is only one official version of the 'Objective Truth'?

The reason why children become uncritical lies in the basic classroom situation, which is as if the teacher knew it all.

A teacher comes into the classroom at the start of the lesson. Who speaks first? Who makes the first move? Normally it is the person in authority who takes the initiative. If he has all the power, it is not surprising that children come to think he is omniscient as well. The teacher



At Selby grammar school, Yorks, 100 pupils staged a sit-down strike when a sixth-form concert which contained swear words and double-meanings was banned.

Headmistress Molly Blake said it could not go on because it was insufficiently rehearsed.

And at a secondary school in Liverpool, 50 children walked out of the classrooms because, they claimed, they were too cold.

Marlene Cadwallender, a 14-year-old fourth-former, led a walkout of 78 pupils at High Cross school, Tottenham, London.

She alleged that "the standard of education was poor and the lessons were a drag."

defines the situation, so it is understandable that his ideas about history are taken to be definitive as well.

When the teacher is talking before thirty children, each in their desks facing the front - that is the medium. What he says is the message. Suppose he says: "Now, I want you all to believe everything I say." In that case his medium and his message coincide. More often he says: "Of course, I don't know everything; your appreciation of the poem is just as good as mine probably." And then proceeds to lecture the class for half an hour!

In that case the children will still come away with the idea that there is a "correct" interpretation of the poem really. The social situation contradicts the message in the individual teachers the situation.

words. The medium is the message! What is meant by 'definition of the situation'? Suppose when teacher is talking, John at the back is reading the Beano.

In that case John defines the situation as "Beano reading time. Why won't he let us go out and play. What a drag, etc." But he is reading the Beano under the desk. His definition of the situation is private and suppressed. The ruling definition of the situation is the definition of the real ruler - the teacher! The teacher defines the situation (effectively but not consciously), as: "Education is good for them. I am talking. I am in control."

All initiatives in the room must first be accepted as legitimate by the official definer: "Put your hand up if you have anything to say." If all the pupils who were bored acted on their definition of the situation - boring talk, let's go and play - the teacher would introduce punishment to reinforce his definition of the situation - interesting talk, sit and listen.

Suppose that as a teacher talks, Denis the Menace lands an ink blot on the teacher's shirt front. This is an act full of meaning. It is a political manifesto for rebellion. What it says is clear: "You bore me. Stop controlling me. I want to be free!" It is an act of praxis. It makes perfect sense to the bored young person.

Now in this situation, the praxis of the teacher will be to deny the praxis of the child: the definition of the situation is that there is only one definition of the situation; therefore counter-definitions will be defined out of existence. Denis is defined as incapable of classroom work, when in fact he is unwilling for it. Throwing the ink blot will be drained of social sense by the teacher: "senseless hooliganism". Dennis will be punished, either physically by being sent to the Head, or psychologically by being labelled as disturbed and sent to the school psychologist and form there to a special school probably.

The teacher exerts a sort of Monopoly of constructive initiative in the classroom. Children therefore have the choice: either to grow up without initiative ("good pupils"), or to refuse to accept the systematic denial of their independent praxis and to grow up destructive ("bad pupils"). Initiatives such as reading ahead in the class reader, going out to play, foot-stamping when bored, and even talking to one's neighbour will all alike be defined as destructive or trouble-making by the teacher's refusal/incapacity to see that he is being destructive of the child's impulses. Only the teacher's viewpoint counts. This is what is meant by definition of the situation.

(of course, different ways of organising classwork are being developed, e.g. group projects. But they often take place still with the teacher firmly in the saddle as Situation-Definer-in-Chief:) "now it's project time children; get into your groups." or "Yes I know I said choose your own project, Kenneth, but I didn't mean you could do a project on just anything, like a football team."

the cognitive wedge

- Peters' use of the cognitive side of education - as a wedge for compulsion.
- The cognitive side of education.
- Objective Truth. Priestly and bureaucratic versions.
- Knowledge and Praxis - the real motivation to understand the world.
- Competence before Creativity yes, but...

(a) Peters' use of the cognitive side of education - as a wedge

The cognitive side of education plays a crucial part in Peters' overall argument. In the first section, he defines education as initiation into "worthwhile activities". In the second section "worthwhile activities" form the link between the situation of practical reason and justification of the principle of authority. According to Peters, asking someone for reasons only makes sense if he has been initiated into worthwhile activities (p154: such as philosophy!). Because according to Peters, they cannot initiate themselves into worthwhile activities they need to be constrained, to be Disciplined. In this way, Peters argues that disciplines (subjects) justify discipline (authoritarian coercion). He drives a wedge in from an Authority (the teacher may know more) to in authority.

Peters is correct when he writes that "judgement is passed on people's wants in deciding what is in their interest." But he slides over from deciding in one's own mind to deciding for other people (whether they like it or not).

(b) My position on the cognitive side of education.

I am not anti-intellectual, I'm not a Black Paper elitist who wants to keep working class

kids down by keeping them away from knowledge. I am all for a "cognitive perspective." In Section (a) I said we had to understand education theoretically. But not for its own sake. We have to understand education theoretically the better to withstand the pressures of the school system. The better to revolutionise it. Cognition should serve people and their intentions. Man was not made for the Sabbath.

The same with children. I believe it is crucial that children should come to understand themselves, their situation in society, where they fit in Nature and History. But I think they can and will come to real understanding much better if they aren't forced to do school work. If knowledge is personally relevant, it tends naturally to be fitted into a cognitive perspective. The person is the natural organising centre of this perspective. All this talk about getting children to see that History and English and Science aren't in watertight compartments ignores children's natural tendency in the first place to build up schemas of their world. The only reason they get to think that English and Science don't tie up with each other is that they were taught in separate 40 minute blocks of knowledge in the first place.

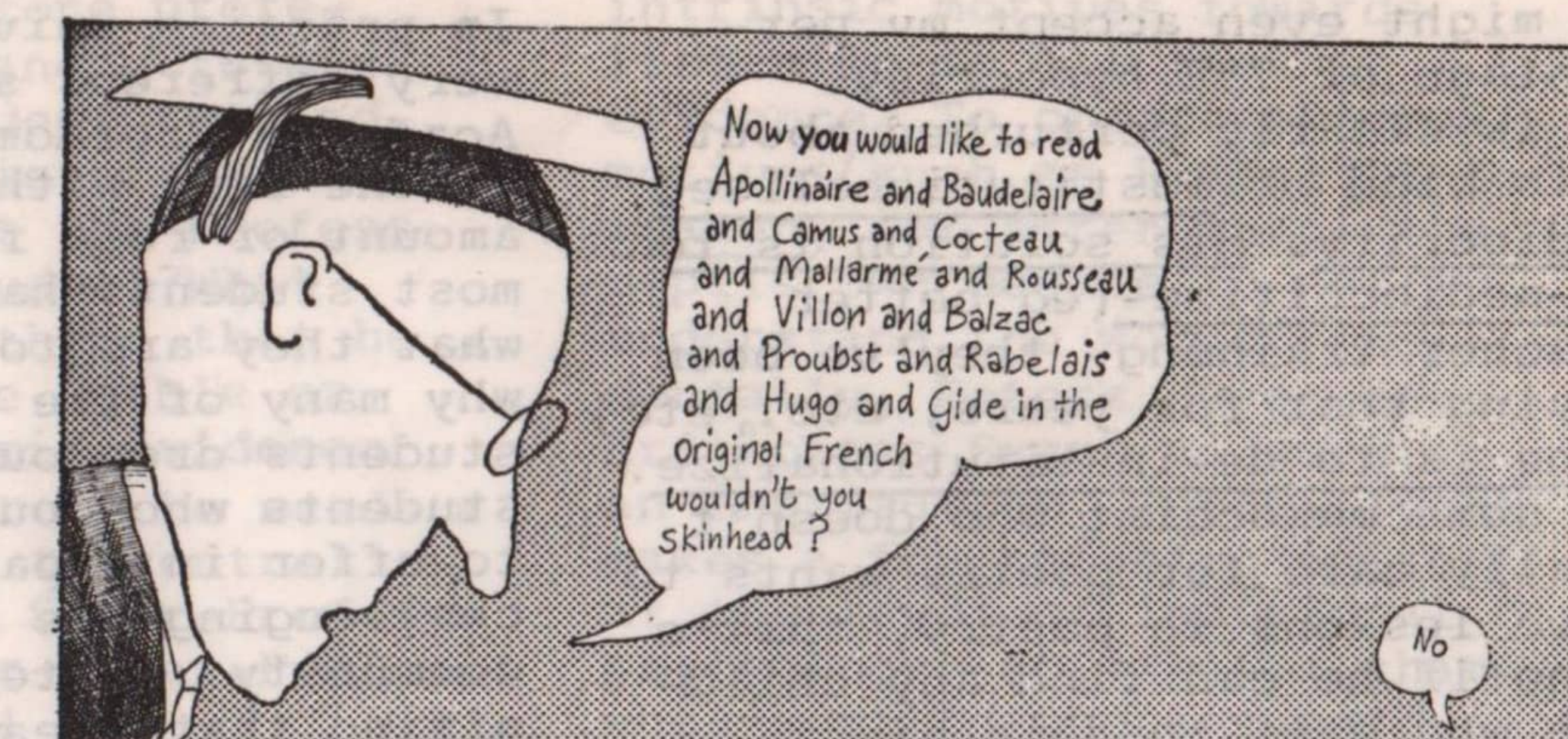
At several points in the book Peters puts the alleged consequences of freedom side by side with a highly idealized version of what goes on in normal schools. For instance, he criticizes "progressive" schools for the bullying that supposedly goes on. Apart from the fact that libertarians don't think much of most so-called "progressive" schools either, bullying in these schools would only be a

criticism of progressive education, IF bullying didn't happen aplenty in ordinary schools. But it does. Frustrated kids turn their frustrations against each other.

The same idealization of normal education lies behind Peters' criticism of child-centred education on grounds of not providing children with enough knowledge. Consider the average school-leaver. Has he or she really learnt much personally relevant knowledge? Has he or she really achieved a cognitive perspective? Most of the knowledge that he has will be obsolete in ten years time and then he will be at the mercy of the media. Moreover, his ability to find things out for himself will have probably been spoilt in the course of his being given the knowledge he now has. When he was a small kid, he had plenty of desire and confidence to find out about the world. Somewhere along the line, the school has made him stupid.

Or take Peters' idea of a "subject", say Poetry, as being worthwhile. Consider all the teachers who teach poetry to children. Peters may consider poetry "worthwhile", but do the teachers? How many of them pursue this "worthwhile activity" in the school holidays or at the weekend (except in the context of planning next week's poetry lessons)? Only poets and people for whom poetry actually means a great deal in their lives can infect children with its relevance. Three-quarters of poetry teachers are gross hypocrites. No wonder that most people get the message that poetry is not for them. Art as a special subject is dead.

Peters would admit that much poetry teaching is done by people who do not themselves experience poetry as a worthwhile activity.



He might even accept my percentage of 75% hypocrisy. He is clearly perturbed about this kind of institutionalised mediocrity. His solution is to de-mediocritize-(eg "better teacher training- they've been saying that for years, etc., etc) Mine is to de-institutionalize. If some masochist who doesn't really care for poetry wants to give lessons in poetry, that's fine if he can find any children who want to join his lessons. But otherwise, let children gravitate towards people who live their poetry. If there are too many children for too few poets, then that's sad, but it can't be helped. At least, let us not positively turn people off poetry for life by the present organized hypocrisy.

(c) "Objective Truth"- Priestly and Bureaucratic Versions.

Having established that I am not against knowledge- and indeed that I use the present level of ignorance in the general population as an argument against Peters' support of the status quo- we can now go on to discuss Peters' ideas about knowledge and truth.

Objective Truth means that it is possible to know what is happening as it is, instead of as I or as you or as they see and think it is happening. The official definition of the Truth is given by a Third Person with an infinite vantage point(God). God then lets a few people into the secret, the Priests, who pass on The Truth to the masses. If uninitiates think differently, then the Inquisition steps in. Galileo was forced to take back his theory about the earth moving round the sun. Dogmatism, backed by Authority is bound to be self-defeating in the long run.

Very few academics now hold a simple ideology of Objective Truth. They recognize that there may be many partial viewpoints on any event. If they all get together(academic community) their partial visions can complement and correct each other. No single scholar has a corner on "the Truth". To deny someone else the right to develop his viewpoint may be suicidal for one's own development in the long run. Consensuses cannot be imposed from the Top by a few Super-Academics. It can only emerge through "letting a hundred flowers bloom"- integration through diversity. Often the most creative breakthroughs have developed from unorthodox academics following the most unlikely leads. Academic Freedom is what the Academic Community is all about.

Like Hell it is!

In practice universities are very different sorts of places. Academic Freedom is confined to the few. With a certain amount of room for manoeuvre, most students have to learn what they are told- that is why many of the most creative students drop out- the very students who could have most to offer in expanding and challenging the ideas of the community. Instead of recognising that every one (potentially) can define truths academics tend to say that only a few people(Qualified Academics) know the Truth. Within the priestly caste disagreements may be allowed. The mass of the people have to learn the several theories. They can only choose among the "approved" theories. Without a degree, one cannot buy one's way into the closed shop. God may be dead, but he lingers on in the shape of Bureaucracy. Priests may not dominate the universities, but hierarchy does (hieros- a priest in Greek) Monopoly definition of the truth gives way to oligopolistic definition. Initiation is still the basic model. Peters has the world-view of many Professors: a bureaucratic conception of truth. But he admits that there is still a great deal of argument about the content of subjects. But he is completely rigid about there being only certain "right" procedures for getting at the content. Objective Truth gives way to objective procedures fixed from above. The teacher's "basic task is not to teach his students what to think, but how to think" (p201)

Three examples:

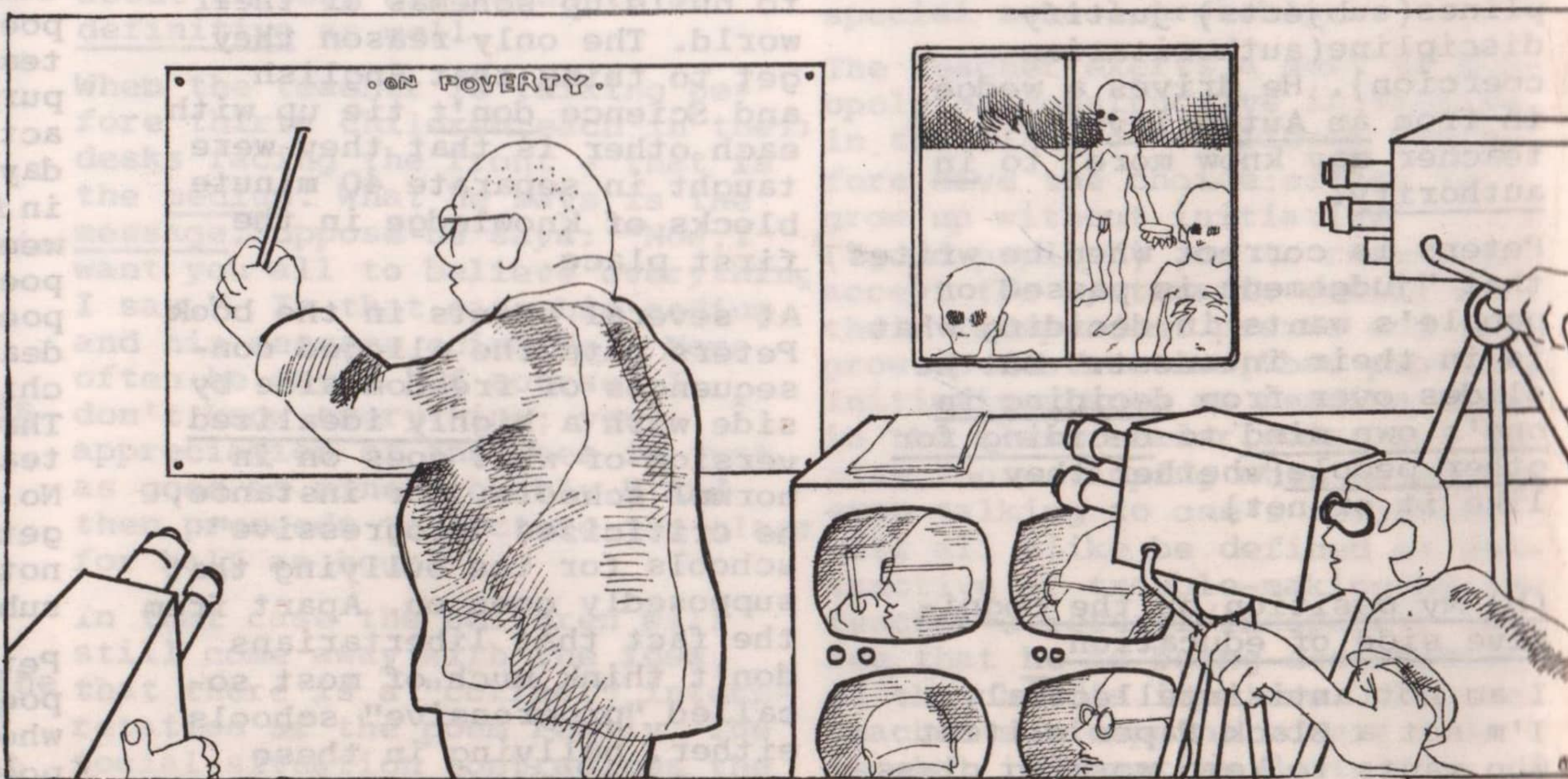
(1) A psychology Professor may insist that there only a few "objective" ways of studying psychology. R.D. Laing is too "subjective" to count as a "proper" psychologist, and Nietzsche

even more so. Their evidence is (defined as) "private". Only public knowledge can possibly count.

(2) A politics Professor may insist that writer X is too "subjective", too "emotionally biased" to write a "good" history of, say, the Vietnam War.

(3) Peters is a Philosopher. If a student were to start questioning Peters' courses from the standpoint of Eastern Philosophy or Existentialism, Peters would define such preoccupations as "not Philosophy". The student would be failed in his exams, because he would be threatening to break the oligopoly's hold on what counts as respectable Philosophy.

By controlling what counts as "responsible scholarship" and by controlling what will be called "public knowledge" the Top Academics still maintain a considerable hold over thought. The child rises from pupil to student to post-graduate to lecturer to Professor by accepting the rules of the academic game each time he sits an examination. Instead of an Intellectual Community where all ways of knowing count (including non-verbal ways of knowing and communicating) we have an academic Power Structure where the definition of the Professor is decisive. Instead of freedom to learn for real, there is freedom to be academic. "The modern university has forfeited its chance to provide a simple setting for encounters which are both autonomous and anarchic, focussed yet unplanned and ebullient, and has chosen instead to manage the process by which so-called research and instruction are carried out" (Illich) (And training colleges are even worse. They don't even have the ideology of the academic community. Oh, I



forgot- they call them colleges of education now. But you know you're being trained all the same.)

Nowhere is Peters' Bureaucratic conception of Truth more apparent than in his constant emphasis on "standards". The "standards" are what the Establishment define and control, but Peters makes them sound objective. Thus Peters talks about the sculptor being motivated by "the urge to give concrete expression to certain standards of beauty."

But this is less than half the story

The sculptor is mainly concerned to express himself, to communicate a vision to other people. He is not out to gain credits for coming up to certain fixed "standards of beauty". Those artists who have worked out their own standards of beauty, have almost invariably been ridiculed by the Art Critics, the Professors of the World of Art. These gentlemen were concerned to maintain what they honestly

considered were the only true standards, the traditional standards. But an additional source of their antagonism to the new artists was the threat to their social predominance.

Throughout "Ethics and Education" there is a constant implicit emphasis on tradition and language. But tradition and language do not only pick out They also screen out.

Peters (rightly) preaches the duty of scholars to remain open to the evidence. (But what is "the evidence". "The evidence" is what counts socially as evidence. What counts as "evidence" depends on who's Top Dog). Peters would do nothing about the social position of the scholars which is the real trouble: the Galileo affair did not just happen in the bad old days: in every field of study there are Galileo's whose heresies are being either suppressed or ignored by Establishment Scholars. In Economics, Medicine, in Ecology, in Philosophy, in Psychology, and in every other branch of knowledge, heretics are being kept down.

(d) Knowledge and Praxis: The real motivation to understand the world.

Peters is quite right to emphasise that to search for truth means being open to evidence against you, being willing to change your ideas. But for some reason, most people are supposed not to have a stake in really understanding the world. According to Peters few people are willing to submit to the "discipline of

enquiry". Therefore professors should standby to discipline the student into admitting contradictory evidence. But wait! Is not the Professor or himself a student? What guarantees are there that he will not also be unable or reluctant to admit evidence against him? Surely he needs a Super-Professor to control him! Surely the Super-Professor needs a Super-Super-Professor to check him!

Any attempt to develop guarantees that people will be open to evidence is a waste of time. The only situation which works is a situation where several people on a level have some common interest, some project they want to achieve together. Here there are checks, but not Authority-checks. For instance, a group of Alpine climbers might share out responsibility for planning different parts of an expedition. In this real situation there would be plenty of motivation to get the preparations right and to encourage other members to do the same. If one of the members of the team had an inveterate prejudice against the Swiss, he would be more likely to go against the advice of the local Swiss guides. If he corrected their good advice, his correction would itself be open for correction from among the members of the group itself. But not if he was in Authority over the group. In that case the expedition would end in disaster (unless a Super-Authority could intervene!)

Desire for feedback can only depend on whether one is committed to achieving the goal to which the feedback relates. One's willingness to take all the evidence into account can only be as strong as one's project in the world. Creating a caste of official definers of reality is no way to solve the problem of dogmatism. In fact it worsens it; cut off from projects in the real world, academics tend not to seek for feedback from the real world; their project must always be

liable to become confined to rising in the academic world, making them over-attentive to the opinions of senior academics. (Note that I speak of liabilities and tendencies only)

If Johnny says he can jump 14 feet across a stream and teacher says he can't, there isn't any point in teacher forbidding Johnny to jump. If the teacher is wrong, then Johnny won't get wet. If the teacher is right, Johnny will learn from reality itself (and incidentally come to value good advice more). There are

intrinsic motives towards listening to all the evidence. To create external motives (such as Exams) is to weaken, not strengthen, the pupils own desire to really understand the world. (Incidentally, Peters never once criticises Exams as such, as an institution. Typically he makes a few pathetic noises at the level of individual psychology, eg, what a shame when some teachers subordinate their teaching to exams to an unwarranted degree!)

Academic community in universities is a myth because academic freedom does not extend beyond the ruling caste in universities. But, in itself, intellectual freedom for all is the only really worthwhile basis for new ideas to develop to the ultimate benefit of the whole community.

Peters does not believe that students at universities and training colleges should have intellectual freedom. It is therefore not surprising that he does not really believe children should or can make sense of the world under their own direction and for their own, often social, purposes. This writer, on the other hand, would extend the idea of intellectual community right down to kindergartens. From baby to professor, everyone has ample motive to understand the world. To misunderstand the world is to be unable to achieve one's intentions in it. One's attempts are blocked; lack of reason means lack of freedom; reality becomes a prison. Restricting freedom (by exams and hierarchy) runs clean contrary to any cooperative venture of understanding the world. To collect children into an artificial environment (school) is to cut them off, not only from the "real world" but also from their having projects "for real" and, hence, from the only rational motive for understanding the real world.

To restrict freedom in the name of reason is a nonsensical exercise, since reason has freedom as its goal and freedom has reason as its prerequisite. Enough motives exist "naturally" for people to want knowledge and to be able to get at it. Correction can come either through discussion or through action in the world which goes wrong and forces one to rethink. "Spare the exams and spoil the child's knowledge" is as false as "spare the rod and spoil the child". If people don't want to be open to the Truth, they can't be made to be. There are no guarantees, and any attempt to construct guarantees cannot

itself be guaranteed. A dictatorship of Professors and Teachers is as self-defeating on a large scale for many people as "cranky" or "biased" ideas are self-defeating on a small scale for the few who hold them- that's if they really are cranks and not geniuses. At all events respect for persons must mean respect for their right to fall into error in their own way. If they do fall into error, one gets them out not by compelling them but by letting them see you working out a better way and NOT pressuring them.

(e) Competence before Creativity- yes, but...

Peters emphasises that children need disciplined knowledge before they can be creative with it. There is much truth in this. But it is for the children to realise this and to come to ask to be initiated into this or that topic or discipline. The discipline must be for them (and their interest in real topics), not they for the disciplines. At every point any intellectual or creative discipline must be accepted because it makes sense to the pupil, because it will advance his project. Learning when to learn is what education ought to be all about.

Peters argues against Rousseau-type naturalism by suggesting that there are very few

"primordial objects"(eg, breast sun, soil, etc.) Most objects around the child are not

"natural" but have been "put there for a purpose and have the imprint of the public mind upon them....most objects with which the child is

surrounded are concretisations of social purpose and belief."

Again we see how Peters gets into error by arguing about a static plant model and from a static individual AND

society philosophy. For what Peters says is not an argument for Authority at all:

it is only a problem for the madman who argues that, marooned on a desert

island, the infant would grow up cultured and educated; the point is

that "this selective world of social artifice" is still directly explorable, like

the child exploring the breast. Moreover society in any case will do the selecting, it does not need

Authority to do it. The real question is whether the child is free to gravitate to richer

more interesting parts of the verbal/cultural world within the overall limitation of

being born into a particular type of culture and language. The idea that Authority is

necessary to provide the child with the necessary social verbal "gen" is quite simply

laughable. Rain falls all around, and not just from the Gardener's watering can(which was in any case filled from the previous rains and not from the ministrations of some older, wiser Super-Gardener.)

As John Holt says, "The sensible way, the best way, is to start with something worth doing, and then, moved by a strong desire to do it, get whatever skills are needed!"

To say that children should be allowed to direct their own development does not mean that a child can sit down in a corner on his own and spin an entire 20th century culture out of his head. A balance needs to be struck between the fact that a whole lot of clever men have thought of things before, and the fact that each child is potentially able to contribute to that culture, to create meanings not just to absorb them. But it is for the child to come to strike this balance by trial and error. It cannot be struck for him.

A child's development can still be self-directed, can only be self-directed, if it takes

place in the social context of a given culture. Only those who picture human nature as

essentially like the child in the womb will find the occurrence of socialisation

surprising. Authority appears to be needed to integrate the atomised pre-social

individual AND his society(see Section 5). Those with a social-individual-IN-society

perspective can see that self-direction does not mean isolation. A child does not

have to wait for Authority to initiate him before he starts picking up his society's

culture and the rules and the skills of that culture. Proponents of self-direction should

jettison the model of Emile wandering through the Garden of Nature because of its misleading

frills(rural setting and neurotic child-centredness- if Rousseau hadn't been of the

leisure classes we might have had a healthier situation of psychological breathing

space for Emile, while Rousseau concentrated on making cloth or farming). But the idea of

self-direction itself is still perfectly relevant in our society.

Even complex things like how a radio works can be "picked up"-

and are, every day, as the large number of amateur radio enthusiasts testifies. Even such

obvious classroom activities as learning to read are "picked up" by thousands of children on

their own initiative before going to school(I am not talking of those who are

taught by their parents). "I quite firmly believe that, with the possible exception

of children in a very remote rural environment most children would learn to read if nothing was done about it at all. With children living in an environment full of print, newspapers, magazines, writing on television, signs, advertising, I cannot imagine how any child who has not been made to feel he was too stupid to learn to read would not learn."(John Holt). In other words, the "realities" of a Technological environment do NOT lend any support whatever to Authoritarian Theories of Education.

Reich

"The personality structure of man today is characterised by an armouring against nature within himself. This armouring of the character is the basis of loneliness, helplessness, craving for authority, fear of responsibility, mystical longing, sexual misery, of impotent

rebelliousness as well as the resignation of an unnatural and pathological type. Human beings

have taken a hostile attitude towards that in themselves which is living, and have

alienated themselves from it. This alienation is not of biological, but of social and economic origin."

authority and respect for persons in the real context of the school

We have seen how Peters "justifies" Authority in terms of the situation of practical reason. We must now see (a) how he manages to reconcile it with respect for Persons. We must also consider if his reconciliation is feasible given the real sociological (b) and psychological(c) consequences of educational compulsion.

(a) Authority and Respect for Persons.

Peters basic tactic is to distinguish education as a "task word" like listening from education as an "achievement word"(like hearing)

"The implications of 'education' as an achievement word (ie, that in the end the overall process of 'education'

will involve the consent and understanding of the educated person-K.F.P.) do not

necessarily carry over to it as a task word. The scientist may have been forced, while he

was a boy, to do experiments in which he had not the slightest interest. But by

being trained to do them repeatedly under rigorous supervision he may eventually

have come to develop an interest in doing scientific experiments and gone out of his way to do

them irrespective of whether he was made to do them or not" (p38).

In other words, it is legitimate to compel children for their own good. Their own good as you

interpret it. Their own impulses do not lead anywhere. Apparently they are useless

evolutionary left-overs, like appendices, which have no function of guiding the

organism(see section 16). The true guide lies outside the organism. The Animal Trainer/

Priest/Philosopher-king knows the narrow path towards fulfillment. Or, he thinks he

knows it!

Peters admits that compelling children may destroy interest and creativity. But he maintains that this is an empirical question to be decided in the future. In the meantime, the children DO WHAT THEY ARE TOLD. "Gifted educators are precisely those who can get children going on activities which have no initial appeal to them" (p39).

Peters must recognise that this sounds suspiciously like manipulation, for he then writes:

"To teach is at some points at least to submit oneself to the understanding and independent judgement of the pupil,

to his demand for reasons, to his sense of what constitutes an adequate explanation"(p39)

The future scientist wants to go and play, does he? Well

tell him what an adventure science will be when he gets

older, and how much he will help the nation. What's this? He still doesn't want to

buckle down? Well make him. (His "independent judgement" can't have matured yet if he

disagrees with us!)

Peters does not write: "To teach is at every point to submit oneself to the understanding and independent

judgement of the child." This would amount to full recognition of the child as an

agent of praxis vis-a-vis you. Such recognition would conflict with Authority whose sole raison

d'être is to deny praxis. Denying the child's praxis is necessary because the child

doesn't know what's good for it, according to authority. Therefore we will submit ourselves

to his "independent judgement" only "at some points"- ie

when his judgement isn't independent, when we know we can persuade him anyway! In other

words we give reasons to make the child do more willingly what we're going to make him do anyway!

School Police State



Because he never forces a showdown between respect for persons and authority, Peters' respect for persons principle never really convinces one. In practice it must degenerate into a rather superior personnel approach: respect for people insofar as they are "good" PUPILS is a phony respect. This phony respect is used to solve the conflict between (b) the pupil being put off by compulsory work and (c) the need for the child to be involved voluntarily in that work if it is to be any "good" for him.

(b) The Sociology of educational Compulsion. - the work of Willard Waller.

Waller began "The Sociology of Teaching" with the fundamental realisation that schools are unfree places:

"The school is a despotism in a state of perilous equilibrium, threatened from within and exposed to regulation and interference from without....the school is continually threatened because it is autocratic, and it has to be autocratic because it is threatened."

The threats from without are obvious: the latest most spectacular example in this country was Risinghill, but such threats are operating invisibly all the time.

The threats from within exist as a consequence of the threats from without. They are the rebellion of the pupils:

"Pupils are the material with which teachers are supposed to produce results (ie not ends in themselves, things not persons-KFP) Pupils are human beings striving to realise themselves in their own spontaneous manner, striving to produce their own results, their own way".(recognition of praxis- incompatible with first sentence- KFP)

"The subject is subject only part of the time and with part of himself. The King is all King (It is unflattering to one's ego to be a subject. (KFP))

In schools the subordinated ones attempt to protect themselves by psychological withdrawal from the relationship, "to suck the juice from the orange of conformity before rendering it to the teacher." "This is why students are rebellious: they want to live!"

"Whatever the rules the teacher lays down, the tendency of the pupils is to empty them of meaning!" The teacher says "Walk faster" and so the children run. The teacher says "slower, silly" and the children crawl. "Many teachers learn to cut through the rules to deal with the mental fact of a rebellion, eg, "What was that Smith?" "Nothing sir, just a cough". Because the teacher's definition of the situation is dominant, the child is forced to deny his own praxis. The disaffected mutter becomes "just a cough, sir."

The teacher has to get the children to learn even when they don't want to learn what he says. There is a constant conflict between making the pupils submit (sit quiet) and making them enthusiastic (sit and listen and learn). The Authority role of the teacher has to be tempered with a helpful nice-chap role of "I'm on your side." All well and good. But if the teacher can be a person, the children can be free to step out of their role as well, especially as their role is less pleasant for them. When the teacher gets friendly, the pupils are always likely to get friendly with him. (This is labelled "getting familiar", "abusing privileges" "going too far".) At this point the children are no longer "working". So the teacher has to put on his Authority role again. His own personality contracts behind his role again, only to expand a little later again with some more smiles and jokes to get the kids interested again (or simply out of common humanity at first). The teacher needs to "jump on and off his high horse continually". Waller continues:

"This pulsation of the teacher's personality with its answering change of posture on the part of the students is usually reduced to a mere conversation of gestures. This conversation is the most significant social process of the classroom." At the point where pupils threaten to become people again (agents of praxis

vis-a-vis teacher), the adult is forced back into his teacher role since he is supposed to be the sole controller of initiatives.

Personal authority tends to be inefficient as the slave system showed. People resent having to do something "because I tell you." They tend to do it slowly and reluctantly and badly. This sort of personal authority Peters is against. He wants authority rationalised so that it no longer seems to come from anyone. The exam system is a way of forcing children to work without it seeming that anyone is responsible. To the child, exams must seem to be part of his environment, like mountains one can do nothing to remove.

In fact of course, the exam system is created by men, not by God. It is maintained as part of the praxis of the ruling class. To many children, especially working class children, examinations are a drag and class work is resented. Direct compulsion by a person and compulsion by

seemingly impersonal requirements to pass exams, both feel equally bad. Inattention is the least painful way of surviving. Rebellion is always possible.

Peters recognizes that too much discipline is liable to alienate children as much as too much personal do-as-I-tell-you discipline. It is important for the Authority in English literature not to deride the child's first efforts. Nevertheless, the examinations are approaching and you really will have to improve your spelling, Johnny. The requirements stand over against the individual and cannot be brought closer to him. Taking the journey in easy stages cannot make mountains come nearer than they are. On the day of judgement, some will have made it: others not. The impact of the requirements may not be as harsh as the impact of the classroom tyrant, but they can never be softened away completely. The teacher has to get results after all. "Requirements" have requirers somewhere along the line. Here is Paul Goodman summing up the dilemma Peters sees, but cannot solve.

"Traditional motives (for authority) have been to domineer and be a big fish in a small pond. The present preferred posture seems to me to be extremely dishonest: to take a warm interest in the young as persons while yet getting them to perform according to an impersonal

schedule. Since from the teacher's (or supervisor's) point of view, the performance is the essence, with failure the relation can quickly degenerate to being harsh for their own good or hating them as incorrigible animals".

The Sociology of the School is summed up superbly by a 15 year old in "The School that I'd Like": "The average boy goes to school, becomes bored, gets into mischief, is punished, 'takes it out' on other boys, is crammed with knowledge for the exams, passes or fails his exams, forgets and has learnt to hate that subject through bad teaching. The average teacher (even the idealistic sort) has to force much knowledge on boys, tries teaching without punishment, boys 'take it out' on him for the vicious masters, he becomes a vicious teacher."

(c) The Psychology of Educational Compulsion. Or, Why Tommy Really Isn't reading.

For the young child, the authority figure is a constant threat. Everything depends on approval from mummy or the teacher. Not only is there the task itself, but there is the question of how to get the teacher to say the magic word "correct". John Holt claims that when they have only to deal with reality children have natural "learning strategies" built-in as a result of mankind's long evolution. These learning strategies constitute an evolutionary wisdom of the mind, and are highly efficient. Timothy Leary has provided a brilliant analogy for the schooling process and its effect on our natural learning abilities:

"Your brain, like any other organ of your body, is a perfect instrument. When you were born, you brought into the world this organ which is almost perfectly adapted to sense what is going on around you and inside you. Just as the heart knows its job, your brain is ready to do its job. But what education schooling does to your head would be like taking your heart and wrapping it in rubber bands and putting springs on it to make sure it can pump." (p200, The Politics of Ecstasy.)

Leary then makes the same point in a different way:

"It's your trained mind, you remember, which prevents you from learning. If a professor of linguistics who doesn't know any French goes to France with his five-year-old son and they both spend equal time with French people, who is going to learn French faster? The five-year-old son will quickly outstrip his dad, even with that Ph.D. in linguistics. Why? Because Dad has stuffed his

mind with all sorts of censoring and filtering concepts that prevent him from grooving with the French process." (p.205)

Leary then goes on claim that the psychedelic experience can release these learning blocks, citing the example of a brilliant woman who had a block against learning languages. She learnt to speak Spanish perfectly by being put in earphones and flooded with spoken Spanish for eight hours under the influence of L.S.D. I do not think that here Leary is exaggerating.

Children's minds seize up when Authority comes along: when Authority explains something (eg, the easiest way to learn task X), it may not seem the easiest way at all to children from their position, with their different backgrounds. (R.F. Mager has shown this in relation to the sequencing of material in programmed instruction. See Mager, 1961, in "Educational Technology, ed. De Cecco, p132. See also Anarchy III)

The children lose sight of the problem-for-itself. The main job becomes to do the task the way teacher says, and not to understand any longer. To this end children abandon their natural learning strategies and adopt "producer strategies" instead, such as guessing or waiting for hints from the teacher. Children may exercise the most amazing natural intelligence learning how to produce the "right" answer. The wrong ways. With the result that they still have not grasped the principles of the problem - "the problem" for the teacher not for them (the problem for them was pleasing teacher). When the form of the official problem is changed, they are at sea; they get the answer wrong and are defined as stupid. Once labelled stupid, what they do will be seen as less intelligent than it is. Expectations will be lowered and subtly communicated to the child. And so the child will have been made stupid.

Wherever Authority intrudes itself, one problem becomes two; in addition to the (intrinsic) discipline of understanding the world there is the extraneous problem of gaining approval. And there is the anxiety that approval may not be given. This anxiety disrupts the learning process, making the child rigid, uncreative, less bold and confident in his thinking.

Later on the task of pleasing teacher becomes the task of passing exams. But still the interest is not the subject for its own sake. Extrinsic motivation leads to children learning living theories as

OPERATION A SUCCESS - but man dies!

(An actual newspaper headline!)

dead facts. When learnt that way the children cannot generate new ideas from they know: their ideas do not enrich their everyday perceptions - for instance in walking down a street; their ideas are inert, like stones. But unlike stones they don't even last. Everyone knows how material that is swotted up the day before an exam is forgotten the day after it. Moreover, with an instrumental orientation to learning children will be unlikely to make connections between "subjects" or with their own experience. As a result they will fail to develop "cognitive perspective". As Waller says: "the learning product which is assured by examination is of the lowest and basest sort."

And so we are forced into the conclusion that making children learn when they are uninterested is bound to fail, as are phony attempts to generate interest. All attempts to pressure children against the grain of their own impulses and interests are self-defeating in terms both of personality and intellectual growth.

"If theory is ever really to be translated into practice, theorists must learn to follow through the social dynamics of the school room." (Waller) On this count Peters fails utterly. He just does not understand the way schools work. Because of this he is naive enough to imagine that classroom Authority is reconcilable with genuine Respect for Persons. The conclusion of this section, on moral sociological and psychological grounds, is as follows: "To be successful in our culture one must learn to dream of failure." Schools are for "learning the nightmare." (Jules Henry) All attempts to liberalize and rationalize educational authority must

fail and deserve to fail. Exams are for failing.

(See also Section 14, Note on Compulsory Schooling)

yet again, just as the more Reading Instruction Experts, the more "reading difficulties", and just as the more miracle drugs and wonder-working surgeons, the less positive health there is in the community, so in agriculture: the more Soil Scientists, the more pollution and soil destruction!

Indeed this process seems to run through every part and function of our bureaucratized Western, and doubtless, Eastern, societies:

"Many students, especially those who are poor, intuitively know what the schools do for them. They school them to confuse process and substance. Once these become blurred, a new logic is assumed: the more treatment there is the better are the results; or escalation leads to success. The pupil is thereby "schooled" to confuse teaching with learning grade advancement with education, a diploma with competence, and fluency with the ability to say something new. His imagination is "schooled" to accept service in place of value. Medical treatment is mistaken for health care, social work for the improvement of community life, police protection for safety, military poise for national security, the rat race for productive work. Health, learning, dignity, independence and creative endeavour are defined as little more than the performance of the institutions which claim to serve these ends, and their improvement is made to depend on allocating more resources to the management of hospitals, schools, and other agencies in question. Not only education but social reality itself has become "schooled".

(I would say "bureaucratized" as I see the schooling process in education as a sub-aspect of the general bureaucratization of natural functions.)

A NOTE ON EDUCATIONAL "BLOCKS".

The concept of the educational "block" is of the utmost importance. To begin with, unless one is going to rely on the unlikely supposition that e.g. a block for Mathematics is determined by our genes, one has to admit that the only way Tommy, or more likely, Tommy's sister, could have acquired it is from his environment, i.e. the adults trying to get him or her to get their sums right.

Secondly, "blocks" are amaz-

ingly widespread at all levels of society. The writer's education has left him with a "block" for mechanical and many practical activities, as has the education of many other male students, and nearly all female students. Indeed, the writer has a "block", or potential for one, for almost every learning situation other than sitting down with a book thinking, or talking with someone about something I already know something about.

The implications of this are so shameful that I hesitated to mention my own difficulties, which I intend to work on. However let us spell out the mutilation a little: schooling has incapacitated me as thoroughly for most forms of learning (and of action) in direct proportion as I have "succeeded" in the forms of learning officially designated as such. Compare this state of affairs that friend of mine who has had almost no formal education, unless being incarcerated in a reformatory at the age of nine for playing truant be counted education. Yet my friend, Peter, can sew and make clothes better than a tailor, deliver his own babies, deal in scrap and junk, mend and maintain motor-bikes, build houses, do woodwork, mine coal act as a steeple-jack, do first aid, breed dogs, do interior and industrial painting, mend clocks and sewing machines, and a host of other skills. All this in addition to having worked out several sociological principles such as Parkinsons Law just by keeping his eyes open, having worked out the exact rate of exploitation on several jobs he was on, and having learnt not just how to deal with the Social Security System for his own purposes, but how to help others avoid being diddled. When he heard that I was writing a pamphlet on education, he started to attack orthodox educational theory (child-centredness) for messing kids around and never allowing them enough independence. He'd even sassed out the basic theory of libertarian education in bringing up his own numerous children!

Thirdly, the process is not absolute or totally beyond the control of the schooled persons to remedy. I must unlearn a certain style of learning and get in touch again with my own natural learning strategies. We nearly all of us have these learning difficulties, and we are all of us responsible for overcoming them!

Fourthly, Illich and Holt both point out that the more educ-

ational resources are pumped into Teaching, the more learning problems, "blocks", seem to develop among the "beneficiaries" of all this compulsory schooling.

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.

There is a somewhat parallel development within medicine: with each great new breakthrough in drug medicine, more and more people suffer from the illnesses of getting cured. (Admittedly the wonder drugs

have saved millions of lives as well!) Iatrogenic disease, as this is called, is now a vast field of medicine covering everything from hospital constipation to institutional depression. The biggest problems centre round drug medicines that knock out the body's natural defences at the same time as they hit (perhaps only suppress temporarily) the invading organism. (See Brian Ingles: Fringe Medicine, for a good account of the crisis of drug medicine and of possible complementary approaches, if not complete alternatives at this stage of our knowledge.)

The last word will be with the sage, Lao Tzu, writing several thousand years ago---

"As for those who would take the whole world To tinker it as they see fit, I observe that they never succeed: For the world is a sacred vessel Not made to be altered by man. The tinker will spoil it; Usurpers will lose it."

do we need better teachers? or none?

Anybody who has been inside a school staffroom will have noticed two topics of conversation returning again and again: (1) unruly classes -- '3c is a real terror' 'not as bad as 2d' (2) stupid children.

There is little direct evidence of how schools make kids unruly and stupid. However there is a huge amount of near evidence. For instance, it has been observed over and over again how "dull" children shoot ahead when they once get a teacher who loves and respects them. Such evidence is obviously unflattering to teachers. They have to be very exceptional characters before they can accept evidence which suggests that it maybe isn't all the fault of William and his home background if by the time he is in class four, William still

can't read.

(The way Bernstein's work has filtered down into the staffrooms is indicative here: Originally Bernstein set out to show how children came to school with different linguistic codes; any kids who were already operating in the same codes as the school would possibly be favoured by the teachers, not necessarily consciously. This message was distorted until it now reads as follows in the minds of many teachers: 'Bernstein showed how working class children have a bad home environment as regards their language. Their homes disadvantage them for school.' In fact, of course, Bernstein's message had radical implications for schools: that the schools were disadvantaging working-class child-

ren in such a way that relative to the middle-class schooling process their homes became a handicap for them.--see article by Bernstein in "Education for Democracy")

The central component in the ideology of the teaching profession is the myth of the "thick" child. (See next section -a note on Intelligence.) I once had a Head tell me that his whole school were 'as thick as two planks'!

Peters would doubtless condemn such an attitude, seeing it as exceptional--due to a bad personality, etc. At several points in the book he preaches against "authoritarianism". But he always sees attitudes and ideas divorced from the real situation which gave rise to them. (For instance, he is like Harold Wilson in being keener to moralize about snobbishness than to attack wage-differentials. p. 141.)

Ultimately, the authoritarian attitudes of teachers are not something to moralize about. They should be understood as the only way teachers are able to protect themselves in a hopeless situation. It is the authority relationship, not its by-product (authoritarianism), that should be the target.

Teachers entering teaching because they enjoyed being with kids, have ended up hating them. Many teachers with "progressive" ideals have ended up as cynical hacks. If ideas and attitudes were decisive, these transformations would not occur. Neither good will, nor better teacher training, nor better pay, nor new buildings can solve the problem of "authoritarianism". The social forces, the wear and tear suffered by class teachers daily, these are what are decisive in determining teachers' attitudes in the long run. THESE FORCES ARE INSEPARABLE FROM THE TEACHERS ROLE AS SUCH.

But here we come to a paradox.

The original justification of the teacher's role, according to Peters, was that the transmission of culture is A GOOD THING. But what if the disillusioning social situation of teachers make them more and more philistine themselves? According to Peters, teachers are needed to stop bullying. But what if the teacher tends to become the biggest bully, backed up by the Head? (Bif, bif, bif, "stop bullying, boy") Peters maintains that teachers are necessary to make children work. But what if the teacher tends to become the laziest

person in the classroom? Peters maintains that academic authorities ought to be in authority to force people to keep open minds towards the evidence. But what if teachers tend to become dogmatic, and professors entrapped in a dead academicism?

In other words, the reason for setting up these forces for wear and tear in the first place was the imperfection of children. Peters would call

Utopian dreamers those who see children as able to direct the themselves, individually and socially.

BUT IS IT NOT MORE UTOPIAN TO HOPE TO IMPROVE TEACHERS' ATTITUDES BY MERE WORDS, HOWEVER PIOUS, FLUNG AGAINST THE HUGE TIDE OF REAL CLASSROOM PRESSURES WHICH ARE EVERYDAY OPERATING IN THE OPPOSITE DIRECTION?

Is not Peters being utopian about teacher-'human-nature' by discounting as excesses and exceptions these very teachers who have been most shaped by the authority structure he claims is imperative?

Grammar school boys, at Cheshunt, Herts, staged a lunchtime go-slow against a teacher they said was always picking on them for trivial reasons. While he was on lunch duty they walked slowly up to the serving hatches and ate their food, one pea at a time.

From the fact of human imperfection it does NOT follow that Authority is needed. It rather follows that "NO MAN IS FIT ENOUGH TO BE ANOTHER MAN'S MASTER." When we consider the way Power corrupts idealistic teachers, we arrive at the following conclusion: Authoritarianism is not an accident that can be discounted and eliminated with courses in Ethics for Teachers. It is structurally generated. It is not "better teachers" that we should be talking about therefore, but the complete abolition of the Teacher role itself, as we know it.

In place of the teacher and his Leader (if not tyrant) Role, we should advocate the leading role, not fixed and tied to one person, but leadership that is constantly changing according to the nature of the group's tasks, a leadership that can come from any quarter, therefore.

Listen to Michael Bakunin:

"I receive and I give-such is human life. Each directs and is directed in his turn. Therefore there is no fixed and constant authority, but a continual exchange of mutual, temporary, and above all, voluntary authority and subordination."

If you think that Bakunin was just a dirty anarchist agitator --he was --will you perhaps accept the evidence of Dr. G. Scott Williamson? Williamson and his team of medical biologist were interested in human ethology--and in particular in the source of spontaneous action in man and in the notion of positive health. They found that the only way they could study their subject was to create entirely free conditions to see what people would naturally tend to do. Any Authority or control would spoil the conditions of the experiment. And so they started the Peckham Community Centre where ordinary London families were free to come and go as they liked in their leisure hours (Like most good experiments, this one was also closed down by the State.)

Here is the evidence of the Peckham Experiment:

"Accustomed as is this age to artificial leadership, it is difficult for it to realise the truth that leaders require no training of appointing, but emerge spontaneously when conditions require them. Studying their members in the free-for-all of the Peckham Centre, the observing scientists saw over and over again how one member instinctively became, and was instinctively recognised as leader to meet the needs of some particular moment. Such leaders appeared and disappeared as the flux of the Centre required. Because they were not consciously appointed, neither were they consciously overthrown when they had fulfilled their purpose. Nor was any particular gratitude shown by members to a leader, either at the time of his services or after for services rendered. They followed his guidance just so long as his guidance was helpful and what they wanted. They melted away from him without regrets when some widening of experience beckoned them on to some fresh adventure, which would in turn throw up its spontaneous leader, or when their self-confidence was such that any form of continued leadership would have been a restraint to them. A society, therefore, if left to itself, spontaneously works out its own salvation and achieves a harmony of action which superimposed leadership cannot emulate."

a note on intelligence

Since 'their things' are likely to range from delivering newspapers to playground insults, from Saturday shoplifting expeditions to Woolworths to scrounging for Guy Fawkes, we can see that fair comparisons are not necessarily measurable ones. It is extremely unlikely that any tests could be devised to measure across class boundaries without introducing class bias. In the middle class environment of the school, "different from" is interpreted as "worse than", and

praxis is reduced to process.

A comparison may help. It is as if working-class kids developed the practice of slouching in school as a mark of class solidarity (some do). At the same time, middle-class parents send their children to deportment classes (some do). The tester from the physical education department then comes to measure their height and concludes that middle class children are "innately" taller. For left-wing critics to emphasise the factor of environment would be legitimate up to a point (middle class children do have better diets). The main objection to the tester's conclusions would be that the working class kids were refusing to hold themselves upright against the measuring rod. When all the objections concerning past environment, the testing situation and the content of the tests had been met however, there might still be a rather small differential to be attributed to innate endowment. (This line of thought has been mostly cribbed straight from a remarkable article by David Ingelby in 'Human Context', Vol II, No. 2 (June '70) called 'Ideology and the Human Sciences'.)

However the example of physique and slouching is unhelpful in an important respect. Physique is static. Mental performance is dynamic. With the best education available everyone could get far, far closer to realising their

full potential for development. AND THAT'S AS MUCH AS WE NEED TO BEAR IN MIND.

Once we have rejected the myth of intelligence testing, we need to go further and reject the idea of any form of school or Authority testing whatsoever;

"The institutionalised values school instills are quantified ones. School initiates young people into a world where every thing can be measured, including the imaginations, and indeed, man himself.

"But personal growth is not a measurable entity. It is growth in disciplined dissidence, which cannot be measured against any rod, or any curriculum, nor compared to someone else's achievement. The learning I prize is immeasurable re-creation.

"School pretends to break up learning into subject-matters, to build into the curriculum made of these pre-fabricated blocks, to build into the pupil a curriculum made of these prefabricated blocks, and to gauge the result on an international scale. Men and women who submit to the standard of others for the measure of their own personal growth, soon apply the same ruler to themselves. They no longer have to be put in their place, but put themselves into their assigned slots. (Ivan Illich, 'Schooling, The Ritual of Progress' (my underlining)

'law and order or law or order'

The closer Peters gets to discussing the structural libertarian alternative to orthodox (liberal/reactionary) education, the more the quality of the argument slips.

At one point Peters writes: "The authority (of parents and teachers) is necessary for another generation to learn to live without authority". In a world of Bosses, Bureaucrats, Commisars and Governments it

seems astonishing for Peters to claim that we adults are all living without authority! It may not seem obvious to a Professor of Education, but any factory worker could tell Peters that authority was a very real factor in his life (And in the lives of Peters' students!) Peters has got it exactly wrong: the Authority of Parents and Teachers is necessary for another generation to learn to live with authority--under it!!

On page 270 Peters writes: "A moral judgement cannot be justified by an appeal to a generalisation about man." Fifteen lines later we find Peters inviting us to imagine the chaos resulting from abolition of the criminal law, "men being what they are"!!

On pages 275 and 276 Peters talks of 'our blackboard jungles' as if they were mere accidental 'blots on our record', removable by more time here and more money there. "In our blackboard jungles, class teachers are in an unenviable practical dilemma of which no philosopher can provide a satisfactory solution. By treating conflict as exceptional, Peters withdraws from the very situations which show his philosophy up as so much bunkum. What is really happening in such a situation?

In 'The School that I'd Like', Edward Blishen cites an example which we can quote without accepting all his interpretation (in favour of 'liberal' authority).

"School children hate being out of control. I remember during my own early teaching days when I could provide farce and little else, the notably ill-behaved boy who came to me after a lesson with a quiet complaint. 'Your lessons,' he said, 'give me a headache.'"

On page 196 Peters asks a "Have you stopped beating your wife?" question: "Do children learn to behave autonomously without a proper framework of order?" Of course children don't develop without a proper framework of order. But what do we mean by order and how does it come about?

Children want order, but is order produced by enforcing Law and Order? In the blackboard jungle situation, the teacher is really enforcing chaos, conflict and wear and tear, not order. To promote order he would have to let go of his authority completely. In the short term this would just lead to intensified chaos which every one would just have to ride out. But gradually the chaos would turn into spontaneous order. From being out of another's control (chaos) the children would come to come to control themselves (anarchy). Maintaining Law and Order stops conflict and friction working itself out and leads to an unnatural degree of conflict and friction.

Several times Peters mentions "Lord of the Flies" by William Golding. This he takes to demonstrate what human nature is really like and why it needs governing. But surely the school children are anything but pure examples of how human nature gets when it is let off the leash. The children have had a very specific upbringing. They have been conditioned by conventional authoritarian education. "Lord of the Flies" can equally well be read as showing the consequences of not letting children govern themselves from birth.

Many well-intentioned teachers start off trying to "treat the children like adults". But because the children have been conditioned by authority structures, they interpret friendliness as weakness and start playing the teacher up. In this situation the teacher needs not just courage but also space and time and freedom from the school authorities. (Incidentally, space, time and freedom are especially lacking during teaching practice - which suggests that all you can practice on T.P. is authority teaching. Which is perhaps no accident.) This way the children can work their reaction to authority out of their systems. But because the teacher himself is bound by the authority of the head, he cannot go through with the experiment. He blames the children for being 'unreasonable', thus confusing their reactions with the spontaneous tendencies towards co-operation and order that would soon appear. He is like the gold-digger who stops digging a few feet above a rich vein and concludes that there isn't any gold in the ground. He is like the man who takes his hand off a cork held down under the water and complains of its instability when it bobs up.

When he reasserts his authority, this confirms the children in their attitude that the only sort of freedom they are given is phony freedom. And this makes them more unresponsive and disorderly, when along comes another friendly young teacher the next year (When at Risinghill, the class teachers were given freedom by the Head, the whole school was just working through to real order when the authorities closed it down.)

This process doesn't just happen in blackboard jungles in ghettos. To some extent it happens in all schools, because conflict between teachers and children is a feature of all authority structures. The whole tragic process is something Peters himself admits he cannot really offer much advice on. And yet it is the main dilemma facing teachers in their real situations "Liberals" and "Progressives" end up abdicating in the face of the crucial dilemma, because they refuse to criticise the structures of schools. Within authoritarian structures, the discipline dilemma is insoluble!

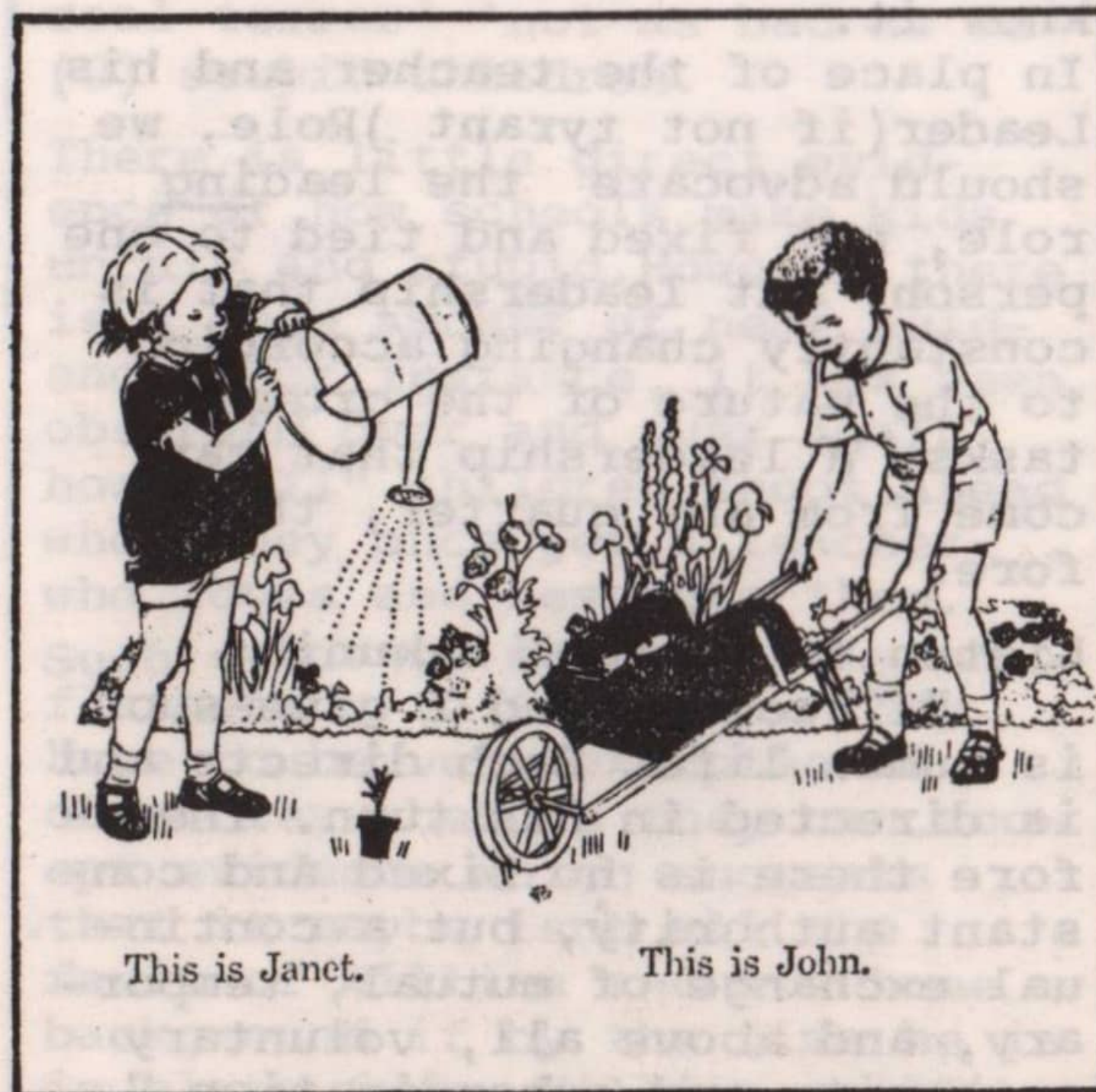
Bruner and Holt both attack the idea that you can tell an educated person by what he knows. Education means learning to solve problems, not learning facts. Therefore, you tell an educated man not by what he knows so much as by what he does when he does not know.

Likewise in the sphere of discipline: the criterion for moral education is not how children behave vis-a-vis adults, but what they do when adults are not present. Has their education encouraged their social instincts? their ability to stick up for themselves? Have the children had the opportunity to learn to distrust demagogues and leaders motivated by power urges? (like Jack in Lord of the Flies). Supposing the children stranded on the desert island had been used to general meetings on the Summerhill lines. Is it not probable that they would have fared better, at least? And if they still failed in the end, would that be because of lack of adult authority or lack of adult competence models, practical know-how, etc?

To be sure, Peters recommends 'democratic procedures'. But the democratic processes he recommends are as phony as the 'respect for persons' he also advocates. In this case, however, he is quite open that the democracy he recommends is one whose limits are narrowly set by authority: elections of blackboard monitors or elections of representatives to School Councils which are without real executive power. This sort of 'democracy' is indeed a training for our society--for our undemocratic society!

Peters admits that teacher-dictated order cannot be justified in terms of the principle of freedom (p194). He rather justifies it in terms of the principle of 'PROMOTION OF WHAT IS GOOD' !!!

The old story: Teacher knows best! Who defines what the basic rules for an orderly environment are? Can Order be imposed anyhow?--Genuine order rather than the exhausted stalemate of many 'orderly' classrooms. Is not the true order something that must grow organically if it is to exist at all? Waller again: "There is a need for a natural order in schools. That does not mean a chaotic order, or an uncontrolled one, but rather a social order which students and teachers (read --children and adults F.P.) work out for themselves in the developing situation, an order which is intrinsic in the personalities of those involved, a social order resulting from the spontaneous, inevitable and whole-hearted interaction of personalities." (my emphasis) And further: "We see human behaviour as ensuing from an intricate and subtle self-regulated process of dynamic interchange between the individual and the situation he is confronted with.... the school must stop trying to become a machine and strive to realize its destiny as a social organism."



This is Janet.

This is John.

Let us close by summing up the gist of this section with a tag by the French thinker Proudhon:

"FREEDOM, THE MOTHER, NOT THE DAUGHTER, OF ORDER."

education and social control

We saw earlier how that to argue for self-directed growth (intellectual and otherwise) does not necessitate holding any romantic view of every child being a genius. Likewise to argue for a way of organising education without authority does not commit us to pretending all children are angels. We do not all need to grow wings for the abolition of school authority to be workable. Anti-social acts would certainly be fewer but those that still occurred would still be controlled.

We are not advocating the abolition of social control. We are merely advocating building an education system which recognizes the social nature of children. To return to our earlier analogy of the man holding the cork just under the water: If the man thinks he is stopping the cork from sinking it is not necessary for us to pretend that the cork will or ought to jump in the air if he lets go. It is enough for us to direct attention to the properties of the cork itself to refute the man's hypothesis of sinking or instability (unviability).

Freedom is not shown by any specific activity that I or any Authority decide free individuals should show. Rather "freedom is for each and all things in the universe, to follow their own natural tendencies- and to fulfil their own virtues, qualities and capacities"(Vanzetti)

Compare this with "The Way" of LaoTse, for those interested in eastern ideas (see again at beginning of Section 16)

The social control of which we are speaking is not something exercised from a point above society, but something which results from the

respective adjustments of fully formed egos: If my rights are infringed I will assert myself against the infringer. Hopefully this adjustment process would be non-violent and extremely sensitive. Hopefully too, mature people would find nothing threatening to them (and therefore worthy of repression) that was not "objectively" so. E.g. they wouldn't get up-tight about other people going round nude for example, and the nudists wouldn't want to force the others to conform to them, either.

To advocate the abolition of all social control would be as ridiculous as to advocate the abolition of gravity: social control is part of human nature; it is inseparable from the functioning of all social groups. To think otherwise is to start from an abstract picture of humanity. It would also be to start from a doormat image of the "teacher", who also has rights as a member of the community. This point is brought out brilliantly throughout "The Open Classroom", Herbert Kohl's "handbook for teachers who want to work in an open environment":

"It is difficult to say exactly what an open classroom is. One almost has to have been in one and feel what it is. However, there are certain things which it is not. It is important not to equate an open classroom with a "permissive" environment. In an open classroom the teacher must be as much himself as the pupils are themselves. This means that if the teacher is angry he ought to express his anger and if he is annoyed he ought to express that too. In an authoritarian classroom annoying behaviour is legislated out of existence.

In a "permissive" classroom the teacher pretends that it isn't annoying. He also permits students to behave only in certain ways, thereby retaining the authority over their behaviour he pretends to be giving up. In an open situation the teacher tries to express what he feels and to deal with each situation as a communal problem."

But John does not exist in a vacuum. When John takes Will's toys, Will gets his own back and John develops respect for other people. When fooling around in the library distracts readers, they turn round and say "shut up"! (Or rather they ought to- In practice they are liable to hand over their own function of control to a special official- in this case a librarian. This sounds all very peaceable but historically the State has monopolised social control functions by a process of violent taking: in this respect the librarian example is slightly misleading). Control from outside weakens the control tendencies generated from inside the group itself. Likewise with schools.

In Summerhill anti-social acts are opposed in two ways:

- (1) by direct opposition-ganging up against the person there and then, eg. taking the bell off a boy's bike if he is making a nuisance of himself through noise.
- (2) by indirect control- through the weekly general meeting where the person has the opportunity to reply to the charges against him.

Contrary to what Peters suggests, children are shrewd and fair judges if they are given real responsibility- or at least they are no more unfair than adults. The punishments Summerhill children give are generally "making-good" punishments not vindictive punishments. Moreover, because they have been fully involved in making and enforcing the few "basic rules" they are much less liable to break them themselves. A further advantage is that unnecessary rules don't get passed, such as no eating in class. When unnecessary rules exist they tend to discredit those few rules whose breach is anti-social.

Peters would accept this last point. On page 264 Peters pleads for the rationalisation of authority: the teacher should derive his authority from the tasks he promotes by using his authority. He should not derive it from the fact that He is Teacher- "Because I say so!"

The model Peters proposes for rational authority is the policeman directing traffic. But in that case, why can't the children delegate their own traffic co-ordinators? Can't they make and enforce their own rules, with the teacher participating as a respected but equal member of the unit concerned? Peters' advocacy of rational authority (co-ordination) leads straight to the abolition of personal Authority (Role Authority of Teacher appointed by Role Head appointed by Local Authority).

If the only function of a policeman is to help old ladies across the road and to direct the traffic, then lets do away with the police force! Lollipopmen and traffic wardens are enough! But the police also have the function of protecting Capital and reinforcing the Authority of the State- these are their main functions, the rest are frills. Likewise the industrialist isn't just out to make things for people- his real job is making surplus (profit) for himself. (Where the two tasks class we get built-in obsolescence).

Peters' ideal teacher doesn't just aim to co-ordinate the negotiation of social initiatives but to come out with a profit, a constructive surplus, a surplus of social initiative. If "his" class does good work it reflects well on him, over and above the credit due to the class-members.

Peters wants authority to be rationalised but not abolished. Rational task- authority for Peters is merely a front for the old authority: "Naturally he hopes that moral persuasion will do the trick; but often he is only too aware that authority will have to be exercised if the moral appeal proves abortive" (p265)

"Trick" is the word! If a child is smoking, you don't just punish him- you tell him how harmful smoking is. But supposing he weighs up the risks and decides to continue, thanks for the advice all the same...? Or supposing he points to Mr. X on the staff and asks the teacher to discipline Mr. X since he's more liable to get cancer, being older...? "Do as I say, BOY! There are RULES against smoking!" With Peters, rational persuasion is indeed a trick, since it functions as a "front" for the old coercive authority.

But suppose that the boy doesn't weigh up the evidence terribly carefully: even in this case the damage the boy would do to his body is small compared with the damage the teacher

does to the boy's mind and personality by over-ruling him. (True, the body-damage over a life-time may be considerable, but we are only talking of at the most six years: on leaving school the boy will return to the forbidden fruits anyway- indeed they will have that much more attraction for being forbidden)

"Prima facie the institution of authority is an affront to rational man because it runs counter to the presupposition in favour of freedom that was outlined in Chapter VII, and because it involves the institution of a system where what is to be done is not settled necessarily by an appeal to reasons, but by an appeal to a man who may or may not have good reasons for what he lays down" What wild anarchist dreamer is this? It is Peters (p249) Has he then undergone a conversion? No, for he now continues to defend this "prima facie affront to rational men" (Authority) along three related lines. "The defence of such a system must be by reference to considerations deriving from the paradox of freedom (see below C), or to considerations connected with the "effective implementation of fairness (the rule of law, etc) (see below A) or to the principle of the consideration of interests, security being in the interest of every rational being (see below B)"

A The effective implementation of fairness:

The "rule of law" is weighted in favour of those who own capital. Similarly in schools: the Teacher's main job is to make an authority-surplus in the day's trading with his children. How else are we to understand a teacher's motives in sending a pupil home for arriving late? His motive cannot be concern at the pupil not getting sufficient schooling- else why would he send him home? His motive can only be to maintain HIS authority. The signs of the teachers' surplus of social initiative are evident everywhere. Where is the "fairness" where staff can arrive late, but not the pupils; staff have common rooms, but not pupils; staff decide the rules, but not pupils; Staff write reports on children, but not children on staff, etc.

B Consideration of Interests and Security:

The security of a community depends not on laws but on its general morale and cohesiveness. This morale is far more likely to be generated in schools which are

not plagued either with Authority or with the tedious wear and tear conflicts against it that Authority provokes. The child who wants peace to read may seem to fare all right when the teacher is present to protect him from his more boisterous fellows; but pandemonium breaks out when the teacher leaves! Authority guarantees security as little as it does "fairness".

C The "Paradox of Freedom"

This principle goes to the effect that "too much" freedom leads to too little. revolutions must inevitably lead to counter-revolutions- there is no reason to investigate the precise historical circumstances in which, say, the Russian Revolution failed. With no adult control, child leaders will develop whose Tyranny is far worse.

We have already criticised the view that this is likely to happen in our discussion of "Lord of the Flies". But let us grasp the nettle of the worst eventuality: supposing tyranny does start to develop on the island? Well in that case adults can do nothing about it- UNLIKE SCHOOLS.

There weren't any adults on Golding's island, but there are adults in schools. If tyranny starts to develop they should oppose it. NOT by jumping back on to their high horse or Role Authority and calling an end to the freedom game. (They shouldn't be able to.) They should oppose it as ordinary members of the school concerned for its welfare. As people who enjoy doing X Y and Z but find that a state of tyranny and chaos is unconducive to what they want to do. As political actors among other political actors in the micro-politics of the school.

Maybe the children won't at first listen to their warnings about power cliques developing in the School Council (say). But they will later on when the power clique has made itself hated. But what if it takes six months for the children to listen to the wise adults calling for a new revolution against the new tyranny (gangs of sixth formers say)? What about the children's education in the meantime? Their book-work may have suffered, true. But surely the whole six months experience will have taught them a far more valuable lesson: the price of freedom is eternal vigilance. Far from being an abdication of the task of education, such a strategy of influence but not compulsion would be the best form of education libertarian adults could possibly give! It would be

education for real democracy, not phony democracy.

This of course, is still focussing far too much on the school as a special institution. If we substitute community centre for school, then such a struggle against power would take place in the community as a whole, with overall gains in social learning for young and old equally.

what is so special about educational ethics?

"Education is the art of imposing upon the young." This definition (Waller's) may sound extreme. But let us go into it. The question is: What is "education"? Is there anything about an adult's dealings with children which is not covered by the ordinary morality of two adults dealing with each other?

Before we go into the question let us first pause to recall Peters' own dictum: no distinction without relevant differences.)

On page 194, Peters discusses the moral dilemma of forcing the young to do school work because it is good for them. Apart from the question of whether forcing them is efficient, Peters writes:

"the basic point remains: no educator can be indifferent to what children want. He cannot, as in an ordinary social situation, say that what people want to do is their own affair, provided that they do not damage others or interfere with their liberty. To adopt this laissez-faire attitude in a school would be to abdicate as an educator. Caretakers, maybe, can adopt such an attitude, but not teachers." What Peters is saying is that "ordinary social situations are different from educational situations. It is this assumption that I wish to destroy."

To begin with libertarian education does not involve a laissez-faire attitude at all: it means that the adult gets involved in the workings of the school but only in the sense that the children also are free to get involved. When a popular revolution occurs, to quietly direct the traffic is not to abdicate as a traffic warden, but it is to abdicate as a policeman. Abdication as a jailer is not abdication as an educator. As Waller says, "the school is a gigantic agency of social control." If a child isn't interested in work then the teacher has no right to force him! He may, as a concerned friend, mention that it's useful to know how to read. But so may the child's mother friends of the same age. Sooner or later, if it is vital that the child learns something, this realisation will come to the child: he'll find it annoying not to be able to read a train timetable and a danger notice (no harm done if he can't read "keep off the grass" notices or bureaucratic forms). All his friends can read, so he might as well learn to. If the realisation "I need to learn X" doesn't come to the child (later adult) then it wasn't vital to have learned X in the first place.

A.S. Neill cites the case of the child who wasn't interested in reading but who was a great radio enthusiast. One day, when the boy was about eleven, it struck him that it would help his radio interests along to be able to read the radio magazines...The writer has recently learned to type from a similar kind of motivation (typing part of this book!) Provided one isn't a lump of clay, a plant, a rat or a sheep, provided that is, one has one's own intentions in the real world, the real world carries its own motivation to understand. (By understanding the world I don't just mean understanding a la how cars work, but also making sense of

one's experience and comprehending the human situation, etc) This sort of reasoning applies to adults and children alike.

Peters justifies forcing children to work on the ground that it is good for them to know about...well what? Beyond the three R's, syllabus designers can agree about hardly anything. Let us say, nevertheless, that it is good for children to know about the history of the Russian Revolution, say (as it indeed is good for them). In that case Peters would justify forcing children to learn about the Russian Revolution on the grounds that it is important for people to know about it. For people to know about it? Or just for children? Why doesn't Peters advocate compulsory state examinations on contemporary events for all adults as well? You cannot maintain educational relationships are different from ordinary social relations and then "prove" it with a principle that can be extended across to adults. If he's so keen on forcing people to know things, Peters doubtless won't object to my forcing him to read all the books in my bibliography. I assure him, it would do him good!

What about acts against the public such as a child putting objects on a railway track? Is there anything specially educational here?

To begin with, human nature is isn't such that children put objects on railway tracks and no questions need to be asked. Of course, if the train is full of individuals who have personally tortured the child in the past, then the act really does make sense at face value: the child is out to kill and to thwart his intentions is to side with his torturers in a mini-war. But otherwise the act isn't intended to kill the train passengers. It can only be seen as making sense if it is interpreted as a symbolic act against authority. And if Authority isn't present to frustrate the child in the first place, it doesn't need to be present to defend its non-existent self against non-existent attacks by a non-thwarted child!

However, despite our protests that nettles would be much less prevalent in a revolutionised school system, let us again grasp the libertarian nettle of the worst outcome: an object on the track and the train due to come. What do you do?

Firstly, surely, you remonstrate with the child-tell him how dangerous it is, show him your displeasure. Then if the

train appears in the distance you knock the object off the track quickly. This is what many children would do with fellow children anyway. It is also what you would have to do with an adult who put objects on the track. There is nothing specifically educational about the most sensible course of action. Whatever you do to the child, even if you report him to the weekly school meeting, you do so as an equal of the child, NOT as someone who has authority over him. Listen to A.S. Neill:

"Mind you we are not above and beyond human foibles. I spent weeks planting potatoes one spring, and when I found eight plants pulled up in June I made a big fuss. Yet there was a difference between my fuss and that of an authoritarian. My fuss was about potatoes, but the fuss an authoritarian would have made would have dragged in the question of morality-right and wrong. I did not say that it was wrong to steal my spuds: I did not make it a matter of good and evil- I made it a matter of my spuds. They were my spuds and they should have been left alone. I hope I am making the distinction clear.

"Let me put it another way. To the children, I am no authority to be feared. I am their equal, and the row I kick up about my spuds has no more significance to them than the row a boy may kick up about his punctured bicycle tyre. It is quite safe to have a row with a child when you are equals.

"Now some will say: 'That's all bunk. There can't be any equality. Neill is the boss; he is bigger and wiser'. That is indeed true. I am the boss, and if the house caught fire the children would run to me. They know that I am bigger and more knowledgeable, but that does not matter when I meet them on their own ground, the potato patch so to speak.

"When Billy, aged five, told me to get out of his birthday party because I hadn't been invited, I went at once without hesitation-just as Billy gets out of my room when I don't want his company." (pp23-4)

We still have to discover what is so special about educational ethics. Nor will it do to say that children are weaker than adults. They are. But wives are weaker than husbands. The duty of adults not to beat children is no different from the duty of husbands not to beat their wives. Those who do want to beat their children are not such as to be swayed

by a book on any kind of ethics, let alone "educational ethics", whatever they are. Likewise, the duty of teachers not to indoctrinate their children is still no different from their duty not to mislead their friends when their friends ask them for information on a subject they are ignorant about.

Ah, you say, but your friend is less vulnerable. He can check up by going to someone else. If he finds you have deceived him he can stop being your friend. He can walk out on you. Children can't. They are more vulnerable. That is why you need school inspectors.

Nonsense! Precisely because they are more vulnerable every child must be able to walk out. That is why every person in the classroom must count as a source of checks, and not just the teacher and any school inspector who calls once a year or so.

The same goes for the sort of character-indoctrination by "charismatic" teachers that Peters rightly attacks. What was wrong with Miss Jean Brodie in "The Prime of Miss Jean Brodie" was that she was unconsciously, and even consciously, out to mould the personalities of "her girls". What was wrong with the school is much more important however. Whatever else we can say about her, Miss Jean Brodie was alive, vibrantly herself, a real person not an antiseptic mask of a teaching role. Miss Jean Brodie was able to mould her girls so much because (1) they were assigned willy-nilly to her class by the Authority with the result that they could not have escaped, and because (2) they had so few real personalities available to them at their school who could have served as alternative models that they didn't want to escape, and (3) the other teachers being hung up on their Dignity, checks to the moulding process could only come via the Top- aware adults should have been able to warn the girls in her classes directly. But this would have been the ultimate sin of "disloyalty"-breaking sham of the united front. The school's structural faults were more important than Miss Brodie's personal faults in the final tragedy.

Or take "respect for persons" as an educational virtue: shouldn't we have respect for fellow adults, old age pensioners, everyone in fact? Why does Peters bring it up in a specifically educational context then? The answer (my

answer!) is this. "Respect for Persons" is needed as a fig-leaf for Power. Liberal moralising is required as a countervailing power, however flimsy, against the main school tendencies towards denial of children's praxis. Peters has to advocate that teachers mustn't be authoritarians only because he still recommends they still be in authority! In other words, what is distinctive about "respect for persons" as a specifically educational virtue is that it doesn't exist! "Pity would be no more, If we did not make somebody poor" (Blake)

The whole principle of respect for persons is an abortion as used by Peters. What if some of his colleagues treat him with lack of respect? Why- he stops associating with them! If they value his company then they will reform their ways to win him back, before he finally withdraws. All relationships

contain minor controls such as signs of boredom or annoyance. Peters has to preach respect for the person of the child precisely because children are not in a position to enforce it themselves! If they show signs of boredom, the teacher will define them as "lacking ability" or "very restless-can't sit still." If they show signs of annoyance they are liable to be punished. None of these conditions holds when Peters relates to his peers. There the "definition of the situation" made by both parties counts. The respect for persons Peters advocates is respect for persons in so far as they comply with the role I give them.

If he treated his colleagues like that he wouldn't have many friends. They are in a position to demand real respect because, unlike kids, they can walk out.

In the education Peters recommends, so much depends on the teacher precisely because so little depends on the kids.

Waller's definition begins to look quite reasonable: "Education is the art of imposing upon the young."

Note on Compulsory Schooling

Finally, let us deal with one of the commonest justifications for schooling made by "progressive teachers". What about kids from a bad background of slums and violence in the streets and boredom? Surely the school is a source of richness, a means of gaining experience?

This explanation is plausible until one realizes that it is not the school as School

(linked with coercive authority) which provides the richness: slum areas should have richly-good risks for the established order"(Illich) The system of education we now have could NOT even be reformed to provide equality to compete one's way up the ladder. How useless then to look to it to help in the abolition of the ladder itself!(This does not mean the sameness of "barracks communism"- the only other meaning of equality imaginable to Peters)

Schools maintain and constantly strengthen the myth of rank of "better than". Hence, they provide a rationale for wage and status differentials, and, more fundamentally, for fixed types of job carried out by individuals whose intelligence has been similarly "fixed" by the schooling process.

So long as revolutionaries are "hooked" on compulsory education---with its corollaries: 1)the monopolisation of educational resources; 2)the packaging of values; 3)their measurement; 4)the doling out of life-chances; 5)education as a scarce commodity; 6)education as administered by a special caste of Experts;--- just so long will any "revolution" they carry out lead to a worse, not a better, society.

The idea of Schooling is basic to our society and becoming more so. Insofar as it is shared by everyone, it is a Myth. Myths function to bind together all the people in a society. The Myth of schooling is now so central as to generate a whole new religion to supplant Christianity. The equation:education=schooling and State Control is now more deeply engrained than the equally mythical equation; harder work=national interest=stocked community centres, should in any case not exist as slums, as impoverished environments. The problem is one of slums, not of slum-children, and therefore specifically educational counter-measures have the implicit assumption of accepting the overall social impoverishment. Remedial programmes for slum kids fail for all sorts of reasons, not least because so little learning takes place through formal instruction anyway.

Further reasons why it is futile for left-wingers to look to the educational system to further equality exist aplenty. "Instead of equalizing chances, the school system has monopolized their distribution"(Illich) "Schools select for each successive level those who have at earlier stages in the game, proved themselves

my interest. Yet to make it is to confuse salvation with the church.

As Illich points out: "school touches us so intimately that none of us can expect to be liberated by something else. We can only imagine other schools." Yet the plain fact is that neither individual learning nor social equality can be enhanced by the ritual of schooling:

"School teaches us that instruction produces learning. ...In fact, learning is the human activity which least needs manipulation by others. Most learning is not the result of instruction. It is rather the result of unhindered participation in a meaningful setting. Most people learn best by being 'with it', yet school makes them identify their personal cognitive growth with elaborate planning and manipulation. Once a man or woman has accepted the need for school, he or she is easy prey for other institutions."

Working class kids may indeed have an impoverished background, poor life-chances, etc. However, no specifically educational recommendations flow from this fact. Moreover, any general educational recommendations concerned with the joy/duty/problem of living/learning in an impoverished situation, have absolutely no connection with the schooling process. If, as Illich argues so persuasively, "school prepares for the alienating institutionalisation of life by teaching the need to be taught", then compulsory schooling to 15, let alone 16!, is surely the worst service that socialists could possibly wish on working class kids.

The whole question of Compulsory Schooling has been well dealt with by Jane Kingshill and Brian Richardson:

"The school's educational shortcomings may be linked to the current inadequate notion Society has of children's civil liberties. If human rights are in some measure denied to children it is because we do not yet regard them as full human beings and our adult code of civil liberties is not felt to apply to, as it were, imperfect adults in a state of transition.

Children are frail, vulnerable inexperienced and immature in varying degrees. So are we all And it is of the essence of human rights to depend, not upon these variables, but upon the one and only constant:

Maybe the chief mistake we make is to pay too much direct attention to the "education" of children and adolescents, rather than providing them a worthwhile adult world in which to grow up. In a curious way, the exaggeration of schooling is both a harsh exploitation of the young, regimenting them for the social machine, and a compassionate coddling of them, since mostly they are productively useless and we want them to waste their hours "usefully". (GOODMAN)

humanity itself. If intrinsic human rights exist, as such, they exist for all human beings alike; what would be an infringement of civil liberties for adults infringes the liberties of children no less.

An essential part of the present education system is compulsory attendance at school between the ages of five and fifteen (or its very definitely hedged-about equivalent). No conscientious objection is allowed, no pay is awarded in consideration for work done, submission to the authority of the school hierarchy is demanded and disobedience as well as absenteeism is punished. No amount of apologies: that education is a privilege, that teachers are enlightened and that the child's welfare is foremost in everyone's mind disguises the true nature of this situation; in a word it is slavery.

The child is born a "free" citizen, so he is told, lives in a "free" country where he is part of the "free" world. At the age of five he learns otherwise. He becomes subject to a state decree which



fundamentally affects his daily life and his whole future, which is inescapable, even unchallengeable. This is, in effect, and perhaps is intended to be, a traumatic experience conditioning the person to the concept of obedience on which the authoritarian state system depends.

Compulsory attendance at school also places the teachers in a difficult position and forces them into an authoritarian role. Because dissent cannot be expressed by withdrawal from the educational institution, it has either to be repressed or expressed as rebellion. Rebellion has to be ruthlessly crushed for the sake of the continuing operation of the establishment. It is more convenient if the pupils can

be forced to submit to authority, and thus powers of coercion have to be assumed leading to a system of punishment sufficiently severe to generate mental and bodily fear in the intending dissenter. Small wonder that teachers are reluctant to give up the right to use corporal punishment as a "last resort." The entire relationship between pupil and teacher is soured by the fact of compulsion and this is a handicap that few teachers have the power to overcome. Not only a child's civil liberties therefore but the whole quality of education is at stake."

(Anarchy 103)

peters' anti-evolutionary view of human nature

Can human beings manage their own affairs? Or do they need Governments to regulate them? What is Peters view of human nature?

Peters has a pretty low view of human nature. "The final fruits" of education include knowledge and an ability to direct oneself. But according to Peters these final fruits are very uncertain: such is human nature that most men won't be interested in what is in their interests ("worthwhile activities"). Left to themselves children will revert to "bingo and eating bananas" (p146) (Note the despicable attitude behind the "eating bananas" phrase.) Apparently this is supposed to prove something about child human nature: to me it indicates something about children who

have been shaped by authoritarian schools.

Moreover reversion to activities which Peters considers "not worthwhile" may only be an initial reaction. Who is to say that after a week or a month or a year children wouldn't voluntarily return to want to find out about the world, make music and beautiful objects, etc.

Peters considers it is in the nature of things that "the mass of men are geared only to consumption" (p145). I consider that there have been periods in history when the mass of men were active and constructive, for instance in certain areas of Spain in the Spanish Revolution. Therefore passivity can't be due to human nature as such.

Indeed the very concept of "human nature" needs to be handled with great care. Peters sees it as something lurking down the well of isolated selfhood. I see it as something social, that develops itself in relation to an environment. Where the environment cannot in fact be changed, the accommodation is passive. Where it can be changed, the accommodation is active. Either way human nature is not something gratuitous: it lies in the fact that the activities people tend towards have a purpose in the situation they see themselves acting in, and that this purpose (want) tends to be functional (need)

Even apathy has a function: adaptation to a situation where other men control you. And so if the mass of men are geared to consumption this is a statement not about human nature isolated, but about human nature-in-the-sort-of-environment where work is boring and meaningless and advertising continually exhorts people to consume. (Maybe capitalist society requires it that the mass of men are geared to consumption! If they were geared to production more they might demand all sorts of subversive things such as workers self-management)

Schools are the clutch for getting children geared to passivity and ignorance and "consumerism". Peters would put them down to (a) "bad" schooling and (b) human nature. Somehow if we could only get more imaginative syllabi, better teachers, liberal attitudes, new buildings, then more people would be "saved".

I would argue that "bad" attitudes and ideas in schools aren't just an accident. The skinhead doesn't just happen to fail. He's pushed down! Teachers don't just happen to become authoritarian. Authoritarianism is inseparable from the system Peters recommends. Schools in poor areas don't just happen to get worse buildings and staff. It's part of the way Britain as a whole works. The system which educates the "good pupils" uneducates the "bad pupils"! "Compulsory Miseducation" is an integral part of the system's functioning. Peters wishes for better education while keeping the Authority of Schools and Teachers. But in this he is like a child on a see-saw who wants both ends to be up at once!

(But even so, how well are the "good pupils" educated in the Top Streams? It's not just skinheads who are made stupid-there are plenty of learned cretins with degrees. "Education and the Working Class" by Jackson and Marsden

contains several revealing accounts of interviews with that pitiful specimen, the grammar-school "success" who thinks he's a cut above the average. A veneer of educational phrases can be imparted, "cleverness" even, but wisdom is something that has to be taken through life).

However, most of the failures Peters puts down to Human Nature. Improvements in our education there could certainly be, but basically the "final fruits" of education are highly uncertain because of "What Human Nature is Like".

Let us examine a passage in detail:

"(The child centred revolt was focussed on) procedural principles to the detriment of valuations about content... Adherence to ideas about respect for the child, etc., "cannot serve as a substitute for valuations about content, which determine the direction of growth and what interests are worth developing. The child-centred teacher who believes in the principle of liberty, therefore, like the parent, the moral problem of choosing between letting children pursue their interests, which may not be in their interest, and getting them to pursue what is in their interest. For the teacher is institutionally concerned with fostering interests which it is in children's interests to develop. This is what education involves. Talk about "growth", "self-realisation" and gearing the curriculum to the interests of children, glosses over this fundamentally normative aspect of education. No doubt some formal educators were neglectful of and ignorant about facts of development and motivation; no doubt they sometimes treated children with little regard for the principle of liberty. But they did at least have a clear idea that their function as educators was to hand on what is worthwhile in the way of content." (p35-6)

This passage, at a turning point in the argument of the book, contains some remarkable assumptions.

Assumption one:

The assumption of constant progress- "no doubt some formal educators WERE neglectful and ignorant", etc. Oh, the bad old days!

Assumption two:

The assumption that libertarian education is just a reaction at the level of attitudes.

By treating it as just a kindly reaction needed at a particular stage, Peters devalues the

libertarian tradition. In fact, libertarian education has a long history; in practice—wherever there have been reasonably libertarian societies with fulfilled people; in theory—with thinkers from Lao Tze, Socrates down to the present day. Libertarian education is not just a reflex of the heart without any head to it.

Peters all the time confuses the child-centred approach (progressive or liberal education) with the libertarian approach. It is true that the child-centred approach may be a swing of the pendulum against the subject-centred approach of traditional teachers. But libertarian education stands for neither approaches. It stands for dialogue. Dialogue is not child-centred but equally balanced or mutually centring. It stands for participation. Participation, or joining in, by the child (or children) into activities which the adult (or adults or older children) were in any case doing and hence centring their attention on. It stands for the child being able at will to escape the spoiling or stifling effects of always being the centre of attention. (Rousseau's Emile would have been highly neurotic!) It stands for adults having reciprocal rights when bored, since bored adults are unlikely to do children any good, and very likely to do children harm. "TEACHING" MUST BE FUN!

Progressive education keeps its criticisms confined to attitudes. Libertarians see how important structures are for spoiling or improving attitudes. Libertarians want structures which EMBODY respect for children, so that there is much less need to preach respect on top of the structures. The child-centred/subject-centred pendulum hangs from the real subordination of children to Authority. Far from being a swing of the pendulum, Libertarian education stands for the abolition of the pendulum itself.

Assumption three:

The Assumption We Know What Is Worthwhile.

Who defines what is worthwhile? The Professors, the rulers of the culture? Or should not children be welcomed into the culture precisely as independent judges of what is valuable on the principle, the more judges the better? Every child, as he grows up from babyhood, experiences the culture in different ways. Every child meets up with different members of society. Because the picture he builds up will

therefore be unique, it will be valuable to his society.



Peters seems to suggest that we know what is valuable and what isn't. The goals of society are fixed. The only question is: Are the children going to conform to society's values? But children can also grow up themselves to evaluate the values of the culture. For instance, they can criticise the viewpoint of those who talk about a fixed barrel of natural talent which "the nation" has to scrape.

They can occasionally have original ideas which show that the structures of academic knowledge aren't fixed by God. Maybe they aren't good at abstract word-knowledge. But words and theories aren't the only ways of experiencing, they aren't even necessarily the most worthwhile ways. The children's ways of working on the world and seeing the world are worthwhile too, without their being forced to do "worthwhile studies". Everyone including children, must define "worthwhile" together, not just a few Professors and Headmasters. The

values of the teacher aren't the only values.

Now, of course adults shouldn't pretend they haven't got values. They should live their values. If the values are "wrong" then they are "wrong"—they cannot be made "right" by deception. Criticism then becomes social and ethical criticism—again there is no specifically educational recommendation to be made, no grounds for hypocrisy in front of children, no grounds for an adult putting on a different self as he enters school every morning, no grounds for an adult to be a smiling door-mat forcing himself to feel kindly "liberal" or "progressive" thoughts when it would be far better for him to give in to his instinctive response and express his anger: "Piss off if you're not interested!"

Instead of forcing children to appreciate Shakespeare, the "staff" should put on a Shakespeare play. Not because they are teachers and are supposed to like Shakespeare but because they really do value Shakespeare and ENJOY playing Julius Caesar, say. If children notice a rehearsal taking place, if they slip in at the back and watch, that's fine. If they want to join in, then they can take part in the crowd scenes to begin with, and maybe find, later, they are being drawn into a discussion about Brutus' motives.

But if other children prefer to gravitate towards a wandering folksinger living his values, that's fine too. Or, if they prefer to join in a "staff" study and action group on say, ecology, and find themselves getting lead into politics, sociology, biology, etc., then that's fine too. Or if they prefer to hang around the harbour all day, messing about with boats, that's fine too.

If the children prefer Pop music to Beethoven then that's fine too. The parents and teachers won't "improve" the children's musical values by making them attend music lessons. But if, as the children are wandering along a corridor they hear a Beethoven quartet being played by two adults and two older kids, then maybe they'll creep in and listen. And see how much pleasure the players are deriving from Beethoven. If they still prefer "Sergeant Pepper" that's fine too. (Personally I like both)

The point here is not that there are no values, but that values can't be legislated or imposed without undergoing fundamental distortion. "Worthwhile activities" are only worthwhile if they are being carried out for their own sake. If the worthwhile activities are only taking place to teach children how worthwhile they are, the children won't be fooled and everyone's time will be wasted. Listen to Martin Buber in an essay called Character and Education:

Does it follow that one should keep silent about one's intention of educating character and act by ruse and subterfuge? No: I have just said that the difficulty lies deeper. It is not enough to see that education of characters is not introduced into a lesson in class; neither may one conceal it in cleverly arranged intervals. Education cannot tolerate such politic action. Even if, the pupil does not notice the hidden motive it will have its negative effect on the

actions of the teacher himself by depriving him of the directness which is his strength. Only in his whole being, in all his spontaneity can the educator truly affect the whole being of his pupil. For educating characters you do not need moral genius, but you do need a man who is wholly alive and able to communicate himself directly to his fellow beings. His aliveness streams out to them and affects them most strongly and purely when he has no thought of affecting them." (pp 133,134)

Authority hampers spontaneity, both for those in authority and for those under authority. Buber's educational ideals presuppose anarchic structures

Assumption Four:

The Anti-evolutionary assumption that Human Wants are Gratuitous and Unreliable.

Peters assumes that children's interests aren't in their interest, that what children need is likely to differ from what they will want.

Interest isn't just an accidental feeling that comes to a person for no reason at all. Man has evolved because when he needed food, he felt an interest in getting hold of some food. The food-interest serves a function. Animals are self-regulating organisms: that is to say, when deficiencies occur in animals' bodies, these needs make themselves felt in animals "minds" in the form of wants. There is internal feedback. Animals don't have to be told to eat—(external feedback.) If monkeys are placed in a room with different sorts of leaves and fruits, they won't just go for only carbohydrates or only proteins. They pick a balanced diet. If they are deprived of one

element (say vitamin B), they show an increased interest in leaves which give them Vitamin B once they are free to choose again.

This only applies to monkeys put in a natural environment for the species, e.g. where the right leaves are growing. Put in an artificial environment where only vitamin tubes are available, they obviously can't choose. (The intellectual fare of schools is both concentrated and artificial hence there appears to be a need for authority).

Psychologists such as Carl Rogers and Abraham Maslow have indicated that babies also seem to have a very definite value system. They are interested in FOOD, WARMTH and PROTECTION. And that is also what is in their interest. They need what they want and they want what they need. For

want of "objective" evidence—that eternal chimera—we should presume that human nature is viable. Babies are self-regulating.

Now of course, babies aren't self-regulating in the sense that they can fend for themselves. Self-regulation doesn't mean self-sufficiency. It means that the child can direct himself to meet his needs from the environment assuming a normal environment of adults whom evolution has provided with caring instincts. Libertarian Education doesn't mean abandoning children but caring for them, letting them want vis-à-vis you. Respecting the child's praxis as realistic does not mean letting the child tyrannize over you; nor does it mean leaving the child on a hillside or on a desert island.

But how does one explain suicide or people going

mad, or stagnating in their development? Surely one can't say people who want to commit suicide have a biological need for it? Many children and adults do seem to want what we think are inferior things. This is the common-sense basis for Peters' assumption that Human Nature is unviable, that people can't regulate themselves. Obviously, at some point in their development, children lose contact with their own feedback, so that they regulate themselves in less fully healthy ways. How do children lose contact with their own feedback? If they have promptings which connect needs with wants, how is this connection broken? Our answer is: by Authority.

Note: many sensible people believe that the concept of "human nature" is positively misleading. However, I feel it is not only useful but invaluable for any libertarian theory: for instance, Marcuse strays close to Totalitarianism for want of the concept: he accepts the ad-man's definition of the mass of men being infinitely manipulable and this leads him into the idea that the revolutionary elite of precious souls who have made The Great Refusal may have to manipulate people into Freedom, because they are incapable of wanting true freedom for themselves.

See "Growing Up Absurd", Introduction. Also an important article by Amitai Etzioni attempting to rehabilitate the concept of Human Nature from even a sociological point of view: recent issue of "Human Relations". 22, 4, pp 325-332.

authority splits wants from needs

bull-shit moralism)
When wisdom and intelligence appeared
They brought with them a hypocrisy.
The six relations were no more of peace
So codes were made to regulate our homes.
The fatherland grew dark, confused by strife:
Official loyalty became the style".

Instead of advocating "better teacher training" or some such cretinous alternative, Lao Tse, unlike Peters, saw the remedy:

"Get rid of the wise men!
Put out the professors!
Then people will profit
A Hundredfold over.
Away with the kind ones:
Those righteous men too!"

Let us consider several examples of how authority splits the subordinate from his own needs/wants.

- (a) Hunger
- (b) Exercise
- (c) Personality Growth
- (d) Sleep
- (e) Curiosity

Influence is outside feedback which the child can weigh against his own promptings. Authority is outside feedback which persistently overrides the inner feedback of the child and distorts the child's wanting. Authority substitutes false wants for the child's own wants tied to his actual needs. Not all outside feedback is harmful to internal feedback. Outside feedback from other children in playgroups leads to the growth of co-operation and respect for others. But authority feedback urging co-operating can only screw the child up. The result is that children get to lose contact with their own instinctive feedback and once the wants/needs connection is broken, the child loses his way and there appears to be a role for Authority to get him back on the way (Compare an expression of this idea in the Tao Te Ching:

Truly, once the Way is lost
There comes then virtue;
Virtue lost, comes then compassion

After that morality;
And when that's lost
there's etiquette,
The husk of all good faith,
The rising point of anarchy"

(trans. R.R. Blakeney- he means chaos in the last line)

On the social scale the Tao Te Ching describes the consequences of losing our Way:

"The mighty Way declined among the folk
And there came kindness and morality
(eg R.S. Peters "Respect for Persons" principle and all the rest of his

But the school wouldn't have had to insist on exercise if it hadn't alienated the child from his own promptings in the first place. Authority always makes work for itself. One compulsion seems to make another justified.

Two compulsions don't cancel each other out, however. When school is no longer there to force them, people lapse back into lethargy, even when their limbs are crying out to be used. Middle-aged victims or coronaries are the end products of Authority cutting the needs/wants connection in early years. They are literally out of their bodies.

c) Personality growth. People can also be driven out of their minds by the conflicting demands of authority. This is a main cause of mental illness (probably). Parents alienate their children from their own needs/wants feedback by giving instructions in words which contradict their own real feelings. The child can read his parents' feelings from non-verbal cues such as a gesture or tone of voice. Consequently, he is split in two-not knowing which set of instructions to follow, the verbal command or the non-verbal command. Such "double-bind" situations mean that the child is damned if he does and damned if he doesn't. If caught frequently in such situations, children learn to go by the verbal instructions. They also learn to ignore their own abilities to pick up non-verbal cues. Because their social perception is damaged they find interaction with other people difficult: for example, because they only go by words, they find it hard to know when someone is joking with them. They miss the non-verbal "I'm only joking" signals and react seriously-thus causing people to consider them "odd". Now some might say, "OK, this sounds feasible, but what has this got to do with Authority? Either parents are psychologically healthy or they are not. You can't wave a magic wand and decrease the number of parents who put their children in double-bind situations". But this is to ignore the structural factor of the Western family system. Being in a double-bind situation is highly unpleasant for the child. He needs/wants to escape. But he can't because in our society (a) parents own their children and (b) there would be nowhere for the child to go.

(c) he is financially dependant--family allowances being paid to his parents at present, not him.

We have seen how the most

important need for children is to be surrounded by plenty of warm, friendly adults. The small family offers the child two parents. If the parents are stifling the child or "double-binding" him, he can't escape: the small nuclear family is too child-centred if the parents are anything short of remarkably healthy. That is why one psychiatrist calls the nuclear family a gas-chamber.

Peters' chapter on Equality deals briefly with the family. Throughout the chapter he completely confuses equality with institutionalisation: according to Peters, the only alternative to the present nuclear family system is the spectre of long rows of bunks in huge dormitories staffed by impersonal State nurses. But what is the real alternative? Surely it is something like this: five, ten or twenty parents club together as members of a family of families. The children of any one family can circulate freely in the homes of all the other families. If one side of a child's personality is being sat on by his biological father, that repressed part will cry out for expression. This crying out for expression will take the form of an intense desire to escape. Simultaneously, it will also generate an intense admiration for that parent in the family of families who most complements the child's biological father, who would be most likely to allow the repressed side of the child's personality to unfold. If children were reared this way they would gravitate wherever the growth-needs of their personalities dictated.

In the first years of such a scheme, the adults would be no healthier psychologically than before. They would be just as liable to put their children in "double-binds". But because they would not be in the Parent-Role of exclusive control over their children, their individual children would be free to gravitate elsewhere, and the collective of children would grow up happier. (Of

course many children might want to stay with their biological parents. This would be fine since it would indicate that they didn't feel the need to move on, that their biological parents weren't stultifying or stifling them) However, as it is at present, "society highly values its normal men. It educates children to lose themselves and to become absurd, and thus to be normal" (R.D. Laing)

(d) Another "moral dilemma" for Peters might be children's desires to stay up late. But here again this dilemma can probably be traced to Authority. Children have their own Body-Time for sleep: it is called yawning, not x-o'clock "when Daddy says". To send a child to bed is to weaken his own promptings. But what if the child ignores yawn-time for some reason?

Maslow points out that some monkeys are better diet-choosers than other monkeys, and therefore healthier. But it does not follow from this that some humans (the good choosers) should decide for other humans (the bad specimens). How would "we" choose who the good choosers were? How would the good choosers know exactly the right moment to interfere with somebody else? Human development is far more complex than working out a good diet for monkeys.

Moreover, if the monkeys who were bad choosers had everything chosen for them they would gradually become worse and worse choosers. They would sense their own body feedback less and less accurately. There really would be no solution but to let the monkeys who were less good at choosing direct themselves as well.

Likewise with children. If a child ignores yawn-time he will be slowly heading for nervous collapse from lack of sleep. The experience of bodily exhaustion is not a pleasant one. When the child gets to be quite exhausted, it might be in order for the parent to say matter-of-factly- "Of course you know why you're so tired and bad tempered, don't you? It's because you aren't getting enough sleep. Doctors reckon people of your age should be getting ten hours a night and you've only been having six for the last week." Only if the children are heading for



serious or permanent damage to themselves should parents intervene with compulsion. However, if the theory of needs/wants connection is correct, such intervention would be unnecessary with nearly all self-regulated children. Where it was necessary, the lesson would presumably have been well and truly learned precisely because of letting the matter go so far.

Even pain has a function. It means-look out, danger! The child who has put his hand on a gas ring once is unlikely to do it again. Of course, if one saw the child was about to put his hand near it, it would be cruel not to warn him. But a warning isn't the same as compulsion.

Not all feedback is as prompt as pain. That does not mean it does not exist. The child who reverts to "bingo, billiards and eating bananas (Peters) may very well get bored with these activities and return spontaneously to activities which can be the vehicle of his own growth. When I was about eleven, I suddenly had a craze for dominos and ludo. If my mother had forced me to do something "worthwhile", like reading a book, I probably wouldn't be interested in anything much now. I would have remained fixated at a need for repetitive uncreative games. But after three months I got bored, and went on to some more creative pursuits.

Blake said: "The fool who persists in his folly will become wise." Most times children are "foolish" they will correct themselves, and so develop their judgement for the future. If a child touches his faeces it's because he needs to. Eventually it will get boring. Regression therapy is based on the idea that even if the patient doesn't know what's good for him, he still knows better than any outside Authority! Compulsion can only interfere with the person's process of getting in touch with himself again, with his own needs. The voice of Authority drowns out our own "still small voice."

The number of times adults can act to alert the child to his own feedback or to the consequences of acts in the world, are numerous. The number of times adults absolutely must override the child's own promptings are very limited.

(e) Finally we come to the most important part of feedback: curiosity. Telling children all the answers is the worst way to teach. Children are naturally curious, but their curiosity

is threatened wherever questions are used primarily to find out how much they know. Adults should never ask children questions unless the adults genuinely don't know the answer. Any other use of questions is PHONY and will sabotage the main motor of the child's intellectual development- curiosity, the child's ability to locate the gaps in his own understandings. Left to itself, this motor, which every child possesses, should be perfectly adequate for the rest of the child's life:

"The spontaneous wish to learn, as shown in its efforts to walk and talk, should be the driving force in education" (Bertrand Russell: On Education, p25)

"Man is by nature a learning animal: Birds fly, fish swim, men think and learn. Therefore we do not need to "motivate" children into learning, by wheedling, bribing or bullying. We do not need to keep picking away at their minds to make sure they are learning"....

"The learner, young or old, is the best judge of what he should learn next. In our struggle to make sense out of life, the things we most need to learn are the things we most want to learn. Curiosity is hardly ever idle. When we learn this way we learn both rapidly and permanently." (Holt)

Peters assumes that adults can know what children need. But as Holt says: "The human mind is a mystery. To a very large extent, it will probably always be so. We will never get very far in education until we realise this, and give up the delusion that we can know, measure and control what goes on in children's minds."

Unless one implicitly imagines a highly idealised picture of Authority, as does Peters, intervention is bound to be more or less inefficient. Hence the costs of Authoritarian intervention will be high for the children involved.

Even more serious is the damage compulsion in one sphere does to the children in the development of their overall personalities. Even if the boy who is forced to work becomes a brilliant scientist- which is highly doubtful- what are the

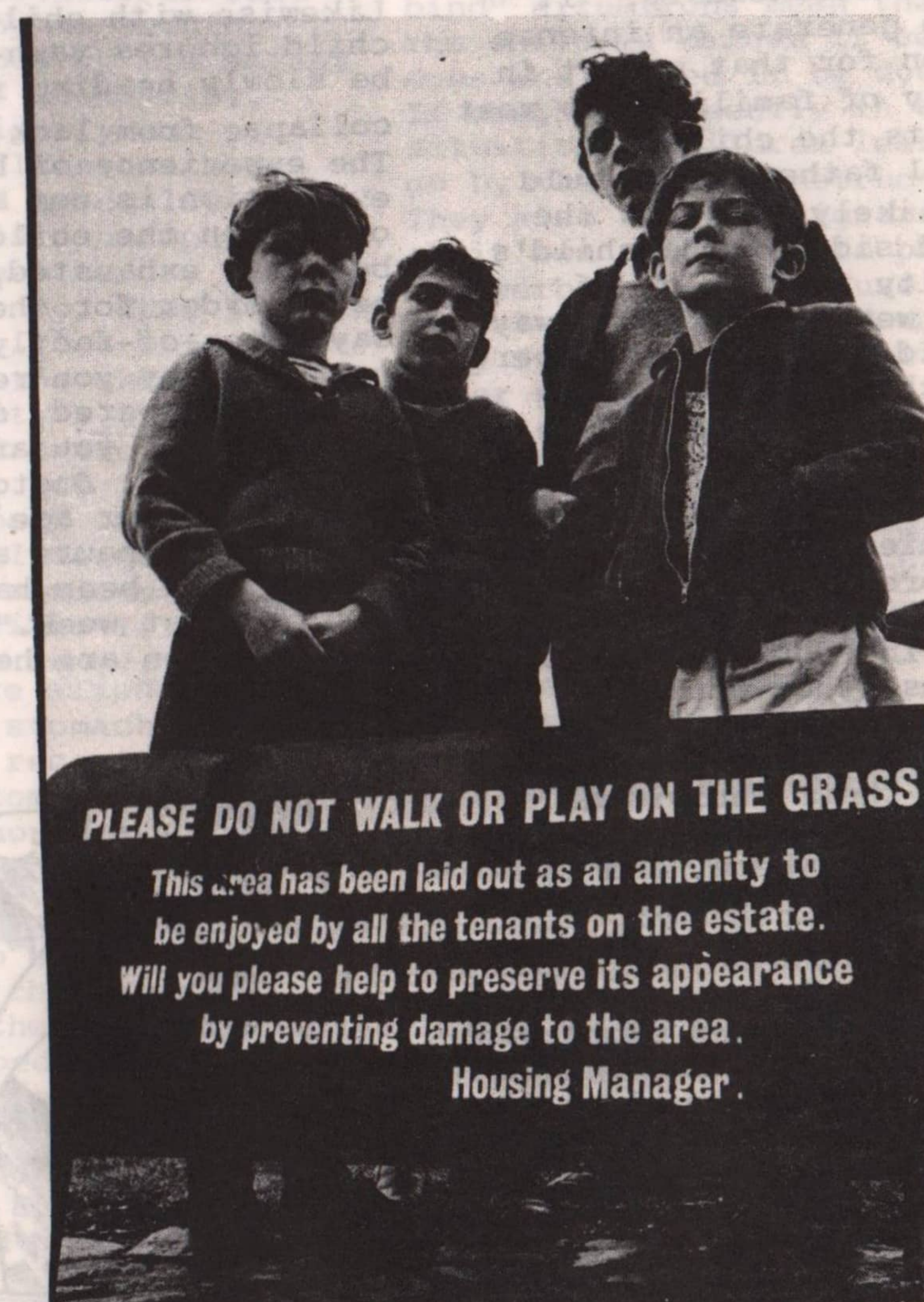
costs to his overall personality? Will he end up making Atom Bombs? "Long before a thermonuclear war can come about, we have had to lay waste our own sanity. We begin with the children. It is imperative to catch them in time: Without thorough and rapid brain-washing their dirty minds would see through our dirty tricks. Children are you. That is why freedom is the only alternative. Not that it is good in itself, but that compulsion destroys everything it sets out to achieve. Above all it destroys communion with another person: "It is not the educational intention but it is the meeting which is educationally fruitful." (Buber, p 135)

Instead of saying, with Peters, "the good teacher is a guide who helps others to dispense with his services" we can say: "the adequate teacher (adult) is a guide who does not force his services on others in the first place- but who offers them when asked." Instead of saying with Peters, "if children are properly educated they will become self-motivating", we can say: "If children are properly educated they will remain self-motivating"

Indeed the whole subject of "motivation" is a huge joke. The donkey is NOT a static animal- on its own it goes where it will. A carrot and stick are only needed when the donkey has some goddam fat-arsed Philosopher on its back. "Motivation" talk always presupposes unfreedom for the person to be motivated and evokes the animal training paradigm of education.

not yet fools, but we shall turn them into imbeciles like ourselves, with high I.Q.s if possible." (R.D. Laing, Politics of Experience, p49) Personalities develop most through open personal relationships based on trust: "When the pupil's confidence has been won, his resistance against being educated gives way to a singular happening: he accepts the educator as a person. He feels he may trust this man, that this man is not making a business out of him, but is taking part in his life, accepting him before desiring to influence him. And so he learns to ask." (Buber: Between Man and Man, p135).

You do not learn to ask someone who has just compelled you.



PLEASE DO NOT WALK OR PLAY ON THE GRASS

This area has been laid out as an amenity to be enjoyed by all the tenants on the estate. Will you please help to preserve its appearance by preventing damage to the area.

Housing Manager.

a note on self-regulation and circularity

I consider the best psychologists paint a picture of human nature similar to the one I have drawn, "social, rational, forward moving and positive" to use Rogers' words. I believe with Eric Fromm that "destructiveness is the outcome of un-lived life" and I see children as spontaneously out to live. But maybe "the best psychologists" are only those with whom I agree.

I have criticised Peters for attributing everything good to the fact that people have been initiated, and everything bad to allegedly removable faults in teaching or to allegedly immovable faults in "human nature". But may I not be doing the exact opposite? Attributing everything good to the untaught child, and everything bad to past control from adults? In which case my position would be circular: self-regulated children can regulate themselves: children who can't regulate themselves must have been regulated by adults earlier on.

There is no escape from this circularity for the libertarian. He may just point to birds flying without being taught, and fish learning to swim without being compelled, and other self-regulated animals. That is not to say that adult models aren't a help in e.g. learning to fly. The point is that the adult birds fly in any case and not just to show their young how to fly. Again the idea of "child-centredness" (or chick-centredness) is unnecessary: evolution is economical: what suits adults also suits the chicks)

The libertarian may also claim that it is up to Peters to say why he thinks that children need to be schooled if animals don't. (Peters' principle of no distinction without relevant grounds.)

But in the end the libertarian must just swallow circu-

larity and drop pretensions to conclusive scientific evidence. Choice is also involved. For me it is an article of faith that children should and can direct their own lives as soon as they want/need to- even if only to direct themselves back to ask for protection, or guidance, or instruction, or to be allowed to join in or watch.

However, there may well be a commonplace precedent for this sort of circularity. Rosenthal and Jacobsen recently tried to prove that children act as bright as they are expected to by their teachers. They administered a bogus test which they told the teachers was to identify "late-starters" in the class, whom the teachers could expect to spurt ahead in a few months. Several months later they returned and discovered that the pupils designated "late-starters" now scored better on tests than control pupils they had previously done the same as. Their evidence is not altogether satisfactory from a strictly scientific viewpoint, but their hypothesis has been suspected by many for a long time.

If it is true it means that adults influence children by the very ideas they form about them. It seems to me obvious that children who are expected to need Authority will on the whole come to be in need of it. Maybe we should change our ideas and see children as positive and independent and viable not just to bring our ideas into line with how children are, but also (partly) to bring how children will be into line with our new positive ideas.

When one plays the word game one is always involved in circularity and articles of faith: The Christians can't answer

"who made God?"; the thorough going agnostic can't answer "why is it right to doubt everything?" In educational theory too, it isn't so much a question of avoiding circularity- neither does Peters- but of choosing your circularity, and (partially)

constituting by your choice.

But in any case, prior to the theory is the relationship, the lived circularity of reciprocity. I love you love me love you love me.... Or I compel you submit I compel you submit I compel you submit. If Peters and the educational establishment he represents choose Authoritarian circularity, we choose libertarian circularity. But either way: "It is not the educational intention but it is the meeting which is educationally fruitful." The abolition of Authority structures is not a sufficient condition for educationally fruitful communion with another person. But it is a necessary condition. ("Sufficient conditions" and guarantees must always be illusory because they can never themselves be sufficiently guaranteed.)



part 2

(A) THE NEED FOR UTOPIAN THINKING

It is quite legitimate to ask revolutionaries what they would put in the place of the present system. Indeed, it is absolutely necessary. Revolutionaries who shy away from giving an answer are hiding the fact that they haven't imagined anything very positive at all. The defense that you can't impose a blueprint on the revolution is true. But it sounds ill from the mouths of those who advocate a Dictatorship of the Proletariat carried out by the "party of the proletariat" (their party), with a line or programme to put through at all costs that is binding on the whole of society, and with "socialist" policemen to punish those whom the central committee designate as "Enemies of the Revolution"!

A chief obstacle to children's learning to read is the present school setting in which they have to pick it up. For any learning to be skilful and lasting, it must be or become self-motivated, second nature; for this, the schooling is too impersonal, standardised and academic. If we tried to teach children to speak, by academic methods, in a school-like environment, many would fail and most would stutter.

Although the analogy between learning to speak and learning to read is not exact, it is instructive to pursue it, since speaking is much harder. Learning to speak is a stupendous intellectual achievement. It involves learning to use signs, acquiring a vocabulary, and also mastering an extraordinary kind of algebra-syntax with almost infinite variables in a large number of sentence forms. We do not know scientifically how infants learn to speak, but almost all succeed equally well, no matter what their class or

culture. Every child picks up a dialect, whether "correct" or "incorrect", that is adequate to express the thoughts and needs of his milieu.

We can describe some of the indispensable conditions for learning to speak.

1. The child is constantly exposed to speech related to interesting behaviour in which he often shares ("Now where's your coat?" "Now we're going to the supermarket", etc)
2. The speakers are persons important to the child, who often single him out to speak to him or about him.
3. The child plays with the sounds, freely imitates what he hears, and tries to approximate it without interference or correction. He is rewarded by attention and other useful results when he succeeds.
4. Later the child consolidates by his own act what he has learned. From age three to nine he acquires style, accent and fluency, by speaking with his peers, adopting their uniform but also asserting his own tone, rhythm and mannerisms. He speaks peer speech but is uniquely recognizable as speaking in his own way.

Suppose by contrast, that we tried to teach speaking academically in a school-like setting:

1. Speaking would be a curricular subject abstracted from the web of activity and reserved for special hours punctuated by bells.
2. It would be a tool subject rather than a way of being in the world.
3. It would not spring from the needs immediate situations but would be taught according to the teacher's idea of his future advantage, importantly aiming at his getting a job sixteen years later.
4. Therefore the child would

have to be "motivated", the exercises would have to be "fun", etc.

5. The lessons would be arranged in a graded series from simple to complex, for instance on a false theory that monosyllables precede polysyllables, or words precede, or sentences precede words.
6. The teacher's relation to the infant would be further depersonalised by the need to speak or listen to only what fits two dozen other children as well.
7. Being continually called on, corrected, tested and evaluated to meet a standard in a group, some children would become stutterers, others would devise a phoney system of apparently speaking in order to get by, although the speech meant nothing: others would balk at being processed and would purposely become "stupid".
8. Since there is a predetermined range of what can be spoken and how it must be spoken, everybody's speech would be pedantic and standard, without truth to the child's own experience or feeling.

It is possible and necessary to think long and hard and concretely about possible alternatives. Nobody says anybody should impose finished blueprints, but we ought to have blueprints of a sort to contribute into the pool of ideas during times of creative social ferment.

(B) GOODMAN

One of the most brilliant thinkers along these lines is Paul Goodman both concerning ideas on the wider society (see his "Communitas"), and on educational ideas in particular. I shall reprint a recent article published in the New York Review of Books, which is a real mine of the best writing on education - and much besides. This particular article was reprinted in "The Libert-

arian Teacher", No. 6. The article can be criticised on several side-accounts (e.g. trimming to the idea of compulsory assembly, assumption that it will be the housewife who will prepare lunch, etc.) However, taken as a whole, it is a marvellous example of realistic idealism, of constructive thinking.

Incidentally, although it deals with very special circumstances, poor New York kids under 10, I believe that broadly similar ideas would apply to higher levels of education in this country.

EVIDENCE TO THE BOROUGH PRESIDENT OF MANHATTAN'S ENQUIRY INTO THE TEACHING OF READING.

Turn now to teaching reading. These eight disastrous defects are not an unfair caricature of what we do. Reading is treated as abstract, irrelevant to actual needs, instrumental, extrinsically motivated, impersonal, pedantic, not expressive of truth or art. The teaching often produces awkwardness, faking or balking. Let me also make four further points specific to learning reading:

1. Most people who have learned to read and write fluently have done so on their own, with their own materials, whether library books, newspapers, comic books or street signs. They may have picked up the ABCs at school, but they acquired the skill, preserved what they had learnt on their own. This self-learning is an important point, since it is not at the mechanical level of the ABCs that reading retardation drastically occurs, but it in the subsequent years when the good readers are going it alone.

2. On neurological grounds, an emotionally normal child in middle-class urban and suburban surroundings, constantly exposed to written code, should spontaneously learn to read by age nine, just as he learned to speak by age two or three. (This is the conclusion of Walla Nauta of the National Institute of Mental Health) It is impossible for such a child NOT to pick up the code unless he is systematically interrupted and discouraged, for instance by trying to teach him.

But of course our problem has to do with children in the culture of poverty, which does not have the ordinary middle class need for literacy, and the premium put on it. Such children are not exposed to reading and writing in important relations with their parents and peers; the code does not constantly occur

in every kind of sequence of behaviour. Thus there is an essential need for the right kind of schooling, to point to the written words and read them aloud, in use.

3. Historically, in all modern countries, school methods of lessons, copying and textbooks have been used, apparently successfully, to teach children to read. But this evidence is deceptive. A high level and continuing competence were required of very few - e.g. in 1900 in the United States only 6% graduated from high school. Little effort was made with children of the working classes, and none at all with those from the culture of poverty. It is inherently unlikely that the same institutional procedures could apply with such a change of scale and population. Where a dramatic effort has been made to teach adults to read, as in Cuba, the method has been "each one, teach one", informally.

4. Also, with the present expansion of higher education, teachers of freshmen English uniformly complain that the majority of middle-class students cannot really read and write, though they have put on a performance that got them through high school. As John Holt has carefully described, their real life need was not reading or writing but getting by. (This is analogous to the large group among Puerto Rican children in New York who apparently speak English well, but who in fact cannot say anything that they need or mean, that is not really simply parroted.)

I trust that the aim of the Borough President's hearings is how to learn reading and writing as truth and art and not just to fake and get by. Further, since poor children do not have the continual incentives and subtle pressures of middle class life, it is much harder for them to learn even just to fake and get by. And even if they do get by, it will not pay off for them in the end, since they do not have money and connections. To make good, they must really be competent.

The question is, is it possible and feasible to teach reading somewhat in the way children learn to speak, by intrinsic interest, with personal attention, and relating to the whole environment of activity? Pedagogically it is possible and feasible. There are known methods and available teachers, and I will suggest an appropriate school setting. Economically it is feasible,

since methods, staff and setting do not cost more than \$850 per child that we now spend in the public schools. (This was demonstrated for two years by the First Street School on the Lower East Side, and it is in line with the budget of Eric Mann's new school for negro children in Newark which uses similar principles. (Politically, however, my present proposals are impossible and unfeasible, since it threatens both vested interests and popular prejudices, as will be evident).)

From ages six to eleven, I propose a system of tiny schools, radically decentralised. As one who, for 20 years, has urged democratic decentralisation in many fields, including the schools, I am of course interested in the Bundy recommendation to cut up the New York system into sixty fairly autonomous districts. This would restore some relevance of the culture (and the staff) of the school to the culture of the community. But however valuable politically, it is an administrative agreement; it does not get down to the actual pedagogical situation. And it is certainly not child-centred; both poor and middle class communities have their own ways of not paying attention to children, according to their own prejudices and distant expectations. By "tiny school", therefore, I here mean 28 children, with four teachers (one grown-up to seven children) and each tiny school to be largely administered by its own staff and parents, with considerable say for the children, as in Summerhill. The four teachers are: A teacher regularly licensed and salaried. Since the present average class size is 28 these are available; A graduate from the senior class of a New York college, perhaps just embarking on graduate study; salary \$2,000. There is no lack of candidates to do something useful and interesting in a free setting; A literate housewife and mother, who can also prepare lunch. Salary \$4,000. No lack of candidates; A literate, willing and intelligent high-school graduate. Salary \$2,000. No lack of candidates.

Such a staff can easily be racially and ethnically mixed. And it is also the case, as demonstrated by the First St. School, that in such a setting, with individual attention paid to the children, it is easy to get racially and ethnically mixed classes; there is less middle-class withdrawal when the parents

do not fear that their children will be swamped and retarded. (We have failed to achieve "integration" by trying to impose it from above, but it can be achieved from below, in schools entirely locally controlled, if we can show parents that it is for their children's best future).

For setting, the tiny school would occupy two, three or four rooms in existing school buildings, church basements, settlement houses otherwise empty during school hours, rooms set aside in housing projects, store fronts.

The setting is especially different since a major part of activity occurs outside the school place. The setting would be able to be transferred into a club-house, decorated and equipped according to the group's own decision. There might be one school in every street, but it is also advisable to locate many in racial and ethnic border areas, to increase intermixture. For purposes of assembly, health services and some games, ten tiny schools could use the present public school facilities...

The cost saving in such a setup is the almost total elimination of top-down administration and the kind of special services that are required precisely because of excessive size and rigidity. The chief uses of central administration would be licensing, funding, choos-

ing sites, and some inspection. There would be no principals and assistants, secretaries and assistants. Curriculum, texts, equipment would be determined as needed, and despite the present putative economies of scale, they would be cheaper; much less would be pointless or wasted. Record keeping would be at a minimum. There is no need for truant officers when the teacher-and-seven can call at the absentee's home and inquire. There is little need for remedial personnel since the staff and parents are always in contact, and whole enterprises can be regarded as remedial. Organisational studies of large top-down directed enterprises show that the total cost is invariably at least 300% above the cost of the immediate function, in this case the interaction of teachers and children. I would put this 300% into increasing the number of adults and diversifying the possibilities of instruction. Further, in the conditions of New York real estate, there is great advantage in ceasing to build four-million-dollar school buildings, and rather fitting tiny schools into available niches.

Pedagogically, this model is appropriate for natural learning of reading:-

1. It allows exposure to the activities of the city. A teacher-and-seven can spend half the time on the streets, visiting a business office, in a playground, at a museum, watching television, chatting with the corner druggist, riding the buses and subways, visiting poor and rich neighbourhoods, and, if possible, homes. All these experiences can be saturated with speaking, reading and writing. For instance, a group might choose to spend several weeks at the Museum of Natural History, and the problem would be to re-label the exhibits for their own level of comprehension.

2. It allows flexibility to approach each child according to his own style and interests, for instance in choice of reading matter. Given so many contexts, the teacher can easily strike while the iron is hot, whether reading the destination of a bus or the label on a can of soup. When some children catch on quickly and forge ahead on their own, the teacher need not waste their time and can concentrate on those who are more confused. The setting does not prejudice as to formal or informal techniques, phonics, Montessori, rote drill, Moore's typewriter, labelling the furniture, Herbert Kohl's creative writing or any other method.

3. For instance, as a writer

I like Sylvia Ashton-Warner's way of teaching little Maoris. Every day she tries to catch the most passionate concern of each child and to give him a card with that key word: usually these are words of fear, anger, hunger, loneliness or sexual desire. Soon a child has a large, ineradicable but very peculiar reading list, not at all like Dick and Jane. He then easily progresses to read and write anything. From the beginning, in this method, reading and writing are gut-meaningful, they convey truth and feeling. This method can be used in our tiny school.

The ragged administration by children, staff and parents is pedagogically a virtue, since this too, which is real, can be saturated with reading and writing, writing down the arguments, the rules, the penalties. Socially and politically, of course, it has the advantage of engaging parents and giving them power.

I am assuming that for the first five years, there is no merit in the standard school curriculum. For a small child, everything in the environment is educative, if he attends to it with guidance. Normal children can learn the first eight years' curriculum in four months anyway, at age 12.

Further, I see little merit, for teaching this age, in the usual teacher-training. Any literate and well-intentioned grown-up or late teen-ager knows enough to teach small children a lot. Teaching small children is a difficult art, but we do not know how to train the improvisational genius it requires, and the untrained seem to have it equally; compare one mother with another, or one big sister or brother with another. Since at this age one teaches the child not the subject, the relevant art is psychotherapy, and the most useful course for a teacher's college is probably group therapy. The chief criterion of selection is the one I have mentioned: liking to be attentive to children. Given this setting many young people would be introduced to teaching and would continue with it as a profession; whereas in the New York system the annual turnover approaches 20% after years of wasted training.

As I have said however, there are fatal political and administrative objections to this proposal. First, the Public School administration does not intend to go largely out of business. Given its mentality it must see any radical decentralisation as impossible to administer and

dangerous for everything must be controlled. Some child is bound to break a leg and the insurance companies will not cover; some teenager is bound to be indiscreet and the Daily News will explode in headlines.

The United Federation of teachers will find the proposal to be anathema because it devalues professional perquisites and floods the schools with the unlicensed. Being mainly broken to the public school harness most experienced teachers consider free and inventive teaching to be impossible.

Most fatally, poor parents who aspire for their children, tend to regard unrigidly structured education as downgrading, not taking the children seriously, and also as vaguely immoral. In the present Black Power temper of Harlem, also, the possible easy intermixing is not itself desired (Incidentally I am rather sympathetic to black separatism as a means of consolidating the power of black communities. But children, as Kant said, must be educated for the future better society which must not be separated).

In spite of these fatal objections I recommend that instead of building the next school building we try out this scheme with 1,200 children.

(from "The Libertarian Teacher" No.6, 1970)

(C) DIVERSITY

Elsewhere, in "Compulsory Mis-education", Goodman has stressed the need above all for diversity in paths of growing up.

"The argument of this book is that every child must be educated to the fullest extent, brought up to be useful to society and to fulfill his own best powers. In our society, this must be done largely at the public expense, as a community necessity. Certainly the Americans ought to spend more on it than they do, instead of squandering so much on piggish consumption, hardware, and highways. But it is simply a superstition, an official superstition and a mass superstition, that the way to educate the majority of the young is to pen them up in schools during their adolescence and early adulthood.

The hard task of education is to liberate and strengthen a youth's initiative, and at the same time to see to it that he knows what is necessary to cope with the on-going activities and culture of society, so that

his initiative can be relevant. It is absurd to think that this task can be accomplished by so much sitting in a box facing front, manipulating symbols at the direction of distant administrators. This is rather a way to regiment and brainwash.

At no other time or place in history have people believed that continuous schooling was the obvious means to prepare most youth for most careers, whether farmer, industrial worker, craftsman, nurse, architect, writer, engineer, lawyer, shopkeeper, party-boss, social worker, sailor secretary, fine artist, musician, parent or citizen. Many of these careers require a lot of study. Some of them need academic teaching. But it was never thought useful to give academic teaching in such massive and continuous doses as the only regimen.

The idea of everybody going to a secondary school and college has accompanied a recent stage of highly centralized corporate and state economy and policy. Universal higher schooling is not, as people think, simply a continuation of universal primary schooling in reading and democratic socialisation. It begins to orient to careers and it occurs after puberty, and jobs and sex are usually not best learned about in academies. The bother is however, that the long schooling is not only inept, it is psychologically, politically, and professionally damaging.

In my opinion there is no single institution, like the monolithic school-system programmed by a few graduate universities and the curriculum reformers of the National Science Foundation, that can prepare everybody for an open future of a great society.

Thus at present, facing a confusing future of automated technology, excessive urbanisation, and entirely new patterns of work and leisure, the best educational brains ought to be devoting themselves to devising various means of educating and paths of growing up, appropriate to various talents, conditions and careers. We should be experimenting with different kinds of schools, no school at all, the real city as school, farm schools, practical apprenticeships, guided travel, work camps, little theatres and local newspapers, community service. Many others, that other people can think of. Probably more than anything

we need a community, and community spirit, in which many adults who know something, and not only professional teachers, will pay attention to the young. Compared with these ideas, R.S. Peters begins to look a hack—a pure and simple hack. (Nobody minds him being a hack of course, or, what it really boils down to, I don't mind his having opinions which I, in my fallibility, think are misguided and unoriginal, etc. What I DO mind is when he lectures in a closed room, or when colleges of education get stropky with us for not having waded through such a boring book as "Ethics and Education")

(D) COMMUNITY PROBLEMS AS A NATURAL "CURRICULUM".

The next extract is also from the U.S. ghettos, but again I feel that it has a general relevance for this country, and not just for the so-called "problem areas" in this country.

"The experience of performance is necessary to learning. Only through doing things and evaluating what they have done can human beings learn the intrinsic relation between cause and effect, thereby developing the capacity to reason. If they are prevented from learning the intrinsic consequences of their own choices of ends and means and made totally dependent on such extrinsic effects as rewards and punishments, they are being robbed of their right to develop into reasoning human beings.... You cannot deprive young people of the rights of social responsibility, and social consciousness, and the ability to judge social issues during the many years they are supposed to attend school and then expect them suddenly to be able to exercise these essential rights when they become adult.

Our children are not learning because the present system is depriving them of such natural stimuli to learning as exercising their resourcefulness to solve the real problems of their own communities; working together rather than competitively, with younger children emulating older ones and older children teaching younger ones; experiencing the intrinsic consequences of their own actions; judging issues. It is because the present

system wastes these natural human incentives to learning that its demands on the taxpayer are constantly escalating. It is because those who have succeeded under the present system have ended up as such dehumanised beings- technicians and mandarins who are ready to provide so-called objective skills and information to those in power (Bichmanns)- that students are in revolt on secondary and college campuses.

We should now be in a better position to make more concrete the meaning of the proposal (mentioned earlier) to "redefine the function of education in order to make it responsive and accountable to the community!"

The Tories failed:

1. they failed to end the disgrace of oversized classes,
2. they failed to recruit enough teachers,
3. they failed to raise the school-leaving age,
4. they failed to end the 11-plus,
5. they failed to expand higher education,
6. they failed to consider the needs of those who left school at 15,
7. they failed to tackle the privileged private sector.

B. They failed to Abolish Schooling

3

Instead of schools serving to drain selected opportunities out of the community, they must be functionally reorganised to become centres of the community. This involves much, much more than the use of school facilities for community needs-although this should certainly be expanded. In order for the schools to become the centre of the community, the community itself with its needs and problems must become the curriculum of the schools.

More specifically, the educational programme or curriculum should not consist of subjects like English or Algebra or Geography. Instead the school must be structured into groups of young-

sters meeting in workshops and working as teams. These teams are then encouraged (1) to identify the needs or problems of the community; (2) to choose a certain need or problem as a focus of activity; (3) to plan a programme for its solution; (4) to carry out the steps involved in the plan.

In the course of carrying out such a curriculum, students naturally and normally, as a part of the actual process, acquire a number of skills. For example, they must be able to do research (observe, report, pinpoint- all related to the social and physical geography of the community); set goals or objectives; plot steps towards the achievement of these goals; carry out these steps; evaluate or measure their progress towards their goals.

Through such a curriculum, research becomes a means of building the community rather than what it is at present, a means by which the Establishment prepares counter-insurgency or pacification programmes against the community. Through the solution of real community problems, students discover the importance not only of skills and information but also of the ideas and principles that must guide them in setting and pursuing goals. In the struggle to transform their physical and social environment, they discover that their enemies are not only external but internal, within the community and within their own selves. Thus the weaknesses or needs of the community become assets in the learning process rather than the handicap or drawback which they are presently conceived to be.

With the community, and, at times, the entire city as a learning laboratory, students are no longer confined to the classroom. The classroom is an adjunct to the community rather than the reverse. Students have an opportunity to exercise responsibility by identifying problems and by proposing and testing solutions, with the teachers acting as advisers, consultants and instructors in specific skills. Students from various teen-age groups can work in teams on the various projects, with each contributing according to his abilities at the various stages, younger students learning from older ones, and those with the capacity for leadership having an opportunity for exercising it.

One of the most important community needs, and one which naturally suggests learning activities, is the need for community information which can be met by student-produced newspapers, magazines, TV news and documentary programmes, films, etc.

No one should confuse this curriculum with a curriculum for vocational education- either in the old sense of preparing young blacks for menial tasks or in the up-to-date form in which the Michigan Bell Telephone Co and Chrysler adopt high schools in the black community in order to channel black youth into low-level jobs. The only possible resemblance between these proposals and vocational education is the insistence on the opportunity for productive life-experiences as essential to the learning process. Otherwise what is proposed is the very opposite of vocational education. It is indeed education or preparation for the tasks of governing. [over themselves and administering over things- K.F.P.]

On the question of "child labour" it should be emphasised that what we are proposing is not "labour" at all. Labour is activity which is done for wages under the control of persons or organisations exploiting this labour for profit. What we are talking about is work which the young people choose to do for the purpose of improving the community and under their own direction.

However, the clash is unavoidable. Because labour has been the only means for survival and advancement in this society, and because increasing automation and cybernation have cut down jobs, any kind of productive activity has now become a privilege monopolised by adults and increasingly denied to youth. The whole process is now reaching absurd proportions: older people doing jobs that could be more safely and easily done by youth, while youth are supposed to stay in school, expending their energies in play, postponing the responsibilities of work and adult life, on the promise that longer schooling will make them capable of better jobs. Meanwhile the skills they are acquiring become obsolete. The whole procedure is based on the false assumption that education is only for the young- and that it must be completed before you start to work and live. Actually the time is coming when society will have to

recognise that education must be a life-long process for old and young. In the end a rational society will have to combine work and study for all ages and for people in every type of activity, from manual to intellectual.

Rallying to the support of all these vested interests we can expect the intellectuals, social scientists, physical scientists, claiming that by such programmes society will be drying up the supply of experts, intellectuals, scientists, etc. The charge is absurd. Such programmes will increase the supply because it will stimulate the desire for learning in great numbers of youth who in the past were turned off from learning."

(Monthly Review, Sept. '70)

(E) END EDUCATIONAL DISCRIMINATION !

Further excellent proposals have been made by Ivan Illich: Illich compares education in the present century with Religion in the Middle Ages. Just as he is opposed to employees being discriminated against according to religious background, so he proposes that we should object to discrimination according to schooling background.

"Two centuries ago the U.S. led the world in a movement to disestablish the monopoly of a single church. Now we need the constitutional disestablishment of the monopoly of the school; and thereby of a system which legally combines prejudice with discrimination."

This would not of course prevent employers from giving job-applicants aptitude tests worked out specifically for the job concerned. All it would do would be to break the connection between education and the social-control-process of acquiring diplomas, the distribution of which is monopolised by the Powers - That - Be.

"To make this disestablishment effective, we need a law forbidding discrimination in hiring, voting, or admission to centres of learning based on previous attendance at some curriculum. This guarantee would not exclude performance tests of competence for a function or role, but would remove the present absurd discrimination in favour of the person who learns a given skill with the largest expenditure of public funds, or- what is equally likely- has been able to obtain a diploma which has no relation to any useful skill or job. Only by protecting the citizen from being disqualified by anything in his career in school can a constitutional disestablishment of school become psychologically effective."

Apart from his hang up to do with laws to protect 'the citizen' (poor

little chap), Illich has put his finger on an absolutely crucial area. It is the exact equivalent of the Abolition of Money in the Economic World. Suddenly the Banks and Millionaires (and the penny-pinching misers and the 'self-made man') are all reduced to nothing: custodians of laughable bits of paper 'backed' by even more laughable yellow stuff called gold. To abolish diplomas would cause the gravest apoplexy to all those who have 'got their degrees' (which is why Illich can't be serious when he proposes to the Hypereducated that they themselves take the ground out from under their own feet). But in terms of real wealth (their understanding), they would not be a jot the poorer after expropriation. Indeed, they might feel a profound sense of liberation and a general freeing of their self-educational style.

(F) EDUCATIONAL CREDITS PAID TO THE LEARNER.

Illich also proposes a system of financial credits for education, paid directly to the learner. The aim would be "the return of initiative and accountability for learning to the learner or his most immediate tutor." Although the idea of educational credits has traditionally been associated with reactionary free-market economists wanting to boost the public schools, conceived as part of an overall programme, Illich's idea would undoubtedly be of the very greatest value.

At present schools pre-empt most educational funds. Drill instruction which costs less than comparable schooling is now a privilege of those rich enough to by-pass the schools, and those whom either the army or big business sends through in-service training. In a programme of progressive deschooling of US education, at first the resources available for drill training would be limited. But ultimately there should be no obstacle for anyone at any time of his life to be able to choose instruction among hundreds of definable skills at public expense.

Right now educational credit good at any skill centre could be provided in limited amounts for people of all ages, and not just the poor. I envisage such credit in the form of an educational passport or an "edu-credit-card" provided to each citizen at birth. In order to favour the poor who probably would not use their yearly grants early in life, a provision could be made that interest accrues to later users of cumulated "entitlements". Such credits would per-

mit most people to acquire the skills most in demand in their convenience, better, faster, cheaper and with fewer undesirable side effects than in school.

Most of the skills which are in demand and which require human teachers have already been acquired by a great many of the people who use them. They are now discouraged from sharing them with others by teachers who monopolise the license and by unions who protect the trade interest. Skill centres which would be judged by customers on their results, and not on the personnel they employ or the process they use, would open unsuspected working opportunities, frequently even for those who are now considered unemployable. Indeed, there is no reason why such skill centres should not be at the work place itself, with the employer and his work force supplying instruction as well as jobs to those who choose to use their educational credits in this way.

(G) SKILL MATCHING

How might such educational credits be utilised outside of special "educational" institutions? As regards the learning of skills, Illich proposes the idea of matching learner with teacher, wherever there is high motivation to learn/teach. As an example of how drills and skills may be imparted if the matching is right, Illich describes a crash programme in spoken Spanish:

In 1956 there arose a need to teach Spanish quickly to several hundred teachers, social workers and ministers from the New York Archdiocese so that they could communicate with Puerto Ricans. My friend Gerry Morris announced over a Spanish radio station that he needed native speakers from Harlem. Next day 200 teen-agers lined up in front of his office. and he selected four dozen of them- many of them school dropouts. He trained them in the use of the US Foreign Service Institute (FSI) Spanish manual, designed for use by linguists with graduate training, and within a week his teachers were on their own each in charge of four New Yorkers who wanted to speak the language. Within six months the mission was accomplished. Cardinal Spellman could claim that he had 127 parishes in which at least three staff members could communicate in Spanish.

No school programme could have matched these results.

Skill teachers are made scarce by the belief in the value of

licenses. Certification constitutes a form of market manipulation and is plausible only to a schooled mind. Most teachers of arts and trades are less skillful, less inventive and less communicative than the best craftsmen and tradesmen. Most high-school teachers of Spanish or French do not speak the language as correctly as their pupils could after half a year of competent drills. Experiments conducted by Angel Quintero in Puerto Rico suggest that many young teenagers, if they are given the proper incentives, programmes and access to tools, are better than most school teachers at introducing their peers to the scientific exploration of plants, stars and matter, and to the discovery of how and why a motor or radio functions.

Opportunities for skill-learning can be vastly multiplied if we open the "market". This depends on matching the right teacher with the right student when he is highly motivated in an intelligent programme, without the constraint of curriculum.

Free and competing drill instruction is a subversive blasphemy to the orthodox educator. It dissociates the acquisition of skills from "humane" education, which schools package together and thus it promotes unlicensed learning no less than unlicensed teaching for unpredictable purposes. (H) EDUCATIONAL MATCHING

Turning away from the inculcation of skills, Illich observes that:

"Schools are even less efficient in the arrangement of the circumstances which encourage learning for learning's sake, for which I will reserve the term "education". The main reason for this is that school is obligatory and becomes schooling for schooling's sake: an enforced stay in the company of teachers, which pays off in the doubtful privilege of more such company. Just as skill instruction must be freed from curricular restraints, so must liberal education be dissociated from obligatory attendance. Both skill learning and education can be aided by institutional arrangement but they are of a different, frequently opposed nature."

An institutional arrangement that Illich advocates to facilitate education is again a form of matchmaking, but unlike training, not a matchmaking between teacher and learner but a matchmaking between learners;

The educational instructor is concerned with helping matching partners to meet so that learning can take place. He matches individuals starting from their own, unresolved questions. At the most he helps the pupil to formulate his puzzlement since only a clear statement will give him the power to find his match, moved like him, at the moment, to explore the same issue in the same context.

Matching partners for educational purposes initially seems more difficult to imagine than finding skill instructors and partners for a game. One reason is the deep fear which makes us censorious. The unlicensed exchange of skills- even undesirable skills- is more predictable and therefore seems less dangerous than the unlimited opportunity for meeting among people who share an issue which for them, at the moment, is socially, intellectually and emotionally important.

Let me give, as an example of what I mean, a description of how an intellectual match might work in New York City. Each man, at any given moment and at a minimum price, could identify himself to a computer with his address and telephone number, indicating the book, article, film or record on which he seeks a partner for discussion. Within days he could receive by mail the list of others who recently had taken the same initiative. This list would then enable him by telephone to arrange a meeting with persons who initially would be known exclusively by the fact that they request a dialogue about the same subject.

Matching people according to their interest in a particular title is radically simple. It permits identification only on the basis of a mutual desire to discuss a statement recorded by a third person and it leaves the initiative of arranging the meeting to the individual.

Illich then discusses three objections to this proposal: The first objection is: Why cannot self-identification be based also on an idea or an issue? Certainly such subjective terms could also be used in a computer system. Political parties, churches, unions, clubs, neighbourhoods and professional societies already organize their educational activities in this way and in effect they act as schools. They all match people in order to explore certain "themes"; and these are dealt with in courses, seminars,

and curricula in which presumed "common interests" are prepackaged. Such theme-matching is by definition teacher-centred: it requires an authoritarian presence to define for the participants the starting point of their discussion.

By contrast, matching the title of a book, film, etc., in its pure form leaves it to the author to define the special language, the terms and the framework within which a given problem or fact is stated: and it enables those who accept this starting point to identify themselves to one another.

The second objection asks: Why not let the identification of match seekers include information on age, background, world view, competence, experience, or other defining characteristics? Again there is no reason why such discriminatory restrictions could not and should not be built into some of the many universities- with or without walls- which use title-matching as their basic organizational device.

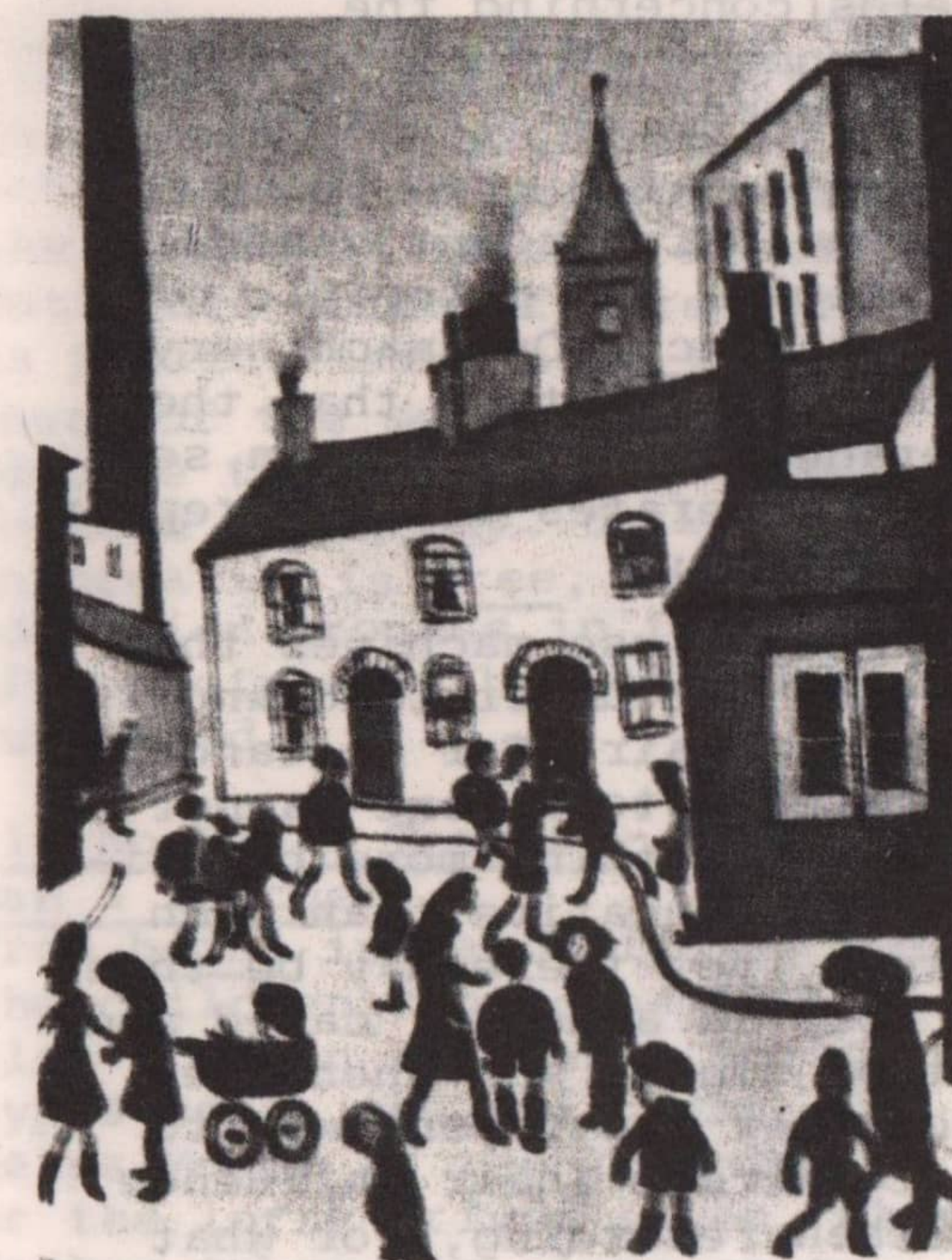
But I fear that, more often than not, the real reason for proposing such restrictions is contempt arising from the presumption that people are ignorant: educators want to avoid the ignorant meeting the ignorant around a text which they may not understand and which they read only because they are interested in it.

The third objection: Why not provide match seekers with incidental assistance that will facilitate their meetings- with space, schedules, screening, and protection? This is now done by schools with all the inefficiency characterizing large bureaucracies. If we left the initiative for meetings with the match seekers themselves, organi-

Mass walkout

At Samuel Pepys comprehensive school, Brockley, London, 70 sixth-form boys walked out of morning assembly and put a list of grievances to the headmaster, Mr. Stuart Jervis.

They said they wanted more respect from senior housemasters when they went into assembly; teachers to knock on their common-room door before entering; less cheek from junior boys; more opportunity to consult the headmaster; and restoration of the right to visit a local tuckshop to buy sweets and buns.



sations which nobody now classifies as educational would probably do the job much better. I think of restaurant owners, publishers, telephone answering services, department store managers, and even commuter train executives who could promote their services by rendering them attractive for educational meetings.

At a first meeting in a drug-store, say, the partners might establish their identity by placing the book under discussion next to their cup. People who take the initiative to arrange for such meetings would soon learn what items to quote to meet the people they seek. The risk that self-chosen discussion with one or several strangers leads to a loss of time, disappointment, or even unpleasantness is certainly smaller than the same risk taken by a college applicant. A computer-arranged meeting to discuss an article in a national magazine, held in a corner drugstore on Fourth Avenue, would obligate none of the participants to stay in the company of his new acquaintances for longer than it takes to drink a cup of coffee, nor would he have to meet any of them ever again. The chance that it would help to pierce the opaqueness of life in a modern city, and further new friendships, self-chosen work, and critical reading, is high."

(I) NEIGHBOURHOOD AND COMMUNITY CENTRES

I have suggested that the idea of the teacher needs to be dropped completely. What about the idea of the "school"?

Although I have used the word for simplicity so far, it is now necessary to substitute it with the concept of the community centre (or several centres of community). The Peckham Centre (see section 10

can perhaps serve as our model. As part of their overall recognised functions such centres would by definition also be open to the children in the community and hence they could be designed partly with them in mind.

The general idea would be a FREE ACCESS ENVIRONMENT in which FREE ASSOCIATION was possible (access to people).

All the equipment of schools would be present: gymnastic, dramatic, artistic, scientific and technological, toys, models, libraries, teaching machines with non-Skinnerian programmes, computerised information retrieval systems (built up by the young people themselves), closed circuit TV.s, ---everything except the cane in the Headmaster's room! (Actually, his room wouldn't exist either since, if there was any "Head" at all, he would have no special privileges and only general co-ordinating role, which would in any case be rotated at regular intervals.) Especially important would be informal, junky, pokey, magical places both indoors and outdoors, which the kids could make into dens; areas where they could be as noisy and as boisterous as they liked without provoking thumpings on the thin partitions from next door; and places where people could be intimate, open to all ages. (Contraception would also be available so that children could grow up without fear of their sexuality.)

Factories in the area, whose workers were also members of the community centres, could supply interesting, surplus, or waste materials (B.G. : polyester foam, bits of electronic junk, rolls of paper, old machines, coloured glass, rope, wires, nails, timber, etc.) The These would either be supplied to the community centre (directly, not through a pyramid of bureaucrats); or they would be available on request by children free to wander round or scavenge in factory yards and ware-houses, council tips, etc; or play/construction sites and spaces would be set aside in the work-places themselves.

Here is a description of a free access environment by the Peckham scientists. Incidentally, it conflicts point blank with Peters' notion that forcing a child to do experiments may turn him into a great scientist (p38)

"Our failures during our first eighteen month's work have taught us something very significant. Individuals from infants to old people, resent or fail to show any interest in anything presented to them through disci-

pline, regulation or instruction, which is another aspect of authority.

"We now proceed by merely providing an environment rich in instruments for action- that is giving a chance to do things. Slowly but surely these chances are seized upon and used as opportunity for development of inherent capacity. The instruments of action have one common characteristic- they must speak for themselves. The voice of the salesman or the teacher frightens the potential users. How does this fact reflect on organisation and the experimental observation on this material?

"Having provided the members with a chance to do things, we find that we have to leave them to make their own use of them. We have had to learn to sit back and wait for these activities to emerge. Any impatience on our part, translated into help, has strangled their efforts- we have had to cultivate more and more patience in ourselves. The alternative to this cultivation of patience is obvious- the application of compulsion in one or other of its many forms, perhaps the most tempting of which is persuasion. But having a fundamental interest in the source and origin of spontaneous action- as all biologists have- we have had to discard even that instrument for initiating activities." (Quoted in Anarchy, 60)

(j) A SAFE MANIPULABLE ENVIRONMENT

In addition to the free access idea, the environment should be highly manipulable so that the children can learn that they are in charge. Bits of old wood and cardboard, pots of paint, screens, and a wide range of the more sophisticated materials of modern architecture should be available to the children; while the basic design of the building would be capable of many varied adaptations and rearrangements.

At present architects and other so-called "experts" are often amazed when kids get bored with the specially provided concrete play-areas and prefer to play on old bomb-sites and junk yards. The reason is that kids need/like plenty of UNMAKE in their environment, rather than to have everything laid on ready made and capable of only the one boring use.

A fairly high degree of wear and tear would be allowed for by the community as an indispensable part of the costs of building up free children

(although vandalism would probably not occur). In the same way homes and other public buildings would all be constructed in such a way that children wouldn't have to be repressed, prevented from exploring their environment for their own safety. (eg. a "rampage-able" section would be allowed for automatically when building channel ferry boats; ordinary houses should have electric sockets off the floor, etc.) Provision for exploration might cost extra in money terms, but it would be considered a basic principle of a home, on a par with provision for warmth and privacy. The human costs of constantly having to pen baby in lest he burn/electrocute himself/fall out of the window/be knocked over in the street, etc etc would be recognised as being immeasurably greater than the cost of building an explorable world for the small child.

But education would not arily happen in the community cultural centre. It would take place in the whole community itself. One such way would be the education of being on the streets. (see Jane Jacobs book in bibliography) This means designing livable communities where people would be "looking out for" each other's children as they went about their normal business, gossiping, etc. Such communities where the streets are safe informal child-rearing places are mostly being destroyed as "slums" by town planners and welfare bureaucrats. I'm living in one right now.

(k) OPEN INSTITUTIONS

The principle of free access would have to be extended to all the institutions of society. This does not just mean the phony openness of guided tours round factories. It means being able to wander round them at leisure and befriend workers who would have time to show youngsters what they were about. Time spent in this way would be considered part of the job of being a worker. The education function would be tied, in with all our institutions. It would be recognised that the factories make people before they make things.

FREE INFORMATION AND TRANSPARENCY OF OPERATION

But even more radical changes would be necessary. Just as it would be recognised that stopping people's physical explorations was unhealthy, so to dampen people's intellectual curiosity would be considered to lead to stupidity and passivity. The child would naturally tend to ask questions about the origin and destin-

ation of the work, the organisation of the overall work-process, leading out to curiosity about the regional and national division of labour, etc. In other words children should have access not just to the shop floors, but to the offices and the office files.

The present top-down organisation of factories means that those at the bottom can rarely see the overall point of their work, its context and human meaning. To make factories, offices, hospitals, etc. open to children, it is first necessary to open them to the workers themselves in these institutions. This means that industry would just have to be socialized. (I do not say nationalized- State-ized) Under workers' self-management with workers producing useful goods and services directly for identifiable communities, industry would begin to make sense again to the workers.

At present, the workings of the State and Capitalist Industry mean that for most of the time people are prevented from taking an intelligent interest in their own environment. This is one of the main contradictions of bureaucratic society: large organisations have to have a minimal level of participation to keep functioning, yet everywhere tend to alienate autonomous initiatives. eg "Nurse, why didn't you use a bit of initiative, you're not a child now girl!" Next day: "And who told you to do that, Nurse X, you're not Matron yet you know." Too much and too little interest are both dangerous. (see Cardan: Modern Capitalism and Revolution: Solidarity Book, 5s. from 53a Westmorland Road, Bromley, Kent)

Children learn to take an intelligent interest in their environment not by set-piece lectures from factory managers about the National Interest and how trouble-makers are disrupting "our" Export Drive. They learn by mixing freely among people who themselves take an intelligent interest in their environment-who have to, because they control it. Children would learn more about Democracy from hearing a delegate committee submit controversial production plans to a factory assembly, than from a hundred books about Parliament in the school library. Moreover, once children had developed the consciousness of taking an intelligent interest in their immediate environment, they would have a solid motivation to carry them into more theoretical

fields (concerning the environment of their immediate environment, as it were)

Connected with this is an extremely important general principle- the principle of transparency. Our machinery should be built so that the average man or woman can see how it operates and can repair it himself:

"People use machines that they do not understand and cannot repair. For instance, electric motors: one cannot imagine anything more beautiful and educative than such motors, yet there may be three or four in a house, cased and out of sight; and when they blow they are taken away to be repaired. Their influence is then retarding, for what the child sees is that competence does not exist in ordinary people, but in the system of interlocking specialities. This is unavailable to the child, it is too abstract." (Paul Goodman, p 78, Growing Up Absurd)

This important principle also applies to the social relations in the wider society-for this reason libertarians should be concerned with creating a human scale society in which the normal child can grow up to understand the workings of that society. But even if we must have decisions made about us in London or New York, then let that decision making process be open: let the TV cameras cover the actual strike negotiations and cabinet discussions for instance, instead of making us dependent on selective leakages to pressmen standing in the rain outside.

Similarly a libertarian should oppose every curtailment of information such as secret brand formulas and classified research. Indeed the scientific

Need for action over 'truants' stressed

venture is fundamentally a co-operative open sharing in the interests of mutual education and scientists involved in secret research are acting against the spirit of science itself. Until all scientific research is public, talk about the "duty of the scientist to educate the public" is mainly so much hypocrisy. Until information is free, the self-education process in the whole of society will be seriously curtailed.

(1) No Man a Teacher - Every Man a Teacher

From being in, and finding out, the children should be free also to join in. Rough prototypes here: the child who helps Mummy in the kitchen; or the lorry driver's son whose father takes him along on a long distance trip; or the ten year old who gets a game of football with the big boys; or D.H. Lawrence helping his father roll fuses for down the pit; or the farmer's son driving the tractor when the regular driver is ill; Belfast kids helping their mums to fill molotov cocktails; gypsy kids who can recognise all the various types of metals by the time they are six.

In the Neighbourhood and Community centres, adults would come chiefly for their own purposes: the children would be around (some of them) and if it looked interesting would stay to watch; if they stayed to watch they might eventually ask to be allowed to join in. At this point adults would obviously be free to say no, but most healthy adults don't mind having kids around when they themselves are satisfied. (It is mainly when the adult must totally centre round the child and his play that many adults find children boring) Once the "burden" of education was spread, generally speaking it would be found not to be a burden at all. Free children would be very much more attractive to be with, since they would not have been either clever-clevered or loutified by class education. Tenderness would spill out of the home.

In this way learning would take place, but there would be no teachers. The nearest that people would get to the teaching role would be the role of skill instructor.

Classes in the three R's and other skills and subjects would take place very much on the model of driving lessons or adult educational classes (including the voluntary aspects of the model).

Formal instruction and even old fashioned "drills" (which still have their place in a

voluntarily chosen programme as Illich argues) would still be necessary therefore, and some people might be expected to develop more talents in this direction than others. These people would spend more of their time with the children than the other adults did. But their relationship with the children would not be one of Monopoly Control: if the children found learning First Aid with Mrs. X was horrid, they would be free to try and make their own arrangements, ask Y's mother to show them. And if Y's mother did show them she would have no fear of state persecution for unlicensed instruction. Here is Illich making a point which is absolutely crucial:

BOTH THE EXCHANGE OF SKILLS AND THE MATCHING OF PARTNERS ARE BASED ON THE ASSUMPTION THAT EDUCATION FOR ALL MEANS EDUCATION BY ALL. NOT THE DRAFT INTO A SPECIALISED INSTITUTION BUT ONLY THE MOBILISATION OF THE WHOLE POPULATION CAN LEAD TO POPULAR CULTURE. THE EQUAL RIGHT FOR EACH MAN TO EXERCISE HIS COMPETENCE TO LEARN AND TO INSTRUCT IS NOW PRE-EMPTED BY CERTIFIED TEACHERS.

The teachers' competence, in turn, is restricted to what may be in school. And, further, work and leisure are alienated from each other as a result: the spectator and the worker alike are supposed to arrive at the work place all ready to fit into a routine prepared for them.

(2) Time To Spare in a Good Society

In times of "teacher shortage" it seems absurd to call for the abolition of the Teacher altogether. Aren't most people far too busy to have time to share with "hangers-on"? We have seen how much (though not all) of what we have proposed requires steps towards the socialisation of industry under workers self-management; the freeing of information; and the development of community self-government.

Before we seek to tie it all down to earth again, there seems to be no harm in adding one more "utopian" condition: adults with time to spare.

This condition presupposes the progressive abolition of waste and all useless surplus work. The concept of surplus has been dealt with best by the American economists Baran and Sweezy, in their book: "Monopoly Capital", and also by Baran alone in "The Political Economy of Growth" (see also Anarchy 118). [Paul Goodman has also emphasised the importance of understanding Surplus, although from a different tack.

Goodman wants us to consider not only the effects of Surplus Commodities (and Arms) but also of the innumerable superfluous jobs have on people. Because useful work worthy of a man is so lacking, young people have to grow up with the realisation: "during my productive years I will spend eight hours a day doing what is no good." Hence the title: "Growing up Absurd."

The general idea goes like this: the feudal lord had retainers to enhance his power and the retainers had fine clothes to enhance his prestige. From his point of view the work of the retainers and the work of making their uniforms was "socially necessary labour." In fact it was only necessary to maintaining his authority, and not to maintaining society.

Likewise in our society there are many jobs which appear to be socially necessary, but which are actually a waste of time from the standpoint of a rational society. For instance the advertiser battles away to persuade you to buy Brand X, while his competitor- or even another adman in the same agency- battles away to sell you Brand Y, probably equally trashy in every respect but packaged differently. From the standpoint of the profits of the separate private firms (X and Y) this is "socially necessary". In fact this work doesn't add a bit of real wealth to society.

The Social Security clerk and the insurance salesman both exist because people are scared of scarcity. But scarcity could be made obsolete if science and technology were not wasted in destructive directions (such as arms) or spectacular gimmickry (such as the Space Race). If technology

were developed to its full extent for human priorities it would put the capitalists out of business, since their priorities are profit. Just consider the fantastic productivity of industry if it worked at full capacity making useful things for people, under a system of workers' self-management. Many boring jobs could be automated, both manual and clerical. But many more could be entirely abolished! Service jobs such as ticket collectors would become laughable in an economy of abundance. (In Paris it costs more to collect the fares than to run the underground itself!) The list of potentially useless jobs is endless: stockbrokers; securicorps; tax lawyers and other legal fiddlers; real estate agents; bankers.- None

of these jobs would be needed in a society where there was no priority given to making profits or maintaining Authority. Where, in fact, Bosses of every kind were seen as so many parasites.

All very nice, you say, but what has this got to do with education? Everything. More and more people would have more and more time in which to "do their thing". The basic ingredient to any education would be fulfilled-WARM AND FRIENDLY ADULTS WITH TIME TO LIVE. Even more than when at work- albeit for only 20 hours a week, say, and in a leisurely creative atmosphere, people would have the leisure, to develop their interests and their capacities, and in turn pass on what they have learned. When we are doing things only in order to live we are dead and closed and uncreative. If everyone including children were guaranteed a material living, there would be nothing for it but to live. The less we had to work towards some extraneous goal and the more we lived for our own purposes in the present the more we would learn.

But even work would become worthwhile in itself. Time for democratic discussion and self-education would be laid aside automatically, as part of the definition of work itself. Men could take advantage of the highest achievements of modern technology to design highly efficient machinery that men could be in control of. Art and Industry would fuse together more and more. Sir Percy Nunn's ideas would not just be applicable to Art lessons, but also to industry itself:

"There can be no universal aim of education if that is to include the assertion of any particular ideal of life; for there are as many ideals as there are persons. Educational efforts must, it would seem, be limited to securing for everyone the conditions under which individuality is most completely developed- that is enabling him to make his original contribution to the variegated whole of human life as full and as truly characteristic as his nature permits; the form of the contribution being left to the individual (or the small group-K.F.P.) as something which each must, in living and by living, forge out for himself....!" (p 13)

The last point is crucial. The form of our contribution must be our decision. Because we are social, "doing our own thing", individually and communally, will naturally tend to help other members

of society. Doing what we want will not just express our needs. It will also meet the needs of others. And vice versa. Therefore we do not need Communist Bosses and Bureaucrats any more than we need Capitalist Bosses and Bureaucrats, to guarantee that what we do will be socially useful. Ways of co-ordinating society without Authority will develop from out of the workings of society itself. As a result of the intelligent actions-in-context of individuals and groups, realistically out to achieve their intentions, it should be possible to build a society of abundance, where equality and freedom both exist.

Here is one description of such a society: it could also stand for a community and its community centre (erst-while "school") or for a family of families system (Section 16)

"(Anarchist-Communism) seeks the most complete development of individuality combined with the highest possible development of voluntary association in all its aspects, in all possible degrees, for all imaginable aims; ever changing, ever modified associations which carry in themselves the elements of their durability and constantly assuming new forms which answer best to the multiple aspirations of all. A society to which pre-established forms, crystallised by laws, are repugnant; which looks for harmony in an ever changing and fugitive equilibrium between a multitude of forces and influences of every kind, following their own course..." (Kropotkin).

(N) THE DESECULARISATION OF EDUCATION Finally, let us return to the question of religion. The reader will remember how Peters took Priestly Initiation as the model for Edu-

cation: moreover a clear gulf exists for Peters between "worthwhile activities" which alone are educational, and "bingo, billiards and eating bananas", the humdrum everyday activities which are not educational. Here is Ivan Illich covering much the same ground from his totally different position (he is a Catholic layman):

The major obstacle on the way to an educational society was well defined by a black friend of mine in Chicago, who told me that our imagination was "all schooled up". We permit the State to ascertain universal educational deficiencies of its citizens and establish one specialised agency to meet them. We thus share in the delusion that we can distinguish between what is necessary education for others and what is not- just as former generations established laws which defined what was sacred and what was profane.

Durkheim recognized that this ability to divide social reality into two realms was the very essence of formal religion. There are, he reasoned, religions without the supernatural and religions without gods, but none which does not subdivide the world into things and times and persons that are sacred- and others that as a consequence are profane. Durkheim's insight can be applied to the sociology of education, for school is radically divisive in a similar way.

The very existence of obligatory schools divides any society into two realms: some time spans and processes and treatments and professions are "academic" or "pedagogic", and others are not. The power of school thus to divide social reality has no boundaries: education becomes unworldly and the world becomes noneducational.

Since Bonhoeffer contemporary theologians have pointed to the confusions now reigning between the biblical message and institutionalised religion. They point to the experience that Christian freedom and faith usually gain from secularization. Inevitably their statements sound blasphemous to many churchmen. Unquestionably, the educational process will gain from the de-schooling of society even though this demand sounds to many schoolmen like treason to the enlightenment. But it is enlightenment itself that is now being snuffed out in the schools."

part 3

LEFT PROGRESSIVES IN THE SCHOOLING BUSINESS- THE RANK AND FILE GROUP- FRATERNAL CRITICISM.

(Note: this section written with teachers in mind, not college of education students)

(a) The R & F position

R & F bills itself thus: "R & F is produced by left-wing teachers within the NUT who believe that the union should be an effective factor in forcing change and progress, both in the general educational field and in the struggle for better salaries and conditions"

In its three years of existence, R & F has popularised and developed a class-and-privilege analysis of the British school system. This is certainly one component in an overall critique, and one that I have not much emphasised in my pamphlet precisely because the critique has diffused widely already (largely due to progressive groups such as R & F)

R & F has been widely reviled by the NUT hierarchy, the unspeakable N.A.S., the establishment Times Educational Supplement, and by some (no less establishment) Communist Headmasters. Any group which makes such people uptight has surely done good work!

R & F has published articles by Schools Action Union militants; and several R & F supporters have been sacked. (See excellent accounts of "How I Got the Sack" in issues 7 and 8)

R & F was a major factor in the catalysing of militancy which forced the NUT executive to hold out for a £135 increase in the last salary negotiations.

R & F has published a well-worked out alternative programme for the running of

schools, "A Teacher's Charter", available R & F price 3d. (see address at back). This Charter begins by noting the frustration and powerlessness felt by many class teachers, especially young ones. It then indicates the basic power monopoly of the Head by quoting from "The Government of County Secondary Schools", issued by the Greater London Council:

"14...(b) Subject to the provision of these articles, the Head shall control the conduct and the curriculum, the internal organisation, the management and discipline of the school, the choice of books, the methods of teaching and the arrangement of classes; and shall exercise supervision over the teaching and non-teaching staff. He shall have the power to suspend pupils from attendance for any cause he considers adequate, but on suspension, he shall forthwith report the case to the Governors; the parent shall be notified that he has the right of appeal to the Governors and in all cases the Governors shall report the facts to the Council."

Within our democracy, how can we tolerate this antiquated and unjust state of affairs? the Charter asks. It then continues by proposing an alternative tripartite structure:

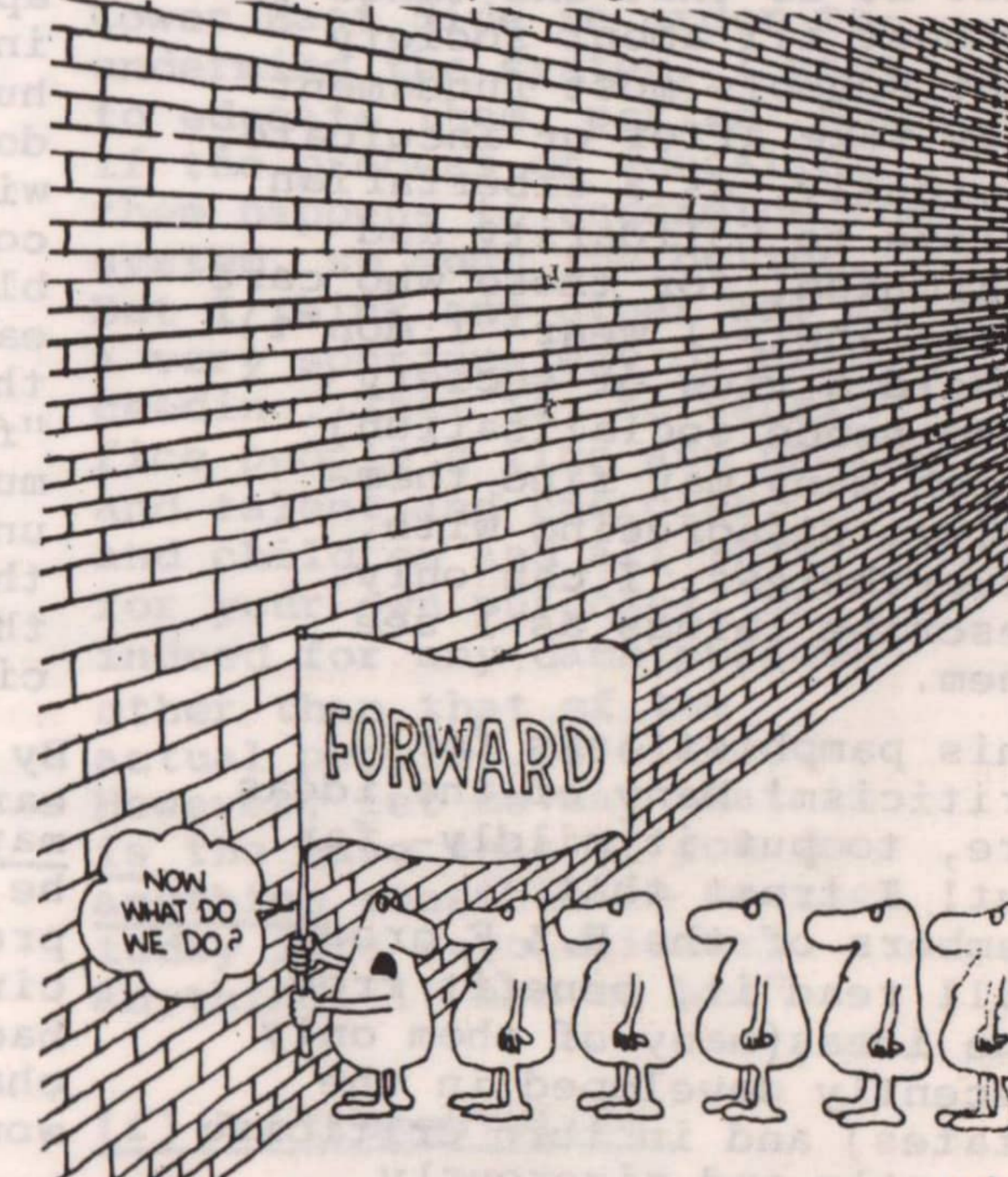
"What then do we mean by democracy? Basically a shift of power from the minority, authoritarian position of the head and education authorities to the full participation by the parents, staff, students, and the community at large, in all decisions taken in an educational context. To safeguard established democracy two principles need to be built in: (1) the right of electors to recall their representatives, and (2) for those who earn their living

in the educational service- Heads, Teachers, etc- comparable and related salaries. Otherwise we have a continuation of the existing structure, in which individuals, once elected, are free from majority control.

The Governing Body of each school should embody these democratic principles; it is at present appointed politically from outside the school and does not have particularly clear functions or power; as such it cannot be regarded as either democratic or effective. Instead we would propose that the Governing Body be made up of elected representatives of the school community.

We have recommended the formation of three associations, which will presumably elect some of their members to the places reserved for them on the Governing Body: a Students Association or School's Council, a Parents' Association, and a Staff Association. Each of these sections of the Governing Body will have their own particular concerns which make the existence of separate associations desirable but there should of course, be close co-operation and consultation between all these."

The Charter proposes the abolition of the Head and his replacement by an Executive Officer, elected democratically, by the Staff Association, and "responsible for the day to day administration of the school, subject to the



overall control by the Governing Body, and in consultation with the Staff Association and the Schools Council. In larger schools, the functions would be shared by more than one person." Finally the Charter puts

forward certain basic rights for class teachers, including: not having to teach overcrowded classes; not having to teach subjects other than those he/she was appointed to teach; the right to attend regular refresher courses on full pay; adequate facilities (staff room, telephone, rest room, creche for the children of teachers,);

"It is unprofessional for any teacher to make a report on the work or conduct of another teacher without at the time acquainting the teacher concerned with the nature of it, if it be written and allowing the teacher concerned to make a copy of it. (This is already a union rule)"

This programme is realistic and serious: that there would be less frustration and more learning in such a structure is indisputable.

(b) My Attitude Towards the Rank and File Group

However, in this and the following sections I want to probe various weaknesses, over-emphases and under-emphases of the strategy for change put forward by left-progressives round R & F. Always it is a matter of tendencies and relative disagreements- basically I see myself as part of the same movement and I do NOT want to antagonize any member of this serious and worthwhile group. Also I want to emphasize that I am very much in the dark as to the way forward in practical terms. Furthermore, my analysis of HOW schools socialize for ill obviously depends on what it is that one takes to be most ill about society that schools most fundamentally take after or inculcate. Obviously, as a libertarian (close to Solidarity and Anarchism, for those who care what labels I wear- I don't) I hold a view of society (and hence socialisation) which many may find themselves disagreeing with. Nevertheless, I can only describe things as I see them.

This pamphlet asks for criticism! Many of the ideas are, to put it mildly- far out! I trust that members of the R & F group will read it, benefit from the ideas (many of them only recently developed in the States) and in turn criticise honestly and rigorously those specific ideas rejected, assimilate into practice those ideas accepted, and put forward new ideas.

It is in this spirit of friendly but rigorous criticism that I now want to state what are, for me, some

pretty basic criticisms of the "progressive" wing of State education, as exemplified by the R & F group.

First however, I would like to put forward some general ideas on Revolution and Society(c). Then I will double back on (c) in (d) and other sections to sharpen the meaning of some key passages and phrases. This will provide a lead in to various differences to be stated with the R & F group, and certain criticisms of the Charter. Finally we will lead on again to the wider issue of education and society and prepare the way for the next sections in which I will hint at a different sort of strategy and put forward points towards an alternative programme.

Blurb over- now the meat!

(c) The Revolution Comes From Action in Every Sector of Society

Can education be better than society?

Is education the way of changing society or must we wait until society is changed?

Peters is basically an idealist philosopher. His "idealism" is not the same sort of idealism as when one says, "He is very idealistic." By idealism in a philosophic context we mean belief in stable internal "essences" which aren't influenced by what is going on round about. Although Peters recognises the influence of circumstances to some degree (making the ritual appeal for better teacher training), his main position is that human nature is such, deep down, that "the mass of men" will always be "geared to consumption"; people are liable to revert to "bingo and eating bananas" if let off the leash of Authority. The "final fruits" of education must necessarily be highly uncertain. It is essentially the inner natures of people that are wrong, not their circumstances.

By contrast Robert Owen in the early 19th Century was a materialist. That is to say, he saw men as the passive products of their material circumstances (which made them bad). Thus Owen looked to a change in circumstances which would make people good.

This is what Marx said about materialists like Owen in his "Theses on Feuerbach":

"The materialist doctrine concerning the changing of circumstances and education forgets that circumstances are changed by men and that the educator must himself be

educated. This doctrine has therefore to divide society into two parts, one of which is superior to society."

It is not a question of enlightened rulers or Royal Commissions or Government Reports changing everything for the better. Being changed is the same old shit. It is when one realizes oneself as someone doing the changing, at the doing end of history as it is made, that the real difference occurs.

Moreover, as a result of action on reality, reality acts back and changes the actor. This is "dialectical" materialism, where subject and object change at the same time. (The word "dialectics" comes from dialogue) It is also Piaget: practical working on reality



leads to the child's building up schemes which he could never have evolved from out of his head independent of the external world.

Society does not change when suddenly a generation of enlightened ones has somehow been educated in its school system. This is because:

- (1) the old society will have influenced the way they were educated;
- (2) the generation to come cannot be enlightened (passive) without being mystified; self-direction is what education is really about;
- (3) once in top positions in society people are mostly changed to fit in with that society, not to change it.

From all this it follows that

Education is not the answer to everything as some idealistic student-teachers sometimes say. To say that education is the be-all and end-all is as silly as saying that Economics is the only real cause of everything else.

Marx continued the above quotation thus:

"The coincidence of the changing of circumstances and of human activity or self-changing can only be grasped and rationally understood as revolutionary practice."

"Revolutionary practice" does not necessarily mean building barricades in the streets, although at the right time it could involve that. Revolution is a whole process starting from me, from you, from everybody, FROM NOW.

Revolution isn't something in the future that just "comes". People have got to "come" the revolution. Revolutions come when "The situation" is ripe. But people make the situation. The situation is made largely by people like you and me, and by our actions over a long period. The situation is also made by economic factors, and by imperceptible social forces (including forces acting through us), but a worthwhile revolution only occurs when a lot of people are reasonably aware of what is happening and are trying to help society in a positive direction.

Our theories about society, our changing of society, society's changing of us and our theories: the unity of all these is what Marx means by revolutionary practice. It follows that theories should also be about how to change reality; repeated failure to change reality in ways we intended should lead us to change our theories about society: only when we gain some purchase on reality does it confirm that our theories about it are on the right track, and provide the means for improving our theories.

Revolutionaries in Education who say "when the Revolution comes society will be O.K. and education will be able to flourish" are therefore caught in the same theoretical vicious circle as Owen, who said: "When Good Rulers come everything will be O.K." According to such crude materialists, Education is completely determined by Society. Moreover revolutionaries of this kind generally take the consequences to mean we should do nothing in the meantime. This lets them off the hook and allows them to continue



BOOKS

repressing their classes in a way no different from teachers with reactionary ideas. Having Marx on your bookshelf does not make you any the less reactionary by itself.

It would be foolish to look only to an economic crisis to bring the Capitalist State toppling to its knees-though an economic crisis is still on the cards. No one part of society causes it all. Revolutions happen when the interacting parts of society have been changing for a long time in ways which become incompatible with one or two other parts of society (eg Top-Down Control, Private Ownership)

Education is one such part of society. Struggling to change education is neither the be-all and end-all nor a waste of time. Education is part of the overall social-change process, changed and changing. Although one is not situated at the point of production to apply one's shoulder to the wheel of Revolution is as necessary if one is a Teacher as if one is a Factory Worker.

Up to now I feel that most left-progressives in education could agree with me. I now want to back-track over the last page or two to make several points in a new way which serves to indicate the deep differences between a "left-progressive" or "traditional revolutionary" way of looking at things, on the one hand, and the libertarian emphasis, on the other hand.

(d) Indoctrination

I have spoken of educationists "Putting their shoulders to the wheel of revolution". By this I do NOT mean indoctrination of kids in Anarchism, Marxism, or any other ism-though it does involve not indoctrinating

them with conventional ideas such as "The Empire was good for India", or "little girls must not get dirty", etc. A critical spirit is worth a hundred "correct" opinions: if we can indoctrinate kids one way, the rest of society will be able to indoctrinate them back again. The distinctive component of libertarian education is its medium (free association without Authority), not any message. To make the point as strongly as I can- an anarchist lecturing kids in the normal classroom situation is more dangerous than a Fascist lecturing kids who have been free from birth, since the latter are free to tell him to get stuffed, and to seek more congenial mentors.

(e) Educating for Its Own Sake

In fact "putting one's shoulder to the wheel of Revolution" is a doubly misleading term. All that is meant in the end is "putting one's shoulder to such and such a positive project" (here education). The point is made strongly by Paul Goodman in the following answer:

"RB What do you think of the idea that this kind of do-it-yourself project is, in its own small way, one way of undermining power structures?"

Paul Goodman: Well I think that if you use that as your purpose, it's wicked. We should do everything for its own sake. Like Lawrence said: Make a revolution for fun, that's all. That is to say, I don't want to use the disadvantaged kids on the Lower East Side in order to undermine the system. I want to educate them, period. Now if the process of educating them happens to undermine the system, so much the better. But I think any other way is a very spurious way of proceeding. That is, to sacrifice people's time and brains and talent and energies, and children and all that, for your own purposes, or indeed for any damn purpose other than that of the actual people, is wicked. However, let me say that it is the case that if you do anything sensible in America today it's revolutionary. Anything! It had to be!"

(f) Instrumentalism

Related to (e) is the whole question of whether teaching is a growing (fulfilling, enjoyable) experience, or whether teaching is a job, like any other almost, involving sacrifice of so many hours in return for money and "free time".

A teenage girl at a public school remarked when her teachers did not join the strike: "They are just a load of blacklegs."

One of my fears is that teachers will fall for the unionism model of their work after, correctly, rejecting the professionalism model. Obviously a chief danger is that Rank and File will concentrate all their energies on the pay issue. Apart from higher salaries and slightly better teacher/pupil ratios, this doesn't achieve much. Teachers must also become aware of how authoritarian as such, their roles are as teachers, and of how maintaining their authority is the chief reason for the wear and tear strains of class-teaching, which many class-teachers have experienced.

But even syndicalist unions that link the questions of conditions and policies are not a sufficient model.

One of the chief results of capitalism is to turn human relationships into instrumental (person-thing) relationships. It may be true that putting on a play after school hours is of great educational value; it may also be true that society is exploiting the teacher who directs it unless it pays him an allowance; but once school-play allowances exist one more corner of life is in danger of being instrumentalised by the wage system. There ought to be intrinsic rewards in putting on a play with kids. If there aren't, it probably isn't worth doing. Teachers should fight for a decent living wage and the abolition of all allowances. To be sure, Rank and File are against Productivity Deals- but because of considerations relating to a quantified (reified?) "conditions" factor- and not from a discussion of the effect on relationships and the quality of life or everyday experience.

Ultimately the whole wage system will have to go, with everyone being guaranteed a

living at a decent standard, working or not, dustman or scientist. In this situation all interaction would involve a free gift of oneself and one's energies, instead of being dragged out of one by the promise of a wage. We should be aware of how capitalism instrumentalizes life, and, as libertarians, we should transcend it to some extent from the word go (not just "after the Revolution".)

Besides, one of the paradoxes of being a revolutionary is that one finds that actions-for-the-revolution often tend to be less effective than other actions that were never geared to winning "converts" in the first place. In addition to propaganda by word and propaganda by deed, the subtlest propaganda is propaganda by presence, the propaganda of life-style. This propaganda is the exact opposite of the sort of instrumental action that can be put on the agenda and done by next week. It only works if it is unconscious. In addition to the aims of any movement there is the way it is done. In addition to what is said, there is the way it is said. All action has an instrumental component and an expressive component, the spin-off as it were, unique to the person. It is this expressive component which attracts people and repulses people, independent almost of what is being said.

It follows that in education too, the most fruitful interaction cannot be planned for. It can only come from who we are. And it is this communion as it were which kids (indeed adults too) are most yearning for.

Living as a revolutionary libertarian is not another technique: political awareness is no substitute for personal response, in education as in the rest of life. Here is Martin Buber:

"(Education) demands of you a reaction which cannot be prepared beforehand. It demands nothing of what is past. It demands presence, responsibility, it demands YOU."

It is the supreme merit of Herbert A. Kohl's little book, "The Open Classroom", that, for all its practicality and realism, he never loses sight of the paramountcy of a simple quality of authenticity- a simple quality which is nevertheless hard to attain after years of being Teacher- or even a few weeks T.P. in the normal T.P. set up where one is being judged not on educational ability but on the willingness to adopt the Teacher's Role.

(g) Union activity and "Collective Action" Union activity, even syndicalism about and for kids and with the aim of liberating kids- all this is no substitute for "living presence" with kids, and their own independent action. More specifically, I think I detect a danger that a busyness with Rank and File and Union activities may actually function as an evasion from the duty to push as far as one can go in one's own situation.

The rationale here is the phrase "collective action" which is in danger of being swallowed uncritically. For the libertarian, the collective action, the organisation which takes that action and any identity one derives from it, are all subsidiary. Foremost is the project of constantly educating oneself, including growing in relation to one's students and hence helping them to develop.

This means that if a national organisation (such as Rank and File) doesn't enable one to operate better than before in one's own situation, then it has no rationale for existence. In other words, it is not a question of: "I'm a teacher-I'm also involved in a collective fight at the national level." Rather: "I'm a teacher- I join Rank and File/participate in the Libertarian Teachers' Association/MESAS etc etc THE BETTER to help my pupils educate themselves." At present I fear that much (good) collective action among the R & F group only takes place on a basis of a shared attitude to work which is one of alienation: sacrifice, instrumentalism, the Teacher Role, etc.

(h) Sacrifice and the Child-Centred Model

But surely there is a contradiction here? How can I reproach left-progressives both for sacrificing themselves to kids and for treating kids as means to an end (instrumentalism)? If I disparage "sacrifice", how does this differ from the "free gift of oneself and one's energies" I have advocated?

I think there only appears to be a contradiction here. For it is of the nature of the unalienated relationship that one both relates to the other in an unselfish way and receives personal gratification, self-fulfillment, knowledge, etc from the relationship.

In an unflawed community the chain of reciprocity is unbroken- what is good for you

is good for me, and vice versa. This is the deep truth that folk dance celebrates and symbolizes.

For example, the community (or association or neighbourhood) is in any case going to put a play on, ie for itself. It is also into the bargain of value to the children who can participate, introduce changes, etc. Or, still within the idea of the school, such and such a teacher enjoys putting on plays with kids, both for the sake of the play, and for the sake of the satisfaction he/she gets from his relationships with the co-participants eg, watching Jenny get more confident, etc. But when we get to the teacher who feels he or she OUGHT to put on a play, because it will be "educational" for the kids, because he feels guilty if he doesn't do it, or because there is monetary gain, or career kudos to be had- then the harmony of social-individual-in society is flawed, the chain is broken.

This raises the whole question again of the idea of child-centredness, which most progressives are in favour of. I believe that it is a reaction to the subject or teacher-centred approach, but a reaction which still posits the conditions of alienation. Child-centredness equals the plant analogy which implies the static (locked in) child unable to find other people to relate to (Section 4, Part one). Hence, the teacher must sacrifice himself; yet because the door is locked he is also exploiting the children, and therefore his relationship is such that his sacrifice does not return to him again in terms of the normal intrinsic rewards of a mutually-centring, mutually educative relationship. The dance is broken. The teacher must draw the goodness from his own self-to feed the plant- but never recuperate substance in return. This is not because the pupils ARE plant-like, obviously, but because the basic social premise or definition of the situation is that the Gardener/Professional-Liberal-Teacher knows what is best for his "charges" (telling phrase).

The point is so basic that another example drawn from the Teachers Charter is in order: a Staff Association of child-centred teachers which is responsible for selecting the text-books for every child in the school (albeit in cumbersome con-

sultation with the School Council- a few pupils "representing" the rest) will alienate the pupils from responsibility for directing their own reading and curriculum (This project would include asking advice and securing suitable books). If the pupils are not able to manage their own unique development process, some are bound to make trouble for the teacher and his child-centred solicitude in selecting the best textbooks FOR the children will have brought no rewards.

To the extent that what he/she recommends is in fact what the pupils need/want to do next- to that extent the situation is rewarding. Many fortunate child-centred teachers have experienced the happy coincidence on many occasions. However, to the extent that his recommendations or style of relationship is not what the kids (or some kids) want/need, to that extent they must inevitably feel exploited, whatever the child-centred intentions of their mentor. For the door is closed. This is part of what Goodman may have been sensing when he wrote: "In a curious way the exaggeration of schooling is both a harsh exploitation of the young... and a compassionate coddling of them...."

(i) Education, The Politics of Equality, and the Politics of Liberation

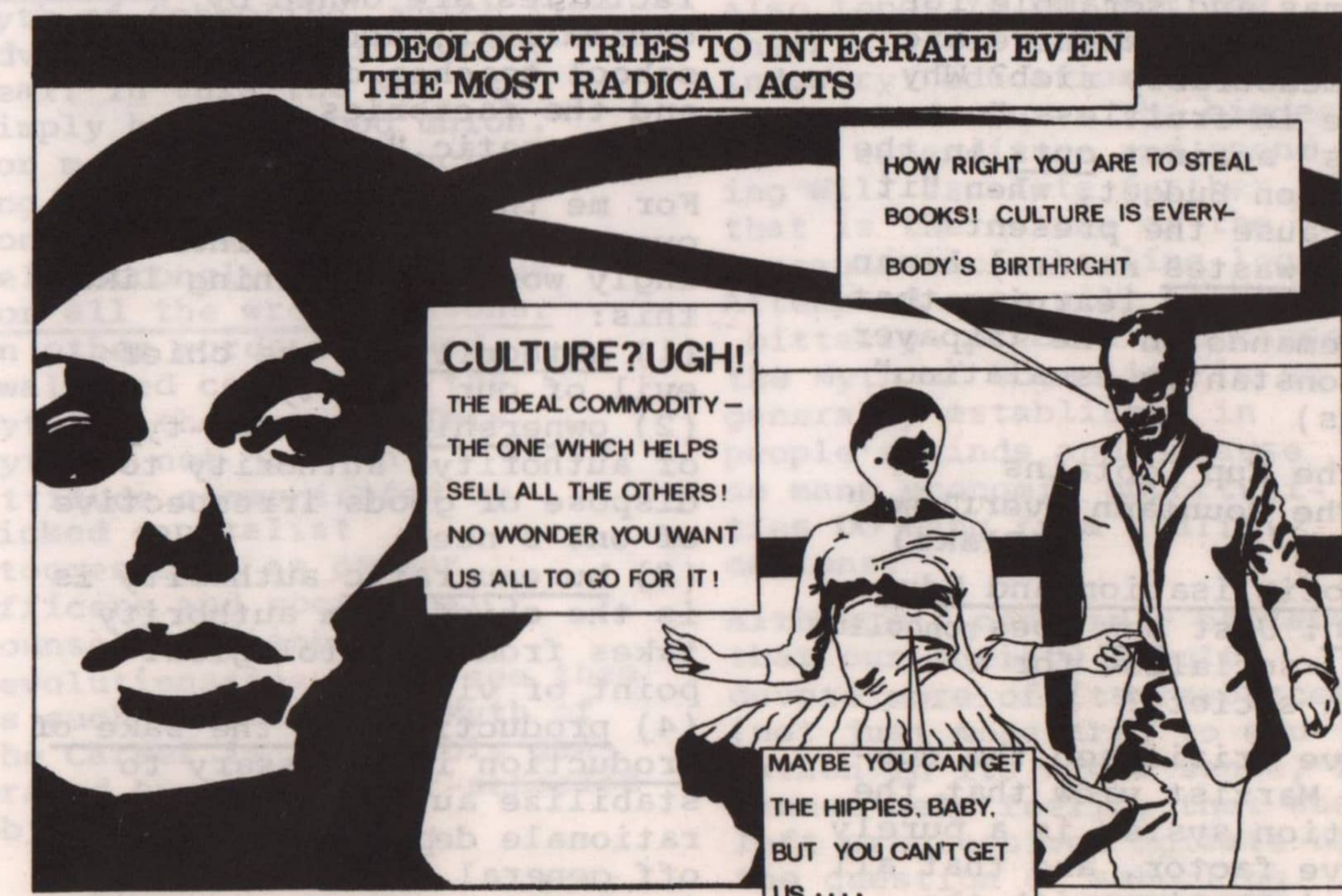
Another counter-criticism may perhaps be made by "Rank and Filers". My recommendations- it will be said- are a-political. Indeed, this is partly true. For in one sense of the word, "politics" is a bottomless well of self-sacrifice by militants; an alienated realm of human relationships where the ultimate question is who

has more POWER. I am not much interested in this sort of politics.

It does not follow that I am reduced to advocating more or less that we all be virtuous- which is what Peters comes down to. Rather I am interested in the new politics, the politics of liberation, understood as both social and personal liberation. As opposed to this politics, the politics of equality is deeply scarred with the idea of scarcity- the more you get the less I get, so fair shares!

The politics of liberation is a politics of the experiential, a politics of the quality of relationships and of everyday life.

The sort of social movement I would propose would concern itself less with quantitative aspects (wages, "conditions" understood as number of hours worked, number of "career opportunities" or with the "general educational field" when the latter is defined as about such questions as the number of kids from different classes who get the available "places" at university, etc. etc.) A movement based on these issues tends to lead to yet more "sacrifice" on the part of a minority of teachers: to participate they have to leave their secret dreams and aspirations in the cloakroom. On the other hand the majority of teachers do not join in precisely because they are not inspired or attracted by the movement, only called upon for more puritanical self-denial. At the quantitative level it is true that the more X gets the less Y gets. Only when the qualitative issues are brought to the fore does it



become untrue: for as we have seen, good relationships are mutually and intrinsically fulfilling. Where hours are played with children or young people, the number of hours worked becomes an irrelevancy. Where one is against the Myth of the Career itself, the issue of "career opportunities" ceases to matter. Where one ceases to equate education with schooling, one sees that the opportunities for education are infinite and not dependent on the number of "places" at this or that institution.

In particular we should pose the issue of freedom, for children and teachers alike. Only then can people find their own experiences of wear and tear in a closed box articulated, their own (suppressed) hopes set forth without trimming in the present or postponement until "after the revolution". Only then will large numbers of teachers (and parents) realize that all stand to gain at this qualitative level. Personal relationships are not fundamentally scarcity relationships (except in a power hierarchy or money system) but abundance relationships, where there is a dialectic, a mutual centring, an uncalculating reciprocity, a loving and being loved. The politics of liberation aims to unlock directly the wealth of the body politic, so crazily

blocked with the result that man developed the insane idea that for relating to others, people needed to be compensated with the false wealth of money. The politics of liberation aims to tap directly the wellspring of Eros so long blocked at source by the carcass of the Monster, Scarcity. Why compete for diplomas and scramble for "allowances", when we are so immeasurably rich? Why engage in fruitless "campaigns" against cuts in the Education Budget, when "it is because the present system wastes natural human incentives to learning that its demands on the taxpayer are constantly escalating" (Boggs)

"The Cup Contains
The Fountain Overflows"
(Blake)

(j) Socialisation and Education: Just how does schooling socialise for a rotten society?

I have criticised the dogmatic Marxist view that the education system is a purely passive factor, and that all the weight lies with the

economy, and all the revolutionary weight lies with the industrial proletariat. Most left-wingers such as the International Socialists within R & F would also want to criticise this position. Nevertheless I believe that they do not dissociate themselves thoroughly enough from the position, so that remnants still remain.

One such remnant lies in the analysis of HOW schools socialise. R & F members tend to over-emphasize the class-and-privilege side of the analysis (in my opinion) and under-emphasize the Bureaucratic Initiation aspect. To be sure, the public schools train the sons of the Top 5% for the Top 5% jobs

To be sure the grammar schools train the next 20%. To be sure also the content of much school teaching is reactionary (eg children's readers). Moreover, on the other hand, the socialists with whom I am disagreeing (somewhat) DO mention the factor of authoritarianism, of training in obedience. However, and here we come to the crux of the disagreement- they emphasize this side often in a somewhat psychological manner- a matter of attitudes before and after.

A more sociological position would be that the school performs its socialisation function through the very structure of the schooling process itself. This isn't very clear so let me spell it out. (It gets a bit complicated but I think there is an important and distinct view to be at least considered.)

A bald synopsis of the left-progressive position would run like this: "schools are class biased and factories are owned by capitalists; (secondarily) school teaches obedience and the factories are bureaucratic."

For me the relations (greatly oversimplified) are increasingly working something like this:

- (1) authority is the chief evil of our society;
- (2) ownership is a sub-type of authority- authority to dispose of goods irrespective of one's need;
- (3) bureaucratic authority is the chief form authority takes from a sociological point of view;
- (4) production for the sake of production is necessary to stabilize authority whose rationale depends on staving off general need-fulfilment (eg built-in obsolescence);

(5) hence the complementary consumption for the sake of consumption must be introduced and maintained on the basis of a secure rationale;

(6) the bureaucratisation of education leads to children being initiated into the essential features of bureaucracy from an early age;

(7) it also results not just in the reproduction of class

differences but in the

generation of status differences (expert, skilled, unskilled);

(8) meritocratic status differences provide the competitive rationale for consumption for the sake of consumption (both of goods and services and hence

(9) play a crucial part in consolidating the whole social order.

A key feature of Bureaucracy is supposed to be its non-favouritism, where relations are based on universalistic criteria, according to merits and roles, not according to particularistic likes or dislikes. In fact, of course, the people in the superior roles are human, not robots, and judge subjectively, for all the veneer. Moreover, who defines what "merits" are? The "universalistic" criteria of advancement are not objective or God-given- a particular class or caste has decided on them!

The family socialises for capitalist society in the general sense of specific attitudes, and overall character structure, which later on may lead to the children growing up privatised and fearful of being independent. It is this general type of preparation of the individual for capitalist society which left-progressives also see operating in schools. My theory of bureaucratic initiation explains how children are prepared for the specific features of a bureaucratic society. They are prepared, not by getting (or not getting) certain wrong attitudes at one time which will lead them to act at another time to be model citizens, but by actually living in a bureaucratic world-through-time so that they develop a perfectly adequate world-view for their already bureaucratized present and future existences.

Take another example: a child is threatened with the stick for talking too much. A static picture of the consequences for that child at that moment

and another static picture of that child in 20 years' time being a good yes-man in industry- these two pictures provide the obvious connection but they fail to capture the essence of the situation for the child. For the child, this incident is one more in a whole series of incidents in which his spontaneity has been curtailed at the demand of a supposedly non-favouritist teacher, backed by a supposedly non-favouritist Headmaster. The incident must be seen subjectively through time, as the constant grooving in of an increasingly central (and hence unnoticed) World View- namely the curtailment of potential, a phenomenological tunnelling in which the future holds options that are

A return to primitive law - a clip from the film of Lord of the Flies.



ever more restricted as one advances. This is the real meaning of the Bureaucratisation of Natural Life Functions (communication, work, love, etc.) from the standpoint of the individual social actor. It is in this context, I think, that the bureaucratization of the particular natural life-function of learning is best seen. Schooling is a situation where one's options and life-chances are objectively managed and stand out over against one. Participation in this objective and structured life-trajectory inevitably leads to a certain overall world view so long as one is objectively held in place in it. The whole schooling process in its

essentials therefore, imparts to its participants a whole world view appropriate to maintaining our society.

This view is different from the idea that only certain aspects of schooling (eg, authoritarianism) inculcate certain psychological attitudes, merely, which dovetail with the necessary industrial qualities; or that certain class-biases operate to ensure that the capitalist class is "best educated" and can take up key jobs in the economy.

I consider that my view finds support from the Warwick files incident and repercussions. Following the "discovery" that the Warwick administration was (a) very much in league with local Big Business and (b) keeping "secret files" on "politically-motivated" students, Warwick students, and students throughout the country sat in, broke into files, etc.

A tiny minority of revolutionaries tried to link the question into a wider framework of Control of Information, which also covered closed committee meetings and struck at the heart of the authority question (eg God speaks from out of a cloud but mortals cannot escape God's all-seeing gaze, not even under the bedclothes! eg sociologists can get money to study shop-floor decision-making for the benefit of management), but not to study decision making at the top).

The NUS seemed most concerned about the career prospects of students, eg lest ICI ever get to know that Joe Bloggs once said boo! to his superior. The NUS is the institution which, for all its concern about the class and privilege aspect of education, personifies the Myth of Schooling, which it advances with a missionary zeal. In this the NUS is simply being a good union. For most students, including most "student revolutionaries", also acted or felt strongly on the issue for all the wrong reasons. In other words they had swallowed completely the Myth of the Career. This Myth is not just an attitude communicated by wicked capitalist stooges such as career officers and vocational counsellors (many of the revolutionaries would see them as such). Rather the Myth of the Career is inevitably generated by their hyper-schooled objective situations.

My view is also supported by Ivan Illich- indeed it partly derives from the following quote:

The Myth of self-Perpetuating Progress.

growth conceived as open-ended consumption- eternal progress- can never lead to maturity. Commitment to unlimited quantitative increase vitiates the possibility of organic development.

Ritual Game and the New World Religion

"School serves as an effective creator and sustainer of social myth because of its structure as a ritual game of graded promotions. Introduction into this gambling ritual is much more important than what or how something is taught. It is the game itself that gets into the blood and becomes a habit. A whole society is initiated into the Myth of Unending Consumption of services. This happens to the degree that token participation in the open-ended ritual is made compulsory and compulsive everywhere. School directs ritual rivalry into an international game which obliges competitors to blame the world's ills on those who cannot or will not play. School is a ritual of initiation which introduces the neophyte to the sacred race of progressive consumption, a ritual of propitiation whose academic priests mediate between the faithful and the gods of privilege and power, a ritual of expiation which sacrifices its dropouts, branding them as scapegoats of underdevelopment.

(k) How Central is the Education Business?- A Matter of Emphasis.

The traditional revolutionary also tends to neglect the sheer size of the education industry: education has now passed Defence as the biggest State expenditure and spending will escalate further, for that is the nature of the bureaucratic (schooling logic) Attempted cuts will be fought bitterly- precisely because the Myth of Schooling is so generally established in people's minds and because so many economic opportunities DO hang from qualifications.

Although I certainly believe that our society should devote more of its resources (not just monetary) to education in its wider sense, I cannot help feeling that when left progressives agitate on the question of schooling

cuts, they are in danger of strengthening, not weakening, the myth of the rat race, education as a commodity, etc., and thus strengthening, not weakening, the status quo.

Here is Illich discussing the education industry in the US where it is even more central than it is here: The New Alienation School is not only the New World Religion. It is also the world's fastest-growing labour market. The engineering of consumers has become the economy's principal growth sector. As production costs decrease in rich nations, there is an increasing concentration of both capital and labour in the vast enterprise of equipping man for disciplined consumption. During the past decade capital investments directly related to the school system rose. Disarmament would only accelerate the process by which the learning industry moves to the centre of the national economy. School gives unlimited opportunity for legitimate waste, so long as its destructiveness goes unrecognized and the cost of palliatives goes up.

If we add those engaged in full-time teaching to those in full-time attendance, we realize that this so-called superstructure has become society's major employer. In the US sixty two million people are in school and eighty million at work elsewhere. This is often forgotten by neo-Marxist analysts who say that the process of de-schooling must be postponed or bracketed until other disorders, traditionally understood as more fundamental, are corrected by an economic and political revolution. Only if school is understood as an industry can a revolutionary strategy be planned realistically. (See Rowntree's "The Political Economy of Education: Youth as a Class" - K.F.P.) For Marx, the cost of producing demands for commodities was barely significant. Today most human labour is engaged in the production of demands that can be satisfied by industry which makes intensive use of capital. Most of this is done in school.

Alienation, in the traditional scheme, was a direct consequence of work becoming wage-labour which deprived man of the opportunity to create and be re-created. Now young people are pre-alienated by schools that isolate them from the world of work and pleasure. School makes alienation preparatory to life,

thus depriving education of reality and work of creativity. School prepares for the alienating institutionalisation of life by teaching the need to be taught. Once this lesson is learned, people lose their incentive to grow in independence; they no longer find relatedness attractive, and close themselves off to the surprises which life offers when it is not predetermined by institutional definition. And school directly or indirectly employs a major proportion of the population. School either keeps men and women for life or makes sure that they will be kept by some institution.

The New World Church is the knowledge industry, both purveyor of opium and the workbench during an increasing number of the years of an individual's life. De-schooling is therefore at the root of any movement for human liberation.

(1) How Central is the Education Process? Completely

In section (c) I wrote: "Education is part of society", and compared the worker in Education to the worker in industry. In so doing I was deliberately confusing Institutional Education (Schooling) with education as a natural ongoing function or process throughout the whole of society. It is this mistake which I believe the R & F group has consistently made (in practice, if not in theory when the matter is explicitly discussed). I quoted Marx in section (c): "the materialist doctrine concerning the changing of circumstances and education forgets that circumstances are changed by men and that the educator must himself be educated." In that context, I imagine, that some of my readers may have made the slide I was unfairly encouraging from education as process to education as institutional commodity: the message would then have concerned colleges of education training good teachers for schools - but wait, haven't college lecturers themselves to be trained? In this context I would like to broaden the use of the word "education" invite the reader to reread

the above quotation with the new broad meaning in mind. A possible criticism of my proposals might be: but where is your constituency if you don't look primarily to teachers? As we shall see, I consider that youth are the constituency who will rebel most against schooling (and have already in the States where most City High Schools

have policemen in the corridors; that is, when the High Schools are not under total occupation by the students!

Moreover, in a very real sense everyone is a constituent for a libertarian analysis of education. For the State/society distinction should not be understood simplistically as meaning that the State (boo!) sits on the all-virtuous society, which without this "unnatural" constraint would develop to a marvellous degree of mutual aid and tolerance. The faults of the whole are mirrored in traces throughout the grain of the parts. The Toad Authority like the Toad Work squats also in US. Hence our revolutionary practice or our project of independent self-education does not simply involve us in staying the same, only becoming (through practice) more cunning, more resolute etc in the fight against them. The ways in which we change will be fundamental so that in the future we will be a different we than the present we. Our self-education process does not refer solely to aspects of strategic theory and the psychological necessities of effectiveness. Everything is at stake if we remain open to the world. And if we remain open to the world, everything can be won.

Madmen in the Middle Ages used to be excluded from cities. The trouble was that they just went off and "plagued" somebody else's city and their "madmen" came and plagued you! So society began to expel people to single places, locking them in to Asylums, out still, at bottom, locking them OUT of society. Similarly with compulsory education: the dominance of the schooling process does not simply mean that schooling equals education; it also, perhaps more importantly, that life is not supposed to carry its own lessons, that everyday life is non-educational to the adult. It follows that the destruction of Schooling does not only mean that every adult is a Teacher (of the Young - the ones who would otherwise be in schools), it also means that everyone (who would otherwise be "out of it") is a Learner.

L. HOW CENTRAL IS THE EDUCATION PROCESS?

In many other situations an indirect approach (which is nevertheless worthwhile in itself) may be best. Namely to encourage the parents to keep educating themselves. Later on the children can gravitate naturally into the skill-matching, T.V. and book discussion schemes, film clubs, tenants' associations, etc. And from there the basis is laid for the demand that such extra-institutional options be available in "school time" but outside the schools.

In their Charter, R & F propose that teachers should receive time and money for regular refresher courses with full pay. Hence, as teachers they recognise the need to educate themselves. Understood as a demand for re-schooling, (with pre-fabricated curricula, diplomas and the chance of promotion) the demand confuses education and schooling. It

directs attention away from the educative or non-educative effect of the teacher's everyday milieu, since such schooling would "compensate" for such and such a length of service. But let us make the demand as a call for time for self-education (albeit possibly in a Centre with others.).

Now let us make the somewhat unfair observation that R & F do not extend this demand to parents. In their tripartite structure for governing the school, the parents participate as educational controllers or overseers (it would appear - maybe the appearance is not intended as with the paragraph above). Parents do not appear as people who are educating themselves, first and foremost, and secondarily, taking an active interest in the education of their children as part of this overall open concern.

Rank & File might well reply: "Yes, well what you are suggesting is the ideal of course, we're all agreed about that. But our demands were put forward with short-term and middle-term possibilities in mind. At least they would be a step in the right direction."

In this case, we may criticise on a different tack, and say - "In that case if the Charter is meant to operate in the near future, are you sure that it's co-operation you want between Parents' Associations and the Teachers' Staff Association. The Charter seems to suggest that this is a straight forward "good thing" - the more co-operation the better starting from now even in the existing situation." To see if this is the case, let us have a look at Parent-Teacher Associations.

P.T.A.'s are active in many districts, and nearly everyone in the world of education thinks them a good idea. Obviously, it is a healthy sign if parents are taking a considerable interest in their children's development, and aren't content to leave that side of things to the professionals. However, many P.T.A.'s are little more than vehicles for the school to mobilise

support behind its predetermined goals: a new language laboratory so that the children can notch up the necessary O-levels in languages; a trophy for the sixthformer showing greatest "service to the school" or for a sports competition; a swimming pool which the community will probably be barred from. Fund-raising for these kinds of projects on the one hand stems from an admirable desire to "do the best for our children" which must be taken seriously: on the other hand it also represents a channelling of mutual aid and self-help into a School System which stands for the opposite values: individual advancement and dependence on the State.

The same problems are associated with the much canvassed "co-operation between home and school". Although parents may go along to meet the teacher with the intention of helping their children, the nett effect may well be to increase adult control over his life: the two sides of his lifethat for very good reasons he was attempting to keep separate, are suddenly fused together in a confusing manner: his parents are suddenly won over to the teacher's side and the world seems one Great Conspiracy. So it seemed to me, at least, when, aged 9, I got a Latin declension wrong and my teacher said that my Dad would be ashamed of me, because he was a Classical Scholar. Kids hate it when teachers are able to turn parental loyalties against them (the kids). The number of jokes about REPORTS clearly indicates the degree of tension and trepidation that exists at the school/home interface for many, many children.

We are not far off Pedagogic 1984: huge and cumulative school dossiers on kids' history, "home background" and so on, which parents and child can never see, but which both have unwittingly contributed to "Hands up all of you whose Daddy is out late on Friday nights, whose Mummy goes to Bingo, what does Daddy say about black men" etc., OR "Ah Mrs Smith, so good of you to take such an interest in your child - after all that's what we've all got in common, haven't we? Now I wonder if you would be so kind as to fill in this form: simple little questions, just things like does Johnny ever show signs of antagonism towards school, if so, towards which Teachers, does Johnny ever have nightmares and dreams, if so, what about, does Johnny ever copy his homework, if so, who from, what measure do you suggest parents should take to stop children experimenting with their own and each other's bodies", etc, etc.

P.T.A.'s and Home/School communication is least problematic where the values of home and school are congruous, e.g. in many middle-class neighbourhoods. In mixed and working class areas they function to co-opt parents into complicity in the cultural invalidation of their own kids. Again, even "progressive" and "concerned" and "socially conscious" teachers can function in a pernicious way to confuse parents and make them unsure of themselves who would otherwise know exactly what the score was with the normal P.T.A. and stay away.

Parents' Associations could have an important role to play under all or

some of the following conditions:

- (1) if they become increasingly assertive of the community against the values of schooling;
- (2) if the parents increasingly meet in any case for their own pursuits, hobbies and discussions;
- (3) if the community comes to control more and more of the school plant for more and more of the year (not just the school year!);
- (4) if the Community begins to run its own skill-matching schemes for/with/including/not excluding the children in the community;
- (5) if the Community increasingly asserts its rights to look after the education of its children outside of school if the children are more interested in the various openings for incidental education in the community (NB this does not mean "Parents Rights" as opposed to the right of the children to determine their own education. Parents should fight with the school not as if the child were a piece of property, but as if the child were an innocent party locked up by jailers (which is more or less the case)).

Obviously such a programme is utopian in so far as there are no ideal "communities" which have miraculously liberated themselves from the myth of schooling, where parents no longer oscillate between neglect and spoiling etc. Working class communities have plenty of their own problems - damp, bills, isolation (on estates), racial tensions (in ghettos), status snobberies, night-shift work, exclusion by the media, their own past schooling etc. Nevertheless, the point still stands: most P.T.A.'s are worse than useless in effect in so far as the good aspects (care for kids, self-help, mutual aid, etc) are channelled into institutional forms; Parents Associations which consciously set out to achieve conflict between home and school are more to the point at present.

Basically, most parents feel unwanted at school, which is "Them" territory, and issues should not be hard to find: e.g. corporal punishment, public humiliations, stupid rules, lack of meals provision, closure of playgrounds, etc etc. The problem is greatly complicated however, because, as I have said, parents are often just as confused as individual teachers, thence some parents might want to be militant a la Daily Express against "letting the kids just play about all day" or more orthodoxly, they might criticise their school for not having enough emphasis on Exams, the school up the road got more GCE passes etc.

At all events such reactionary demands should be met and taken seriously. "Progressive" teachers who refuse to discuss and face such criticisms are on a loser: for John Gordon and Stuart Froome and the Black Paper-ites are all the time exploiting very real fears and problems of parents. Even when wrong, the parents are right, in so far as the progressive school should not rely on its position/qualifications/superior vocabulary etc. to maintain its authority and continue with the practices objected to. Instead of trying to use the State to protect liberal values, progressives should become libertarians

in so far as they give way to parents' desires to be influential in the upbringing of their own kids, but then immediately go on the offensive again from a libertarian analysis: in other words "Teachers' Rights" aren't worth fighting for as against "Parents' Rights", so libertarians should melt and flow with the latter demand the better to ensure that Parents' Rights are not as against the right of the child to determine his or her own educational development.

The role of libertarian teachers in relation to parents' associations is thus very important and very difficult. Different situations require different forms of praxis. Where reactionary and orthodox-brainwashed militancy is being articulated, the response is somewhat as indicated above. Where serious parental grievances exist (e.g. corporal punishment) the role of the libertarian is simple, as he should be prepared to support the parents' associations, even to the point of parental occupation against his own establishment. (How many years till we see one? Not many.) In other situations where P.T.A.'s are wholly given over to fundraising, his role may simply be to ask who is going to control the premises/equipment bought with the direct help of the whole community (and also indirectly through taxes, of course.)

ADULT EDUCATION.

I believe that many people have a vague sense of having been swindled by the schooling system. "I've had my chance", they say, but question them further and they'll admit that the system discriminated against them from the word go. Now they want to "do the best by" their children - this usually means pushing them up the ladder with all the thrust of their own (repressed) ambitions. This vicarious "fulfilment" is damaging both to their kids and to themselves: the problem is that it is a central aspect of their overall life-adjustment: threaten it and you get an angry response. Nevertheless anger is a sign that you're on the right track, in many cases. (In many others it's a sign that you're a supercilious, prying, good-for-nothing, i.e. the anger is valid counter-praxis.)

The whole sphere of "Adult education" is swarming with contradictions as we shall see. Nevertheless, in conversing with the sort of person who says "I've had my chance", I personally might like to contribute some of the following points to the overall (two-sidedly developing) conversation:

- (1) Yes - you have been swindled, but we are all responsible for what we are made of;
- (2) Yes, you haven't been educated much in some directions, but lots of so-called "highly educated people" can't mend a fuse and are much less adaptable than less "well educated" people; the professor and the dustman are alike picking up information about their environment the whole time.
- (3) Yes, you will certainly be barred from the Top Jobs without qualifications, but the Top Jobs are mostly con-

cerned with Bossing someone else around; certificates don't mean you're more educated, in any case.

(4) Your children will be discriminated against in school just as you were probably. Don't rely on them to develop for you - you'll only drive them up the wall.

(5) Schools and Colleges and Universities and other Institutions have their drawbacks - for instance having to study somebody else's curriculum and producing the essay like a battery hen. The main advantage of being there is the opportunities for informal discussions (self-development, etc). But even if less concentratedly, such opportunities do exist aplenty outside of the official system is one is willing to step outside of the normal rut of events and make the first moves (e.g. by redirecting a conversation from well-trodden tracks towards the existentially significant).

(6) Nobody can stop us educating ourselves, although there are some general difficulties (e.g. physical exhaustion at night, exclusive control of "educational institutions", etc.)

(7) If we want to find out something or express ourselves in some way or another we should never take no for an answer. Just because the situation isn't at present recognised as carrying its educational significance, that isn't to say that we can't get it redefined.

(8) If we want a job, we shouldn't take no for an answer if the refusal is on the grounds of lack of schooling, "qualifications", etc. If we really want to do it, we'd soon be able to pick it up. So we should make a stink. Take direct action. Break down the closed-shop of the intellect. I.Q. is a load of crap to keep us in our place.

All this is rather vague about the actual contents of such self- and group educative projects. The reader will see why in a moment.

Right now there is a widespread expansion of Adult Education. On the whole this expansion is probably making matters worse, since it caters uncritically for a false orientation of "getting culture" or even "keeping up". (Keeping up with the latest cultural commodity, what the Experts define as being the in-subject this year). Adult education courses, LEA and WEA classes etc., may all be useful and meaningful, enriching one's everyday life and/or equipping one to fight to change it. But such courses may also be peddling commodity Culture, the Art instead of Life that is dead and that turns you into a necrophiliac snob. Anyone who just signs on for evening classes and then has to "pick" a course from the menu to "do" is probably a culture snob, wanting to make himself a cut above the next man.

There is much to be said for Leary's proposal to Harvard University: Politics of Ecstasy p 202 relevant bit about the Library, ending up "...you can still get very dangerous books without a prescription".

The expansion of adult education is therefore profoundly ambiguous: it may be a case of "the man addict-

ed to being taught, seeks security in compulsive teaching" (Illich); it may be substitute life colonising real life; it may be middle class values are invading working class communities; it may be that if we all became adult-education fiends we would be too busy studying "Sociology" to actually want to change society.

One or two institutions have experimented with community based study-for-action courses, but they tend to channel the "action" into Labourite channels and hence the "study" is correspondingly trivialised. Of its nature (revolutionary practice) the transcending of philistinism on the one hand, and commodity culture or theory-fetishism on the other, is something that is hard to achieve. Of their nature, career-conscious college lecturers or F.E. tutors are unlikely to "provide" it, even the new socially conscious breed - indeed especially them, for they are blind to their own irrelevancy.

An example of their heavy-handed style of "involvement", is a series of courses run by Keele University Adult Education Institute in Silverdale, a nearby mining village on the outskirts of the Potteries. It was billed as open to everyone, and no efforts were spared to insure a good attendance.

"They'll be above my head!"

Before you say that about these meetings and discussions, try one. You'll lose nothing, and you'll almost certainly be surprised.

The team of people who are coming from Keele to Silverdale are experts, but they know how to talk with people who are not—especially people who spend most of their lives at work, whether it be at the mine, in the potbank, in a shop or at the kitchen sink.

An interview with the Director of Adult Education revealed that, while culture was plentiful on the bill in Keele, down in Silverdale village there was a dearth, and it was the aim of these courses to even things up a bit. After the first introductory meeting the local paper had a photograph of a long table with a carafe of water on it and four distinguished speakers, the Rt Hon Lord Davies of Leek, His Worshipful the Mayor of Newcastle, and two Keele Professors!

Still, we mustn't carp: for as "experts they know how to talk with people who are not".

Doubtless some academic has done a paper proving that 4 Big Wigs and a Long Table was the authentic idiom of working class communication, before the bourgeoisified workers fell prey to all those adverts for pubs and clubs.

Students "going to" workers are often met with the indignant cry "get back to your books!" Yet in a different context (say in a pub) the same workers are quite capable of discounting some theory (e.g. workers' self-management) on the grounds that "you've only had it from books." In another context (say, watching a current affairs programme on education) some workers are apt to be unduly impressed by the lineup of Professors and "Expert" pundits, while in still another context they might reject anything they say on purely class-"instinctive" grounds. All this demonstrates clearly that deep ambivalence people feel towards Education and hence the possibilities of their own conscious self-education. (This ambivalence is not, or course, due to any psychological trait - a putative "A" factor for instance - it is an apt assessment of the Education actually prevailing which very often, but not always, is irrelevant, incompatible with the experience of everyday, naive or simply a status-symbol commodity offered for consumption from a hostile world of "Prestige and Power "Expertise").

Any movement for a redefinition of Education is going to have to explore these ambivalences and the ambiguities. There is as much good sense as "apathy" in choosing to watch "The Box" if the alternative is a High Culture gone to seed or Fabian study groups.

Telly - we take it for granted. With or without a pinch of supercilious "highbrow" snobbery. Yet who can deny the fantastic influence of the media? By the time children leave school they have probably spent many more hours in a room with a telly on, than in school. And what trash most programmes are! Obviously an important way of raising the cultural level of the masses is to raise the cultural standards of TV programmes.

What crass manipulative rubbish! So "we" know best that factory workers should get more Jane Eyre and Ancient Temples of Egypt stuffed down their throats. Television, for all its faults, is the major educative medium for millions of people, who watch many programmes not because they are mindless zombies with nothing better to do, as middle-class teachers fondly imagine, but because, however inadequately, these programmes do in some sense articulate their own life-experiences and aspirations. What I am saying is that television is a popular medium/art form which, for all its obvious faults, is almost the sole art form which could ever tie in adequately with their experience, in a way that actually changed everyday perceptions and hence generated consequences in the real world. Compare this with serialised Dickens, which however regrettably (or not) would be compartmentalised off into "programme on the telly" (as opposed to "this is me").

Current affairs programmes are obviously based on a feeble capitalist consensus (except for World in Action). Yet whatever construction the pundits put on the film footage, telly means that the man in the street now knows that America is bombing Vietnam to hell. They might still agree with America, but compare this with the French massacres in post-war Madagascar. Then the Frenchman in the street could only know of it through a little paragraph in Le Monde, under "other news". Then it could be denied that imperialism existed. Now, it cannot.

In other words, TV has its immensely positive aspects, as well as its negative aspects. The former derive from the technological possibilities for communication. The latter from the social relationships according to which the communications industry is controlled. Indeed, TV and radio do not properly speaking form a communication industry at all. (Communication implies two-way). The most we have is a mass distribution industry.

Now, the exciting thing is that this does not reside in the technological facts themselves; for instance, every transistor radio could be a transistor radio - transmitter. Of course, if this happened all of a sudden, the air would be full of interference in the short run and this is the reason the State gives to justify its monopoly of the air-waves. But such reasoning is invalidated by the increasing frequency-specificity of radios, as they could be built. So when Radio Caroline gets on the air, it is hounded off - the Government own the air! Your radios, oh plebs! are for receiving our messages. The Police and Securicops, on the other hand, get two way transistors.

The same authoritarianism is revealed by post war advances in all the other media technologies: radio-satellites, stereophony, tape-recorders, video-tapes, transistors, computers, data-banks, teleprinters, lasers, movie cameras, Xerox copying, lithography etc etc.

Television at present is one way, centralised, and State controlled. The new socialist culture could only come from the release of the fantastic potentialities of TV: radical decentralisation, advance into two way communication, multi-channels etc etc. Given these conditions a mass self learning process would be unleashed that would make nearly all the "Adult Education" courses in this country totally irrelevant. Yet freedom of expression exists only for the most short-range or minority-interest forms of communication (e.g. speech, theatre, poetry etc). The commanding heights of communications are controlled (and aborted) by the Bureaucracy, with its tame Englebert Humpledincks and Edward Lucie-Smiths. (Many of these ideas on the media were drawn from a marvellous article called "The Consciousness Industry" in New Left Review, 64, by Hans Magnus Enzenberger).

WHAT KIND OF GROUP? A CRITIQUE OF "TEACHERS RIGHTS".

Now, of course, as workers called Teachers there is no reason why R & F should want to concern themselves with

adult self-education. As a group professing to be concerned with "the general educational field", there is every reason. The demand for the resources, both IN and OFF FROM work, for self-education throughout one's life is a key demand in the Politics of libertarian education.

The question is - which do we see as more important? Our own advancement in the short-term as teachers? OR the kind of qualitative educational demands which threaten to explode the connection between education and State control, and so return a modest thoughtfulness and creativity to the everyday arena from which it has been stolen by the institutionalised Monopoly of School?

Even if you choose (legitimately) to restrict one's concerns to the welfare of teachers, what does this mean? Can one so restrict one's concerns without taking a restricted view also of what constitutes the welfare of the teacher? Does one only measure the presence or absence of this "welfare" by wages and hours worked? Or does one measure such presence or absence by other indices too - such as the turn over, mental

illness rate, the ulcer count etc? And if we are to admit such symptoms into our calculations, can we really con ourselves that this would all be reduced all that much by the normal run of solutions? Or hasn't it got everything to do with the exhausting everyday wear and tear of teaching which comes from being locked up in a classroom with kids who wouldn't necessarily choose to be there?

It follows that a major factor in improving teachers' welfare would be to abolish compulsory education. Item One on a Teachers' Charter: "No teacher shall have to teach children who are not interested". Even for teachers to be intelligently self-regarding, they are forced back to the issue of freedom, the qualitative policies of experience.

An example: a friend told me of how he had spoken with another left-wing teacher in the school where he worked about the school tuck shop, which he felt should be under the control of the pupils. His colleague had disagreed vehemently and accused my friend of being anti-Union: didn't he realize that there was a negotiated allowance for teachers in charge of tuck-shops? My friend was indeed anti-Union so long as the Union was asserting Teachers' Rights over against the Rights of Children. An extreme example of this static quantitative politics might be the "Right" of Teacher to maintain "Order" in "His" class by Corporal Punishment. Instead my friend was looking to a vision of a satisfying communal life, where teachers true rights (the right to enjoy "work") could not be established at the expense of children's rights. (Incidentally, both teachers describe themselves as anarchists

In the University context, Tom Wengraf, among others, has made the point that the demand by staff for "academic freedom" is synonymous with the corporate irresponsibility of academic staff, unless it can be shared by the students. In other words the value of the notion of "teachers' rights" depends on whom those rights are being asserted over against.

Nobody, least of all me, is saying that teachers should be badly paid.

I am however saying that senior teachers should be. Differentials of any sort should be attacked, I believe. The teachers, like every other industry, should get the average wage (adjusted for size of family). But this is another story.

However, unless R & F also confronts the qualitative issue of freedom to learn, there is a danger of their qualitative demands serving as a mere deflection from the basic alienation teachers undergo. A teacher could be very militant in R & F on this sort of an (implicit) basis: "For such a lousy job as teaching one deserves a bit extra". Danger money in the Black-board Jungles!

Let us by all means try to ensure that our services be well rewarded economically, but let us not put the cart before the horse: our everyday social exchanges must be rewarding or else not a million pounds can compensate us for the loss of our souls. So long as we and our pupils are enslaved to the logic of compulsory schooling, with us cast as junior warders, we warders will always "need" more pay! There is no ducking the issue of freedom to learn.

The logic of compulsory schooling could also capture R & F in the following way. Because opportunities for self-education have been so diminished and institutionalised in the wider society, simply to abolish the compulsory aspect of schooling by itself would not help matters much. Many teachers recognise this latter proposition and, thinking that there is no alternative, are prepared to accept the logic of compulsion in education. Without fighting that logic, R & F could never gain control of the N.U.T., while still retaining an anti-authoritarian platform. In exchange for intra-Union power, it might well be tempted to do a deal with communist teachers, career Headmasters and other authoritarians.

An even more realistic way would be to advocate NO COMPULSORY SCHOOLING together with measures to improve the educative impact of opportunities in the wider society. If R & F could propose specific alternatives to the school way of educating oneself, and actually point to a few pilot experiments and relevant social trends, then its task of persuading teachers to drop compulsory schooling would be greatly helped and its whole anti-authoritarian programme would become realistic among teachers.

Thus the wages and conditions aspect interlink decisively with the question of the abolition of schooling and the promotion of an educative environment.

Unless it puts the qualitative educational aspect of freedom to learn in an educative society at the very centre of its programme, R & F is condemned to be little more than a hotted-up corpse of traditional unionism.

SOYEZ REALISTE, DEMANDEZ L'IMPOSSIBLE!

After making these, possibly over-critical remarks, one can endorse fully the Teachers' Right R & F have been agitating for - Security of Tenure, Freedom from the arbitrary Authority of Headmasters. Any elbow room we can get by collective or individual means, is all to the good.

Herbert Kohl's "The Open Classroom" suggests ways of getting by with the minimum of intervention from On High. However he writes of American schools which are larger and less personal. In this country the Headmaster can generally get to hear of unconventional practices, or worse, is actually of the liberal type who "takes an active interest", who "likes to see how you're getting on" etc.

One other way of expanding elbow room is to be an educator away from the school itself for a considerable proportion of one's time. Naturally there is a danger of "bad behaviour" being reported to the Head or "Amazing Subversion Attempt" to the readers of the News of the World, but in many situations away from school, it ought to be a friendly, informative, interested, interesting adult, rather than Teacher.

In general, libertarians should look to systematically blur the boundaries between education and life. Immediately the phrase "Education for Life" springs to mind. But this is a fusion of the two on the terms of Schooling: it represents the colonisation of the everyday realm by the idea that we need to be taught how to exist in it. (In America many schools even teach "social adjustment" classes, including how to shake hands with Pop's Business Associates!)

"Education for Life" is a bad joke. Education for Life is what libertarian education/living is all about. This may be helpful by such ideas as environmental studies; projects requiring independent and/or group research; matching kids (kids matching themselves) with needy people or specially interesting people in the community; visits and work-camp experiences; participation in voluntary organisations; foreign exchanges; stays at various kinds of independent Centres; temporary apprenticeships with workers or professionals (e.g. a film crew).

Starting from a non-school context, there are many ways in which libertarians could make a difference, but they could all be grouped together under the head: EXPANDING OPPORTUNITIES FOR INCIDENTAL EDUCATION.

SECURITY OF TENURE AND LIBERTARIAN PRAXIS.

There is a great danger that the

cry of "community education" will be taken up in a way that makes matters no better whatsoever. Some years ago in psychiatry there was a great to-do about "community care" as opposed to institutionalisation in mental hospitals. However there was no conscious effort to identify and combat those anti-therapeutic forces and structures in the environment which had driven people to need special care in the first place; the result was that a crucial insight (there is no special category of mentally therapeutic people or relationships) simply served to legitimate skimping on mental health expenditures, without leading to a healthier society.

Thus when Goodman insists that "incidental education, taking part in the on-going activity of society, should be the chief means of learning" it is necessary to prevent this crucial realisation from becoming linked with cuts on education spending and providing a convenient rationale for those who believe that "one third of the nation's children are ineducable" (as the present Minister of Education does).

On the other hand there is a danger that community education will be incorporated by the power structure, e.g. practical work-experience resulting in higher profits for an employer and "improved attitudes to authority" among the young. This latter danger is in my view real, but full of promise: for any revolt of youth in such circumstances would be grounded in personal involvement in everyday reality, instead of spending itself in "revolutionary" wankings on isolated campuses.

Goodman himself is well aware that "the actual activities of society either corrupt or exploit the young" (but so does the schooling process) and therefore suggests that "the chief task of educators is to see to it that activities of society provide incidental education, if necessary inventing new useful activities offering new educational opportunities."

("The Present Moment in Education", Anarchy 107). And we may add if necessary fighting against those anti-educational aspects of our environment such as Top-Down Management Information Control, "little boxes" architecture and the nuclear family, Toy Industry, lack of nurseries and creches, etc.

To take only one area: exploitative and restrictive apprenticeships schemes work to spin out over four years what could easily be learnt in a few months by the average apprentice. For the teachers to worry over the souls of their charges until they are fifteen and then without protest to watch them enter a four year course of stupefying and mental Super Exploitation, is sheer hypocrisy. Teachers should be concerned to follow through with their pupils and to the point up to the public the educative (or non-educative) nature of their later environments. At the national level, affiliation to the TUC should ideally lead to an all out challenge within the TUC against the way apprentices are treated. Members of the NUT should offer to make themselves

available to other unions in helping to redesign these courses with the full participation of the unions and the apprentices themselves.

Which brings us to the last area in which groups of conscious educationalists (as opposed to simple school teachers) can start to operate links with the developing youth movement.

YOUTH IN THE VAN OF REVOLT AGAINST SCHOOLING.

So far, we have failed seriously to do justice to the role of the pupils in their own liberation: "the emancipation of the proletariat must be the task of the proletariat itself" (Marx). As the proletariat of the school system, it seems clear to me that school pupils and college students must increasingly lead the way in destroying educational authoritarianism, and in de-institutionalising the definition of education.

Illich speaks of schools becoming a sort of training ground for techniques of revolt against the Welfare State. In this connection it seems to me that the playful mocking of Authority as developed by the Pupils may well be an appropriate weapon, especially if the mocking constantly "goes too far". (I am not talking of the once-a-year review which schools, colleges and hospitals have developed to function as a safety-valve).

Ragging teachers is, of course, an ancient school sport. Looked at from the standpoint of changing Education, it tends to be purely reactive and often does not discriminate: although in any particular situation it may induce a teacher to drop such and such a detested practice, ragging can also lead to relatively humane teachers becoming vicious bastards. However, discriminating ragging in connection with a programme of demands and in conjunction with other forms of opposition to schooling could be a considerable advance.

The important thing is to recognise that a genuinely popular idiom of revolt already exists and that this idiom, with all its faults, will and must be one element in an overall synthesis. (The other elements being the SAU-type approach and constructive self-education e.g. in independent discussion groups). If the playful antics of working-class primary school children can ever connect with the earnest idealism of sixthformers wow!

In the same way school pupils have always resisted, but their resistance, although often social and not individualistic, has been isolated and only proto-political in consequence. It has always lacked the consciousness of its own public legitimacy. Vandalism of school facilities continues apace, and is even increasing - leading to local authority education committee proposals for arming school caretakers with Alsatians!

[Incidentally, so resolutely does the bourgeois public suppress the proto-political meaning of vandalism, that, at the time of the Keele "troubles" of 1970, no papers mentioned the simple fact that school kids have been



smashing things and throwing paint for years! More interestingly, even if the students at Keele had seen the elementary connection, few even of those who approved the vandalism would have wanted the papers to point out the connections. Perhaps there is such a thing as "responsible" extremism?]

It seems clear that libertarians are on the same side as vandals. Not to support those who are undergoing a 10 year process of cultural denigration and the rape of their autonomy, is to fail to realise the desperate things that schools do to their pupils. When Archbishop Bloom tells it like it is: "We Do Murder To Our Children", every one can agree. But when a group of children react as if they were being in some sense murdered, then a thousand manicured hands are raised in horror and all the old clichés about "senseless vandalism" are trotted out.

The vandalism is NOT senseless; nor of course, is it constructive or creative. It may be a bad tactic to use but this is a possibility that we should raise for discussion as tactics with the pupils whose independent praxis it represents - not ours. In other places used against specific targets e.g. exam papers and as part of an overall campaign in the school, vandalism makes a lot of sense.

Either way the job of libertarians is to relate to this anger and this willingness to fight back so that young people select outlets which they increasingly see will lead to real increases in their everyday freedom.

One way might be to write very simple explanations of the process of schooling and to distribute these discretely among alienated children and youths. Not that most of them, by definition, haven't an inarticulate understanding of what is being done to them - far from it. The aim would be to begin to suggest the possibilities of revolt becoming revolution, of private hitting out becoming public and purposeful hitting-back. To see their own perceptions and anger articulated in print (the Janet and John/"Them" medium, remember) is the first step towards the formation of a political consciousness of their being a group for itself, and away

from isolated and sporadic reactions: a la Beano. (Of course, it is even better if the duplicated sheets that circulate clandestinely - as in Russia - are written by the school pupils themselves, and not for them.)

However, the whole area is immensely delicate, and the LHM provides crushing penalties for "corrupting minors" (e.g. prosecution of the OZ school kids issue, written by the school kids). Therefore such an operation would have to be done with the greatest care (e.g. use of non-traceable paper, duplicators and typewriter).

One of the key demands in any school must be the right of the kids to organise independently. The development of the Schools Action Unions is of the utmost importance here. Apart from leading, one hopes, to elementary rights concerning dress, dignity and decency, the schools action unions should begin to challenge major educational practices, such as exams. Once they are confident enough of themselves, (and only then) the kids should accept genuinely libertarian teachers as equal members i.e. as prepared to be delegated by the group. No other basis for admittance is satisfactory since willingness to ally themselves with their pupils is probably the best touchstone for separating left-libertarians from left-authoritarians and liberals. Although the decision to admit them obviously belongs to the pupils/students, libertarian "adults" could prove helpful in broadening the struggle. ("Broadening the struggle" is not here meant, as it often is, as a code word for manipulation by a revolutionary faction.)

In return for contracting certain duties toward the group, the libertarian "adult" would also enjoy certain benefits from his association with the kids ON THEIR SIDE. Security of Tenure for teachers might come to depend increasingly on the sort of support they would get from students and staff if they were sacked. (Witness the embarrassment of the authorities following student demonstrations at Holland Park Comprehensive School, Market Drayton Grove school, the L.S.E., and Hornsey.)

Security of tenure would take on a new dimension if the positive discrimination (solidarity) of pupils became as powerful as their negative discrimination (ragging etc.).

In a similar way it is naive for libertarians to expect to force reforms through the N.U.T. (let alone the Government), by sheer good arguing. Only when pressures exist from kids as well as from a few teachers for an exams boycott, would any impact be made to counter the tremendous pressures for examinations and grading coming from industry, and very definitely within teaching itself. The same holds good for compulsory attendance.

Creative vandalism

This old transformer chamber, belonging to the London Electricity Board, was a dirty green colour with the paint flaking off. Four boys, without asking anyone's permission, repainted it gold, black and white. The police arrived in large numbers and took names and addresses; but returned an hour later to say that the LEB had permitted painting to continue. 'By the end of the day the structure resembled a delicate middle-eastern mosque, its pinnacle of gold reflecting the setting sun.'



Again it would be naive to imagine that left wing teachers on their own could persuade the Unions to reform their shocking apprenticeship practices. Working class young people need allies, maybe, but it is they who will provide the main thrust of any opposition to their phony "apprenticeship schemes". At present, working class youths have been so sat on and shat on by most school teachers, that they are unlikely to trust initiatives from any teachers favourably (and rightly; the Blacks and the women in the U.S. could neither develop until they broke away from white/male hegemony, even especially the hegemony of white/male liberals and progressives.)

This is all to the good, but it rules out the possibility of left-libertarian teachers coming in on the early stages of a movement of working class youth (if it ever were to materialise independently of an overall militant movement of workers). Eventually, however, when the apprentices get marching, we teachers must be prepared to join in at the end.

If the apprentices end up smashing exploitative dance-halls, or if a few managers or union officials get the boot put in, then this violence is not something we are entitled to maralise about: it is the violence of their whole socialisation process coming home to roost.

Like vandalism, all this is not very pretty, but violence of a sort (personal, uncalculated, non-regimented and short-term) is probably necessary for many people if they are ever to pass through to the constructive aspects of revolution. I wish I could think otherwise.

(Also note that I do not see the revolution as two mechanically successive stages, construction following on from destruction.)

The youth movement in this country is still very fragmented. Perhaps it will never get going seriously until the lead up to an overall revolution by mass-movement. Either way, as it gets underway, we can expect that many of its demands will fall exactly into the category of encouraging incidental education, e.g.

- (1) abolition of compulsory school;
- (2) a minimum youth wage;
- (3) youth centres under full youth control;
- (4) end to police harassment;
- (5) legalisation of non-addictive drugs;
- (6) free availability of contraception;
- (7) residential hostels for young people to live away from home for short or long periods;
- (8) equality with university students in standards of accommodation etc.
- (9) more numerous facilities for outdoor sports, including adventure facilities in the mountains, and outdoor sports in general. (At present the main opportunity for working class kids to experience "adventure" is to join the Army.)
- (10) end to discrimination in cafes, dance halls etc against young people;
- (11) youth radio stations, run by young people, etc. etc.



THANKS TO TEACHERS AND EXAMS, COMPETITIVENESS STARTS AT NINE. Sorbonne

Libertarian teachers should be willing to help run summer free schools or anti-courses or skill and interest-making schemes in conjunction with schools action unions, or courses designed to be of use and of interest to working class kids. In addition to supporting the demands of youth (i.e. from Authority), they should encourage young people to dispense with Authority, where possible, through constructive self-help, e.g. voluntary mutual aid with the drugs scene, co-operative libraries for records and pamphlets, co-operative discotheques, more free concerts etc, etc; these may well be vehicles for real education.

At present, adults attempt to contain youth through officially approved outlets such as boys clubs and Shelter weeks and Oxfam walks, and school citizenship councils. Although in some schools such activities are better than nothing, in many schools libertarian teachers should avoid being associated with anything smacking of "the idealism of the youth today, blah blah". After ten years of having their civil liberties confiscated in school, most fifteen year olds are ready to assert themselves a bit. After years of giving in and paying attention, a bit of old fashioned "selfish" taking is the pre-condition for the re-emergence, spontaneously, of a real, not manipulated idealism.

The youth movement is important in another way: aspects of its culture are as good as anything the School Music Dept has to offer, or the official school poetry text-books. Although much of youth culture is commercialised or trivial, there is much that - dare one say it - even R. S. Peters could profitably groove to. Here is an obvious basis for sharing, dialogue, two-way education, or else for campaigns to have one's culture recognised as

valid in school itself. However, as with all worthwhile demands this could lead to a dangerous incorporation - A Level Music - Discuss the work of the Grateful Dead in their early and later phases. Compare and contrast!

**I AM YOUNG,
MY BROTHER
IS BLACK,
WE ARE
ANGRY.**

Sorbonne

God made the bees
The bees make honey;
We do the work
The teacher gets the money.

young comrade.

The Revolutionary Potential of De-Schooling

Of course school is not, by any means, the only modern institution which has as its primary purpose the shaping of man's vision of reality. Advertising, mass media and the design components of engineered products play their part in the institutional manipulation of man's demands. But school enslaves more profoundly and more systematically, since only school is credited with the principal function of forming critical judgement and, paradoxically, tries to do so by making learning about oneself, about others, and about nature depend on a pre-packaged process. School touches us so intimately that none of us can expect to be liberated from it by something else. We can only imagine other schools.

Many self-styled revolutionaries are victims of school. They see even "liberation" as the product of an institutional process. Only liberating oneself from school will dispel such illusions. The discovery that most learning requires no teaching can be neither manipulated nor planned. Each of us is personally responsible for his or her own de-schooling, and only we have the power to do it. No one can be excused if he fails to liberate himself from schooling. People could not free themselves from the Crown until at least some of them had freed themselves from the established Church. They cannot free themselves from progressive consumption until

they free themselves from obligatory school.

We are all involved in schooling, from both the side of production and that of consumption. We are superstitiously convinced that good learning can and should be produced in us-and that we can produce it in others. Our attempt to withdraw from the concept of the school will reveal the resistance we find in ourselves when we try to renounce limitless consumption and the pervasive presumption that others can be manipulated for their own good. No one is fully exempt from exploitation of others in the schooling process.

School is both the largest and the most anonymous employer of all. Indeed, the school is the best example of a new kind of enterprise, succeeding the guild, the factory and the corporation. The multi-national corporations which have dominated the economy are now being complemented, and may one day be replaced, by supra-nationally planned service agencies. These enterprises present their services in ways that make all men feel obliged to consume them. They are internationally standardized, redefining the value of their services periodically and everywhere at approximately the same rhythm.

"Transportation" relying on new cars and superhighways serves the same institutionally packaged need for comfort, prestige, speed and gadgetry, whether its components are

produced by the state or not. The apparatus of "medical care" defines a peculiar kind of health, whether the service is paid for by the state or by the individual. Graded promotion in order to obtain diplomas fits the student for a place on the same international pyramid of qualified manpower, no matter who directs the school.

In all these cases, employment is a hidden benefit: the driver of a private automobile, the patient who submits to hospitalization, or the pupil in the schoolroom must now be seen as part of a new class of "employees". A libertarian movement which starts in school, and yet is grounded in the awareness of teachers and pupils as simultaneously exploiters and exploited, could foreshadow the revolutionary strategies of the future; for a radical programme of de-schooling could train youth in the new style of revolution needed to challenge a social system featuring obligatory "health", "wealth" and "security".

The risks of a revolt against school are unforeseeable, but they are not as horrible as those of a revolution starting in any other major institution. School is not yet organized for self-protection as effectively as a nation state, or even a large corporation. Liberation from the grip of schools could be bloodless. The weapons of the truant officer and his allies in the courts and employment agencies might take very cruel measures against the individual offender, especially if he or she were very poor, but they might turn out to be powerless against the surge of a mass movement.

School has become a social problem; it is being attacked on all sides, and citizens and their governments sponsor unconventional experiments all over the world. They resort to unusual statistical devices in order to keep faith and save face. The mood among some educators is much like the mood among Catholic bishops after the Vatican Council. The curricula of so-called "free schools" resemble the liturgies of folk and rock masses. The demands of high-school students to have a say in choosing their teachers are as strident as those of parishioners demanding to select their pastors. But the stakes for society are much higher if a significant minority loses its faith in schooling. This would not



only endanger the survival of the economic order built on the coproduction of goods and demands, but equally the political order built on the nation-state into which students are delivered by the school.

Our options are clear enough. Either we continue to believe that institutionalized learning is a product which justifies unlimited investment or we rediscover that legislation and planning and investment, if they have any place in formal education, should be used mostly to tear down the barriers that now impede opportunities for learning which can only be a personal activity.

If we opt for more and better instruction, society will be increasingly dominated by sinister schools and totalitarian teachers. Doctors, generals and policemen will continue to serve as secular arms of the educator. There will be no winners in this deadly game, but only exhausted frontrunners, a straining middle sector, and the mass of stragglers who must be bombed out of their fields into the rat race of urban life. Pedagogical therapists will drug their pupils more in order to teach them better, and students will drug themselves more to gain relief from the pressures of teachers and the race for certificates. Pedagogical warfare in the style of Vietnam will be increasingly justified as the only way of teaching people the value of unending progress.

Repression will be seen as a missionary effort to hasten the coming of the mechanical Messiah. More and more countries will resort to the pedagogical torture already implemented in Brazil and Greece. This pedagogical torture is not used to extract information or to satisfy the psychic needs of Hitlerian sadists. It relies on random terror to break the integrity of an entire population and make it plastic material for the teachings invented by technocrats. The totally destructive and constantly progressive nature of obligatory instruction will fulfill its ultimate logic unless we begin to liberate ourselves right now from our pedagogical hubris, our belief that man can do what God cannot, namely manipulate others for their own salvation.

Many people are just awakening to the inexorable destr-

uction which present production trends imply for the environment, but individuals have only very limited power to change these trends. The manipulation of men and women begun in school has also reached a point of no return, and most people are still unaware of it. They still encourage school reform, as Henry Ford III proposes less poisonous automobiles.

Daniel Bell says that our epoch is characterized by an extreme disjunction between cultural and social structures, the one being devoted to apocalyptic attitudes, the other to technocratic

decision making. This is certainly true for many educational reformers, who feel impelled to condemn almost everything which characterizes modern schools- and at the same time propose new schools.

In his book "The Structure of Scientific Revolution", Thomas Kuhn argues that such dissonance inevitably precedes the emergence of a new cognitive paradigm. The facts reported by those who observed free fall by those who returned from the other side of the earth, and by those who used the new telescope did not fit into the Ptolomaic world view. Quite suddenly, the Copernican paradigm was accepted. The dissonance which characterizes many of the young today is not so much cognitive but a matter of attitudes- a feeling about what a tolerable society cannot be like. What is surprising about this dissonance is the ability of a very large number of people to tolerate it.

The capacity to pursue incongruous goals requires an explanation. According to Max Gluckman, all societies have procedures to hide dissonances from their members. He suggests that this is the purpose of ritual. Rituals can hide from their participants even discrepancies and conflicts between social principle and social organization. As long as an individual is not explicitly conscious of the ritual character of the process through which he was initiated to the forces which shape his cosmos, he cannot break the spell and shape a new cosmos. As long as we are not aware of the ritual through which school shapes the progressive consumer- the economy's major resource- we cannot break the spell of this economy and shape a new one."

Riot, revolution and unrest are taking over from the three R's in Britain's schools as mini-agitators in blazers and gymslips spell out what they think are their rights.

TIT-BITS 3 APRIL 1970

REPEAT after me... A is for Anarchy, B is for Bolshie, C is for Chaos. For, in a few years' time, this could be the new kind of teaching alphabet in schools. A dangerous new trend is developing in Britain's classrooms and riot, revolution and unrest are taking over from the three Rs. Mini-agitators in blazers and gymslips are aping their elders in all the oh-so-familiar techniques of "civil disobedience." From the First Form upwards, we are beginning to breed a new race of pint-sized trouble-makers who resent any kind of discipline or social order. Every day, our children are exposed to the ideologies and catch-phrases of disruption. From demos in the streets. From radio and TV. Even from resentful parents or misguided "progressive" teachers. It is not surprising that the weapons our schoolchildren have picked up are now being turned on everything from individual teachers to the educational system.

No discipline

One London headmaster told me: "The whole idea of school discipline and respect for authority is breaking down."

COLLEGES OF EDUCATION: Groping suggestions from someone very much in the dark.

"The man addicted to being taught seeks his security in compulsive teaching." (Illick)

What can one say? Simply that many colleges of education are unbelievably stultifying, repressive and philistine places. Others are "liberal" and somewhat more alive. But basically they share in the inanities of schooling twice over, for they are schools for schools.

(1) Recognise the basic Power set-up:

Recognise that you won't get anything fundamental just by asking politely and arguing by the light of Immortal Reason. The Principal is Top Dog, together with the Governors. The staff are more up than down. And you're at the bottom. All authority is a usurpation of your right to determine your own existence/education.

(2) Try to realise a Community of Scholars:

Try to educate yourself, and to get education, not just schooling, discussed. Criticize and challenge everything you disagree with. Choose your own essays, gravitate towards the most interesting students and staff to learn with and from them; read only books you choose to read.

If you think (1) and (2) are contradictory you are dead right! So:-

(3) Work out which situation you are in:

In any particular situation, eg, tutorial, work out which is the dominant reality- Community of Scholars, Intellectual Freedom, etc., OR Academic Power Structure, Freedom for the Acquiescent, etc.

Unless the situation is clearly the former, in which case there is no problem- go ahead and do your thing-, you will have to make a choice: (a) to fight the real issue openly, obstinately, refusing to be silent until your point is answered, the pettyfogging restriction is removed, etc. etc.; or, (b) to lie doggo, con, greeze, fiddle, lie, cheat, copy, steal, or any other subterfuge appropriate to an underground existence in enemy-occupied territory. (Warning: too much of that latter course can be demoralising. When lying gets to be automatic and you don't even realize that the choice of saying what you really thought was open to you, then it's time for you to get out to a different milieu where you can be authentic.)

Above all, don't MIX STRATEGIES. eg, don't lie to a member of staff who really is on your side (there aren't many in a crunch); likewise, don't advocate the abolition of schooling in an exam if you want to get past! This not mixing strategies applies particularly to T.P. which is fraught with difficulties for the libertarian.

(4) Don't be fooled by phony reforms:

eg, students on a disciplinary committee, continuous assessment, a non-decision making consultative committee which only acts as a buffer, etc. Also, don't put forward bureaucratic proposals a la N.U.S. for students on the body which decides the curriculum. Even 50% on this committee still leaves it the body which dictates what you and your fellows shall or shall not study. Participation in one's own academic domination is not where it's at! If one believes in the simple proposition of self-direction in study, it really doesn't need staff or students to tell anyone (However, a genuine widening of options could be a meaningful reform).

(5) Don't fall for "Student Power" posturings.

These are often a substitute for real action and real self-education. Many "student power" demands are formalist in so far as they are too strongly concerned with organisational measures (forms) for more (formal) schooling. They are rarely concerned with directly realising (or sketching forth) the substance of a free educational system. By all means argue hard and be prepared to really fight for college reforms that would make a real difference, eg, reduction of work load, abolition of mid-year class tests, right to design own syllabus, right to choose essays (if genuine- and you aren't really still obliged to censor yourselves in your choice- so as not to "abuse your privileges"). Sit-ins, work-to-rule, laugh-ins, play-ins, and various forms of direct action may all be effective in winning these

MEMORANDUM from the SENIOR TUTOR

10th December, 1969

Dear Mr. [redacted],

Unless I am very much mistaken you were absent from the last two classes in the P.2 Statistics course in Psychology; the one piece of written work which was required during the term you did complete, but carelessly and in a way which suggested considerable hurry and lack of concern.

realistic goals. However, if there is no prospect of victory, or if the sit-in becomes an end in itself, or merely symbolic action, not direct action, then the action will be demoralizing in the long run. This is not to say that where the action is realistic, direct and for real, it may not also be a valuable experience in itself providing a powerful common symbol of resistance to oppression, or even taking on a creative cultural life of its own (à la Hornsey). It is to say that these come into the bargain as it were, and not if the sit-in becomes an end in itself.

(6) Don't Confine your action to college issues:

Here is Paul Goodman talking about students who confine their demands to issues within their insitutions:

"Among radical students I am met with a sullen silence. They want Student Power and are unwilling to answer whether they are authentically students at all. That's not where it's at. (I think they're brain-washed). Instead of "Student Power", however, what they should be demanding is a more open entry into society, spending the education money more usefully, licensing and hiring without irrelevant diplomas, and so forth. And there is an authentic demand for Young People's Power, their right to take part in initiating and deciding the functions of society that concern them- as well, of course, as governing their own lives, which are nobody else's business. Bear in mind that we are speaking of ages seventeen to twenty-five, when at all other times the young would already have been launched into the real world. The young have the right to power because they are numerous and are directly affected by what goes on, but

**"What would happen if I worked harder?"
'Nothing'**

**- BE
A BAD
STUDENT
TOMORROW**

especially because their new point of view is indispensable to cope with changing conditions, they themselves being part of the changing conditions.

Perhaps the chief advantage of incidental education rather than schooling is that the young can then carry on their movement informed and programmatic, grounded in experience and competence, whereas "Student Power", grounded in a phony situation, is usually symbolic and often mere spite." (Anarchy, 107)

(7) Don't get co-opted

Never join the power structure except under direct mandate from fellow students for the most unambiguous short-term objective. After that pull out. Beware of getting ensnared in NUS bureaucracy. Don't identify Union General Meetings as the only form of "action" available to you. (Beware the orator bug!) Beware getting pacified by friendly but liberal tutors who will hardly ever risk their security on a matter of principle, no matter how much they seem to appreciate you and your ideas. (You'll be the same when you are a teacher! - or will you?)

(8) Be prepared to get sacked:

So what if you get chucked out for sitting in/smoking pot/stealing the exam papers/painting the college the night before open day/saying what you think/fomenting subversion/selling left or libertarian literature/failing an exam because you chose to study your own interests, etc. etc.? Like I've just been saying for the last 40,000 words- education does not equal schooling. If you are going to drop out, go with a bang so they are forced to kick you out for some outrage, eg, sitting on your exam papers, eloping with the principal's daughter. Then shake the dust from off your feet and start educating yourself, eg live off the dole and study in the nearest library, go and live in a commune, hitch through America, buy a copy of the Whole Earth Catalogue, anything for REAL is educational.

(9) Don't get disheartened:

You'll probably find 85% of the college just doesn't seem interested. Instead they put all their energies into the approved substitute directions: rugger; moaning about the food; TV goggling; pinball, rag, etc.

Keep at it! Remember how deeply alienated most of them have been by the schooling process, how they've "learnt the nightmare" of failure so they are frightened to think and discuss for themselves. And don't

grow into a sort of scornful schizoid state in which you end up calling everyone a cabbage because they aren't interested in what you in your wisdom consider the "worthwhile activities" (shades of R.S. Peters!). How do you know that they aren't ready and willing to unthaw if you don't appear so clever and threatening to them? How do you know that the reason they aren't interested in your proposal is that it's too bureaucratic in the NUS idiom, too remote and that they would get interested if you really made a break with past proposals- even if at first they laughed? Calling people cabbages is the mark of the isolated, demoralised militant. But of course people are apathetic! That's what you're in business to try to change. APATHY IS NO EXCUSE!

(10) DO YOUR THING

On the other hand, if you really can't make headway, no matter, go ahead and do your thing with whoever you can get together with who is interested. "Your thing" might be anything from making love to yoga, to reading Paul Goodman to encounter groups to guerilla theatre- any interest which is FOR REAL and not phony like most of the things you learn in class. If you want to be a teacher remember that you will be of far more use to your students if you develop your interests and personality to a maximum than if you "sacrifice yourself" endlessly reading books on education and methodology to "prepare yourself"! Remember too that in many ways it is more subversive to ignore authority (and do your thing) as it is to fight authority. (The problem being that authority won't ignore you!)

(11) Maybe get involved in the community

Ordinary people are interesting animals, much more so than the stereotypes (not just right wing) suggest. You can learn more about society from a crook or a tramp or a so-called loon or a shop steward or a housewife or a bingo-hall manager or a priest than you can learn from many a sociology lecturer.

Learn how they learn, have an eye for the informal arrangements that normal surveys screen out- such as one neighbour teaching another how to fish, lorrydrivers taking their kids on a continental run, etc.

By talking with people, try to work out what the biggest local problem is- TO THEM. Tape record them as they try to articulate their worries, insights, hopes, etc. Go into the factual research side (agitprop may

be able to help). Bring out a pamphlet which welds the factual research stuff with people's own articulations and experiences, the edited transcript of the tapes. Try to start on an action group on the problem, but BUT DON'T SUBSTITUTE YOURSELF for local initiative. If it doesn't happen, it doesn't happen! (12) Maybe try other forms of incidental education: For instance (1) try to start a matchmaking service for skill-training or book and problem discussion in your college, community or city; (2) (if female) go into your own social role, your personality as a woman, why women rarely

TALK WITH US

UNDERSTANDING IS FREE

UNDERSTAND US

WE ARE PART OF ONE ANOTHER

NO MORE THEM AGAINST US

EACH ONE IS INDISPENSABLE

TALKING AND WORKING TOGETHER

WE CREATE AN EDUCATION

EDUCATION MEANS

A LIFETIME GROWING WISER

IS THERE ANYTHING MORE IMPORTANT?

WISDOM EQUALS THOUGHT

ALIVE WITH FEELING

WHAT ELSE CAN ANSWER OUR QUESTIONS?

THE QUIET NOISE OF WISDOM WORKING

THAT IS THE REVOLUTION

contribute in meaningful discussions, etc. Start a college women's liberation group (literature via agitprop); (3) leaflet a few local schools or (better) get to know a couple of friendship networks among school kids, and encourage them to start projects (such as discussion groups they invite speakers to) and not to rely on the schooling rat-race.

(13) Maybe do a pamphlet (or film, etc) for your college or for national distribution:

eg, a slam on Bantock or Bruner (much needed) or the need to abolish exams or the principle of free communication or ANYTHING that you are interested in and bugs you. (I may be able to help in so far as the network of contacts built up for "Down With School" can be used by anyone in the movement to contact other people in training colleges. Also, I can advise a little on production, etc.)

(14) STUDENTS OR MEN AND WOMEN?

"Do not wish to be a student in contrast to being a man. Do not study as a student, but as a man who is alive and who cares. Leave the isolated world of ideological fantasy, allow your ideas to become part of your living, and your living to become part of your ideas" (Tom Hayden)

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Douglas, J.W.B.: "The Home and the School", Panther Books.

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Hargreaves, D.H.: "Social Relations in The Secondary School"; Routledge 32s.

Partridge, J.: "Life in A Secondary Modern School"; Penguin, 5/-.

Rubinstein and Stoneman (eds): "Education for Democracy", Penguin Education Special, 5s., Some banal stuff, but excellent chapters by Bernstein (+) Albert Hunt (+), Michael Duane, and one or two others.

John and Margaret Rowntree: "The Political Economy of Education- Youth as a Class" (available via Agitprop, first printed in Our Generation)

Frank Musgrove: "Youth and The Social Order"; Routledge 25s.

The Opies: "The Language and Life of The Child" OUP; "Children's Games in School and Playground"

STUDENTS

+ "The Student As Nigger", Jerry Farber.
+ "Ten Days That Shook The University", available from B.C.M./King Mob; London WC1, 3s.
"Student Power", (eds) Cockburn and Blackburn; Penguin 7s. (some gaseous posturing, but much good material.)
"Student Power" (ed) Julian Nagel, Merlin Press (especially article by Dick Atkinson on "The Academic Situation")
"LSE and Liberalism", by David Adelstein; 2s. from the LSE Graduate Society, c/o LSE
"The Hornsey Affair": students and staff of Hornsey College of Art (Penguin Education Special

Tom Wengraf: "ON Transforming the social relations of Production- the Student" May Day Manifesto: Bulletin No 14/15, May/June, 1969.

BOOKS OF MORE GENERAL INTEREST WITH GREAT RELEVANCE TO LIBERTARIAN EDUCATION.

- + Krimmerman and Perry(eds) "Patterns of Anarchy"; with section on Education, including extracts from Read, Ferrer, Godwin, Goodman and Tolstoy; Doubleday Anchor, 20s. %
- +C.W. Article and Extracts on "The Peckham Experiment", Mnarchy 60, %
- + Martin Buber: "Between Man and Man"; Fontana
- + Aldous Huxley: "Island"; Penguin, 4s. 6d. %
- + William Morris: "News From Nowhere"; Monthly Review; 36s. or sections in "Selected Writings" ed. Asa Briggs, Penguin, 7s. 6d.
- + Paul Goodman: "Communitas", Vintage Books V174 %
- Jane Jacobs: + "The Life and Death of Great American Cities"; Vintage Books, V241
- + Carl Rogers and Barry Stevens, et al: "Person to Person"; Real People Press, California 1967; available via Mandarin Books, London.
- + Germaine Greer: "The Female Eunuch"; MacGibbon and Kee, 45s.
- + R.D. Laing: "The Divided Self"; Penguin 5s.
- + Marty Segal: "Notes Towards the Mathematical Foundations of a Non-Manipulative Social Psychology"; Mind-blowing; duplicated sheets available via me; 10s. should cover costs.

ETZIONI, "HUMAN RELATIONS", 22, pp 325-332
(on the concept of human nature from an unusual point of view for a sociologist)

JOURNALS

- (1) The Libertarian Teacher: Bulletin of the Libertarian Teachers' Association- excellent material, but infrequently published. 3s. per issue from 36 Devonshire Road, Mill Hill, London NW 7.
- (2) The New York Review of Books: From which much of this pamphlet has been lifted. Worth ordering regularly from your bookseller.
- (3) Anarchy: monthly anarchist magazine, generally spots the big issues and analyses them five years before the Reith Lectures and the Sunday Times. Has had frequent articles on education, including: Comprehensive Schools (18); Secondary Modern (21); Goodman's Community of Scholars (24); After-School (53); Mis-Spent Youth (64); The Sociology of the School (71); The Free School Idea (73 +); Braehead (82); A Tale of Two Schools: Rivinghill and Kilquah-inity (92); Approved Schools and Detention Centres (101); The Rights of the Young (103 ++); The Present Moment in Education (107 ++); Programmed Instruction/Piaget (111); May or June 1971 issue: "Libertarian Education: An Introductory Anthology."
- All at 2s. 6d. (including postage) except for issues after 107 (3s.) and the last issue (3s. 6d.)

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(+) BITMAN magazine- BIT Information Service, 141 Westbourne Park Road, London W 11. Bit deals in information and advice on a wide range of legal (and illegal) social and, ahem! pharm-

ceutical questions and problems. Also has practical snippets and recommendations for books, tools, etc. BIT also distribute the Arts Lab Newsletter, Communes, Hapt, and other good things.

(5) Agitprop Information: 160 North Gower Street London NW 10, tel 01-387-5406. Agitprop publishes a monthly Red Notes to keep people informed of ventures, events and publications on the left. 5 issues for 10s. Also do very valuable Practical Manuals, eg "How To Start Street Theatre", A Bookstall, A Local Journal, Print Your Own Posters, Research Power-Structures, etc. They also stock a wide variety of left-wing pamphlets and mags- including some on Education and a lot on Women's Liberation and Imperialism.

(6) ++ Whole Earth Catalogue: This gives an amazing insight into our potential for educating ourselves apart from Bureaucratic State Monopolies. It stands for self-education in anything from Learning How To Learn to Recycling Sewage, to Yoga, to Weaving, to ScrapTechnology, to Geodesic Domes, to Growing Your Own Food, etc. etc. A crucial development by people who are really liberating themselves from diploma fetishism. And really useful.

(7) "Confrontation" 63a Erick lane London E.4.

(8) "Hapt"

Statement: "An item is listed in the catalogue if it is deemed: 1) Useful as a tool; 2) Relevant to independent education; 3) High quality or low cost; 4) Easily available by mail. PURPOSE: We are as gods and might as well get good at it. So far remotely done power and glory-as via government, big business, formal education, church- has succeeded to the point where gross defects obscure actual gains. In response to this dilemma and to these gains a realm of intimate, personal power is developing-power of the individual to conduct his own education, find his own inspiration, share his adventure with whoever is interested. Tools that aid this process are sought, and promoted by the WHOLE EARTH CATALOGUE."

\$8 per year from Portola Institute, 558 Santa Cruz Ave, Menlo Park, California 94025. Also publishes "Big Rock Candy Mountain"- a "Learning to Learn Catalog" about personal growth techniques and disciplines.

Seeds of The Counter-Culture

This pamphlet will obviously circulate among those involved in Educational Institutions. In all other sectors of society pamphlets and magazines are being produced. It is good that we should recognize that seeds of anti-institutional revolt are germinating in different sectors and help to sow more of them. By helping these connections form we are helping the revolution to take shape in a non-authoritarian manner.

EDUCATION:

The Libertarian Teacher (see bibliography) Vanguard and other Schools Action Union papers. Rank and File: c/o 87 Brooke St., London N16, subscription 6s. a year.

Blackboard: Excellent progressive mag written by, and aimed at, colleges of education students. Copies 1s. 6d. from 69 Charlton Road, London SE3

Contact: Journal of the Pre-School Playgroups Association- a good example of self-help and mutual aid, albeit of a liberal cast. Their pamphlets would be of great use to anyone starting a playgroup or summer school project, etc. PPA, 87 a Borough High St., London SE1

SOCIAL WORK:

"Case Con" for radicals/revolutionaries round social work, trying to escape from their containment functions. Send 1s. 6d. to 19 Lidfield Road, London N16 for a sample copy. Years sub, including duplicated newsheets: 7s.

PSYCHOLOGY:

Red Rat for people "in" and studying psychology; 50 Leamington Road Villas, London W11. 2s. copy

HEALTH/HOSPITALS

"Germ's Eye View" (London) is a magazine produced by hospital porters, technicians, nurses, student nurses and doctors at the Royal Free Hospital. Available price 8d from 10 Roderick Rd., London NW3 (There is also a Manchester based Germ's Eye View.)

SOCIAL SECURITY

"The Book of Murther" is the journal of the National Federation of Claimants Unions. Available price 5s. or £1 a year from 84a Stratford Road, Birmingham.

WOMEN:

"Shrew" is a mag published by the Women's liberation Workshop in London. Address: 27 Albany Mansions, Albert Bridge Road, London SW11. Send 1s. 6d. an issue, 2s. 6d. if male.

ARCHITECTURE:

Architects Revolutionary Socialists Enclave, or Arse, or whatever you want to call it. Brilliantly produced magazine by/for architects. Available: 20 Chalcot Road, London NW1.

MEDIA:

"Open Secret" is the Journal of the Free Communications Group, a mishmash of soggy liberals some "radicals", militant journalists and technicians and the odd revolutionary or libertarian. Some excellent articles. Obtainable from 30 Craven St., London WC2.

COMPUTERS:

"Real Time" is a provocative and exciting mag dedicated to the gentle subversion of the country's Top Super-Technologists. Available from 66 Hargrave Park, London N19.

LIVING:

"Communes", the magazine of the Communes Movement, available from BIT, 141 Westbourne Park Road, London W11.

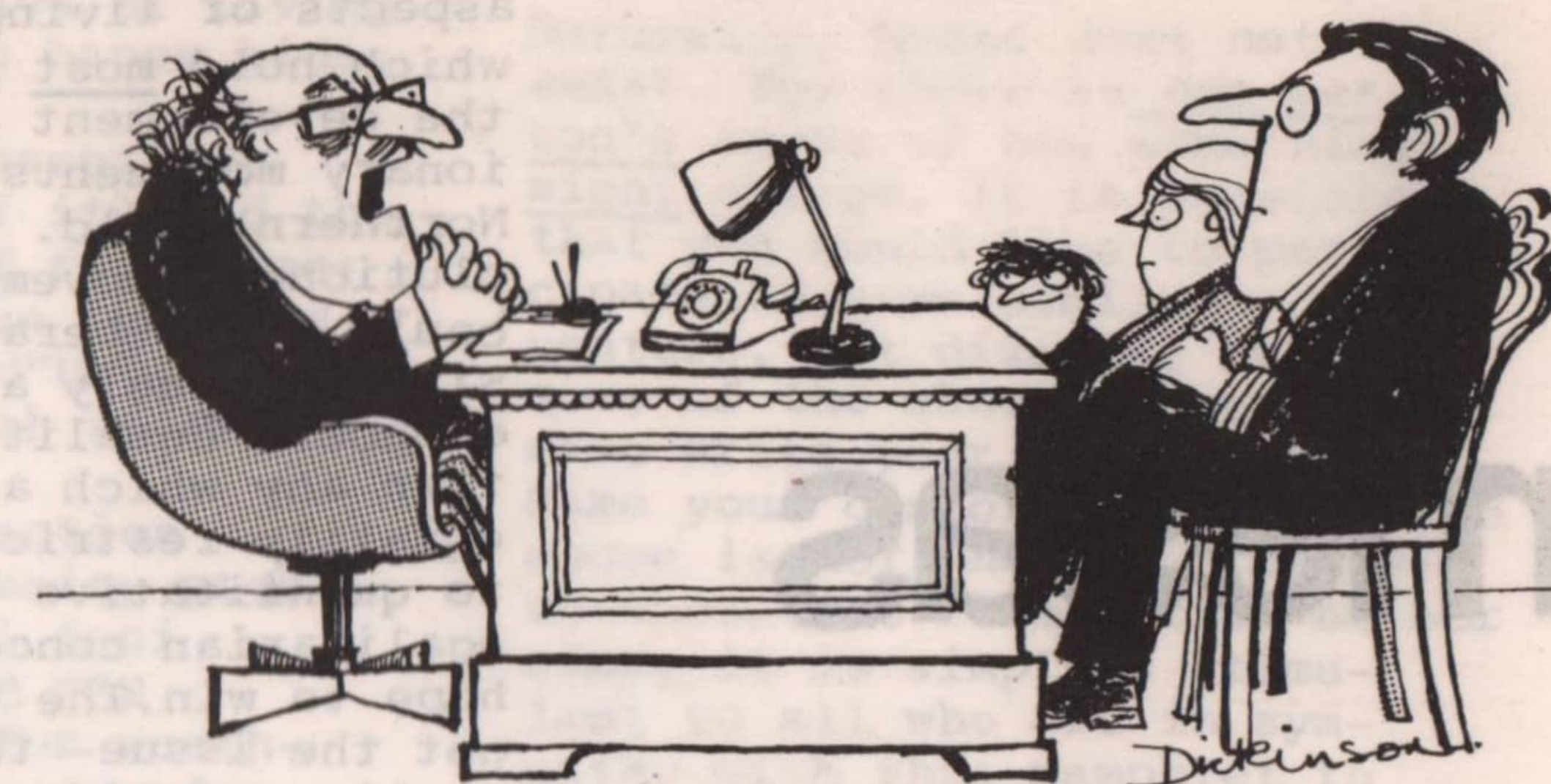
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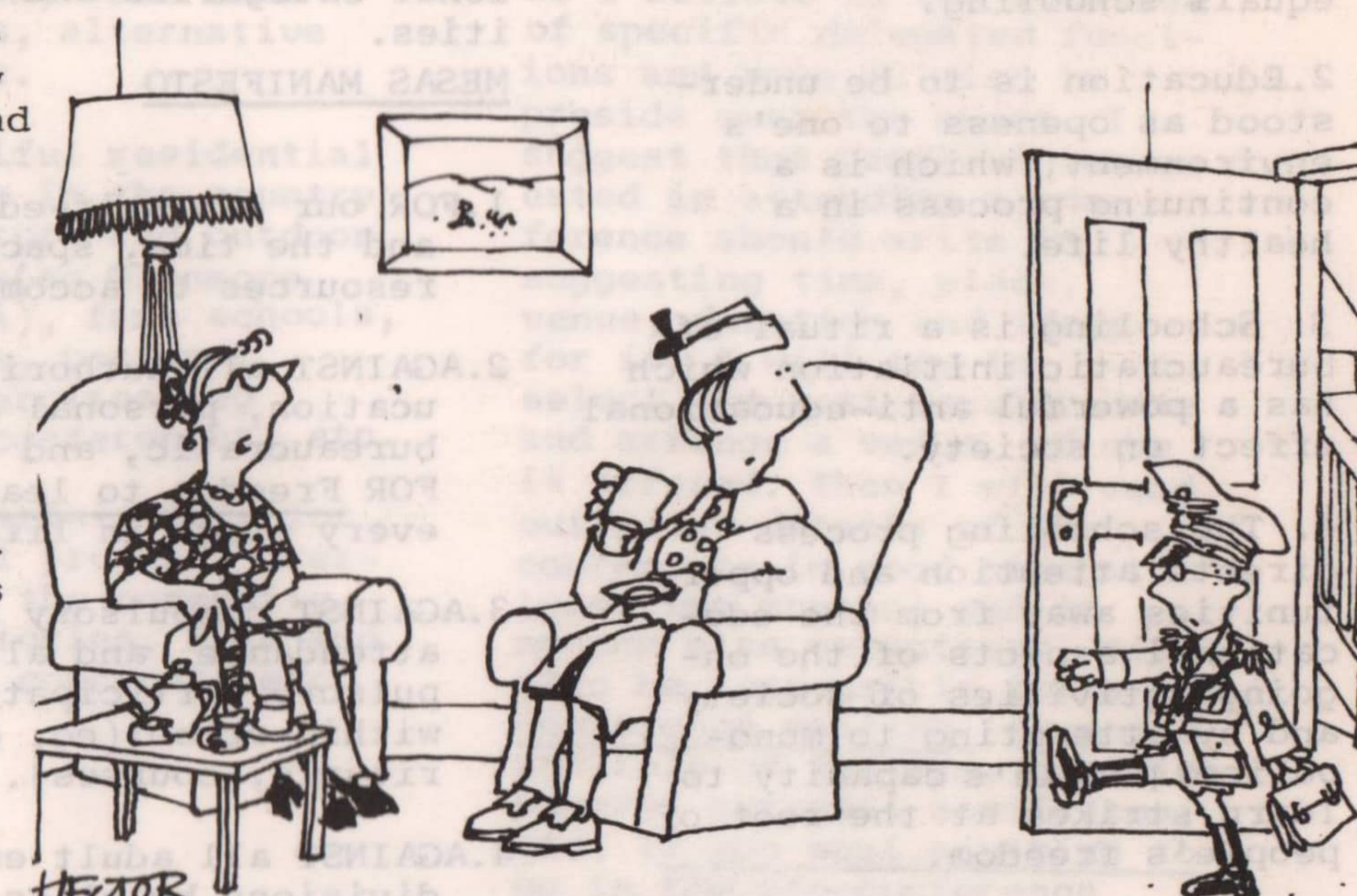
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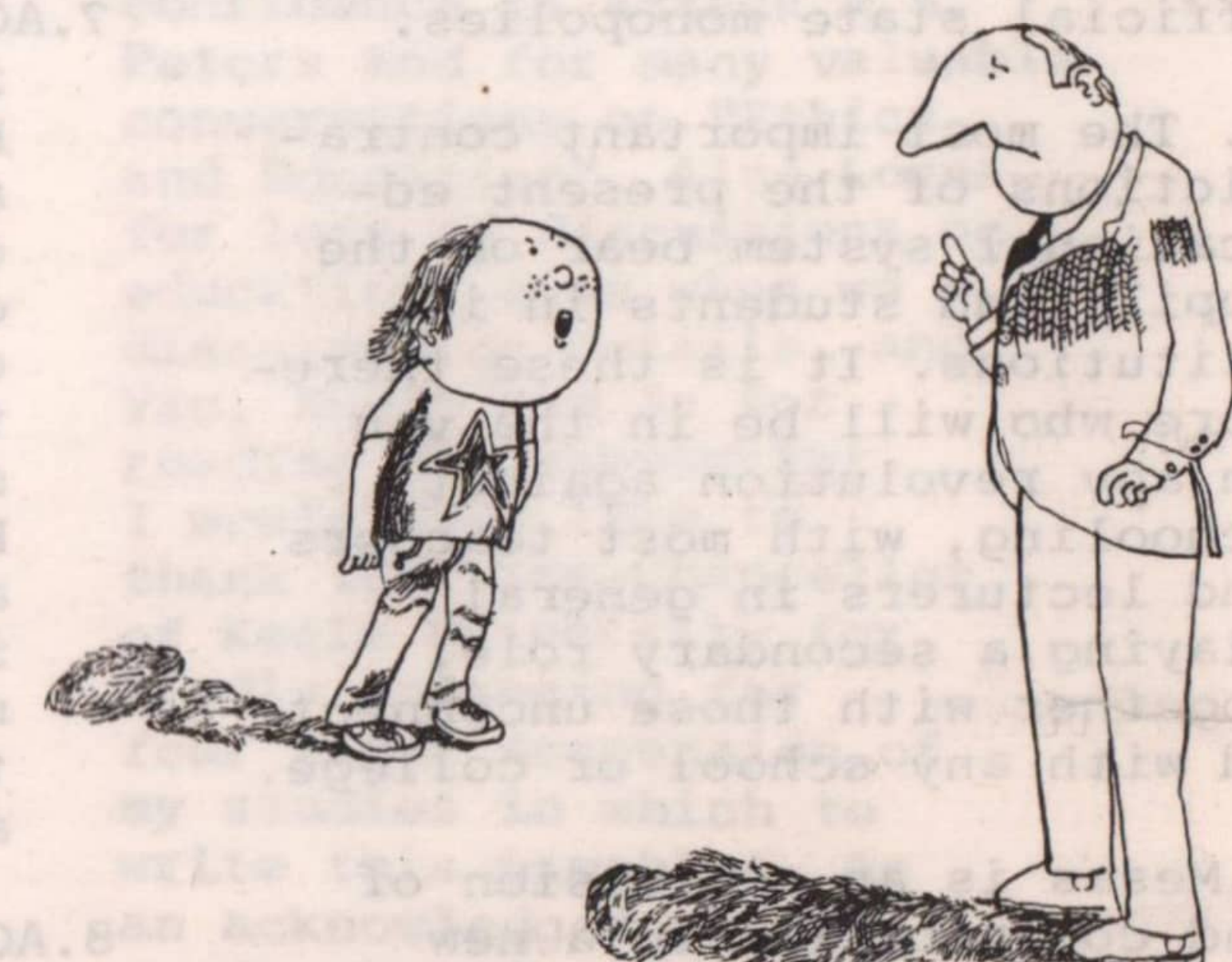
Comments welcome, and also advice on anyone you know who might be interested in serving as a distribution outlet.



"As a child psychologist of twenty years' experience, my considered opinion is that two rounds with Henry Cooper would do him the world of good."



"We were relieved to find a school that wasn't soft on uniforms."



"Oh, don't come the old 'you're not too old to be spanked' junk! You lack authority and you've always lacked authority!"

mesas

MESAS

1. All over the world people are prey to a mass superstition: that education equals schooling.

2. Education is to be understood as openness to one's environment, which is a continuing process in a healthy life.

3. Schooling is a ritual of bureaucratic initiation which has a powerful anti-educational effect on society.

4. The schooling process directs attention and opportunities away from the educational aspects of the ongoing activities of society and by attempting to monopolise people's capacity to learn strikes at the root of people's freedom.

5. Mesas stands for "Movement for an Educative Society and the Abolition of Schooling."

6. As a conscious organisation it can only represent a small fraction of the overall movement which exists everywhere in thousands of everyday practices and unco-ordinated trends- in fact wherever people are learning freely, independently of the official state monopolies.

7. The most important contradictions of the present educational system bear on the pupils and students in institutions. It is these therefore who will be in the van in any revolution against schooling, with most teachers and lecturers in general playing a secondary role, together with those unconnected with any school or college.

8. Mesas is an expression of and contribution to a new politics- the politics of liberation. This politics sees in the qualitative, experiential and personal

aspects of living the areas which hold most promise for the development of revolutionary movements in the Northern world. Such revolutionary movements could win liberation and simultaneously a degree of economic equality far greater than any which a politics of equality restricting itself to quantitative "issues" and egalitarian concerns could hope to win. The "issue" is not the issue- the whole quality of life is at stake.

9. Any proposals in the following manifesto are not "demands" off Big Daddy Government to "grant", set up and enforce. Their realisation and elaboration depends on local initiative, community spirit, self-help and practical mutual aid, combined with the determined intransigence of groups, classes, occupational categories and communities.

MESAS MANIFESTO

1. FOR our own self-education and the time, space and resources to accomplish it.

2. AGAINST all Authority in Education, personal and bureaucratic, and FOR Freedom to learn at every stage in life.

3. AGAINST compulsory school attendance, and all compulsory participation within school (eg, games, rituals, courses).

4. AGAINST all adult enforced divisions by class, age, sex, religion and so-called "intelligence".

5. TOTAL OPPOSITION to all I.Q. Testing as a gross insult to the spirit of free children, men and women.

6. AGAINST all Exams and Grading as running clean contrary to the logic of intellectual enquiry and progress.

7. AGAINST all Homogenisation in education and FOR all trends in schools and colleges in the direction of good education (eg, FOR diversity of approaches and freedom to experiment, AGAINST systematic class bias, FOR network organisation and co-operative learning, age-mixing, multi-media studies, wide extensions of environmental studies, etc.)

8. AGAINST all restrictive monopolisation of educational legitimacy in all aspects of society (eg, BMA in medicine, apprenticeship

systems in the unions etc.); and particularly AGAINST the fetishisation of "qualifications" in education itself; and FOR the free involvement in education of non-teachers such as concerned aides and housewives interesting professional people and workers with first hand experience, students, etc.

9. AGAINST the Monopolistic control of plant (eg school gym or swimming pool, library, university computer, etc) and FOR all "Community centre functions" in schools, community centres or wherever they occur.

10. AGAINST the monopolistic appropriation of funds for education by the school system and FOR educational credits payable to learners (all of us) as of right and regardless of whether the individual uses his educational credit in a "school".

11. AGAINST all closed and segregated institutions of Higher Education (especially against the perpetuation of schooling ghettos for training for schooling) and FOR open and lively centres for intellectual and personal growth, scientific and cultural experimentation, discussion and research (including research into education considered in its true sense).

12. AGAINST all Culture as exclusive fetish or commodity (eg special Art Galleries and Museums) and FOR the decentralisation and de-institutionalisation of exhibitions, galleries museums etc.- in other words- FOR a beautiful and playful environment.

13. FOR freedom to "gravitate" on the part of the young and old alike (both escape from and attraction to)

14. FOR the right of children and young people to organise independently (S.A.U.s, union for apprentices, Arts labs, Release, clubs, discussion groups, folk groups, pupil-created courses, Whole Earth Catalogues) and FOR their taking of this right, and using it, where it is not granted or readily established.

15. FOR the direct sharing of skills, the exchange of services (eg playgroups) and the matching of educational concerns independently of the market and the state certification system.

16. FOR the opening up of all work places and other public institutions to the workers/inhabitants themselves (eg. job-swapping); to working parents with young children to look after (eg creches needed); and to young people (eg non-packaged visits, short or medium term participation).

17. FOR time OFF work to be granted as of right for retraining, educational projects, foreign travel, etc. and FOR time IN work for debates, private study, befriending kids, answering questions, child-minding, etc.

18. FOR parental involvement in education-FIRST ON THEIR OWN BEHALF, and also in the education of their children.

19. AGAINST all "child centred" self-denial on the part of all concerned with kids, and FOR all enjoyment and exploration of life for its own sake (which will also be infectious, educative, etc.)

20. AGAINST the destruction of organic communities by town-planning and "rationalisation"; and FOR a liveable environment and safe, playable streets.

21. AGAINST "little boxes" and the isolated nuclear family; and FOR all family systems extended, multi-generational, family of families)

and communes which can offer a variety of ways of living and bringing up happy kids.

22. AGAINST the present toy industry (90% of it) and the colonisation of free time; and FOR creative toys and a richly provided "UNMAKE" environment with space.

23. FOR study and action groups on community problems as natural foci of concern; and FOR opportunities for worthwhile community service.

24. AGAINST all cultural homogenisation and FOR cultural differences.

25. FOR foreign exchanges, and non-packaged foreign travel.

26. AGAINST all secret research closed meetings of public concern, and rigged Press Monopolies; and FOR open information, free communications, alternative media, etc.

27. FOR plentiful residential facilities in the country for adventure and outdoor activities (eg Glenmore Lodge, YHA), farm schools, work camps, personal growth exercises, (eg Esalen), conferences, etc.

28. FOR a materials levy for educational projects exercisable by the community, on all factories, film and publishing concerns, etc.

COME TOGETHER!

Naturally, Mesas does not exist. The above is one person's ideas of how something might emerge. It is possible that you would like to participate in some similar venture, but disagree with some of the above. In that case write your own manifesto! Name your own organisation. The above is NOT meant to pre-empt co-operative formulation of our aims, it is simply a stimulant to all who are in sympathy with this pamphlet to think through the practical consequences of your having read this far (If there aren't any, you might as well not have read it).

We need a discussion weekend (or week, or...) in which to think together and plan together. I am willing to act as a self-appointed secretary for this coming-together. Relief is welcome as I believe in the rotation of specific delegated functions and have no wish to preside over the event. I suggest that people interested in attending a conference should write in suggesting time, place, venue, duration and ideas for it. I will try to select the most popular date and arrange a venue, if one is offered. Then I will send out rough details of the conference in good time (at least two months) and if no-one else volunteers, will also be responsible for a pre-conference mailing composed entirely of letters, position papers, personal manifestos, etc; If you want anything to go in the pre-conference mailing please type it on (Roneo) stencils- foolscap size, and enclose money for about 200(?) copies worth of duplicating paper plus postage. There will be NO selection or censorship of material so presented.

I would like to thank Eddie McWilliams for giving me the confidence to attack R.S. Peters and for many valuable conversations on "Ethics and Education". Also Lorna for lots of discussions on education, even when we disagreed on details, and Vic, Robin and Jo for reading the manuscript. I would also like to thank the Vice-Chancellor of Keele University for kindly arranging for four terms suspension of my studies in which to write this pamphlet. As an acknowledged expert on Progressive Education, I trust he will find his confidence repaid.

