

THE PRESENT MOMENT IN EDUCATION

PAUL GOODMAN



ANARCHY 107
3shillings 15pence 40cents

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January 1970

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Single copies 3s. (40c.). Annual subscription (12 issues) 36s. (\$5.00). Joint annual subscription with FREEDOM, the anarchist weekly (which readers of ANARCHY will find indispensable) £3 19s. 4d. Cheques, P.O.s and Money Orders should be made out to FREEDOM PRESS, 84B White-chapel High Street, London, E.1, England.

Other issues of "Anarchy":
Please note: Issues 1, 2, 4, 5, 6, 7, 9, 10, 12, 13, 14, 15, 26, 34, 35, 36, 37, 38, 39, 66, 70, 71, 96, 98 are out of print.

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The present moment in Education

PAUL GOODMAN

1. INCIDENTAL EDUCATION AND PEDAGOGY

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 labor, 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 is often complex, but the young can take it by their own handle, at their own times, according to their own interest and initiative. Most important, they can imitate, identify, be approved or disapproved, co-operate and compete, without the anxiety of being the center of attention; there is socialization with less resentment, fear, or submission. The archetype of successful education is infants learning to speak, a formidable intellectual achievement that is universally accomplished. We do not know how it is done, but the main conditions seem to be what we have been describing: adult activity is

PAUL GOODMAN's article appeared in the New York Review of Books for April 10 last, and has been widely quoted in the American press. It has already been published in this country in the journal *Resurgence*, but it is certainly worth giving it further circulation since his views are, as an American commentator remarked, "probably the most fertile conceptions for change being offered by anyone, anywhere".

going on, involving speaking; the infants are only incidental yet they participate, are attended to and spoken to; they play freely with their speech sounds; it is advantageous to them to make themselves understood. Finally, according to Jespersen, children pick up their accent and style from the gang of other children; it is their uniform, the way they appoint themselves.

Along with incidental education, however, most societies also have institutions specifically devoted to teaching the young. Such are identity rites, catechism, nurses and pedagogues, youth houses, formal schooling. I think there is a peculiar aspect to what is learned by such means rather than picked up incidentally. But let me emphasize strongly and repeatedly that it is only in the last century in industrialized countries that the majority of children have gotten much direct teaching at all, and it is only in the past few decades that formal schooling has been extended into adolescence and further. E.g., in the United States in 1900 only 6 per cent went through high school and $\frac{1}{4}$ per cent through college. Yet now formal schooling has taken over, well or badly, very much of the more natural incidental education of most other institutions.

This may or may not be necessary, but it has consequences: these institutions, and the adults in them, have correspondingly lost touch with the young, and the young do not know the adults in their chief activities. Like the jails and insane asylums, schools isolate society from its problems, whether preventing crime, curing mental disease, or bringing up the young. And to a remarkable degree vital functions of growing up have become hermetically re-defined in school terms: community service means doing homework, apprenticeship is passing tests for jobs in the distant future, sexual initiation is high school dating, and rites of passage are getting diplomas. Crime is breaking school windows, and rebellion is sitting-in on the Dean. In the absence of adult culture, there develops a youth sub-culture.

Usually there has been a rough distinction in content, in what is learned, between incidental education and direct pedagogy. Ordinary social activities that do not exclude children tend to be matter-of-fact, and children taking part without anxiety can be objective, if not critical. But pedagogy, whether directed by elders, priests, or academics, deals with what is not evident in ordinary affairs; it aims to teach what is more abstract, intangible, or mysterious, and the learner, as the center of attention, is under personal pressure. All social activity socializes its participants, but pedagogy socializes deliberately, according to principles, instilling the morals and habits which are the social bonds.

There are, of course, two opposite interpretations of why pedagogy wants to indoctrinate, and in my opinion both are correct. On the one hand, the elders, priests, and schoolteachers are instilling an ideology to support their system of exploitation, including the domination of the old over the young, and they have to make a special effort to confuse

and mystify because the system does not recommend itself to common sense. At present, when formal education swallows up so much time of life and pretends to be practical preparation for every activity, ideological processing is especially deadly. Those who succumb to it have no wits of their own left and are robots.

On the other hand, there perhaps *are* vague but important wisdom and abstractions that must be passed on, which do not appear on the surface in ordinary occasions and which require personal attention, special pointing, repetition, and cloistered reflection. Thus, champions of liberal arts colleges say that, one way or other, the young will pick up contemporary know-how and mores, but the greatness of Mankind—Hippocrates and Beethoven, Enlightenment, Civil Liberties, the Sense of the Tragic—will lapse without a trace unless the scholars work at it. I sympathize with the problem as they state it and I will return to it; but in fact I have not heard of any method whatever, scholastic or otherwise, to *teach* the humanities without killing them. Myself, I remember how at age twelve, browsing in the library, I read *Macbeth* with excitement, but in class I could not understand a word of *Julius Caesar* and hated it: and I think this was the usual experience of people who read and write well. The survival of the humanities has seemed to depend on random miracles, which are becoming less frequent.

Finally, unlike incidental learning, which is natural and inevitable, formal schooling is a deliberate intervention and must justify itself. We must ask not only is it well done, but is it worth doing and *can* it be well done? Is teaching possible at all? There is a line of critics from Lao-tse and Socrates to Carl Rogers who assert that there is no such thing as teaching, of either science or virtue; and there is strong empirical evidence that schooling has little effect on either vocational ability or citizenship—e.g., Donald Hoyt for American College Testing, 1965, found that college grades have no correlation with life achievement in any profession. At the other extreme, Dr. Skinner and the operant-conditioners claim that they can “instruct” for every kind of performance, they can control and shape human behavior, as they can do with animals sealed off from the ordinary environment; but they are careful to say they do not “educate” in the sense of developing persons (whatever that might mean). It is disputable whether human children are good subjects for this kind of instruction in any society we like to envisage.

In the middle, the main line of educators, from Confucius and Aristotle to John Dewey, held that, starting from the natural motives of the young, one can teach them good habits of morals, arts, and sciences by practice; the learners take on a “second nature” which they can then use by themselves, they are not simply programmed. And on various theories, Froebel, Herbart, Steiner, or Piaget have held that such teaching is possible if it addresses the child’s powers in the right order at the right moments. But sociologists like Comte or Marx seem

to say that the background social institutions and their vicissitudes overwhelmingly determine what is learned, so it is not worthwhile to think about pedagogy, at least as yet. I will not pursue this discussion here—my bias is that “teaching” is largely a delusion—but we must bear in mind that such fundamental disagreements exist.

2. THE SCHOLASTIC

TURN NOW TO ACTUAL FORMAL SCHOOLING in the United States, the country most technologically advanced (but the story is not very different in other developed and developing countries, including China and Cuba). The school system, expanding and increasingly tightly integrated, has taken over a vast part of the educational functions of society, designing school-preparatory toys from age two and training for every occupation as well as citizenship, sexuality, and the humanities. Yet with trivial exceptions, what we mean by School—namely, curriculum generalized from the activities of life, and divided into departments, texts, lessons, scheduled periods marked by bells, specialist teachers, examinations, and graded promotion to the next step—is a sociological invention of some Irish monks in the seventh century to bring a bit of Rome to wild shepherds. It is an amazing success-story, probably more important than the Industrial Revolution.

At first, no doubt it was a good thing for wild shepherds to have to sit still for a couple of hours and pay strict attention to penmanship and spelling. And mostly it was only aspiring clerics who were schooled. By an historical accident, the same academic method later became the way of teaching the bookish part of a couple of learned professions. There is no essential reason why law and medicine are not better learned by apprenticeship, but the bookish was clerical and therefore scholastic, and (perhaps) any special education containing abstract principles was part of the system of mysteries, therefore clerical, and therefore scholastic.

This monkish rule of scheduled hours, texts, and lessons is also not an implausible method for giving a quick background briefing to large numbers, who then embark on their real business. Thus Jefferson insisted on universal compulsory schooling, for short terms in predominantly rural communities, so children could read the newspapers and be catechized in libertarian political history, in order to be citizens in a democracy. Later, in compulsory urban schools, the children of polyglot immigrants were socialized and taught standard English, a peculiar dialect, so they could then try to make good in an economy which indeed proved to be fairly open to them in the long run. The curriculum was the penmanship, spelling, and arithmetic needed for the business world. Naturally, forced socialization involved drastic cultural disruption and family fragmentation, but perhaps it was a good solution—we have yet to see how it works out.

The context of schooling at present, however, is entirely different.

The monkish invention is now used as universal social engineering. Society is conceived as a controlled system of personnel and transactions—with various national goals, depending on the nation—and the schools are the teaching machine for all personnel. There is no other way of entry for the young. And teaching tries to give psychological preparation in depth. Schooling for one's role, in graded steps, takes up to twenty years and more and is the chief activity of growing up; any other interest may be interrupted. The real motivation for a five-year-old's behavior, thus, is geared fifteen years in the future.

In highly productive technologies like ours, of course, which do not need manpower, a more realistic interpretation is that the social function of long schooling is to keep the useless and obstreperous young away from the delicate social machine, to baby-sit and police them. Yet it comes to the same thing. Whether by accident or design, the schools are not like playgrounds or reservations; rather, the texture of school experience is similar to adult experience. There is little break between playing with educational toys and watching Educational TV, being in grade school and the Little League, being in high school and dating, being in college and drafted, being personnel of a corporation and watching NBC television. It is a curious historical question whether the schools have been transformed to the model of business organization, or the adult world has become scholastic, with corresponding arrested maturation. The evidence is that up to about 1920, business methods had a preponderant influence; but since 1945 the school monks have increasingly determined the social style and adults have become puerile.

Since the trend has been to eliminate incidental education and prepare the young deliberately for every aspect of ordinary life, we would expect pedagogy to become secularized and functional. Yet radical students complain that the schooling is ideological through and through. The simplest, and not altogether superficial, explanation of this paradox is that scholastic mystery has transformed ordinary adult business. Society is run by mandarins, the New Class.

* * * *

The personal attitude of school-teachers toward the young is problematic. I can understand that adults are protective and helpful to small children, and that professionals, in graduate schools, want apprentices to carry on; but why would grown-ups spend whole days hanging around adolescents and callow collegians? Sexual interest makes sense and must be common, but it is strongly disapproved and its inhibition makes a bad situation.

Traditional motives 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. *I do not see any functional way to recruit a large corps of high school teachers.* With incidental education there is no problem. Most people like the young to be around and to watch them develop, and their presence often makes a job more honest and less routine, for they are honest and not routine.

Current high thought among schoolmen, for instance the National Science Foundation and the Harvard School of Education, is to criticize the syllabus as indeed wasteful and depressing, but to expand the schools and make the programming more psychological. Since the frontier of knowledge is changing so rapidly, there is no use in burdening children with knowledge that will be outdated in ten years, and with skills that will soon be better performed by ubiquitous machines. Rather, they must learn to learn; their cognitive faculties must be developed; they must be taught the big Ideas, like the Conservation of Energy. (This is exactly what Robert Hutchins was saying forty years ago.) Or more daringly, the children must not be taught but allowed to discover; they must be encouraged to guess and brainstorm rather than be tested on the right answers. But are these suggestions *bona fide*? Perhaps, as Gregory Bateson has speculated about dolphins and trainers, and as John Holt has illustrated in middle-class schools, learning to learn means picking up the structure of behavior of the teachers. The young discoverers are bound to discover what will get them past the College Boards, and the guessers and dreamers are not free to balk and drop out for a semester to brood, as proper geniuses do. And what if precisely the big Ideas are not true?—Einstein said that it was preferable to have a stupid pedant for a teacher, so a smart child could fight him all the way.

I think the pedagogic reasoning of Harvard and the N.S.F. is something like this: though knowledge changes, the function and the style of science are fixed. But this is an ideology of a political structure that, hopefully, is even more in flux than knowledge is—at least let us hope that 80 per cent of Federal money for Research and Development will not continue to be used for military science. We can survive with our present science, but not with our present Science. Unless the “cognitive faculties” become more magnanimous, philosophical, and prudent than they are at present, it is a waste of money and effort to plan for ten years from now at all. But the only pedagogy that I have ever heard to teach magnanimity and feeling is Wordsworth’s: the beauty of the world and simple human affections.

But of course there is an underlying problem that earnest teachers, also at Harvard and in the N.S.F., are concerned about: how are the young to learn to cope with the complicated technological environment? Perhaps it is a mistake to look for a scholastic solution; I think this was the mistake of Dewey’s earlier attempt to domesticate industrialism by

1984. The slogans and style of dissident youth around the world are like a caricature of Summerhill—naturally a caricature because they have not yet been assimilated into social change: participatory democracy, do your thing, don’t trust anybody over thirty, drop out of the system. Summerhill’s affectionate family of autonomous persons is a model for all pads, communities, and tribes. The sexual freedom exists that Neill approved but could not legally sanction. Careless dress has become a common uniform.

Before I discuss what is wrong with this history let me mention the criticism that *contemporary* progressive education is a middle-class gimmick (though Pestalozzi did his work and Montessori her best work with the outcast). The black community, especially, resents being used for “experiments”. Poor children, it is claimed, need to learn the conventional ropes so they can compete for power in the established system, or even can con the system like hipsters. Therefore black parents demand “quality education” and expect their children to wear ties.

In my opinion, this criticism is wrong-headed. The scholastic evidence, for instance the *Eight Years Study*, shows that the more experimental the high school, the more successfully the graduates compete in conventional colleges when it is necessary. And more important is that, since black children do not get the same reward as whites for equal conventional achievement—for instance, a white high school graduate averages the same salary as a black college graduate—it is better for the blacks not to be caught in an unprofitable groove, but to have more emotional freedom, initiative, and flexibility, to be able to find and make opportunities. That is, black communities should run their own schools, and they should run them on the model of Summerhill. This has indeed been the case with the sporadic Freedom Schools, north and south, which have a dose of Neill by direct or indirect influence. But of course freedom is incalculable. My guess is that children, if free to choose, at least up to the age when they are muddled by the anxieties of puberty, will choose black and white together, quite different from their parents’ politics and prejudices. (To be sure, it has not been the doing of black parents that the schools are not integrated.)

* * * *

What is really wrong with our history is that, in their own terms, the successes of progressive education have been rather total failures. The societies that emerged in the following generation, fulfilling their programs, were not what the visionaries hoped for. Jacksonian democracy, as described by Tocqueville, was very different from the Old Regime, but it was hardly the natural nobility of *Emile* (or the vision of Jefferson). It lacked especially the good taste, the fraternity, and the general will that Rousseau hankered after. Dewey’s pragmatic and social-minded conceptions have ended up as the service university,

technocracy, labor bureaucracy, and suburban conformity. But Dewey was thinking of workers' management and education for workers' management; and like Frank Lloyd Wright, he wanted a functional culture of materials and processes, not glossy Industrial Design and the consumer standard of living.

The likelihood is that A. S. Neill's hope too will be badly realized. It is not hard to envisage a society in the near future in which self-reliant and happy people will be attendants of a technological apparatus over which they have no control whatever, and whose purposes do not seem to them to be any of their business. Indeed, Neill describes with near satisfaction such success-stories among his own graduates. Alternatively, it is conceivable that an affluent society will compound with its hippies by supporting them like Indians on a reservation. Their Zen philosophy of *satori* was grounded originally in a violent feudalism, of which it was the spiritual solace, and it could prove so again.

How to prevent these outcomes? Perhaps, protecting his free affectionate community, Neill protects it a few years too long, both from the oppressive mechanistic world and from adolescent solitude (it is hard to be alone at Summerhill). And it seems to me that there is something inauthentic in Neill's latitudinarian lack of standards—e.g., Beethoven and rock 'n roll are equivalent, though he himself prefers Beethoven—for we are not only free organisms but parts of mankind that has historically made itself with great inspirations and terrible conflicts. We cannot slough off that accumulation, however burdensome, without becoming trivial and therefore servile. It seems clear by now that the noisy youth sub-culture is not only not grown-up, which is to the good, but prevents ever being grown-up.

4. INCIDENTAL EDUCATION

IT IS POSSIBLE THAT THE CHIEF PROBLEM in the coming generation will be survival, whether from nuclear bombs, genocide, ecological disaster, or mass starvation and endless wars. If so, this is the present task of pedagogy. There already exist wilderness schools for self-reliance and it has been proposed to train guerrillas in schools in Harlem. The delicately interlocking technologies of the world indeed seem to be over-extended and terribly vulnerable, and the breakdown could be pretty total. But let us fantasize that this view is not realistic.

My own thinking is that

(1) Incidental education, taking part in the on-going activities of society, should be the chief means of learning.

(2) Most high schools should be eliminated, with other kinds of communities of youth taking over their sociable functions.

(3) College training should generally follow, not precede, entry into the professions.

(4) 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.

(5) The purpose of elementary pedagogy, through age twelve, is to protect children's free growth, since our community and families both pressure them too much and do not attend to them enough.

Let me review the arguments for this program. We must drastically cut back the schooling because the present extended tutelage is against nature and arrests growth. The effort to channel growing up according to a preconceived curriculum and method discourages and wastes many of the best human powers to learn and cope. Schooling does not prepare for real performance; it is largely carried on for its own sake. Only a small fraction, the "academically talented"—between 10 and 15 per cent according to Conant—thrive in this useless activity without being bored or harmed by it. It isolates the young from the older generation and alienates them.

On the other hand, it makes no sense for many of the brightest and most sensitive young simply to drop out or confront society with hostility. This cannot lead to social reconstruction. The complicated and confusing conditions of modern times need knowledge and fresh thought, and therefore long acquaintance and participation precisely by the young. Young radicals seem to think that mere political change will solve the chief problems, or that they will solve themselves after political change, but this is a delusion. The problems of urbanization, technology, and ecology have not been faced by any political group. The educational systems of other advanced countries are no better than ours, and the young are equally dissenting. Finally, it has been my Calvinistic, and Aristotelian, experience that most people cannot organize their lives without productive activity (though, of course, not necessarily paid activity); and the actual professions, services, industries, arts and sciences are the arena in which they should be working. Radical politics and doing one's thing are careers for very few.

As it is, however, the actual activities of American society either exclude the young, or corrupt them, or exploit them. Here is the task for educators. We must make the rules of licensing and hiring realistic to the actual work and get rid of mandarin requirements. We must design apprenticeships that are not exploitative. Society desperately needs much work that is not now done, both intellectual and manual, in urban renewal, ecology, communications, and the arts, and all these could make use of young people. Many such enterprises are best organized by young people themselves, like most of the community development and community action Vocations for Social Change. Little think tanks, like the Oceanic Institute at Makapuu Point or the Institute for Policy Studies in Washington, which are not fussy about diplomas, have provided excellent spots for the young. Our aims should be to multiply the path of growing up, with opportunity to start again, cross over, take a moratorium, travel, work on one's own. To insure freedom of option and that the young can maintain and express their critical

attitude, all adolescents should be guaranteed a living. (The present cost of high schooling would almost provide this.)

The advantage of making education less academic has, of course, occurred to many school people. There are a myriad of programs to open the school to the world by (1) importing outside professionals, artists in residence, gurus, mothers, dropouts as teachers' aides; and (2) giving academic credit for work-study, community action, writing novels, service in mental hospitals, junior year abroad, and other kinds of released time. Naturally I am enthusiastic for this development and only want it to go the small further step of abolishing the present school establishment instead of aggrandizing it.

Conversely, there is a movement in the United States, as in China and Cuba, for adolescent years to be devoted to public service, and this is fine if the service is not compulsory and regimenting.

It is possible for every education to be tailor-made according to each youth's developing interest and choice. Choices along the way will be very often ill-conceived and wasteful, but they will express desire and immediately meet reality, and therefore they should converge to finding the right vocation more quickly than by any other course. Vocation is what one is good at and can do, what uses a reasonable amount of one's powers, and gives one a useful occupation in a community that is one's own. The right use of the majority of people would make a stable society far more efficient than our own. And those who have peculiar excellences are more likely to find their own further way when they have entry by doing something they can do and being accepted.

Academic schooling can be chosen by those with academic talents, and such schools are better off unencumbered by sullen uninterested bodies. But the main use of academic teaching is for those already busy in sciences and professions, who need academic courses along the way. Cooper Union in New York City used to fulfill this function very well. And in this context of need, there can finally be the proper use of new pedagogic technology, as a means of learning at one's own time, whereas at present this technology makes the school experience still more rigid and impersonal.

Of course, in this set-up employers would themselves provide ancillary academic training, especially if they had to pay for it anyway, instead of using parents' and taxpayers' money. In my opinion, this ancillary rather than prior schooling would do more than any other single thing to give black, rural, and other "culturally deprived" youth a fairer entry and chance for advancement, since what is to be learned is objective and functional and does not depend on the abstract school style. As we have seen, *on the job* there is no correlation between competence and years of prior schooling.

But this leads to another problem. Educationally, schooling on the job is usually superior, but the political and moral consequences of such a system are ambiguous and need more analysis than I can give them here. At present, a youth is hired for actual credentials, if not actual skill; this is alienating to him as a person, but it also allows a measure of free-market democracy. If he is to be schooled on the job, however, he must be hired for his promise and attended to as a person; this is less alienating, but it can lead to company paternalism, like Japanese capitalism, or like Fidel Castro's Marxist vision of farm and factory-based schools (recently reported in *New Left Notes*). On the other hand, *if the young have options and can organize and criticize*, on-the-job education is the quickest way to workers' management which, in my opinion, is the only effective democracy.

University education—liberal arts and the principles of the professions—is for adults who already know something, who have something to philosophize. Otherwise, as Plato pointed out, it is just verbalizing.

To provide a protective and life-nourishing environment for children up through twelve, Summerhill is an adequate model. I think it can be easily adapted to urban conditions if we include houses of refuge for children to resort to, when necessary, to escape parental and neighbourhood tyranny or terror. Probably an even better model would be the Athenian pedagogue, touring the city with his charges; but for this the streets and working-places of the city must be made safer and more available than is likely. (The pre-requisite of city-planning is for the children to be able to use the city, for no city is governable if it does not grow citizens who feel it is theirs.) The goal of elementary pedagogy is a very modest one: it is for a small child, under his own steam, to poke interestedly into whatever goes on and be able, by observation, questions, and practical imitation, to get something out of it in his own terms. In our society this happens pretty well at home up to age four, but after that it becomes forbiddingly difficult.

I have often spelled out this program of incidental education, and found no takers. Curiously, I get the most respectful if wistful attention at teachers' colleges, even though what I propose is quite impossible under present administration. Teachers know how much they are wasting the children's time of life, and they understand that my proposals are fairly conservative, whereas our present schooling is a new mushroom. In general audiences, the response is incredulity. Against all evidence, people are convinced that what we do must make sense, or is inevitable. It does not help if I point out that in dollars and cents it might be cheaper, and it would certainly be more productive in tangible goods and services, to eliminate most schools and make the community and the work that goes in it more educational.

Yet the majority in a general audience are willing to say that they themselves got very little out of *their* school years. Occasionally an old reactionary businessman agrees with me enthusiastically, that booklearning isn't worth a penny; or an old socialist agrees, because he thinks you have to get your books the hard way.

Among radical students, I am met by 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 brainwashed.) 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 in the real world. The young have the right to power because they are numerous and are directly affected by what goes on, but especially because their new point of view is indispensable to cope with changing conditions, they themselves being part of the changing conditions. This is why Jefferson urged us to adopt a new constitution every generation.

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.

5. MANKIND AND THE HUMANITIES

FINALLY, LET ME GO BACK to a very old-fashioned topic of educational theory, how to transmit Culture with a big C, the greatness of Man. This is no longer discussed by conventional educators and it was never much discussed by progressive educators, though Dewey took it increasingly seriously in his later years. In our generation, it is a critical problem, yet I cannot think of a way to solve it. Perhaps it is useful to try to define it.

The physical environment and social culture force themselves on us, and the young are bound to grow up to them well or badly. They always fundamentally determine the curriculum in formal schooling; but even if there is no schooling at all, they are the focus of children's attention and interest; they are what is there. Dewey's maxim is a good one: there is no need to bother about curriculum, for whatever a child turns to is potentially educative and, with good management, one thing leads to another. Even skills that are considered essential prerequisites, like reading, will be learned spon-

taneously in normal urban and suburban conditions.

But humane culture is not what is obviously there for a child, and in our times it is less and less so. In the environment there is little spirit of a long proud tradition, with heroes and martyrs. For instance, though there is a plethora of concerts and records, art museums, planetariums, and child-encyclopedias, the disinterested ideals of science and art are hardly mentioned and do not seem to operate publicly at all, and the sacredness of these ideals no longer exists even on college campuses. Almost no young person of college age believes that there are autonomous professionals or has even heard of such a thing. Great souls of the past do not speak to a young person as persons like himself, once he learns their language, nor does he bother to learn their language. The old conflicts of history do not seem to have been human conflicts, nor are they of any interest.

The young have strong feelings for honesty, frankness, loyalty, fairness, affection, freedom, and other virtues of generous natures. They quickly resent the hypocrisy of politicians, administrators, and parents who mouth big abstractions and act badly or pettily. But in fact, they themselves—like most politicians and administrators and many parents—seem to have forgotten the concrete reality of ideals like magnanimity, compassion, honor, consistency, civil liberty, integrity, justice—*ruat coelum*, and unpalatable truth, all of which are not gut feelings and are often not pragmatic, but are maintained to create and re-create Mankind. Naturally, without these ideals and their always possible and often actual conflict, there is no tragedy. Most young persons seem to disbelieve that tragedy exists; they always interpret impasse as timidity, and casuistry as finking out. I am often astonished by their physical courage, but I am only rarely moved by their moral courage.

Their ignorance has advantages. The bother with transmitting humane culture is that it must be re-created in spirit, or it is a dead weight upon present spirit, and it does produce timidity and hypocrisy. Then it is better forgotten. Certainly the attempt to teach it by courses in school or by sermons like this, is a disaster. Presumably it was kept going by the living example of a large number of people who took it seriously and leavened society, but now there seems to be a discontinuity. It has been said that the thread really snapped during the First World War, during the Spanish War, with the gas-chambers and Atom-bombs, etc., etc. I have often suggested that the logical way to teach the humanities, for instance, would be for some of us to picket the TV stations in despair; but we are tired, and anyway, when we have done similar things, students put their own rather different interpretation on it. We try to purge the university of military projects, but students attack the physical research itself that could be abused (and is even bound to be abused), as if science were not necessarily a risky adventure. They don't see that this is a tragic dilemma. They seem quite willing—though battenning on them in the United States—to write off Western science

and civil law.

Yet apart from the spirit congealed in them, we do not really have our sciences and arts, professions and civic institutions. It is inauthentic merely to use the products and survivals, and I don't think we can in fact work Western civilization without its vivifying tradition. The simplest reason that cities are ungovernable is that there aren't enough citizens; this happened during the Roman Empire too. It is conceivable that the so-called Third World can adapt our technology and reinterpret it according to other ideals, as was supposed to be the theme of the conference in Havana against Cultural Imperialism; but I read dozens of papers and did not find a single new proposition. Anyway, this does nothing for us. Here at home it is poignant what marvels some people expect from the revival of African masks.

A young fellow is singing a song attacking the technological way of life, but he is accompanying it on an electric guitar plugged into the infrastructure; and the rhythm and harmony are phony mountain-music popularized by Stalinists in the Thirties to give themselves an American image, and which cannot cohere with a contemporary poem. But I can't make him see why this won't do. I can't make clear to a young lady at the Antioch-Putney School of Education that a child has an historical human right to know that there is a tie between Venus and the Sun and thanks to Newton we know its equation, which is even more beautiful than the Evening Star; it is *not* a matter of taste whether he knows this or not. Yet she's right, for if it's not his thing, it's pointless to show it to him, as it is to her.

It seems to me that, ignorant of the inspiration and grandeur of our civilization, though somewhat aware of its brutality and terror, the young are patsies for the "inevitabilities" of modern times. If they cannot take on our only world appreciatively and very critically, they can only confront her or be servile to her and then she is too powerful for any of us.

Margaret Mead says, truly, that young people are in modern times like native sons, whereas we others use the technology gingerly and talk like foreign-born. I am often pleased at how competent my young friend proves to be; my apprehension for him is usually groundless. But he is swamped by presentness. Since there is no background or structure, everything is equivalent and superficial. He can repair the TV but he thinks the picture is real (Marshall McLuhan doesn't help). He says my lecture blew his mind and I am flattered till he tells me that L. Ron Hubbard's metempsychosis in Hellenistic Sardinia blew his mind; I wonder if he has any mind to blow.

I sometimes have the eerie feeling that there are around the world, a few dozen of Plato's guardians, ecologists and psychosomatic physicians, who with worried brows are trying to save mankind from

destroying itself. This is a sorry situation for Jeffersonian anarchists like myself who think we ought to fend for ourselves. The young are quick to point out the mess that we have made, but I don't see that they really care about that, as if it were not their mankind. Rather, I see them with the Christmas astronauts flying toward the moon and seeing the Earth shining below: it is as if they are about to abandon an old house and therefore it makes no difference if they litter it with beer cans. These are bad thoughts.

But I have occasionally had a good educational experience in the Draft Resistance movement. The resisters are exceptionally virtuous young men and they are earnest about the fix they are in, that makes them liable to two to five years in jail. Then it is remarkable how, guided by a few Socratic questions, they come to remember the ideas of Allegiance, Sovereignty, Legitimacy, Exile, and bitter Patriotism, which cannot be taught in college courses in political science. It is a model of incidental learning of the humanities, but I am uneasy to generalize from it.

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OBSERVATION ON ANARCHY 103: THE WRITING ON THE WALL

I HAVE ONLY JUST GOT ROUND to reading my September ANARCHY, and was surprised to find a letter I sent to FREEDOM as a kind of epigraph on page one.

I had asked for a "reasoned defence" of the Dulwich College episode. No such defence appeared in FREEDOM, but *you* have provided one. May I thank you for this, and say that it has helped me to understand the point of view of the people concerned?

The bit about the guerrillas descending from the hills I particularly liked. My only fear is that when they are safely back in their mountain fastnesses, the ire they have aroused in the adults down in the valley may be expended on the unfortunate children. One of the many objections to school punishments is that they are so often administered summarily, and their severity therefore depends on all manner of irrelevant and external factors, such as, e.g., whether the master had a row with his wife before leaving home. If the children of a given school are goaded to rebellion that is one thing; but for those who have not yet rebelled to suffer vicariously for those who have rebelled on their behalf and cleared off—that is another thing again and, I fear, the most likely outcome of that kind of activity.

Still—good luck to SAU. May I add (thanking you for your kind words about me) that my work was not all done outside the state system. Bodenham Manor School was recognised as an efficient school by the Ministry of Education (as it then was) which provided about half the capital required for setting it up; and all the children were maintained there by LEAs.

Banbury, Oxon

W. DAVID WILLS

Two outstanding recent films comment on two extremes of contemporary authoritarian education. Arthur Uloth discusses *If . . .* with its devastating comment on the English public (i.e. private) school system, and Paul Barker examines *Kes*, a picture of the schooling and the social background of innumerable English children.

Schooling on the screen

1: Boy in a cage

PAUL BARKER

"KES" IS A FILM about the way we try to tame most of our school-children; about—in its director's words—"a waste of human spirit." Anyone who has ever taught, or been taught, in a run-of-the-mill secondary modern school, or in the lower streams of a comprehensive, knows what a battle-field of willpower nearly every classroom is. Chiefly the teacher's will. He needs to fit these boys (the boys more than the girls) to his concept of a decent, orderly, *quiet* class.

It's wrong just to fault the teachers. This is what parents and employers largely want of the staff in such schools. They want the children assembly-belted into leading decent, orderly, wage-earning lives. *Kes*—which had its first public showing at the London Film Festival recently — brilliantly puts across this permanent feeling of aggression and suppression. It was filmed at a school in Barnsley in the West Riding, and in or around Barnsley itself. The actors, with one exception, are local children, teachers or northern club entertainers.

The title of the film is the name of a bird; but the subject of the film is the bird's owner, Billy Casper. He is one of the children who are being crudely moulded for that moment when, as they approach 15, the youth employment officer will check rapidly through the job possibilities and settle for "manual." Somebody has to hump dustbins; somebody, if you live in Barnsley, has to go down the pit.

There is one passage in the film which is as boldly effective as a tabloid headline. Jud Casper, Billy's brother, goes off to his shift in the pit. He wears a shirt and trousers that make him look like a man in the army; maybe they are army-surplus. The pithead reeks rust and

PAUL BARKER is editor of New Society where his review of Kes first appeared. No one else we know has had a chance to see this remarkable film by the time we go to press, and we are grateful for the opportunity of reprinting his article.

muck and flaking brick. As the miners tramp across and start to go down the shaft in the decrepit cage, the soundtrack cuts to the drone of children singing in school assembly. After a few moments, the picture cuts to the assembly hall, too. This is where Billy goes: it's new-shoddy ten years after it was opened, and the teachers stand like special constables during assembly, on the lookout for whisperers or dozers. Billy is about to leave school, but he doesn't want to go down the pit. His brother, on starting work, only swapped one cage for another. The same route stretches ahead for Billy.

The storyline reinforces this image of a cage. Like the young kestrel, "Kes," that he catches and decides to train, Billy can be caged and controlled, within limits; but beyond them, he remains wild, despite all the efforts at taming. School is a cage; home is a cage; work (whether down the pit or not) will be a cage: but every so often Billy will escape.

The director of *Kes* is Ken Loach, whose best-known work has been in television: *Cathy Come Home* and *Up the Junction*. His first feature-film was *Poor Cow*; *Kes* is his second, and he himself prefers it. It's a film that avoids two temptations that could have trapped it into a false picturesqueness.

On the one hand, the trap of the nature film: swooping wings, proud beak, green fields and woods. All these are there, but they are played down; the shots are cut back, sometimes tantalisingly so. Loach, like the Barry Hines novel the film is based on, is interested in Billy more than in the bird.

The alternative trap is the industrial picturesque of dark stone back street, with children playing—like Opie informants—on the worn setts; all warmly evocative of a *Coronation Street* working class. This only bobs into *Kes* occasionally. Billy lives on a council estate, straggling at the edge of Barnsley. By comparison with the redbrick rush-job look of these houses, the dark stone of the older streets seems solid. In the council houses, whenever a door is shut in anger, the soundtrack records a thin bang, not a slam. This is where the working class lives now.

Loach does catch beautifully how, in the West Riding, the countryside which creeps in so close to the towns is a release from the confines of industrialism. Billy is a loner: he walks among the trees, chews grass with the knowing munch his grandfather would have recognised. But Loach is concerned less with a specific portrait of a boy than with his film's general social message. Just as Cathy personified the homeless, Billy Casper personifies the "Newsom children"—those secondary school children who will leave early and fill most of the country's jobs.

In casting the film Loach followed through the logic of his belief that human potential is being wasted. Some child in school in Barnsley ought to be able to play the lead part. David Bradley was chosen to play Billy out of about 30 other children who'd been seen. The son of a miner, he is at this school himself. As Billy, he looks the part perfectly. He even looks fed right—as if he ate nothing but fish and chips and crisps and pop. When he strips to play soccer, his ribs stick out.

Beneath each eye there is a diagonal line of tiredness running across the top of the cheek. His anorak is a size too small; his hair was last brushed a fortnight ago. His resilience shows through, and—when he is training Kes—his ability to be absorbed in a task. Like most of the cast he helps give the film the rough edge of documentary. The headmaster of the school in *Kes* is in fact head of a nearby school. “The relationship didn’t just stop when the cameras stopped turning,” Loach says.

The constant suppression is shown best in two sequences. One—the most direct—is where the headmaster canes Billy (for falling asleep in assembly) and some other boys who’ve been caught smoking. The head gives them a joint harangue. In a way, he’d rather not cane them; but what choice has he? “I taught your father, MacDowall,” he tells one of them. “Things are no better now than they were then. . . . We can never tell you anything . . . mere fodder for the mass media. . . .” And the caning goes ahead. The school is not blackboard jingly; just deadening.

The other sequence is the games period, when Billy is forced to turn out, even though he detests football, and is thrust by the PE master into a borrowed pair of ludicrously oversized shorts. The PE master is played by a professional wrestler who also, it happens, teaches English. It is a very precise piece of casting. He sums up all the pressures on Billy—all the more so for living in a world of mock-heroic fantasy not unlike that of many of the boys. In the boys’ soccer game he plays as captain of one side—only half-joking when he speaks of himself as Bobby Charlton. He makes sure his side plays with the wind. By suddenly reverting to referee, he sends off the other side’s captain. (In mimicry of television, Manchester United/Spurs scores are flashed across the bottom of the screen.) But Billy, fooling around, lets a crucial goal through. The PE master keeps him in the showers and turns them full cold.

Billy’s life is of a piece. Home is where the narrowing-down of Billy’s future begins. His mother, deserted by her husband, is off every Saturday night with her new boy-friend. There is a gross, accurate Saturday night scene, with her and Jud slanging each other across the tables of beer.

Jud’s own relationship with Billy is almost entirely a bullying one (paralleling the bullying that Billy sometimes gets at school). The film opens with a shot of Jud and Billy sharing the same cheap, ugly bed. Billy and the alarm clock wake Jud for the pit; but when Billy asks for the alarm to be re-set for his own getting-up time, the only answer is “Set it thissen.” Jud’s face has self-confidence and self-assertiveness in its bones. It is Jud who, at the end of the film, will kill Billy’s kestrel, and throw it and Billy’s brief freedom into the dustbin. Billy spends some money of Jud’s on fish and chips instead of putting it on a double. The double comes off. Billy must be punished.

The details tell. When Billy is told he could get a book on training kestrels from the public library, he asks, “Where’s that?” And on

getting there, he finds he can’t take a book out because he’s not a member and he would have to take the card back to his mother to sign. He steals one from a second-hand bookshop instead.

One part of Billy that can’t be squashed is his gaiety. As he trains Kes, whom he’s caught in a nest near his home, he talks to it like a miner to his whippet—“Come on, lass”—and it soars to his hand across the fields. The quality of Billy’s life is delicately caught: a blithe toughness among the shoddiness. This is epitomised when Billy squats down on a hillside, against a background of chimneys, to read a *Dandy* he’s delivering. Loach cuts a whole strip from “Desperate Dan” into the film.

Kes is being held up over distribution. Because it has a U certificate, the trade seems to think it’s for kids. Yet, at the very least, all education committees should see it, compulsorily. A new school building and pale pine desks are not enough; nor is a *New English Bible* to read the lesson out of at assembly.

I remember one shot of the council estate: those ugly, boxed houses—then behind them the untidy huts, where the tenants can do what they *really* want. It is in one of them that Billy rears his hawk; and where, after he’s gone down the pit, he may try again, I suppose. Or keep a whippet.

2: Which side would you be on?

ARTHUR ULOTH

IT HAS BEEN THE CUSTOM in middle-class English families for the past hundred years or more to send children away from home at a quite early age. They go to boarding schools, where they remain from the age of eight to the age of eighteen. So that home life virtually ends for these children at eight years old, until they set up their own homes.

This system is believed to create tough and resilient people, who are ready for any emergency. Often no doubt it succeeds. If it generally failed it would be given up. Yet it fails with a great many children, and reduces them to nervous wrecks. Presumably they are regarded as an expendable minority.

The tough and resilient type is the empire-builder, or perhaps more truly the empire-administrator, because in fact the British Empire had already nearly reached its fullest extent by the time the public school boys started appearing on the scene in any great numbers.

The builders of empires are unpleasant types usually, but they are also individualists, and the public school system of education aims at the suppression of individuality, or at any rate its diversion into eccentricity.

For the benefit of those readers who have not either been the victims of this system, or made a study of it, it consists of two stages. The child is first sent to a "preparatory" school, which is supposed to prepare him or her for public school life, and is in fact a kind of miniature public school. The child stays there from the age of eight to that of thirteen or so. Some start as early as five. In fact it seems that some parents cannot get rid of their offspring soon enough, and one wonders why they ever bother to have children at all.

At the beginning of his school career the child is bullied systematically. (Girls' schools do not seem to be quite so brutal as boys', and since my personal experience is of course that of a boy's school I shall stick to the fate of the boys.) This semi-official policy is intended to harden the boy, and make him able to stand anything. His consolation comes towards the end of his career in the "prep" school, when he is now in the position to bully the younger boys.

However nemesis awaits him, for when he goes to his public school, having been a dominating figure in his "prep" school, he again becomes of small account, and the whole process is repeated. This is supposed to cure him of excessive pride. When he gets to the top he can again become a bully, and often does so. The system is not intended to eliminate the urge to bully, however. It would be truer to say that it is intended to teach how to bully and domineer scientifically. You know what it is like to be on both the giving and the receiving ends.

The public school system is still flourishing, and most of the criticisms that are made of it are attacks on its snobbery. Its cruelty to children is not objected to, merely that it is only available to middle- and upper-class parents who can afford the fees. The great solution is to provide grants so that working class boys can also have this torture inflicted on them. The academic prestige of these schools is high, and I strongly suspect is greatly exaggerated. However that is neither here nor there. Their real attraction lies in the association they have in people's minds with Power and the ruling class. "In my country," said the Venezuelan patriot and adventurer Rafael de Nogales, "everyone wants to be the government, because not being the government is Hell." This is, however, true of most countries really, however liberal they may be. Everybody wants to be the government, or at least to bask in its reflected glory.

But we live in a more revolutionary age today than ever before in modern history, and the public schools are at last coming under fire for the right reasons. The film "If . . .", directed by Lindsay Anderson, would have been inconceivable a few years ago. It shows just how much public feeling has changed during the present decade. When I went to see it at a West End cinema the place was crowded out, and the average age of the audience must have been about twenty.

The school presented to us in this film is absolutely true to life to the very last detail. Seeing it was a weird experience. I felt that I was seeing again people I had met in real life. The housemaster with his eccentric musical interests, his frustrated cow-like wife, the dotty matron, the history master who loves his subject, but is way above the heads of

his pupils, the "progressive" Head, who can afford to be liberal because the business of inflicting discipline is carried out by subordinates, and above all the sadistic "Whips" (prefects, monitors or what you will), older boys who are entrusted with more authority than the assistant masters. Thank goodness though I never encountered a chaplain like the one in the film. However he is quite possible.

Yes, undoubtedly this is a real school, or the essence of several real schools. Sometimes the film takes off into fantasy, but even when it does so it is still close to reality. These fantasies are the sort of fantasies that schoolboys have. Indeed, the ending of the film, with a group of rebel boys firing on the staff, parents and prefects at the end of term Speech Day, is probably intended as fantasy also. Certainly I can remember how we discussed doing exactly this, but of course we never did.

It is interesting, having seen the film, to read the script by David Sherwin, now published as a paperback by Sphere, 5/-. This brings out things which one may have missed in the film, for example the fact that the school was founded by an armourer in 1631, Sir William Webster, Knight-in-Chief of the Worshipful Guild of Armourers, a distinguished soldier, merchant and explorer. The connection between the school and militarism is never lost sight of, and just how successful the system is is shown by the rebel boys' desire to fight it with its own weapons.

All warrior societies that have got past the stage where every man is automatically a fighting man if need arises, have institutions roughly similar to the public schools, where young members of the ruling class are put through a period of rigorous training, with a good deal of ill-treatment. Men may be naturally aggressive, but they are not naturally warlike, for if they were this specialised training would never be needed. Here you are shown the whole process.

At the beginning of the film the boys arrive for the new term, including of course a number of new boys. There is a very good scene where a new boy called Jute is tested for his "Bumph Examination", which is an entirely unofficial exam every new boy has to take. It concerns the customs, nicknames, slang, geography and so on of the school. Not only does he have to get the answers correct, but he has to use the exact form of words laid down. The Whips will hear his answers in a few days. He must not say "um . . ." or "er . . .". He must get the whole thing word perfect or the boys given the task of teaching him will be beaten, and he will have to do the whole thing over again. This is entirely true to life.

The original intention presumably was to ensure that the new boy would know his way around, but the ultimate result was to create an initiation rite, and a painful one at that. The younger boys also learn to bully the new boys, otherwise they will be punished themselves. So the members of each grade go in fear of those above them, and instil fear in those below, until is reached the level of the lordly Whips, who fear no one, not even the headmaster.

The climax of the film arrives with a Field Day. At this point also fantasy seems to take complete command. The rebel heroes have obtained some live ammunition from somewhere, and they shoot holes in the tea urn, and Mick, their leader, shoots and bayonets the chaplain, who is the head of the school cadet corps. For this the boys are punished by being set to cleaning out the meeting hall where the Speech Day ceremonies are to be held. In a cellar underneath the stage they discover some discarded cadet corps weapons, and more live ammunition, with which they stage their revolt.

The improbabilities of this final series of events do not detract from the film as a whole. Somehow one is able to accept the situation as it builds up to its climax, dreamlike though it is. (The headmaster produces the chaplain, still alive apparently, out of a drawer, makes the boys shake hands with him, and then lectures them tolerantly on "responsibility" and "service".) The rest of the film up till this point has been so real that this departure from verisimilitude does not jar. The film ends to the roar of gunfire, leaving the question with us, "If this were to happen, which side would you be on?"

Some sort of a joke?

TONY GIBSON

ENGLISH PROGRESSIVE SCHOOLS by R. Skidelsky (Penguin Books 7s.).

THE TROUBLE ABOUT this book is that it is not really about progressive schools, and the two schools it is most concerned with are German in tradition and not English. One could hardly have a more misleading title. The author is far more concerned with personalities than with schools. A section of the book is devoted to a short biography of A. S. Neill, and although we are introduced to various personalities Neill has known we are told very little indeed about this school as about any other progressive school.

The personalities who are dealt with principally are Reddie who started Abbotsholme, inspired by the pedagogic ideas of Germany in the late nineteenth century, and Kurt Hahn who imported his school from Germany to Scotland in 1934 when his Jewish origins made it difficult for him to continue in Germany under the Nazi regime. The author admits that, "It was this element of 'muddle' in the English character that was gradually to convert Reddie into a violent Anglophobe and a fanatic Germanophile. . . . It is not, therefore, in the least surprising that Reddie turned to Germany for a pedagogical plan; equally it is not in the least surprising that he found one". So much for the "Englishness" of the two schools with which Skidelsky is principally concerned.

Now for the question of "progressiveness". This word has a meaning in contemporary English, and I am sure that Skidelsky has been long enough in this country to find out that meaning in relation to education. But like a clever-clever undergraduate defending a perfectly preposterous motion before his debating society he insists right until the end of his book that Reddie and Hahn were "progressive educators" and that their schools are to be classed with Summerhill, Dartington, Kilquhanity, Burgess Hill, and King Alfred's. Although his knowledge about progressive schools is pretty superficial, he has done his research on Reddie and Hahn. He tells us that "Reddie first turned to education because he believed that he had a mission to protect adolescents from sexual vice. This aim was always in the forefront of his educational career". This is pretty rich. It all depends, of course on what you mean by "sexual vice"; Reddie was a woman-hater and as queer as a coot. It was not for nothing that his boys came to be known as the "Abbotshomos". Everything was done in that school under Reddie to interfere with the normal development of adolescent sexuality, from diatribes against the opposite sex to curious rituals around the act of defecation.

As for Reddie the "progressive" educator, Skidelsky quotes an old boy from the school who tells us that when Reddie was in a bad mood, "His temper was ungovernable. He shouted, stormed and raged. He seldom came into class without a cane". No doubt some teachers in progressive schools have bad tempers (I once hit a boy with an eight-foot batten of timber—a most satisfying expression of bad temper) but the idea of regularly conducting classroom teaching with a cane is more like the pedagogy of Wackford Squeers than that of a "Progressive educator".

As to the "progressiveness" of Kurt Hahn, W. B. Curry of Dartington is quoted as writing of Hahn: "People like Hahn are so tormented themselves by their moral fanaticism that they set up a sense of guilt in any community in which they are important. Having created the sense of guilt, they then use it as an excuse for punishment. . . . Unless I am very profoundly mistaken . . . the education which Hahn advocates is incompatible with a really liberal civilisation. It seems to me to be the product of the tortured German soul." It will come as no surprise that Skidelsky quotes with relish Kurt Hahn's adulation of Adolf Hitler in 1933, the year before he was forced to get out for being a Jew.

Is this book some sort of joke? If so the joke is on the reader for paying seven shillings in the expectation of getting a book about English Progressive Schools. Can it be that Skidelsky, the clever-clever undergraduate, is simply amusing himself at our expense by defending a series of monstrous and ridiculous propositions? Or has he some very personal axe to grind, the nature of which he does not choose to reveal openly? It is as though I were possessed of an obsessive hatred of Public Schools, and worked it out by writing a book ostensibly about the British Public School Idea, using for my examples Old Wapping

Secondary Mod., Court Leys Approved School and St. Trinian's Girls' Academy—rounding it off with a biographical sketch of Arnold of Rugby.

If one is interested in Reddie and Hahn, the Outward Bound movement, Baden Powell and all that—in fact in Boys (preferably in shorts until they take a reluctant leave of adolescence about the age of 21) this book will have much to interest you. But there is another half to the species, and progressive education is quite as much concerned with girls.

On anarchy and freedom

E. J. CONDON

A DICTIONARY DEFINITION of the word "anarchy" will often comprise two distinct meanings: (1) chaos, disorder; and (2) absence of external authority. Much of the bigotry and intolerance shown towards anarchists, I hope to show, can be understood, though not necessarily condoned, in the light of this twofold meaning. Furthermore, a consideration of two contrasting notions of the concept of freedom, along with a linking together of each of these notions with the idea of anarchism most appropriate to it, may help us to avoid many confusions and pitfalls which we might otherwise encounter in discussions with non-anarchists.

Most non-anarchists regard anarchy as chaos and disorder alone. What does this position entail? First, it can be said in passing, that to describe anarchism as such is to make a value judgment, in so far as the speaker not only refers to a particular way of life, but also passes an opinion on it. In other words, he realises that anarchism entails no rules, and he does not like it (i.e. he calls it chaotic).

Secondly, and more important for our purposes, this conception of anarchism corresponds fairly closely to a particular notion of freedom: a notion, that is, of *negative* freedom—freedom from—as conceived as the answer to the question, "What is the area in which I am not restrained?" (to use Isaiah Berlin's notation). The anti-anarchist, in other words, more often than not believes that this is the concept of freedom which the anarchist uses when he talks about a free society. And, since the anarchist denounces all authority, it is quite natural to expect him to go on to say that his demand for freedom entails an answer to the above question on the lines of "I wish to be completely unrestrained".

Now, if everyone were totally unrestrained in this sense, this may or may not lead to chaos; what is certain is that the door is opened wide to chaos. So this anti-anarchist argument is, at least internally, fairly

sound. *But*, it is based on a false premise: that of equating anarchism solely with this idea of negative freedom—and anarchists do not do this. There is far more to anarchism than a mere absence of interference in our lives.

Consider the other notion of anarchy, that of absence of external authority. We may note, again in passing, that usually this is far less of a value judgment; it is rather a factual statement, in that it describes a state of affairs, i.e. one without external compulsion, without passing an opinion on it.

Now this conception of anarchism corresponds much more closely to the idea of *positive* freedom, conceived (to quote Berlin again) as the answer to the question, "Who governs me?" This notion of freedom is much nearer to the hearts of anarchists than the negative notion. And the anarchist answer to the question is that, under anarchy, I govern myself. In other words, this is a principle of self-government, not of no government (which is what the anti-anarchist would have us believe).

Unfortunately, both the idea of self-government (i.e. positive freedom, anarchy as conceived by the anarchist himself), and the idea of no government (i.e. negative freedom, chaos, anarchy as conceived by his opponent), can be inferred from the simple, emotionally and ideologically neutral concept of "absence of external authority". And this may be one source of the tension: anti-anarchists accuse anarchists of taking one of these two paths, whereas they in fact take the other; and this failure to agree upon the use and meanings of such basic terms renders much discussion between anarchists and their opponents quite futile.

Of course, nothing I have said so far implies that anarchists do not want any negative freedom. They most certainly do, for without a certain minimum of this sort of freedom (say, the amount specified by the Declaration of Human Rights *at least*), people cease to be human, let alone free. Indeed, all political doctrines demand some degree of negative freedom; even the worst sort of tyrant allows some measure of non-interference, however small. Anarchism, like other political theories, contains a blending of the two sorts of freedom; and in the end it boils down to a matter of emphasis. For a large degree of negative freedom is quite compatible with a high level of dictatorship; indeed, a clever dictator will allow his subjects as much negative freedom as will not endanger his power, such that his slaves come to regard themselves as free. But this is not the sort of freedom anarchists desire, though they do desire some degree of negative freedom. They shift the emphasis to the positive side, and this concerns the *source* of authority, not the area of non-interference. And they push this notion to the furthest, in that each person governs himself.

For this reason, anarchism is much closer to Kant's idea of (positive) freedom as obedience to a law which one imposes on oneself, than to the *laissez-faire*-type Monday Club (negative) freedom which entails no interference whatever and tough luck to the poor unfortunates who get trodden on in the process.

On the District Line

PETER REILLY

TUBE TRAINS ON THE DISTRICT LINE are not usually full at ten o'clock in the evening. The theatres and the pubs have not yet turned out their customers and the evening class students are already home. Last Monday evening there were only four people in my section of the carriage. In the seat next to the narrow door at the front end of the carriage a youngish man, dark-skinned, possibly an Indian, sat with his legs crossed holding an umbrella. A middle-aged man sat opposite him and another middle-aged man opposite me at the other end of the row of seats.

Shortly after the train pulled out of Whitechapel Station a number of youngsters entered through the doors connecting with the adjacent carriage. They came in aimlessly, shuffling, talking, until one of them noticed the dark face in the corner. Immediately they slumped into the seats next to and opposite him. There must have been eight of them because there were not enough seats in our section so two went on and sat further down the carriage. The boys were about fifteen or sixteen years of age—probably still at school. Their hair was short but not cropped, they wore jeans and boots but not the rest of the “skinhead” uniform. Perhaps they were “Peanuts”. I don’t know.

One of the group, a fat, pink boy, asked the man in the corner if he had a half-a-crown piece. The Indian shook his head.

“Let’s have a look at your umbrella.”

“What?”

“Let’s have a look at your umbrella.”

“No.”

The fat one’s hand reached for the thick cane handle but the other held the umbrella firmly.

“Sure you haven’t got a half-a-crown piece.”

“No, I can’t help you.”

There was a shout from further down the carriage.

“Ask him if he’s got a half-a-crown piece.” Six heads turn.

“We done that already, you git.”

“He reckons you’re a queer.”

“What?”

“He reckons you’re a queer.”

“Yes, he says you’re a queer.”

“He says you’re as queer as him”—indicating the fat boy—“and that’s saying something. Ha, Ha, Ha.”

One boy has pulled his mac over his head and is peering along

his nose and over the edge of its collar. Another says, “Let’s try the next carriage.”

“No point, we’re getting off at Mile End.” (Sometime we must have stopped at Stepney Green. I had not noticed.)

The two return from further down the carriage and stand, strap hanging, in front of the man. Their backs mask his face but I see their hands pulling at his umbrella. A thin-faced, dark haired boy is staring at me. I stare back.

Surly, chin jutting, he says, “What’s the matter?”

I pause but can think of nothing better than, “A good deal by the look of it.”

We are nearing Mile End. More of the boys stand up crowding around the man, the corner, and the door. I can now only see his feet; which one of them is kicking! I half stand holding the arm of my seat. The handle of his umbrella appears as one of them pulls it, jerking its owner forward. The doors open and the boys leap off. A sudden punch is aimed at the Indian’s face by the last to leave. They are gone. But the doors are still open and one is back, throwing a punch around the glass partition, and gone again.

I notice now that the other two men are also standing. Boys leap on and off. Now the Indian is waving his umbrella as the boys taunt him from the platform aiming kicks at him through the narrow door. Another taunts us—standing whites—from the other door, and one of the men moves swiftly towards the door. The doors close. And then open. The boys crowd forward again.

Two uniformed London transport men struggle through them to get on the train. The Indian thinks that they have come to investigate and expostulates, “They are trying to get me. . . .” But London Transport doesn’t want to know. “Nothing to do with us”, they say and pass down the carriage and away from us. The doors close and I sit down.

The doors open. The dark haired one is threatening me from the platform. “Come on, you want to have a go.” I remain seated and wave him away. “You just go and change trains.” The doors close. We three are seated now. The Indian stands, turning, bewildered, to each of us, “Did you see. They were trying to get me. . . .” His hands, one holding the umbrella, are half raised; his voice incredulous.

We are embarrassed. One says, “They’re a disgrace to the mothers that bore them.” The other, “They’re the same lot that caused trouble at Aldgate East the other night”. I say nothing. The Indian sits. We all sit; in the same isolated silence that existed before the incident.

Afterwards, I felt a mixture of embarrassment and fear. Fear—I was afraid with the stomach sinking feeling of personal danger. But further, deeper, I was afraid of what it might mean. I saw recently a book called *The Yellow Star*. In photographs it traces the history of the Nazi persecution of the Jews from “Juden Raus” to the final solution. I was afraid that I had seen the first photograph in a new book.

Covering ourselves

RUFUS SEGAR

NOT HAVING DONE ANYTHING for the inside of this magazine since issue number six, I though it was about time I wrote about what has been going on the outside of the magazine.

The way the magazine is put together is comic, awful, and for a journal of dissent, too vulnerable. The words are assembled by the editor and sent to a trade typesetter in Stepney. The proofs are made up into a dummy in Putney. The metal type made up to print the insides in Whitechapel. The picture for the cover is made in St. James's and sent to a blockmaker in Clerkenwell. The block is sent to a printer in Bishopsgate who prints the covers. The insides and the covers are collected together and taken to a binders in Fulham who folds the insides, stitches on the covers and trims the copies. The magazines are sent to Whitechapel for dispatch. Sometimes you get your magazine late.

The process is Victorian, small-scale industrial production. The typesetting, blockmaking, printing, binding and postage are paid for. The rest is not in the money economy. You get the writing, editing, drawing and distribution for free. Not that you should be grateful, consider the motives of the people involved.

I can only speak for myself. I produce most of the covers, with considerable autonomy and independence and in splendid isolation. The editor sends me the subject of the issue; sometimes with an explanation, sometimes with a clipping or a possible image, more often than not just a list of contents. From then on what you see outside is my responsibility. The covers are a by-product of the work I do, they are fitted in to a varying work load and the amount of time and thought given to them is raggedly uneven. This does not relate to the quality of the covers. Some quick covers have been resounding, some laboured covers have been abysmal. The covers are the record of my response to ANARCHY a month in advance of publication without the benefit of reading the copy. With some hindsight, I am fascinated by about one in four copies, I pick at one in four, half I just can't read. This uneven

reaction is like the covers produced—one in four considered, one in four uneven, and half just skimmed.

The reason for doing the covers and continuing to do the covers is a combination of loyalty and passion. The loyalty is mainly to the editor and to an ill-defined group of English anarchists who are mostly impotent but full of promise. The passion is for the potency of the situation.

The editor is a posterity man, he intends that besides the copies that go out on publication there are some unbound copies put aside to be hard-back bound volumes of ANARCHY for each year since 1961. Covers will not be included. The covers are disposable.

The editor is a frontiersman. There he goes, sowing seeds of revolution, implanting pills of love and sedition into the body politic. The covers are the seed packets or the sugar on the pills.

The production of the covers has run into difficulties of copyright and censorship. It is these two subjects that made this article necessary.

Copyright is ownership and the rights of property. This has implications for an anarchist magazine (see Proudhon in No. 106). This is best illustrated by what happened about No. 89 of July 1968 about France and the May days. The cover was a newspaper photo from *The Times* which was blown up about three times and the title put on in red lettering. The image was of three posters pasted on a public building. The image was strong and dramatic and appropriate. Two others were used as fillers in the issue. All were pirated. No acknowledgements were given, no permission granted, no fees paid, they were liberated, stolen.

Whose property? The rights to the image belong to the makers and copiers. Begin with the posters, the people who made the posters and fly posted them started it all off. That was a free offer. The photographer was the first copier, he was there and snapped them into his butterfly net. He had copyright. The newspaper bought the pictures and copied them. The newspaper had copyright. Both the photographer and newspaper were ignored and the pictures were copied once again. The intention was to extend the audience of the original posters which were themselves free.

There were consequences. A year later the photographer caught up with ANARCHY 89 when she came to England. Eliane Barrault was indignant about the pictures having been used. *The Times* was the only paper in England that had used the picture (they had published a selection without naming her as photographer). On seeing the cover of ANARCHY 89 and recognising the picture as hers, she was even more annoyed at seeing a credit for the cover to someone else. The remedy was to put the record straight, and say whose pictures they were. This I have done, rather ungraciously. There was no request for payment for using the pictures because the intention of the posters, and of ANARCHY in reproducing them, both deserved support. Miss Barrault was too kind, if I had cut up and used *Paris-Match* that week I would have been off to Wormwood Scrubs.

I let sleeping dogs lie, I am dimly aware there are all sorts of copyright hounds lying about, some savage with one eye open, most of them snoozing, a dozen fleas such as ANARCHY would not disturb them. In making the cover for each issue and reproducing illustrations from a multitude of sources it is difficult to know what is in copyright or not, and if it is, who has the copyright. Knowingly I have taken quite a few pictures, whole or in part. I am not inclined to apologise for doing so.

Each issue sets the problem to find an image to assemble with words to make a cover. If there is not one to hand that I can use, I draw one. If the dogs wake up and start biting, I will draw more covers.

There are three demands to be met when infringing copyright. Money, ego, and permission to use. The money involved is not really worth bothering about, the most complex bit of piracy I can think of, which means stealing the greatest amount of effort per square inch, is to completely fill the cover with an ordnance survey map. The royalty payment for this would be £7 13s. Bruised egos can be anointed with lavish credits at the time. Permission is more difficult, better not to ask than risk refusal. If there is a serious possibility of complications on this issue, assault the image, cut it, tear it, juxtapose it, alter it, add to it—anything to transform it.

The other matter is censorship. This has sometimes thrown a spanner in the works. No. 63 had on the back cover a wood engraving of a naked man on a mattress being subjected to various pressures, shown as various bandages and ropes about his body and limbs being pulled and operated by various well-dressed forearms and fists. A frontal nude with visible penis. The cover went through the pipeline until it came to the binders. There the foreman of the wire-stitchers refused the job. He couldn't have his ladies handling such a cover, they might be offended. Note that it wasn't his objection, it was the possibility of others who should be protected. With some delay and expense the issue came out.

More recently a similar thing happened to 105. The subject was Wilhelm Reich. The cover devised was too much for almost every part of the system, the blockmaker thought it was dodgy and said that the directors of the firm would not make the block. I said that if they did not want to do it please say exactly why before refusing. On consideration they went ahead and made the block. The cover printers then refused to print it. One of the contributors saw the cover proof and threatened to withdraw his article if the cover was used. I can't even reproduce it in the body of the magazine. Anyone who wants a copy send a stamped addressed envelope to Freedom Press.

That's all, I will continue with the good, bad and indifferent work, and may write a progress report in No. 208. Meanwhile if there is anyone about who is capable of doing a more dramatic and provocative job on one or many covers, please get in touch.

Freedom **P**ress

publish
FREEDOM weekly at 9d.
and **ANARCHY** monthly at 3s.
from
84b Whitechapel High Street
London E1
01-247 9249
Entrance Angel Alley,
Whitechapel Art Gallery exit,
Aldgate East Underground Stn.

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Anarchy: £1.16.0, \$5.00
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Airmail
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by Sea: £4.19.0, \$12.50

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