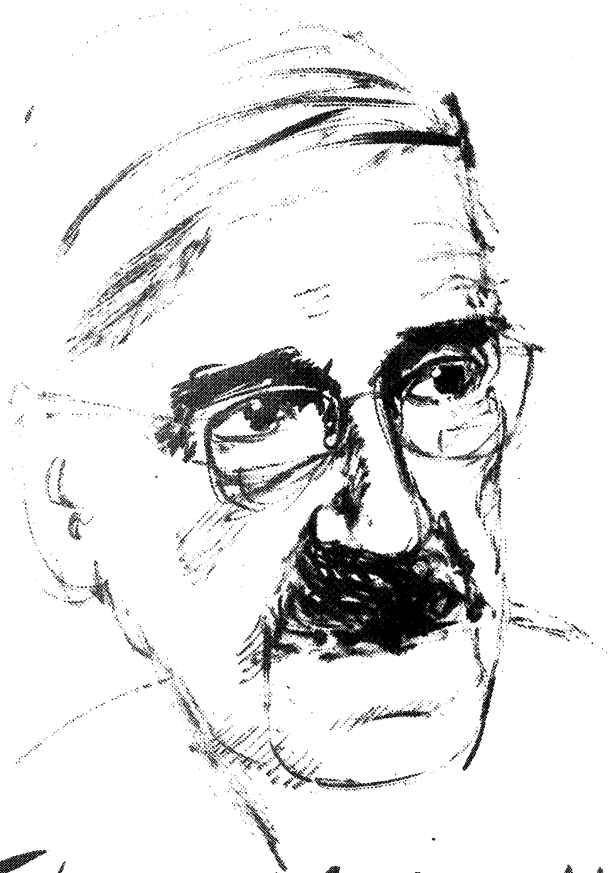
Radical Education Dossier 1



"Dear John,... it didn't work out

Magazine of RED G October 1976 80c

1 Radical Education Dossier

This number has been compiled and produced by **Clift Barnard, George Barnes Kevin Harris, Bob Mackie, Leslie Redmond and Jim Walker** acting as an editorial collective on behalf of **RED G, 10 Reuss St., Glebe, 2037.** Sydney 660—0874

Typeset and produced by **Battler Printing and Publishing,** 28 Block Place, Melbourne. Phone 429-1610
Printed by **Waverly Offset,** Geddes Rd, Mulgrave.

At a time when there is an attack on education, and social welfare generally — led by a profoundly anti-democratic Australian government — there is an urgent need to build a strong radical movement in education, as part of a broad social and political movement for a more equal and democratic society.

We hope this magazine will make a contribution to that movement, by promoting a wider understanding of socialist analysis of schooling in Australia, a critical awareness of issues in schools as they are experienced by students, teachers, parents and others, and the development of strategies for radical change.

We hope that RED will appeal to people engaged in education in a wide variety of roles and levels. We are well aware of the danger of RED being, or being thought to be, simply "academic". To avoid this, we need your involvement. To begin with, why not write and tell us what you think of the first issue? Next, lets have your contributions.

RED is published by the Radical Education Group (RED G), set up in August this year. RED G grew out of a conference, "What To Do About Schools?" held in Sydney in June. There were some 700 participants, students, teachers, academics, parents, and unionists. The conference dramatically demonstrated the high level of present concern about our educational system, and a widespread interest in making a radical reappraisal of it. Above all, it demonstrated the participants' profound conviction of the urgent need for radical action to change it.

Radical Education Dossier will come out three times a year, publishing articles, reviews, letters, news items, contact lists, poems, pictures, cartoons, etc., on a wide range of theoretical, political and practical issues in education. We want readers to be active in using RED, as a forum for the exchange and discussion of experiences and ideas, and as an instrument in their own educational activities, inside and outside the classroom.

If John Dewey Calls, Tell Him Things Didn't Work Out ...

by Sam Bowles

IT HAS BEEN remarked that the humanity of a nation may be judged by looking at its prisons; I think this might equally well be said of the schools. They are a fairly sensitive barometer of the way that a social system is organized.

Since the early sixties we have noticed that the schools are not only an arena for social struggle, they are also a kind of social laboratory in which competing visions of how social problems should be solved are tried out. So you find in the schools all forms of experiments, very often with the lives of children, about how society should be run: should it be run from the top down, from the bottom up, should it be equal, should it respect individual differences and develop them, should it submerge them, and so on. Why have the schools taken on this dual role?

I think most people who call themselves liberals or progressives (I use the words interchangeably) readily admit that the capitalist economy creates certain problems for human progress. Certainly John Dewey, the most influential American progressive educator of all, acknowledged this. They recognize, of course, that the capitalist system has progressive aspects, but I think they are willing to admit that it gives rise to inequality and to conditions in the workplace which are not at all consistent with how we would like to develop as human beings.

Naturally, the language is somewhat different: they probably don't identify capitalism as the problem; they would be more likely to identify it as "human nature" or "technology". But in any case there is a fairly general agreement that certain social problems have to be dealt with, and the theory is that schools have an important role to play in fixing up the deficiencies of an imperfect society. In particular, there is the notion that schools and other social policies can significantly reduce the inequality in society, and moderate the brutalizing effect that industrial work has on individuals, so as to provide within the schools an arena in which the full development of human capacities can take place, something which is prohibited in the workplace because of the nature of the workplace, that does not allow us the creativity, spontaneity and full development which would make us happier.

There is considerable faith in this notion, which has been around for almost a hundred years. Let me quote someone not known for his eminence as a social thinker, but who has had an influence on US history, Andrew Carnegie: "Just see, wherever we peer into the first teeming springs of the national life, how this true panacaea for all the ills of the body politic bubbles forth: education, education, education." This is a great steel magnate and major spokesman for the capitalist class around the turn of the century, trying to put forth the need for some alternative to calling out the National Guard every time the workers go on strike, which he did readily — and successfully. He knew that there had to be a more progressive answer to the ills of society, so he and a growing number of capitalists allied with him, including Ford and Rockefeller, put their influence behind education as a rectifier of social ills. Of course, they were not alone; in fact, what is striking in the United States is the near-unanimity with which this proposition has been greeted.

Let me now summarize the main points of my analysis of this position, and then I will enter into the argument in more detail. First, I would like to put the proposition that school reform has been proposed as an alternative, not as a complement, to social revolution or change in the social structure. Secondly, the objectives of the progressives are contradictory under capitalism. You simply cannot meet these objectives, under capitalism. This leads me to the third point, which is somewhat ironic; namely, that the prerequisite for the success of progressive school reform is precisely the social revolution to which the school reforms were proposed as an alternative. The two strategies must go hand in hand, or the strategy of reform is meaningless. That is the message I intend to argue here.

I would say there are three major objectives in the progressive educational tradition. The first is fairly obvious: a school system must prepare young people for adult roles, primarily work roles, but also other adult positions. This preparation mostly takes the form of some kind of occupational training, or some attempt to make people better able to produce what is needed in the society. It therefore prepares people for economic security of a sort, as well as increasing the nation's collective productivity. I think there can be little objection to this, though I know that some

people feel it is somehow unworthy for the schools to prepare people for work. I strongly object to that position. Work is going to be with us for a long time, and it is useful for schools to be relevant to what happens in the workplace.

The second objective, which is a highlight of the Karmel Report, is that schools should be used to equalize society, or, failing that, at least to equalize the opportunity to win the prizes which the economy has to offer; the best jobs and the best salaries. Whatever the formulation, this is a major objective of the school reformers. The third objective, perhaps more nebulous, is that schools should be an arena in which the full development of human capacities can take place, as an antidote to the brutalization and fragmentation of modern industrial life.

How have these objectives fared, historically? Have any of them succeeded, and if so which ones, and to what extent?

As to the first objective, there can be little doubt that the school system has been a raving success, at least for most people. In the United States, there is ample evidence that the schools have contributed significantly to the productivity of the capitalist economy, and in fact educators delight in joining with economists in reproducing these studies, which I think are quite persuasive, every time a budget question comes up. The school system has succeeded in large measure in preparing young people for adult work roles.

. . . a glowing success in turning out productive workers: a major failure in creating equality, or equality of opportunity . . . . . .

On the second objective, there can be equally little doubt that the schools have failed to promote social equality, either of outcomes or of opportunity. The evidence for this, which I think is not to be questioned by social scientists of virtually any persuasion (at least in the States), may be summarized as follows: the schools are highly unequal, in that rich children get more resources than poor, rich children go on further in school, there are considerable racial differences, etc. The school system also lacks power to affect the economic structure. Where the school system has been equalized, or has shown a marked trend towards equality, the effect on the economic structure has been imperceptible. Let me give you two examples. In the US, there has been considerable progress towards closing the gap in years of schooling between blacks and whites. Over the past fifty years the gap has narrowed from an average of five years to less than half a year. In many respects the quality of schooling is still unequal, but there has been a major success in equalizing the amount. As far as we can tell — and the "we" in this case means not simply social critics but defenders of the faith as well — this has had virtually no effect on the distribution of income between blacks and whites. Similarly, if you look at inequalities in schooling, by comparing how many years the best-educated have compared with the least-educated (least-schooled, I should say), you will notice that, in the States, the gap between the top and bottom of the educational distribution has been closing. This has been primarily because nobody has yet invented a degree above the Ph. D. and also because the school-leaving age has gradually risen so that fewer and fewer people leave school with less than a secondary school degree. The effect of this has been to make the best- and least-educated more nearly similarly schooled: has this had any effect on the distribution of income between them? No, none at all. Once again, there is evidently no effect at all of the collapsing of educational inequality upon the distribution of income. This leads me to the rather pessimistic conclusion that equalizing the schools does not equalize the economy, and we therefore have to rethink strategies based upon that position.

About the third objective, I think we can be only general in our assessment. It is not hard to assess for yourself whether schools are an arena in which the full development of human potential takes place. Those of you who are involved in teaching recognize the contradictory position that you are in, in wishing that you could promote creativity, spontaneity, autonomy, the capacity of students to make their own decisions, etc. And yet the structures within which you work are probably quite hostile to that, although it may be allowed in limited areas as a pedagogical or motivational device. There is nothing new in this; in fact, this is what is depressing, If one reads the educational history of the United States, one finds every decade or so a book gets wide circulation, saying that the schools are fragmented, routine, boring, and brutal, and that students are not developing their capacities but rather are having them stamped out. Everybody reads the books and wrings their hands, commissions are appointed, they confirm the results, programs are set up to rectify this, and then the cycle will be repeated some years hence. This goes on with boring and depressing regularity. My impression is that, while the internal structures of schools change from, say, teacher-centred to child-centred, aspects of discipline change—from rule-following to internalization of norms, for example — the basic themes are the same; and students, teachers and others see quite clearly the continuity in the school's repressive or authoritarian functions, which are quite inconsistent with this notion of the full development of human capacities.

So, the record is not bright; a glowing success in turning out productive workers; a major failure in creating equality, or equality of opportunity; and a major failure in providing an arena for the full development of human capacities. Why? I think we can eliminate some possible reasons.

I doubt that a progressive educator would disagree with my description of reality, but he might interpret it like this: "We haven't had our chance. We have never been able to put forth, in the schools, the kinds of progressive education we want. We have lacked the political power." I am deeply sceptical of these claims. In the United States, progressive education has been the dominant ideology of educators, and of the educational establishment, right up to the Federal Office of Education and the major philanthropic foundations, as well as the major university schools of education, graduate schools of education, etc. It has in fact captured the entire educational system, as far as its ideology and ostensible purpose are concerned. There are, of course, occasionally aristocratic suggestions that we return to the original, aristocratic view of education, but these people are isolated and unimportant. They rarely have important positions in any of the institutions I have mentioned. So it is inappropriate to suggest that progressive education has not been tried. There are probably those who feel about progressive education the way Mahatma Gandhi felt about Western Civilization — that it would be a good idea. Progressive education, many people feel, is a nice set of ideas, and it would be nice if we could have them. I sympathize with that view, but I don't believe that all we need is more progressive educators to achieve the objectives. I think a rather more fundamental approach is necessary.

The critical question here is: how is it that schools

make more productive workers? That is what schools do well. If we can discover how that works, perhaps we can figure out why the other objectives have failed so miserably. There is a theory of this: schools produce better workers by making them smarter. Working in a modern industrial system is a highly demanding task intellectually, imposing great demands on one's mental skills because of the advanced technological nature of society. In order to get along you have to be able to read, write, calculate and communicate quite well, and for this reason the schools play an important part in preparing workers by passing on those cognitive skills which are necessary in the workplace. This is the dominant view among social scientists and educational theorists, to the extent that they have a view about this matter at all. I reject this theory.

Let us consider all the jobs in the modern capitalist economy, and ask what cognitive skills are required for them. Teachers have a tendency to be sympathetic to this approach, because the job of teaching is precisely one of passing on mental skills. But if we move beyond the area of teaching, we find that the role of mental skills is, in fact, quite limited, in most jobs. There are a number of studies, for example, which show that there is no relationship at all between how supervisors evaluate work performance and how well the workers themselves score on IQ tests. There probably is some relation in some very high-level technical jobs, and some people of exceptionally low IQ would probably be incapable of functioning in many jobs. I do not mean to suggest that mental skills are irrelevant, but that the mental skills of most of the populations of advanced capitalist countries are far in excess of the requirements of the jobs that we have. In fact, it is often suggested that you will do better in the job if you are less adept mentally, if only because you will be less pained that your skills are not being fully utilized. Adam Smith's teacher, Adam Ferguson, had a good grasp of the future when he wrote, "Ignorance is the mother of industry, as well as of superstition. Reflection and fancy are subject to error, but a habit of moving the hand or foot is independent of either. Manufacture, accordingly, prospers most where the mind is least consulted, and where the workshop may be considered an engine, the parts of which are men." Ferguson's view of the industrial process is probably much more acute as a description of most work situations than the more optimistic view of the liberal educational theorists. They have the illusion, based on their own experience and their inability to transcend it, that most jobs are like their own.

Herb Gintis and I tried to subject these propositions to a less intuitive test. We collected data on people's incomes, educational levels — that is, the number of years of schooling they had — and their IQ test scores. And we asked: what is the relation among the number of years of schooling a person has, how well they score on IQ tests, and their income or occupational success? We found a number of things which will surprise no-one. It turns out that people with more education get more income, better jobs, and they also tend to do better on IQ tests. However, IQ by itself plays only a very minor role in determining success in later life. In other words, dumb rich kids stay rich and smart poor kids stay poor, which again contradicts the liberals' theory that schooling is about the development of human capacities leading to greater social and intellectual equality.

It didn't take manufacturers very long to realize that the function of schools was not primarily intellectual. Horace Mann, one of the greatest educational reformers in the US, was attempting to put across the notion of modern school reform, in the shape of public primary education, in the nineteenth century; he wrote to the major manufacturers of his state at that time, asking for their opinions of education and what the economic value of schools was, if any. Homer Bartlett, one of the manufacturers, wrote back: "I have never considered mere knowledge as the only advantage derived from a good common school education. I have uniformly found the better educated as a class possessing a higher and better state of morals, more orderly and respectful in their demeanor, and more ready to comply with the wholesome and necessary regulations of an establishment. At times of agitation on account of some changes in regulation or wages, I have always looked to the most intelligent and the best educated and most moral for support, and seldom have I been disappointed. They will generally acquiesce and exert a salutary influence on their associates, but the ignorant and the uneducated I have found to be turbulent and troublesome, acting under the impulse of excited passion and jealousy." This down-to-earth manufacturer had practical experience in such matters. The very year he wrote this, they exerted a major wage-cut in his mills. Incidentally, in case there was any doubt about it, the plant he owned was subjected to a careful study of the importance of education, to find out if there was any relationship between literacy in the workforce and productivity. After all, Bartlett's statement might have been simply rhetoric. However, there was no relationship whatsoever between the number of pieces produced by his workers and whether or not they were literate, so I think we have to believe he was speaking the truth from his own experience. It was not primarily, as he put it, "mere knowledge" which was the function of schooling, but rather some effect on social behavior, some effect on the workplace itself.

. . . . . "Ignorance is the mother of industry as well as of superstition. . . . . .

Putting it more systematically: in developing a productive workforce you have the problem of somehow providing a vehicle for the transition from the family to the workplace. Two hundred years ago, the family was the workplace, and no special institution was required to make the transition. People grew up in the production unit, and so the process of being inducted into the family was the same as being inducted into the production unit of the society. The family was both. With the development of the capitalist system, where the production unit was divorced from the family—a separate unit whose internal structure was based on employing workers for wages and producing for profit, rather than simply producing the things needed and distributing them among family members—it became clear that the social experiences and relationships encountered by workers were radically different from those in the family. Also, different skills were needed in the factory. One couldn't simply follow one's mother's example. Even if one were moving out of the home, to become a textile worker, for example (as many young women in this period did), the equipment used and the skills needed in the factory production of textiles were radically different from those needed in the home, So we have a change, not only in the social organization of production, but also in the technical aspects of production, and people could not be expected to learn what they needed to know simply growing up in the home.

Most of what you need to know in jobs of a technical nature in advanced capitalist societies is learned on the job. Very little of it is learned in school. On the other hand, adjustment to the social structure of the workplace starts off in the home. For example, you learn that hierarchy and the

sexual division of labor are the natural order of things, rather than a social contrivance. You learn these things growing up at home, but you don't learn all you need to fit into a factory. So you move into school, and there you learn other things — social skills: how to relate to authority and fellow-workers, how to compete, how to work hard at some boring task completely unrelated to your needs so as to get some external reward.

So you move into school, and there you learn other things — social skills: how to relate to authority and fellow workers, how to compete, how to work hard at some boring task completely unrelated to your needs so as to get some external reward.

The school system, then, can be seen as performing two major functions in the production of future workers: firstly, it develops patterns of behavior and identification among workers — who they regard themselves as similar to, different from, etc.; and secondly, it puts forward by its very structure certain beliefs essential to the smooth operation of the economy. Perhaps most important is the belief that whether you get ahead in the world depends on you, and you alone, and primarily on your success in school. If you don't make it in school you have no-one but yourself to blame, because it is quite clear that school awards success according to objective criteria — marks, for example. And if you do well in school, you will do well later; so that if you find yourself in some lousy or low-paying job it is because you have lacked either the talent or the motivation, early in life, to prepare yourself for success. In other words, in addition to inculcating a set of patterns of behavior, of relations to authority, and so on, school inculcates a set of ideas about how society allocates its goodies so that people who find themselves lacking in goodies later on will be unable to organize successfully, or perhaps even to perceive the problem, but in any case will not manage to mount a campaign to get a bit more of the goodies by getting together with other people and making collective demands on the system.

Both of these functions, in the areas of social behavior and of beliefs, are of course reflected in the social organization of schools, which are arranged so as to promote those two objectives. In our book, Herb Gintis and I have graced this very pedestrian notion with a special name, because we operate primarily in the academic world, and if you have a very down-to-earth concept and you want people to believe in its importance you have to give it a name. (We have to make our living too, so we have to play the game.) So, when we refer to the fact that the school system replicates the structure of the factory or the office in its internal organization, we call that the Correspondence Principle. By this we simply mean that the structure of schools corresponds to the structure of economic life. At the most elementary level, we are describing the situation of a worker, who works for wages, who does not have control over the productive process, and does not own or have control over the product. This is the basic definition of what is called "alienated labor" in the Marxian language. Is there any analogue to this in the educational system? Do we have such a thing as the "alienated student"? Of course we do, and not in any psychological sense, but in the precise sense I outlined. Do students also lack control over the educational process and over the educational product? Of course. There is an exact correspondence between the alienation of the worker and the alienation of the student in this sense.

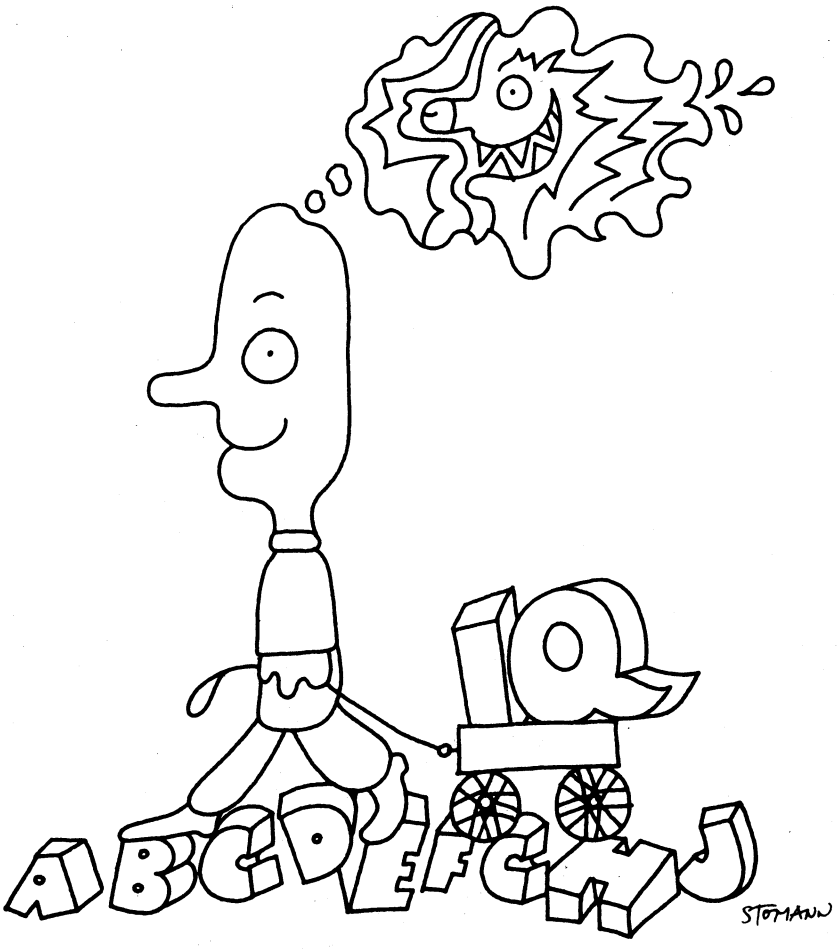
Do students also lack control over the educational product? Of course. There is an exact correspondence between the alienation of the worker and the alienation of the student in this sense.

Let us look more concretely at the processes by which this is achieved. Notice that the schools do not serve

everybody in the same way: we have different classes in society, different occupational roles, the structure of production is not at all homogeneous, and so we would not expect all schools to be the same. We would expect schools serving one class to be different from those serving another class. Methods thought appropriate for children going into professional occupations might be thought thoroughly inappropriate for those going into working-class occupations. Of course, we find exactly that. If you consider the jobs which allow a certain amount of autonomy — upper professional or managerial ones, perhaps — you can guess that students destined to go into those jobs will probably go to schools in which the same kind of autonomy and decision-making are given to students, at least in some degree. Likewise, students headed for working-class jobs, in which they will be deprived of any major autonomy, will also be deprived of this in the school. So we see the vast differences which exist in the types of education available in well-to-do suburbs and industrial neighborhoods. The experience of radical education in Australia sounds similar to that in the States, where the attempt to break down hierarchy in schooling has been a lot more successful among the sons and daughters of the upper class than among those of the working class: a simple example of the Correspondence Principle.

This correspondence has two dimensions. Consider secondary schools: those in working-class neighborhoods in the States tend to be highly authoritarian and rigid, with very little choice of elective subjects, a set curriculum, very often dress codes — no blue jeans, etc. — and so on. Schools in the wealthy suburbs are quite different. You see people sitting around on the floor, students can leave their classroom at will, there is a very open environment, the chairs, of course, are in a circle — God forbid that they should be lined up — conversations in class, at least from time to time, run between the children rather than just back and forth from teacher to children. You will find different ways of managing students and the educational encounter. And of course there are no dress codes. Similarly, if you look at the system as a layer cake, you will see the same kind of development. For example, comparing universities with secondary schools, in universities students are given a fair amount of freedom: they can select their courses and have some discretion in their lifestyle. These are things not given to secondary students, who are often going into jobs which rob them of the autonomy available in the upper reaches of the economy. The question of evidence on this is a little complicated. We have done a lot of school observation, not only in our work but also because we are interested in how schools are run. But we also tried something statistical, to see if we could find out what goes on in the classroom and what is being rewarded there. What are the schools really after? They are not really after intellectual skills, which are merely a by-product to provide a rationale for the system. The main product is a workforce which will acquiesce in the domination of the employer and the exploitation of workers by the employer in the workplace.

What are schools really after? They are not really after intellectual skills, which are merely a by-product to provide a rationale for the system. The main product is a workforce which will acquiesce in the domination of the employer and the exploitation of workers by the employer. . . .



We decided to look at grading as an issue. We are interested in it because we don't like to do it; we regard grading as an aspect of the hierarchical nature of schools, and so we tried to investigate the way that grades are given out. One of the crucial things to find out about a social system, if you want to understand how it works, is how it distributes its rewards: who gets them, and for what reason? That is a critical way to look at what a system is really all about, as opposed to what it says it is doing.

Grading studies are quite common, so we had a large number to choose from, and we also did some of our own, and I will give you some representative conclusions from our studies. We took a large number of students, for whom we had marks and also their scores on so-called objective tests of ability within that area. So we would have, for example, a standardized mathematical achievement test and the grades in the math course. We then had a very large battery of other so-called personality measures, of which there are two kinds: one is simply a battery of tests in which the

student answers some questions from which the psychologist who has made the test infers whether or not the student is, for example, creative, aggressive, independent, dependable, consistent etc.

The other kind is one in which we have asked the student's fellows to rate him according to these traits — whether or not the student was perceived as being co-operative, amenable, nasty, tactful, etc. So we have both the responses provided by the student and those provided by his companions. And we found out that there is, of course, a relationship between how well you do on, for example, a mathematical achievement test, and the marks you get in your math course. However, independently of what you know as far as the objective test is concerned, your marks still vary according to some other things.

In other words, people who are equally smart in math according to the standardized test don't get the same marks. The question is, what things are associated with getting good marks and what with bad? Those which seem statistically most associated with good marks are the following (I will just read down the list of personality traits which are rewarded by getting good marks independently of how much you know as measured on these test scores): perseverance, dependability, consistency, identification with school, empathizing with orders, punctuality, deferment of gratification, external motivation, predictability, and tact.

Teachers probably appreciate students who have those characteristics: they won't liven up the class, but they won't give you much trouble either. Now, what is negatively rewarded? That is, what types get worse grades than is indicated by their actual ability to answer questions on an objective test? These are the people who are creative, aggressive, and independent. Those are the three traits. This study was done in a New York high school, but there are hosts of others.

What gives this one some weight is a parallel study done by associates of ours on what it takes to get the approval of your supervisor in the workplace. The list is exactly the same, except for the negative evaluation of "aggressive", which doesn't show up:it's not positive, it's just not there.

Perhaps this seems a rather lengthy detour into statistical method, but it does demonstrate what every student knows, which is critical because if they didn't it wouldn't work. **We have found a quite systematic relationship between what the economy rewards, what supervisors or employers think of as good workers, and what the school system seems to be promoting in its internal distribution of rewards through grades.**

I said that the school operates also in the world of beliefs: what you think about the social order and its distribution of rewards. This is important. Herb and I think that the critical role of the school is embodied in its so-called objective testing and labelling of students.

It is extremely important that the school system appear to be rational and objective, and that people believe that the rewards acquired in this "rational" and "objective" competition are causally related to the rewards of society. In the US, the notion that getting ahead requires brains, that brains are measured by IQ tests, and that IQ tests are based both on schooling and on genes, has been the foundation stone of much of the liberal theory I have outlined. Of course, the liberals have suffered a powerful counterattack from the right, and this is instructive, because the issue of IQ tests has been central to the ideological dispute. The 1960s were a period of major educational reform. Massive expenditures, of the order of $2 billion a year were poured into so-called "compensatory education programs", into the schools of poor children, into special programs for poor children, etc. By the end of the sixties, a massive amount of data had accumulated suggesting that these extensive projects in egalitarian education had come to very little and exercised very little influence on the students' ability to get jobs, on the school system itself, and on the kids. So in the late sixties, the time was ripe for someone to come along and say, "We've put all this money into these kids; there must be something wrong with the kids, because things didn't work out". And Arthur Jensen, who has become prominent since then, claimed that economic opportunity had not flowed after all these dollars simply because the poor are dumb, and they don't have what it takes. What it takes is to be smart, smartness and dumbness are genetically determined, and therefore the schools are relatively powerless. The rather conservative nature of this position is evident.

. . . . . the culprit is not the genes of the kids but the nature of the economy, and educational progressives have always been loth to take on the nature of the economy.

This story tells you something about the bind that progressive educators are in. They mount a program of egalitarian reforms, which fail because education cannot change the structure of the economy directly in the way in which they think it can; and then they are defenceless, because they have had their day in court, and they have failed, and so some other interpretation is likely to come forward. In the States, it was this reactionary IQ-and-genetics theory. To me, it is striking that liberal educators in the States argued about whether or not IQ was heritable, but they failed to make the most fundamental and obvious point, which is that you should not blame inequality on the schools; the fact that the school system did not radically change society is not because there is something wrong with the kids — it is because there is something wrong with society. That would seem to me to be an obvious point to make in defence of those failed programs, or in defence of one's position, given that the programs had failed; and it is striking, and to me depressing, that most of the educational establishment chose rather to contest the claims about IQ than to make the very obvious point. Of course, the reason is fairly simple: it is a lot easier to contest the claims about IQ and its inheritance than to mount a challenge against the capitalist economy itself. The culprit is not the genes of the kids but the nature of the economy, and educational progressives have always been loth to take on the nature of the economy. As I said at the beginning, they have always seen their efforts as a substitute for changing that structure, and so they have been stuck in this bankrupt position and are now thoroughly on the defensive as the right mounts this campaign, which of course has very strong racist overtones, as well as being essential in perpetuating the class structure.

There is virtually no statistical support for the claims that the perpetuation of poverty and wealth have to do with inherited IQ. Once again, Herb and I delved into some statistical work here, and just for the sake of argument we said, "Let us assume that IQ is substantially inherited; would that explain the fact that poor kids end up poor, and rich end up rich?" In other words, even if there is a high heritability of what is measured on IQ tests, would that account for them ending up that way? And you will not be surprised that the answer is no, for the simple reason that the way you get ahead in the world is not by having a high

IQ. That is a fundamental flaw; there is also a flaw in the notion of heritability, of course. But even if IQ were inherited it would be about as relevant to the perpetuation of the class structure as the demonstrated fact that one's hair breadth is also inherited.

I said at the beginning that the objectives of liberal education were contradictory under capitalism. I have outlined how the schools produce what are thought by employers to be better workers, and suggested that the process of producing better workers is inconsistent with producing an equal society and with the full development of human capacity. The inconsistency stems from the fact that the production of a good work force requires that workers be divided and labelled; some thought to be worthy, others not; it requires that differences among people by sex or by race be perpetuated in school so that they can be used by manufacturers to break up any coalitions or groups of workers that might stand against them. The school system perpetuates the fragmentation of working people through this labelling process, through the process of defeat — and for some kids, success — in the system. Further, it is preposterous to suggest that a system which is based primarily on the induction of workers into workplaces could also be an arena for the full development of human capacity, the absurdity of that notion is also verified by the grading and other studies that we have done.

The implications here for teachers are many, and most of them will have to be thought out in your own situation, but let me run down some of my own conclusions about what I do as a teacher.

In the first place, the problems of the classroom are social and political problems: there is no amount of good pedagogy which can solve the problems I am referring to here. This does not mean that there is no difference between good and bad pedagogy, but it does mean — and this, I think, is important — that we ought not to blame ourselves if we, in our own classrooms, cannot create an island of humanitarian and equal relationships in this sea of otherwise unequal and brutalizing social relations. We can't do it because the problems in the schools have their roots elsewhere, and we shouldn't blame ourselves for not doing it. On the other hand, we shouldn't lapse into inactivity. Conservatives say, "It's not our fault — back to business as usual. Let someone else deal with it." I think that the radical position on this is, "It's not our fault either, but there may be something we can do about it, both as teachers and just as people."

Secondly, teachers will clearly have to work with other groups in making good education possible. It is not something which can be done by teachers, or by teachers and parents, within a school framwork. It has to be done by opening up the possibility for better education by changing the rest of society. And that involves changing the nature of work and how work in organized. I suppose the question will arise, "Can teachers do anything at all in the classroom in this regard?", and I think the answer is yes.

..... the problems of the classroom are social and political problems: there is no amount of good pedagogy which can solve the problems I am referring to here.

Much of what I have suggested is that the internal structure of the classroom is a critical aspect of this problem, and, depending on your job security, the sympathy with which your fellow-teachers regard your efforts', the degree to which you can get union support for trying out new things in the classroom, and perhaps the sympathy of your headmaster, as well as the support of your students — depending on all these things, you may be able carry on a method of teaching which has two characteristics: it must, of course, meet the students' needs; there is absolutely no point in adopting, for example, freeschool methods which may be consistent with some good society of the future but which are inconsistent with your students' finding some kind of security in this world. Your methods have to serve your students' interests or you will ultimately be isolated. It is not entirely clear, however, that one has to serve those interests in the way in which the school system defines them today, because the interests of the students are not being served by the system as it stands.

I believe that changes can be made, both in the content of what is taught and in classroom relations which are perfectly effective in passing on the skills required by the system, but which will also have the capacity for developing not only critical thought but also collective behavior against obstacles. I think, for example, the grading system is a very critical juncture. Students find themselves oppressed by grades, as do teachers. Discussion of grades, and alternative methods of grading — to the extent that you can get away with them — can have, I think, a rather radicalizing influence on students' consciousness about the society they live in and how it operates.

..... changes can be made, both in the content of what is taught and in classroom relations, which are perfectly effective in passing on the skills required by the system, but which will also have the capacity for developing not only critical thought but also collective behaviour against obstacles.

I suppose the main point of all this is that John Dewey was right. His optimism about liberal education was based on the notion that society was democratic. His major book was called *Democracy and Education*. He put forward the view that, in a fully democratic society, the process of training people for adult work would be consistent with, in fact coextensive with, training people for equality and training the fully-developed human being. These three objectives were compatible, in his view, because he saw American society at the time as democratic.

Well, he was wrong about the democratic nature of society: he mistook a form of democracy in the political sphere for the whole thing. He overlooked the distinctly authoritarian nature of everyday life in the United States, particularly as it exists for people who work, whether in families, in large enterprises or small, and who are faced not with a democratic form of interaction, but with a totally authoritarian one.

And so, I say again; John Dewey was right. The objectives of liberal school reform can be compatible, and in fact are compatible in a fully democratic society, and this gives us a hint about the kind of social change necessary to make these objectives attainable — a democratization of economic life.

And for this reason it seems to me that teachers, in their own work, attempting to change the structures of education that they are involved in, must recognize that the value of most of the things that we fight for depends upon a program which can ultimately democratize economic life; and here it seems fairly clear that educational reforms must be part of the development of socialism in economic life.

[An address presented at the radical education conference, "What to do About Schools", held in the NSW Teachers Federation auditorium, June 1976.]

Questions and Answers

IN VIEW of The Fraser Government's decision to review secondary and "post-secondary" education to make it more closely tied to job training, or as Fraser so aptly put it, to ensure that it turns out "square pegs to fit into square holes", the following answers by Sam Bowles to questions at the "What to do About Schools?" conference should be of interest.

Q: If you think that schools should be a preparation for the workplace, won't this promote a capitalist result? From a democratic point of view, shouldn't schooling be for the full development of the individual, rather than for any end result in society?

A: Well, I don't think being productive means being capitalistic. But of course the more advances enabling us to spend less time providing the necessities of life, and more time developing human capacities, the better. I agree that the overall objective should be human development, though we may differ on what that is. But I think it quite likely that a system of production can be developed as an instrument for the overall objective, thereby making the production of workers consistent with human development itself.

Q: If you establish a system of production, it becomes important that people be tailor made to fit into that system. But if you don't specify any system, such as in a primitive society, children could develop and do their own thing. They could evolve according to their own nature, and find a place in society, but it wouldn't be tailor made for them.

A: The necessity of production is not as easily suppressed as the idea of production. It seems to me your position is a cop out, because what you're saying is that if you let production take care of itself, people will fit in, they'll produce. That to me is rank utopianism. You'll end up a servant to whatever system of production everybody else designs.

Educational radicals have to confront production as a critical problem. We have to figure out what kinds of production are consistent with human development. If we don't consider the productivity of schools, because that road leads to authoritarianism and inequality and so on, we'll give over the leadership of the school reform movement to those more realistic people who say that a fundamental task for schools is to get people jobs and to get the necessities of life produced. We won't get anybody to believe us if we say production will take care of itself, and we have to consider this political problem. Most people have a very realistic sense; they're not willing to go along with reforms which don't deal with the workaday problems of how we are going to make a living, and I agree with them.

Sam Bowles

Q: Can I comment on the almost total worthlessness of tertiary vocational training? I know this is a kind of counter-cultural comment. But does it demonstrate your correspondence principle that tertiary training locks people into a situation where they are alienated? So shouldn't we try to destroy this kind of training?

A: I'm suspicious of your intent. Politically, it is very easy to get on the wrong side of the mass of students by arguing against the curriculum being vocationally relevant. In a period of mass unemployment, criticism of vocational education should be based on showing that it's ineffective, that it doesn't get you a job, or that it gets you your first job and then leaves you obsolete if you want to change your job, or if technology changes.

Now, this does not mean an attack on vocational education. It means an attack on specialization. Usually the argument is between liberal and vocational education: should or should not schools be relevant to work? I'm thoroughly in favour of schools being vocationally relevant, and I would like to propose a different distinction: between general and specific education. Its critical that in developing vocational relevance, the training should not become so specific that the worker is equipped only for the first job.

It's no accident or mistake that vocational education in the States has taken the form of highly specialized, fragmented training. It has two objectives. One is to train workers to be productive. The other is to ensure that they get only limited fragmented skills so that the attempt to make them productive doesn't give them skills which would enable them to understand the way the system works, to criticize it and to gain more control over the productive sphere.

So the specialized, fragmented aspects of vocational training should be the object of attack, and we should do that in alliance with students fully recognising their need to get an education which will get them a job. We shouldn't get cut off from the very real and reasonable objectives of working class people and others.

Is Progressive Education the Alternative ?

by Rachel Sharp

IN MANY advanced western industrial societies there is a growing consensus that the educational system is undergoing a major crisis. Despite differing interpretations of the nature and causes of the crises and a lack of agreement about what should be done, there is no longer an acceptance that by and large the educational system is performing its social function adequately. The legitimacy of the system is being called into question.

In this paper I shall be particularly concerned with the thesis that it is basically the authoritarianism of the educational system which needs to be transformed. Through breaking down the traditional power relationships between teacher and taught, by instituting radical approaches to pedagogy which stress the importance of freedom and pupil initiated learning, many educational reformers believe that much of the current alienation from the educational system can be eradicated, that the nature of learning can be experienced as exciting and intrinsically motivating, and that there can be a cooperative relationship between teacher and taught which will have significant personal and social payoffs in reducing the incident of private troubles and social ills characteristic of adult life in the affluent society.

My argument will be based upon some research which I carried out with Tony Green in a progressive child centred state primary school in England.[1] I shall first describe and discuss the implications of this research for an interpretation of the educational crisis. I shall then proceed to consider the free school movement suggesting that free schools are no more likely than schools operating "progressively" within the state sector to produce the consequences which their idealistic supporters think are desirable. Finally, I shall attempt the more difficult task of suggesting some basic ingredients of a radical educational policy. And by "radical", I mean a policy which is ultimately designed not merely to transform the form and content of the school system, but to bring about a change in the inegalitarian structure of power and the distribution of rewards and facilities characteristic of the society we live in.

Since the Plowden report in England, child centred education has become something of a semi-official ideology[2] which is seen by many as the answer to a wide range of educational problems. The Australian Educational system has traditionally been more authoritarian with its centralized curriculum and closer state control over the teaching profession but even in this country in recent years there has been a growing interest in more liberal approaches to pedagogy characterized not simply by the establishment of a number of independent free schools, but also by a more experimental approach to the curriculum, forms of classroom or school organization within the state sector itself. Whilst these tendencies are diverse in character, there is a common underlying intention to produce a more flexible educational environment within which children's initiative and spontaneity can be faciliated.

When our study was conducted there had been very little evaluative research carried out on child centred education. It was uncritically assumed that in comparison with the formal, traditional school, a progressive child centred one would automatically be a less repressive environment more conducive to children's learning and personal development. Traditional teachers who were not prepared to subordinate their authority as teachers to the freedom of the pupil were made to feel reactionary whilst those who saw themselves as child centred could identify themselves as the leaders of a progressive and radical movement which would transform the school, and, since the schools produced the decision makers of adult society, eventually transform the society.

Sociologically, our concern was to explore, through an intensive case study of one school organized on a progressive child centred basis, the social processing of pupils within such an environment. Previous research on the traditional school had continually demonstrated the way in

Rachel Sharp

which the school functions as an instrument of social selection. The school is typically hierarchical and the pupils stratified, this educational stratification having crucial implications for the child's ultimate location within the system of stratification in adult society. We were interested in knowing whether and in what way the child centred school produced different outcomes, whether an open approach to pedagogy and classroom organization produced consequences more consistent with the egalitarian and democratic ethos articulated by educators and invoked by child centred teachers as legitimating a major move away from formal and authoritarian approaches to schooling.

The research took place in a school in a working class district in London. The main catchment area was a large municipal housing estate consisting of a number of high rise blocks of flats, several smaller blocks of units and a number of individual family houses grouped around the shopping centre. Most of the inhabitants had been rehoused into the area through slum clearance programmes in the surrounding districts.

The school itself had been operating for about three years. It was well known in the vicinity as something of a showpiece for the local school authority, having established a reputation as a well run very progressive school with an exciting innovative head teacher and a stable group of competent and committed staff.

The research team, using the method of participation observation, spent a year in the school, examining three infant classrooms in depth. These classrooms were vertically grouped with children whose ages ranged from four to seven. The aim was to attempt to capture the ongoing dynamic processes at work within each classroom. We were particularly concerned with the social meanings of the classroom situation and the relationship between the teachers' construction of the meanings of the pupils and their actions and activities and the social structuring of pupils' identities.

This focus was prompted by the development of a new approach to sociological theorizing about education deriving from social phenomenology and interactionism which is premised on the basic assumption that social action is mediated by the meanings of the actors, and that the explanation of social action involves the understandings of the participants' world views and taken for granted definitions of the situation.[3] We had been influenced by this approach and felt it important to explore the ongoing process of reality construction in the day interactions in the classroom, but were critical of the view that a full explanation of the processes observed could be gained solely by examining the system of meanings within the classroom context.

Early on in the research we identified what we called a dominant ethos within the school, especially expressed by the headmaster who was the most articulate spokesman, but to a greater or lesser extent by the other teachers as well. There were four major features of the ethos: firstly, education is concerned with the socialization of the whole child, not just with the inculcation of cognitive skills. Secondly, knowledge cannot be divided into self-contained compartments: the pupils' learning experiences should be geared to their stages of development and related to their own developing interests. There should be an "integrated curriculum" to achieve this end.

Thirdly, the role of the teacher is to arrange the context of learning, to "facilitate". Authority does not reside solely with the teacher. The child has rights and needs and the pupils should be given a wide range of choice and freedom to interact with their environment in a way which corresponds to their stages of development. Fourthly, education should be child centred. It should not be subordinated to some arbitrarily defined social needs. Childhood is a unique stage: every child counts and is important now. This necessitates a supportive and egalitarian environment to assist each child to develop the maximum of his potential.

Now, it should be stressed that this dominant ethos is an ideal type — an idealization. The different teachers in the school varied in their stresses and emphases. In addition, when we cross-examined the teachers closely about the ideology, it was apparent that it was not a completely coherent, unambiguous and internally consistent perspective. Inner contradictions and ambivalences were revealed which could be interpreted as the result of the teachers' conceptual confusions. Dearden,[4] for example, has explored in detail from a philosophical point of view many of the key concepts of child centred education and revealed a similar lack of coherence and conceptual muddle in this tradition of educational theorizing. He would advocate that all teachers should be exposed to a course in conceptual analysis and "straight thinking". But in our view these inner contradictions and ambivalences in the ethos of the school cannot simply be explained as being due to woolly thinking. They are more likely to have a social structural explanation, reflecting the contradictions, conflicting pressures and constraints on teachers which no amount of philosophical theorizing can wish away.

The Research Findings

Although there were variations in the three classrooms studies, each context produced a marked hierarchical stratification of the pupils. In order to describe what seemed to be occurring, it will be useful to discuss three paradoxes.

Firstly, in each case, although the teacher expressed a desire to get to know the pupils in all their idiosyncrasy,

and seemed aware of the dangers of "giving a dog a bad name", in each classroom some pupils had acquired a "reified" identity — i.e. were seen as really thick/stupid/peculiar/maladjusted etc. — whereas others had developed a very close/complex relationship with the teacher. Using A. Schultz' terminology,[5] the pupils could be ranked along a continuum ranging from the pure contemporary at the one end (i.e. — where there was very little intersubjective interaction between teacher and taught) to the pure consociate at the other (i.e. — where a high level of intersubjective experience existed between pupil and teacher).

Secondly, although in theory the teachers saw all possible activities within the classroom as equally educative, the children choosing among them in accordance with their state of readiness and needs, it soon became obvious that the different activities varied greatly in terms of the consequences which followed from the possible choices of activity the pupils made. For example, the children's choices significantly influenced the way in which the teacher constructed an identity for the child and how she interacted with him, two aspects which were crucial for the child's career and status within the classroom. Moreover, using the teachers' actions as an indicator, they were certainly operating with a hierarchical system of evaluation concerning the different possible activities within the classroom.

Finally, and associated with the other two paradoxes, although the teachers stressed that all the pupils were of equal worth, in each classroom there was observed a definite system of social stratification. Pupils varied in terms of how positively or negatively they were seen by the teacher, in terms of the type and amount of interaction they had with her, and in terms of the access to the range of scarce resources within the classroom.

How can one explain paradoxes? There are several possible explanations. In the first place, one could do as the teachers themselves tended to do and invoke the "poor" background of many pupils. The teachers operated with a view of the pupils which saw them as generally socially and culturally deprived. Their attitude towards their pupils was largely negative. They applied a kind of pathology model to explain educational failure which has received much support from structural functionalism — i.e. a failure to internalize the knowledge and values operative within the educational system is due to the inferior cultural backgrounds of the pupils.[6] The implication of such a perspective is that the child must undergo some resocialization to change his attitudes and values in order to be able to benefit from the experience offered. In large part the teachers we examined saw their task as one involving the resocialization of these "deprived" and "emotionally insecure" children.

A second explanation which would conflict with the above involves the idea that the teachers were selectively and arbitrarily applying labels to the pupils and differentiating their approach to the children in terms of these labels, thus setting in operation the principle of the self-fulfilling prophecy [7] i.e. — teacher makes a judgement of the pupil that he had emotional problems and is insecure leaves him alone to choose activities in accordance with his emotional needs — to work through his problems — the child is then deprived, relatively, of the teacher's attention, so does not acquire the skills of literacy and numeracy — thus eventually reinforcing the teacher's prophesy that he is emotionally insecure and not very bright and therefore unlikely to be able to respond educationally.

The implication of such a perspective would be that teachers need to have their attitudes changed — be taught not to label pupils, prematurely, to think positively of so-called "culturally deprived" pupils as only culturally different and not inferior, and in so doing avoid discriminating against them in such a way as to produce the self-fulfilling prophecy.

Such an approach, we would argue, is inadequate. It fails to take into account the social structural conditions in which the construction of labels and prophecies and the differential treatment of pupils occurs. There may be pressures and constraints on teachers which force them to operate with hierarchical labels. Secondly, the explanation is too mechanistic-treating the pupils as a passive receiver of labels. It does not take into account the different types of role playing in the classroom which the pupils engage in, which differentially presents management problems for the teacher, and the way in which the social structural pressures on her allow her only certain structures of opportunity to solve them.

Our approach tries to relate up the intra-classroom processes which we observed to the wider context of constraints which structure the teacher's meanings and actions, emanating both from within the school, and from the wider society.

What sort of constraints impinge upon the teacher's practice? In the first place there is the sheer pressure of pupil numbers. There is not a one to one teacher/pupil ratio — each teacher was faced with a class of 25-30 pupils. Secondly, there are expectations placed on the teacher by parents, colleagues, the local authority, the headmaster etc., to produce certain goods and to run a well managed classroom. These cannot be ignored. But more importantly the teacher is functioning in a micro and a macro societal context where resources and power are not evenly distributed. Although the teacher has more power than the pupils, she is relatively powerless to run her classroom completely autonomously. She may be trying to institutionalize the liberal values of self-development, freedom, individualism and autonomy for her pupils but in a wider society where the inequality is such that the achievement of these values for the few depend upon their denial for the many.

explanation

Our explanation of the hierarchical levels of differentiation within the classroom, the developing ranking of the pupils in the system of social stratification within the class, is framed in terms of the teacher's management problems which are a function of the social structural pressures on her from within and outside the classroom.

In order to illustrate this, let me give the following example. In the "open" classroom, the pupils are given free choice. They are exhorted to get busy, to become interested and involved. However, the different choices that the pupils make and the roles they take up in this open and fluid context have markedly different social control implications. The teacher is faced with the task of what to do with freely choosing children. The teacher's solution to the problem is what we call the practice of "business". The more children take seriously the command to "choose and get busy", the more this frees the teacher to get on with the tasks she feels are important, given the social structural pressures on her.

It is suggested that the developing stratification of the pupils can be understood in terms of the bedrock of business and the different pupils' activities and status in the classroom in terms of the nature of their intergration into

the bedrock of business. Similarly, many elements of the teacher's vocabulary like "child directed learning", "readiness", "stage of development" etc. are related to the differential labelling and treatment of the pupils via the social control problems which the pupils present to the teacher in the classroom. It was, for example, discovered that the technical vocabulary which the teachers employed did not have clear and unambiguous reference, could not be seen as providing guidelines for the teacher as to how to act in specific circumstances, but had a rhetorical function assisting the teacher in legitimizing her actions given her social control dilemmas.

The bedrock of business is a dynamic and flexible thing. A child's label or status is not a fixed thing but can change. Pupils' identities can be transformed not simply as a result of changes in what they do, but in terms of changes in the general state of social order in the classroom.

In each of the three classrooms, it was possible to observe three types of child: the abnormals, the normals and the elite. The abnormal pupils were the ones who were seen as really "dim", "thick" etc. They were often "understood" by the teachers in terms of a neopsychiatric vocabulary. They were the pupils who failed to get involved into the bedrock of business, who presented a major threat to the teacher's competence; often other professionals became involved in the social construction of their identity, like the school social workers, psychiatrists, etc.

The child centred vocabulary with its stress on freedom, tends to legitimise the teacher's non-intervention with these pupils, which at the same time frees the teacher to concentrate on less difficult pupils. The normal pupils are the ones who form the basis of the bedrock of business. They are the ones who take seriously the teacher's advice to choose and get busy. They settle down with a minimum of trouble, make few demands on the teacher's attention, and can be easily handled and reflected on within the framework of the teacher's commonsense.

The elite pupils, on the other hand, are the ones who seem to cue into the fact that what the teacher really wants is not for them too choose indiscriminately, but to choose to do the things which please her — and the things which please her are the things which relate to the social structural pressures on her to produce certain goods in the form of minimum standards of literacy and numeracy and "good" attitude towards work, effort, etc. The irony of the elites' position, of course, is that it depends on a large proportion of the pupils becoming integrated into the bedrock of business which thus frees the teacher to concentrate on them — thus sponsoring them in their career in the classroom.

There are additional ironies which can be pointed out — if all the pupils conformed to the teacher's model of the ideal child — the elites — i.e. all were actively choosing to get involved, seeking the teacher out for assistance and help, the teacher's task would be rendered impossible. Secondly, by giving the pupils choice, the child himself becomes responsible for his own success or failure in the classroom. The ambivalencies in the teacher's perspectives regarding the real issue of choice are exploited by the elite pupils in one direction but become the noose whereby the non elite pupils hang themselves unwittingly.

Thirdly, whilst the different choices that pupils make may be the result of initial cultural differences between them, over time these differences for some become real deprivations because many are deprived of the teacher's attention. Finally it was noticeable that many of the elite pupils came from homes where they were being subtly instructed in what to choose to do in the classroom, and being taught to read even though the school explicitly advised against parental interference.

Thus although the school thought it was engaged in compensatory education to make up for what was seen as the deficiencies in the child's background, the school's successes came from homes where the parents were engaged in compensatory education to make up for what they saw as deficiencies in the school and the way the classrooms were run on the free choice principle.

Discussion of the Research Findings

Progressive teachers themselves have tended to respond to the results of this research by arguing that the teachers under scrutiny cannot be regarded as "truly progressive" or "child centred". They are really authoritarians masquerading as liberals, or naively permissive running classrooms which can only lead to anarchy. In our view these arguments involve the personalization of failure instead of grasping the underlying contradictions within a progressive child centred educational philosophy. This philosophy is being put into operation within a set of wider societal conditions which undermine the very possibility of its successful realization.

It would be inappropriate to blame the teachers and hold them responsible for the structure of inequality and the maldistribution of power and recourses in the wider society within which the educational system functions and which in its operation it reproduces. The school teachers studies are mere carriers of an educational philosophy which is embedded in the dominant ideology of a capitalist society, that of liberal democracy,[8] an ideology which professes to uphold the value of freedom, equality and individual self development but which provides a completely inadequate cognitive theory as to how these moral ends can be realized.

These teachers share the dilemmas of most educators. They are moralists and utopians who inadequately comprehend the economic, social and political preconditions for the goals they profess. Their view of freedom is individualistic, voluntaristic and psychologistic, involving a romantic idealization of the child. The perspective they adhere to is not socially situated, or located within an analysis of how individual actions and activities occur within a social context. For them, freedom for their pupils involves the throwing off of arbitrary constraints and creating an environment in which children can spontaneously pursue their own interests and needs appropriate to their particular developmental stages. They allow their pupils choice but inadequately understand the extent to which these choices are already socially and culturally conditioned by family, peer group and mass media pressures.

The free pursuit of children's interests may merely reinforce and help to reproduce the very stratification of cultural experience which they see as merely the product of formal schools with their hierarchical organization and stratifying implications for the pupils. In addition they have a concept of themselves as free individuals — freely deciding to reject authoritarian pedagogies and to institute radical educational practices within their classrooms. Little do they appreciate the range of determinations operating on them which distort and undermine their intentions. They

fail to cognize the way in which their practical activities in the classroom are constrained by wider forces emanating from beyond the classroom in the societal context itself, and the social role of education in reproducing the very conditions of that wider society to function in its present form.

For example, the teachers are conditioned by their own ideological moulding, an ideological moulding which occurred in part in the very educational system in which they are working. They are carriers of class ideologies regarding the educability and motivations of working class pupils; their faith in educational change as the focal point of social change, their conception of the autonomy of educational institutions from wider societal pressures is typical of the liberal view of education. Both liberal educational theory and the dominant way of theorizing about education in the social sciences — structural functionalism—have an inadequate conceptualization of the location of the educational system within the broader social context itself which these teachers shared.

An examination of their underlying assumptions about society revealed that many features of society are merely taken for granted and accepted as given, not requiring or warranting critical examination or scrutiny. They accept, for example, that the society is stratified. They see it as vaguely inevitable, related to the differential social importance of adult work roles and the social distribution of talents and motivations. They can see that some groups, especially from the lower strata, are currently discriminated against. They want a fairer society, but for them, equality of opportunity entails equality of opportunity in the race to become unequal.

The hierarchical distribution of power and resourses in adult society is not itself viewed as problematic but accepted as a basic fact of life. Who ends up with more power or rewards is more important than the question — should or must there be hierarchies at all? I would suggest that these features of their ideology are shared by most teachers whether traditional or child centred. They are related to certain fundamental assumptions about man and society built into a liberal democratic world view which is essentially a class ideology which obscures and mystifies the real nature of relationships between individuals and groups in the society we live in.[9] The teachers we examined were unaware of the class nature of the educational system and of their own social location within the class structure.

To lay the blame on teachers would presuppose that, even if they were aware of the considerations discussed above, they could have acted very differently. Mere awareness of the social structure of constraints on one's own autonomy does not by itself mean that these constraints disappear. Teachers operate within authoritarian power structures which can be mobilized against them if their activities deviate too far from what those in positions of power deem desirable. This point should not be regarded as a recipe for inaction but to argue for a full appreciation of the nature of power structures within which educators work as a precondition for effective action. This point will be taken up again in the last section of the paper.

Another response of critics to our study is to suggest that even though child centred schools may not be able to avoid hierarchically stratifying the pupils because of the nature of the constraints referred to, at least they are happy places where the children are enjoying themselves. I want to raise some critical observations on what I shall call the Happiness Ideology. Workers in the helping professions frequently propagate the view that their aim is to make people happy, to be able to adjust to their conditions and come to terms with them. I would question this aim on the grounds that it may involve more subtle and manipulatory methods of social control.[10] I have referred above to the use of neopsychiatric concepts in the school's vocabulary. Children who were underachieving tended to be categorized by schools as inately unintelligent or stupid, but in neo-psychiatric terms as insecure, emotionally maladjusted, or with inadequate self concepts.

In the formal school, a fairly narrow range of the child's attributes are seen to be relevant to the child's educational experience. In the informal child-centred school, however, where the school is seen as in the business of total socialization or resocialization, a far wider range of pupil attributes become the object of critical examination. Cognitive, social, emotional and psychological criteria all become relevant, and emphasis on cognitive skills gives way to a much broader range of goals embracing a holistic therapeutic task of creating all round, well socialized, happy individuals.

Freedom becomes justified in therapeutic terms; for the elites it is justified because they are already "whole" well adjusted people and hence can take advantage of freedom to pursue their interests. For the rest freedom will enable them to resolve in an unthreatening supportive context whatever emotional or psychological hangup is preventing them from developing cognitively. But as we have observed, the emphasis on freedom to develop into happy people means for some freedom to be happy, but to be ignored, whilst for the elites they happily monopolize the teachers' attention.

The happiness ideology reinforces the tendency to make the child responsible for his own career in the classroom. The non elites freely choose happily to participate in the conditions of their own manipulation leading to the personalization of failure and the deflecting of criticism away from the structure, whose character necessitates a hierarchical ranking of pupils and the unequal distribution of the teacher's time and attention, onto the individual pupils themselves.

Schools cool people out and the progressive child centred ideology may perform this task more subtly and effectively than formal authoritarian schools which are more easily visible as denying educational opportunity. Giving children choices does not entail that the teacher is no longer a powerful figure, it may mystify and obscure the extent to which behind an apparent facade of 'openness' and free cooperation, pupils are being categorized and processed and prepared for life in the adult labour force, to happily adjust to the conditions in which their real freedom is being denied.

Free Schools as an Alternative?

Those who establish and patronize free schools tend to come from the disaffected professional middle classes. They are alienated psychologically and culturally from the society they live in. They often share a moral repugnance for all forms of oppressive structures; they hate pollution, materialism, competitive bourgeois individualism and other values which they see being fostered within the state educational system, but their reaction to traditional education and the society they live in is based upon a moral critique rather than on an analytical understanding of the central contradictions within the structure of capitalism.

They tend to be cultural and moral revolutionaries, believing that it is possible to effect a transformation of people's consciousness within the bosom of capitalism itself, so long as alternative structures are set up which can foster what they take to be man's inner sense of decency, morality and desire for spontaneous growth. And free schools are the sort of alternative structure which can realize these desirable ends (along with communes, eco-individualistic houses and health food cooperatives!). The thinking proceeds along the following lines: if the alienated and disaffected would combine together and put into practice in their own life style the habits of sensitivity, co-operation, moral concern for the individual and communication with others then life would be a much better place.

Now in one sense this is a truism, but in another it is naive utopianism revealing little understanding of the nature of capitalist institutions and the way in which it is the structure and inner dynamic of these institutions which maims and dehumanizes people. It is as if capitalism is to be explained in terms of people's moral failings and turpitude rather than as a system which has its own inner logic and necessity moulding and fashioning man into a tool which can serve its requirements. "If only people would start to be humane and nice to each other . . ." yes, if only they would — but we do need an adequate theoretical understanding of the reasons why they do not which goes beyond moralistic critiques and attempts to conceptualize the economic, social and political preconditions for transforming people's consciousness towards more humane modes of relating to one another.

The free school movement is a dependent social movement with counter-cultural tendencies. It involves an individualistic turning away from the society, an opting out for a few who are fortunate enough to have sufficient economic resources, education and leisure to be able to go it alone. It can never be an option for the masses and has few implications for anyone but its own supporters. I remarked earlier that its supporters tended to be middle class people who were alienated psychologically and culturally from the society they live in. This may be so but economically they are integrated into the structure and a priveleged part of it.

They may not have vast institutional resources and power at their disposal but at least they have enough to enable them to raise loans for school buildings and materials, pay teachers and contribute their time to their children's education. These possibilities are not open to many in the kind of society we live in and certainly not for the majority who are most exploited and oppressed by the workings of capitalism—the migrant worker, the black, the unskilled labourer, the single supporting parent etc.

apolitical

My main argument against free schools would be that they are essentially apolitical, privatized communities in which a few children may experience life as a happy, free, spontaneous, cooperative endeavour, whilst the rest of the world continues in its dull, dreary and exploitated way. The political dimensions of the free school movement seem insignificant and possibly counter productive as far as effecting any widespread social changes are concerned. Parents of free children who might otherwise have combined to struggle for change within the state sector have their energies directed now into politically non-threatening arenas, whilst their offspring are being socialized into the world view that utopia on earth can be established if only people would be nice to each other as they are in free schools.

We found that ex pupils of Dartington, which is a long estabished private progressive school tended to be privatized people, not attached in any significant way to any

NSW Secondary Students Association

IN NSW most people directly involved in education already belong to and can work within some kind of union. Teachers belong to the NSW Teachers Federation, trainee teachers can join the NSW Trainee Teachers Association (relatively unique in Australia as it is affiliated with the Teachers Federation) and tertiary students belong to the Australian Union of Students and can work within their regional collective.

When these unions join together on specific campaigns, such as the Defend Education Spending campaign, they can exert a considerable amount of political pressure. In the future, activity around educational issues will to a great extent depend on how effectively these unions can work as a coalition.

In linking up these unions, however, the absence of any secondary students union poses a real problem. Many issues which affect secondary students are dealt with by the teachers union and there is no effective organization within which secondary students can organize. Hence the need for a secondary students association and hence the pressing need to get the recently revamped NSWSSA going again.

There are, of course, obvious problems involved in getting a secondary students union organized. Firstly, there is the sheer size of the job and the relative isolation of students in the schools. Secondly, but not nearly as important, there is the problem of high turnover, fear of victimization, etc. However, if these problems can be overcome, the NSWSSA can be extremely effective in two main areas.

Firstly, in giving secondary students an organized voice in general education campaigns. The coalition between teachers, trainees and tertiary students will obviously be strengthened.

Secondly, a strong secondary students union can begin to organize on issues affecting the schools and work towards changing the more odious aspects of education in NSW. Issues which the SSA regards as important are authority relations in the school and classroom, compulsory curriculum, assessment (the HSC, 4th Form moderating exams, etc.) and conditions and facilities. These are some of the things which will provide a solid basis for much needed secondary student activism in NSW.

The NSW Secondary Students Association meets every Monday at the Teachers' Federation, 300 Sussex St., Sydney, at 7-30pm on the 9th floor. Contact David on 929–6583 or Bruce on 528–9964.

organized political or social movements, but instead individualistically contemplating their own egos in an elitist atmosphere of self-assigned cultural superiority.

Moreover the stress on anti-authoritarianism and freedom for the pupil to pursue his own interests raises again the question of freedom to do what and for whom? I would not castigate the traditional school simply because the authority of the teacher is upgraded over and above the freedom of the child. What is wrong with the traditional school is the nature of the knowledge being transmitted to the child and the social function which this knowledge performs in the maintenance of an opressive and authoritarian society. Allowing pupils the free pursuit of their own spontaneous interests and desires may deny them the opportunity to be confronted with a cognitive view of the world which can provide a thorough going alternative critique of the society into which they have already been partially socialized, whatever the counter cultural ideologies of their parents and which can provide a more realistic and penetrating analysis of what is problematic about the society they live in than the bourgeois individualism of the alternative life style movement of which the free school tradition seems a part.

Free schoolers seem often to be little concerned about the content of education, and overpreoccupied with process. It does not seem to matter what the child learns, so long as his interest is captured and he is happy and motivated. I would fundamentally disagree with this. A child's life is a short one. Choices do have to be made about what is important for a child to know and to do, and it is up to the educator to guide those choices and to expose the child to what he thinks is important whether the child chooses to listen or not. I am less concerned about a child being denied the opportunity to spend a great deal of his time making pottery and painting which is his great passion, than that he has been exposed to an analysis of society which can explain how in our present state of affluence in Australia, some children can have the luxury of pursuing their passions whilst others in the third world have a life expectancy of thirty.

Nor do I accept that learning can always be a happy joyful experience. Some of what we need to learn is frightnening, the re-examination of conceptions which have always been fundamental to our own identity does create trauma, self doubt and anziety, but that does not mean that it should not be attempted if for some that process results in a more incisive understanding and a greater determination to struggle for a more liberating world.

Towards a Radical Educational Policy

I have argued that child centred education is contained within liberal democratic assumptions about the child, the educational system and the society, the key feature of this ideology being its masking function. The failure of the educational system to fulfil the promise of freedom, equality and individual self-development is not due to the individual or social pathlogy of the pupils who fail, nor due to the pathologies of authoritarian teachers or naive progressives but due to the very nature of the wider society for which children are being prepared. If classrooms are socially stratified, if the educational system as a whole is selective and inequalitarian, this precisely illustrates the effectiveness of its social role, to reproduce the social division of labour and the ideological conditions which perpetuate the structure of capitalism.

The school system in a capitalist society cannot help but be authoritarian, selective and socially divisive. To the extent that child centred teachers ignore this they naively contribute to the reproduction of the social structure and assist ideologically in its legitimation. When they engage in a moralistic critique of that society but fail to understand it properly, they produce consequences very different from those they intend.

I would advise all teachers who think of themselves as radical to read Gramsci's work on education.[12] Gramsci reminds us that "the traditional school was oligarchic because it was intended for the new generation of the ruling class". He goes on to argue that it is not the mode of teaching which makes a school hierarchical but the social composition of the pupils and the social destinies for which they are being prepared — whether to rule or be subordinate: "The problem is not one of model curricula but of men, and not just of the men who are actually teachers themselves but of the entire social complex which they express." School systems reflect the kind of society they serve and because the progressive child centred teacher or his free school counterpart have inadequately grasped the economic, social and political dimensions of the educational activity, they naively assume that mere changes in pedagogy or curricula can produce the goals that they strive towards.

understanding

The most important prerequisite for a radical educational policy is that such a policy be adequately based on a sophisticated understanding of the context of political activity and the structure of the society which we are trying to transform. Mindless activism and struggle is the cause of a great wastage of human resourses and energy which could better be diverted elsewhere. The ruling class has demonstrated its effectiveness in defusing potentially radical movements by involving their supporters in time wasting pseudo-democratic participatory movements which leave the basis of power and inequality fundamentally unaltered.

I would suggest that activists in Australia should devote considerable energy initially in a process of self education or re-education concerning the nature of capitalism, its inner logic and weak points and an analysis of strategies and struggles designed to transform it. Such a process of education about capitalism in general is vital for anyone working within the educational system and can work to dispel the liberal democratic tendency to think about educational reform in naive utopian terms. I would suggest the setting up of study, reading and discussion groups among teachers which can serve two functions — on the one hand it can sensitize educators to the theoretical weaknesses and vulnerability of liberal views of the world and provide a basis for a reorientation of the knowledge component of what is transmitted in schools. On the other, it can serve as a foundation for a commonly shared, systematic and coherent world view regarding the society and sources of change within it on which a successful collective revolutionary strategy must be based.

Secondly there is a need for activist struggle to breakdown authoritarian power structures which control the activities and destinies of both pupils and teachers within the educational system. A danger here, however, is that we must be clear why democratic control over the conditions

which affect and constrain our lives is important. Liberals often view democracy in merely institutional terms. Collective control over decision making is seen as an end in itself. Little concern is devoted to considering the implications of whatever the collectivity defines as important. Power to do what, for whom, and why are vitally important questions and do not disappear when democratic participation has been achieved.

My analysis of the failures of free schools suggests that democratic decision making based upon a false or misguided analysis of what is problematic can be just as mystifying and counter-productive as authoritarian decision making. Control over decision making in education is important because what is needed is a reorientation of the knowledge poses threats to the existing power structure born within schools and in the basis of the society they serve. In addition, struggle can lead people to be aware of the nature of oppression, often a vital component in a change of world view.

Why do I regard the reorientation of knowledge as so vital? The answer could relate to my analysis of what is holding capitalism together through the stresses and strains of economic crises. Whilst capitalism may rest fundamentally on the control over the means of coercion, such naked and visible force rarely needs to be brought to the forefront of people's consciousness, because of the way in which the ideological legitimation of the system works so successfully.

Capitalism is held together by a complex and systematic set of ideas which are widely accepted and which serve to perpetuate the institutions which reproduce capitalist exloitation through people's acceptance of them. It is only by continually knocking away at the foundations of these ideas, by exposing people to facts of which they are probably unaware, by confronting people with counter explanations of phenomena they have always taken for granted, that a coherent and equally systematic world view with more comprehensive explanatory power can be built up. And without this alternative world view, any radical educational programme will be doomed to failure.

Moreover it is within the state educational system that we must work. Opting out to create alternative schools is not a revolutionary strategy. The revolutionaries of the future are the masses, those being denied educational opportunity in the state sector, those being moulded into a complient labour force for capitalist social relations of production. It is these who must be exposed to a critical analysis of the whole structure of bourgeois hegemony in our society.

Within the confines of many subjects which are currently taught in schools, geography, history, social studies, literature and even the biological and physical sciences there is ample opportunity to begin to question the basic world views which maintain the structure of oppression. Of course one will need to be subtle about it and not go into the schools armed with the dangerous rhetoric of concepts like the dictatorship of the proletariat and the exploitation of the masses — but the scope for changing the foundation of pupils' world views has consistently been underestimated, more particularly because of the lack of understanding by teachers themselves of these alternative conceptions and their knowledge implications.

The gravest danger to a radical educational policy is not the authoritarian teacher but those potential supporters of a radical movement whose moral consciences have been awakened but whose critical consciousness is ill developed and naively utopian. The main aim of a radical educational policy is to build a revolutionary movement and this will not be achieved by some wishy washy liberals giving in to the alternative life style movement or fetishising the individualistic ego through free choice principles and a facade of openness and pseudo democratic benignness.

The radical teacher cannot absolve himself from the responsibility which follows from the knowledge he has of how capitalism works and its debilitating social and individual implications. Following Gramsci, he should not believe that one can develop into a self-confident, self-disciplined struggler against oppression without a thorough going training in the habits of hard work, self denial, study and personal asceticism. The happiness ideology has to be rejected.

It is not happy people, well-adjusted to the exploitative conditions of capitalism who will be the future revolutionaries. Rather they will be people who are profoundly unhappy about their situation and those of others, but who have the cognitive wherewithal and the will to struggle to overcome the conditions which deny the possibility of self realization for the many. It is the task of the radical educator to create such people and to work with them to overcome the structure of capitalism which is incapable of institutionalizing the values that it purports to support.

A Brief Bibliography

1. **Education and Social Control:** A Study in Progressive Primary Education by Rachel Sharp & Anthony Green. Routledge & Kegan Paul. London. 1975.

2. **Bernstein, B. and Davies, B.** Some Sociological Comments on Plowden. in R.S. Peters (ed.) Perspectives on Plowden. Routledge & Kegan Paul. 1969.

3. See **M.F.D. Young (ed.) Knowledge & Control:** New Directions in the Sociology of Education. Collier Macmillan 1971; and the Open University Units for the Course "School and Society" for illustrations of this perspective applied to Education. See P. Filmer et al. New Directions in Sociological Theory. Collier Macmillan 1972.

4. **Dearden, R.** The Philosophy of Primary Education. Routledge & Kegan Paul. 1968.

5. See **A. Shutz.** Common Sense and Scientific Interpretations of Human Action. Collected Papers. Vol. 1. 1962.

6. See for example, **T. Parsons.** The School Class as a Social System. Harvard Educational Review XXIX 1959. J.B. Douglas. The Home and the School. 1964. MacGibbon & Key. And almost any textbook in the Sociology of Education.

7. **Rosenthal, R. & Jacobson, C.** Pygmalion in the Classroom. N. Keddie. Classroom Knowledge in M.F.D. Young op. cit. and Rist, R.G. Student Social Class and Teacher Expectations: The Self fulfilling prophecy in Ghetto Education. Harvard Educational Review. Vol. 40. No. 3.

8. See **J. Macpherson's** work on liberal democratic theory in The Real World of Democracy.

9. See **N. Poulantzas.** Political Power and Social Classes. N.L. Books. 1972. Chapter on Ideology.

10. See **V. Sharp.** Social Control in the Therapeutic Community. Saxon Books 1976, for similar comments regarding democralization movements in psychotherapy.

11. See **P. Musgrave & R. Selleck (ed.)** Alternative Schools. John Wiley & Sons. 1975 for an account of some free Schools in Australia. See A. Graubard: Free the Children, 1972. Pantheon Books for a Critical Account of the Movement in the USA. See J. Holt Freedom and Beyond. 1972. E.P. Dutton & Co. See especially bibliography in 1. Lister (ed.) Deschooling.

12. **Gramsci.** On Education, in The Prison Notebooks. Lawrence & Wishart. 1971.

In a class society, the power elite necessarily determine what education will be, and therefore its objectives. The objectives will certainly not be opposed to their interests . . . . . it would be supremely naive to imagine that the elite would in any way promote or accept an education which stimulated the oppressed to discover the raison d'etre of the social structure. The most that could be expected is that the elite might permit talk of such education, and occasional experiments which could be immediately suppressed should the status quo be threatened.

(Paulo Freire)

The Trainee Teacher and Radical Education

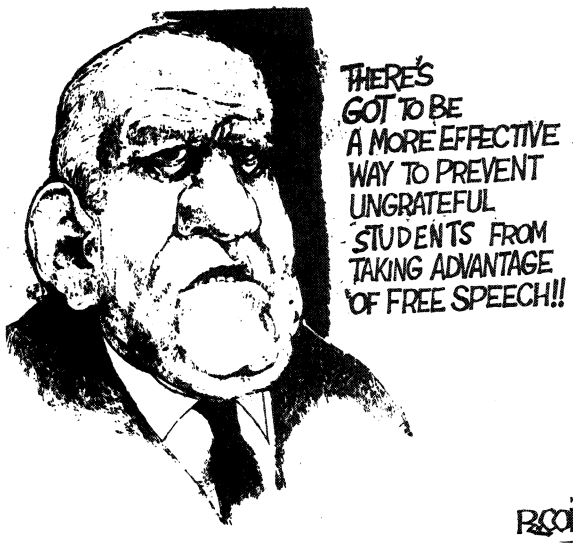
THERE ARE very few teachers who see their job as necessarily serving the interests of the power elite. Similarly, there are very few trainee teachers who see their future job in this way. What is it, then, that hides the obvious from them?

The answer to that lies in the very structure of teacher education. Whether it takes place at a university, a CAE, or a specific training college, teacher education is controlled essentially by the future employer of the graduating teachers. And that future employer, directly in most cases, and indirectly in others, is the state — represented by the education department.

The state gains its control over teacher education, and consequently over teachers' awareness, in three closely interrelated ways.

In the first place, it offers and awards teacher education scholarships. These are awarded to students who have already displayed certain favorable intellectual and personality characteristics in enduring and succeeding in the school system itself. And these scholarships can, at any time, be withdrawn should the student cease to display those characteristics. Thus it is against any particular trainee's interests to begin failing exams, or to develop personality traits like unco-operativeness or rebelliousness which can lead one straight into those notorious psychological examinations.

In the second place, the state controls teacher education by employing the teacher educators. This it does directly in some colleges, and indirectly in other colleges and universities. And



the state, of course, employs the people who think the right way; thus the large-scale conservatism among teacher educators, especially in colleges where the control is direct. Now the state is not infallible in its choice. Some people lie at their interviews; others change their views after serving an apprenticeship and securing tenure. And at universities especially, where different criteria often influence selection committees, bad eggs occasionally slip through. But not too many. By and large, one teacher education unit is quite like any other.

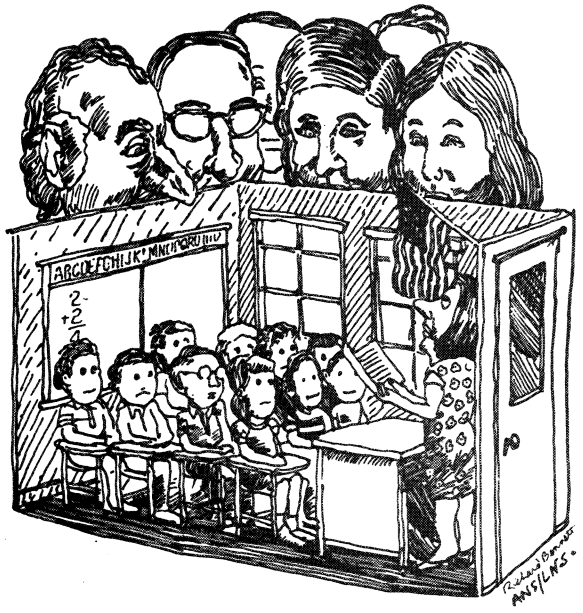
Now here comes the really important part, In

teacher education it is the staff who determine the curriculum, even if this includes concessions to option courses or student representation on curriculum committees. And curriculum determination has two aspects: there is determination as to what goes in, and, explicitly or implicitly, to what stays out.

The curricula of all teacher education establishments embrace one basic assumption: students must be prepared to teach in the schools as they will find them when they go out to teach. The assumption is defended pragmatically: "What's the point of teaching teachers to teach in schools that don't exist; or failing to prepare them for schools that do exist?" It is, of course, pragmatism tinged with idealism, seeking to reform and improve as well: so out with blackboards, fixed desks, and percentiles; and in with overhead projectors, open classrooms, and letter grades. But pragmatism it remains, and for all the inclusions of undergraduate studies and general studies for the students' "personal development", teacher education is essentially vocational.

And teaching is a tough vocation to learn. Bus-driving, plumbing, bricklaying, and accountancy are relatively easy. But teaching requires knowledge of psychology, social psychology, sociology, history of education, theory, philosophy classroom techniques, methods, evaluation techniques, and so on; not to mention knowledge of one's content, and the practical ability to get into a classroom and put it all together. Little wonder that students and staff are never satisfied that enough has been accomplished in the training period, and little wonder that staff vie with each other for more hours, and that students are continually inundated with assignments.

The third way that the state controls teacher education, is that the state, not the training institution, employs the graduates; and the state, at some later stage, gives them their teaching certificates (as distinct from Dip. Ed. or Dip. Teaching). It hasn't happened yet, but the state could look over the graduates from a particular institution and refuse to employ them. Or, only slightly less drastic, the state could look over such graduates, employ them, but refuse to send any more scholarship-holders to the particular institution. And so the institutions, while all desperately claiming autonomy (especially university departments), are not autonomous at all: they are bound to have acceptable curricula and produce acceptable graduates and diplomates.



And all of this indicates why, as a trainee teacher, you will learn a particular psychology, a particular sociology, a particular philosophy, and particular teaching methods, all designed to fit a particular teaching scene. There will be some talk of other things, like open classrooms and progressive education; you might be encouraged to criticize the educational status quo in an essay or two, based on given relevant reading. But overall, there will barely be enough time to cover the "essentials".

There will not be time to tell you, or let you see, that you are oppressed. There will not be time to challenge the very basis of the society you, as a teacher, will help perpetuate. There will not be physical facilities to let you experience other modes of education apart from lectures and tutorials. Or to tell the truth, the power elite have arranged it so that you cannot oppose their interests: if you manage to, you won't graduate; if you do graduate, you won't last long in teaching unless you buckle down.

So why do you need RED?

Let's try the following reasons:

—We'll fill in the side they don't tell you about education

—We'll expose the vested interests inherent in education today

—We'll help expose as myths the things they lay before you as facts

—We'll oppose the power elite, and provide the theoretical and practical framework whereby you too might oppose them

—We'll provide a link-up which will let you know who else is struggling for socialistic education, and what they are doing about it.

(Reprinted from
International Socialism No 90
July/August, 1976)

The Soweto Uprising

by Alex Callinicos

THE uprising that began in Soweto on Wednesday 16 June has now (22 June) spread beyond the Witwatersrand to Pretoria.

It is the first time in sixteen years that urban South African blacks have directly and massively challenged the forces of the apartheid regime. And the circumstances are very different. The Sharpeville massacre, on 21 March 1960. when the regime's police fired on black demonstrators. killing 69, inaugurated a period of savage repression. The mass movement of passive resistance to apartheid led by the African National Congress during the 1950s was crushed and its leaders gaoled or driven into exile. Today the tide of liberation wars in Southern Africa is drawing even closer to the borders of South Africa itself. The fall of Portuguese colonialism, the Frelimo government in Mozambique, the guerilla war in Rhodesia (Zimbabwe), and above all South Africa's humiliation at the hands of MPLA in Angola together must instil fantastic self-confidence in black South Africans.

At the time of writing it is impossible to predict with certainty the course of the uprising. But a number of points can be made.

First, and fundamentally, South African blacks have once again demonstrated their complete opposition to the apartheid system. The uprising arose out of black schoolchildren's protests against being forced to learn Afrikaans, the language of their most hated white oppressors. But very quickly, under the impact of police repression, the grievance was swept up into a general rebellion against apartheid. The offices of the regime's 'Bantu' (black) administration were destroyed; demonstrators gave the clenched fist black power salute popularised by the new black consciousness movement.

Soweto, the massive black township whose inhabitants work in Johannesburg 18 miles away, as well as the surrounding area, expresses in a concentrated form the situation of the urban black in South Africa.

The function of the apartheid system, consolidated by the National Party, which has been in power since 1948, is simple. The factories, mines, farms, offices and homes of white South Africans require a huge pool of cheap black labour in order to provide the settlers with their privileges and the multinationals operating in the country with their profits. Yet a permanent urban black working class would be an explosive threat to the system. So the apartheid system serves to prevent such a working class from forming. In theory, all blacks are temporary residents in the cities, which are reserved for the whites. They are required under the pass laws always to carry documents certifying their right to be in the city. Should a black lose his job he can be deported back to the rural area to which he 'belongs' even if he has lived all his life in the city.

Hand in hand with the immigrant labour system goes the denial to all blacks of trade union rights. Strikes by black workers are illegal, and their unions go unrecognised by the employer or the state. The system of job reservation guarantees that skilled jobs will go to whites alone. The white trade unions, enjoying huge wage differentials out of all proportion to the work they do (mainly supervising the blacks who actually do the work), are less a section of the working class than a parasitic excrescence dependent on the white capitalists for their privileges.

The result can be seen in Soweto. 86 per cent of homes in Soweto have no electricity; 93 per cent no shower or bath; 97 per cent no hot water. 54 per cent of the township's one million residents are unemployed. The average black family income in South Africa is 73 rand; yet the poverty datum level — the minimum income compatible with bare subsistence — is 120 rand a month.

Apartheid operates in education as viciously as it does elsewhere. Verwoerd, Vorster's predecessor and the architect of apartheid, succinctly explained the basis for the education of blacks in South Africa:

'There is no place for him (the black) in the European community above the level of certain forms of labour . . . For that reason it is of no avail for him to receive a training which has as its aim absorption in the European community. What is the use of teaching a Bantu child mathematics when it cannot use it in practice?'

The result can be seen in the 1973/74 spending figures when 483 rand was spent on the education of every white child and 28 rand on the education of every black child.

But apartheid has failed in its objective. The black population is increasingly urbanised and proletarianised. In 1970 33 per cent of the total African population of 15 million lived in the towns. The perctage of black labour in manufacturing industry grew from 57.6 per cent of the workforce in 1936 to 73.3 per cent in 1967.

Apartheid involves not simply preventing the formation of an urban black proletariat. It also involves 'separate development' — the development of the rural black 'Homelands' — the Bantustans — under tribal leadership into sovereign states. This policy is meant to be crowned in October when the Transkei becomes the first Homeland to achieve independence.

Yet Transkeian independence will be a force. The

Transkei ia a rural peasant area. More than 78 per cent of those economically active within the Transkei work on traditional subsistence agriculture. Yet so stagnant is the peasant economy that it only utilises 5 per cent of the area's agricultural potential — staple food has to be imported. Two thirds of the Transkei government's income comes from the South African government. Despite an intensive building programme in Umtata, the Transkei's capital — presidential palace, an international airport, a Holiday Inn hotel, all financed again by Pretoria! — there is no manufacturing industry worth mentioning.

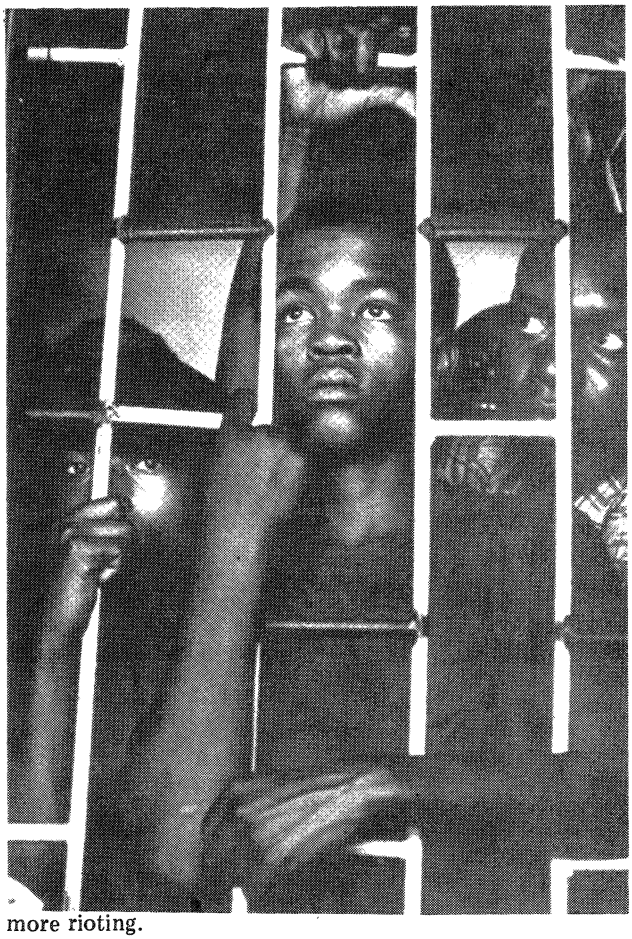
The same is true of the other Homelands. The traditional peasant economy has been smashed in South Africa by a series of measures like the imposition of money taxes and the reservation of all but 12.9 per cent of the land, and that the least fertile, to the whites. The black peasantry have been forced to work in the factories, mines and farms of South Africa. Those who remain on the land have become progressively the dependants of black workers as the productivity of traditional subsistence agriculture falls and the birthrate soars. The Homelands, statelets carved out of the 12.9 per cent, often territorially split up (the Transkei is divided into three parts), have no future except as a means of advancement for black opportunists and Quislings.

Within the black working class there has developed a new ability and willingness to fight. A massive strike wave centred in Natal in early 1973 shocked the white ruling class and forced it to consider concessions in the direction of black trade union rights. There were more fundamental reasons underlying this new moderation on the part of Voster and the ruling Nationalist Party. Apartheid had created a huge shortfall of skilled labour (two million by 1980) and a very low level of labour productivity compared with levels in advanced capitalist countries. One way of solving this problem would be to abandon the migrant labour system and offer a series of concessions — trade union rights, abolition of job reservation — that would provide the incentives for large increases in black labour productivity.

The problem facing Vorster is that to go too far along the road of concessions would inevitably fuel black demands for political rights as well and would cause a rebellion among his own base of white trade unionists and employees who depend on apartheid in jobs for one of the highest standards of living in the world. Hence the hesitations that have informed Vorster's policy of 'domestic' detente'.

For example, one concession announced was that blacks were to be permitted to buy 30-year urban leaseholds. Then it was announced that permission would be limited to those who took out Homeland citizenship (thus taking away the point of the concession as a recognition of blacks' permanent status in the cities). The change has still to be implemented. Again, the government has a number of times publicly committed itself to backing attempts by employers to 'reclassify' jobs so that they are no longer reserved for whites. Yet, not only has it taken little initiative in this field, but it is taking steps to strengthen job apartheid. The government is enforcing a law which makes it an offence for industrialists in most areas to employ more than two or 2.5 blacks to any one white. 100,000 workers could lose their jobs if the law is applied rigorously.

Another explosive issue is that of Transkeian citizenship. 1.3 million Xhosas who come from the Transkei live in the white area. Many were born there. The regime is attempting to force them to take out Transkeian citizenship. After the Soweto uprising one opposition senator warned that if this measure were enforced it could cause more rioting.



The contradictions of Vorster's detente policy were dramatically revealed after the Angolan debacle. In order to conciliate hardliners within the Nationalist Party opposed to both detente and withdrawal from Angola, Vorster replaced a 'moderate', Punt Janson, with Andries Treurnicht, in the highly sensitive post of Deputy Minister of Bantu Administration and Bantu Education. Treurnicht is an exchairman of the Broederbond, the Afrikaner secret society that dominates white South African politics, and the most vocal Nationalist opponent of concessions to blacks both inside and outside South Africa. Thus it was Treurnicht who was responsible for enforcing the decision to make black children learn Afrikaans. After the rioting began, he commented: 'Why are pupils sent to schools if they don't like the language divisions?'

There have been plenty of warning signs. South Africa's economy has been hit hard by the world recession. The rate of growth tumbled from 7 per cent in 1974 to 2.25 in 1975. The rate at which new jobs are created was halved. The Johannesburg Financial Mail asked: 'Is the spectre of unemployment going to turn into a spectre of unrest among the jobless? The uprising has answered that question!

The slump has caused a dramatic fall in strike figures. Employers and the state have used unemployment to hammer down on trade union militants. But there have been tremendous pressures the other way — inflation (still over 10 per cent) and rising transport costs (for example a 20 per cent increases in bus fares in the Durban area) have eaten into the starvation wages paid to black workers. And a fightback of sorts has been taking place. Black workers in Kwa Thema township near Johannesburg launched a massive bus boycott against fare increases in March (Putco,

the bus company, is especially hated — when the uprising spread to Alexandra, another township near Johannesburg, last week, the Putco offices were burned down). The police were called to crush strikes demanding recognition of the Allied and Metal Workers Union at British Leyland and Heinemann Electric.

A demonstration in Johannesburg in March provided an indicator of the volatility of the situation. 500 demonstrators outside the Rand Supreme Court, where a political trial was taking place, were joined by black workers on their way home to catch trains from the nearby railway station. The demonstration rapidly swelled to 2000 chanting black power slogans and hurling bottles and stones at the police and passing cars. The police had to draw their guns to disperse the demonstration.

Even the Bantustan leaders sensed the changing mood. Gatsha Buthelezi is the Chief Minister of KwaZulu Homeland and one of the cleverest of the black politicians trying to achieve a modus vivendi with apartheid. His face used to decorate adverts in papers like the Economist promising foreign investors that they would have no problems with trade unions in South Africa. In March he addressed a mass rally in Soweto, where, donning a Che Guevara-style guerillas outfit, he launched Inkatha Ye Sizwe — Power is Ours — called for majority rule and warned the whites that it was up to them to determine whether the changeover is peaceful or not. To continue to serve a useful role as mediator between black and white, Buthelezi had to move dramatically leftwards or lose touch with the rising tide of black militancy.

The political organisations of the black resistance, committed not to collaboration with apartheid but to its overthrow, have also been more active than for many years. Probably the strongest of these is the African National Congress, which, with a breakaway, the Pan-Africanist Congress, has been banned since Sharpeville, and its leaders in gaol or in exile. The ANC appears to have been more active, for example, in the demonstration outside the Rand Supreme Court.

Perhaps more important is the black consciousness movement, whose organisations are Black People's Convention and South African Students Organisation. This is a movement of angry young militants who have been brought up under apartheid, a movement hostile to Bantustan leaders like Buthelezi and impatient with the traditional organisations like ANC. (The victories of the liberation movements in Angola and Mozambique have had a tremendous impact on the black consciousness movement: SASO and BPC leaders are on trial at present for organising a demonstration in solidarity with Frelimo). SASO grew out of black students' opposition to apartheid in higher education and members of its youth wing, the South African Student Movement, appear to have been active in the anti-Afrikaans agitation that led to the Soweto uprising.

But the uprising has clearly swept beyond the sphere of influence of the organised black resistance, fuelled by the anger and frustration of the young unemployed in Soweto and the other townships.

Whatever the fate of the uprising it could not have come at a worse time for Vorster. Detente is in ruins, as a result of the Angolan war and the collapse of negotiations between the Smith regime and the African National Council in Zimbabwe. This week Vorster is meeting Kissinger to discuss the efforts of the Western imperialist governments and the South African regime to find a neo-colonial solution to Zimbabwe The success of these efforts depends crucially on the collaboration of black governments like Kaunda in Zambia. The Soweto uprising will make it more difficult for Vorster to find allies in Black Africa.

Even if the present uprising is crushed by the regime's immensely strong military apparatus, it is a beginning not an end. The urban black masses in South Africa have taken on the regime directly and frontally for the first time since Sharpeville. Both conditions within South Africa and the wars of liberation being waged in both Rhodesia and Namibia indicate that South Africa is entering a period of massive confrontations between the regime and the oppressed black population. Thus, as the economy recovers, it is quite likely that there will be an explosion of black wage struggles.

It remains, therefore, to draw some provisional lessons from the uprising.

First, no rebellion that is isolated to a single township or area, even if it is a massive as Soweto, can succeed. It is always possible for the regime's forces to cut off all access into and out of the area and then to shoot and starve the people into submission.

Second, it is not simply a matter of spreading the uprising geographically. The power of the black working class lies in its ability through strike action to paralyse the white economy. The weakness of the uprising is its failure to spread, so far, not only to the militant and comparatively highly organised workers of Natal and the Eastern Cape, but also to the miners of the Rand. The mines have been shaken by black discontent over the last few years — 162 black miners died violently between September 1973 and March 1976. Yet, perhaps because the miners are fenced off into separate all-male compounds, from the rest of the black population the uprising does not seem to have spread to them.

Third, it is therefore a matter of building a movement that struggles against apartheid but which organises black workers as a class. Out of the struggles of black workers against the double oppression that weighs on them as blacks and as workers will arise the power capable of smashing apartheid. Unfortunately, despite the growth of the black workers' movement in recent years, the black resistance, especially the ANC, sees the struggle as a predominantly national one against racial inequality.

But in fact apartheid increasingly relies on the collaboration of the black bourgeoisie. Vorster's detente policy would not exist without the alliance with Kaunda and the split in the Zimbabwean movement.[8] Similarly, within South Africa, it requires the collaboration of people like Kaiser Mantanzima, the chief Minister of the Transkei, Buthelezi and Richard Maponya, the Soweto millionaire (who fled to a five-star hotel in Johannesburg when the uprising began!)

Apartheid and capitalism in South Africa are so intermeshed and interwined that they must be smashed together or not at all. The only force whose position gives it both the interest and the ability to carry out this task is the black working class. The disintegration of the South African peasantry which we have seen means that any strategy based on rural guerilla warfare, which ANC, PAC and the Unity Movement of South Africa have all toyed with, is pure fantasy.

No revolutionary socialist organisation committed to the struggle of the black working class exists in South Africa. But the ingredients of such an organisation exist in the angry young militants of the black consciousness movement and of the new black trade unions. It is the duty of revolutionaries in the imperialist West not only to support the struggle of black South Africans, but to give assistance to those committeed to building such an organisation.

Tear along here

REDossier

WE'LL TRY and keep you posted on things that are happening, people that are offering activity or information, groups working in related fields, and the like . . .

Brian Abbey and Dean Ashenden of Sturt CAE, Sturt Rd., Bedford Park, 5042 are promoting contact and communication among the people who were at the Bowles and Gintis conferences in June, by collecting names of interested people, and proposing the listing of a network of activities and interests as a catalyst to fruitful relationships. This could lead to future meetings or conferences, a newslatter and/or a journal.

Centre for Non-Sexist Resources, c/- JCPTA, Homebush west Primary School, Exeter Rd., Homebush West, 2140 (phone: 76-7715) are offering a wide range of resources to help teachers and others to expand the life options of boys and girls, and to counter the sense of inferiority and dependence in girls. They offer assistance in arranging speakers and films, a meeting place and a supportive, relaxed atmosphere for the exchange of ideas over coffee.

Education Subscription Service, 20 Smith St., Collingwood, 3066, (phone 419-5142) is an information exchange for people interested in radical change in education. Their Magazine is a mine of information on happenings in schools, in meetings and conferences, and in the corridors of power. Subscription of $5 gets The Magazine, plus the listed articles and publications you order, many of which are very difficult to get otherwise.

Education News Service, AUS, 97 Drummond St., Carlton, 3053, offers a subscription of 10 issues for $5 per annum, recording the developing education scene in Australia.

Radical Education 86 Eleanor Rd., London, E8 provides a forum for news, articles and discussions on the British struggles, and is an excellent details of the discriminatory cuts in education spending, articles on Portugal (by Dean Ashenden) and on China educational systems; news of black parents' mobilisation against police victimisation, an article on the stereotypes in popular comic strips, and energetic letters and criticisms of relevant writings. Subscriptions is about $2 and postage for four issues.

Science for People from Brit Society for Social Responsability in Science and **Radical Science Journal** from the same source, 9 Poland St. London, WLV 3DG, are aimed at questioning the assumptions underlying scientific research and education, and at exposing the prejudices of so-called "neutral" science projects. SFP is perhaps more topical and current and costs 25p plus postage per issue, while RSG is more analytical and costs about $2.40 plus postage for subscription of 3 issues.

Science for the People from SESPA (Scientists and Engineers for Social and Political Action) 16 Union Square, Somerville, Mass. 02143 is the US counterpart, having goals to elucidate the role of science and technology in society, to enrich the political consciousness of readers and to stimulate participation in concrete political activities. The organization of SFTP includes groups concerned with Genetics and Social Policy, Food and Nutrition, The Politics of Cancer, Occupational Health and Safety, Science Teaching, Women's Issues, Alternative Technology and other, local issues. Subs. $12 or what you can afford.

Radical Philosophy of 40 Langdon Park Rd., London N65QG aims to develop radical theory, and to expose the social and political assumptions embodies in orthodox philosophy. Subs. $6/three issues, $2.80 if poor.

Radical Statistics, from Liz Atkins, 105 Noel Rd., London, N1, are people concerned about political misuse of statistics, and to demystify teaching materials for schools.

No More Teachers' Dirty Looks, published by Bay Area Radical Teachers' Organizing Collective, 388 Sanchez St. San Francisco, Cal. 94114, and **The Teacher Paper**, 2221 NE 23rd St. Portland, Oregon, 97212, are

* helping teachers maintain their humanity, and their sanity.
* ending the isolation many good teachers feel.
  publishing articles written by classroom teachers only.
* printing lively, sophisticated articles about realities in the schools today.

Radical History Review, quarterly journal of the Mid-Atlantic Radical Historians' Organization, is available by subscription for $5 from low income earners, or $10 from high income earners or dedicated revolutionaries. Send 50c for a sample copy to Gil Schrank, 107 W86 St. New York, NY 10024.

Communus, a magazine of post-school education examining alternatives and critiques. Published by National Union of Students' community action and environment project, 3 Endsleigh St. London, WC1.

Spark, published by the Committee for Social Responsibility in Engineering, though our news is about two years old, was publishing articles like "Desert action blooms — Community technology — Plug in the public power — A new form of workers' control — Interview with a Chilean engineer — The energy mess and corporate power — Technology assessment through science fiction — US government refuses asylum to Vietnamese engineers." Write to CSRE, 475 Riverside drive, New York, NY 10027.

The Insurgent Sociologist, published at the Department of Sociology, University of Oregon, Eugene, Oregon, 97403, advertised an issue last year devoted to "Social background of American Presidents, Cabinets and Congress. — Ruling class institutions: CFR, higher education councils. — Ruling class social networks and interlocks." The cost was $3 for classroom use, and free to subscribers.

Red G Study Groups are being formed to develop the theoretical understanding of members, and to expose the strategies by which Australian society may be liberated. For information and contact addresses ring Liz Williams (Sydney) 660-3816.

Radical Education Dossier (RED) is produced and published three times a year by the Radical Education Group (RED G). RED G is a group of socialist activists with concern for education. As a member of RED G you:

— will receive a monthly newsletter
— can participate in study groups
— can benefit from support groups
— can use the varied resource centres being set up
— can attend all business meetings
— can participate in all group activities

and of cours e you will be a member of a growing collective seeking to establish socialistic education in Australia.

RED 2 will appear in April 1977. in Red 2: Gintis on deschooling. RED wants your contributions:

— articles up to 5,000 words
— commentaries and information items up to 1,000 words
— book reviews, news of publications
— letters; notices; contacts; news; photographs; cartoons; poems . . .

Send them to: RED Editorial Collective,
10 Reuss Street,
Glebe 2037.

Copy for RED 2 is needed by the first week in February 1977.

Tear along here

RED News What To Do About Schools?

Pictures from the Conference. . . . Above — Bowles and Gintis

Below — 700 other participants

IT WOULD not be altogether surprising if people traced the beginnings of RED G and this magazine, to the Radical Education Conference, "What to do About Schools," which was held in Sydney earlier this year.

Certainly RED G formalized itself out of interest generated at and by the conference. But 700 people do not turn up, from all parts of Australia, to a mid-week conference unless there already exists among them the need and the concern to radically reappraise the role of schools in our society.

The conference, then, can best be seen as an event which made us aware of two major things. On the one hand it made everyone, including the somewhat stunned organisers, aware of the vast numbers of sympathetic people who, up till now, have been struggling in more or less isolated ways in every scattered outpost of this continent.

On the other hand it made us aware of crucial theoretical and practical issues relating to the radical restructuring of schooling. This article is concerned only with reporting on that latter aspect.

Principal speakers at the conference were Sam Bowles and Herb Gintis, Professors at the University of Massachusetts, authors of Schooling in Capitalist America (reviewed elsewhere in this issue). In the opening session of the conference (also reported in full elsewhere in this issue), Bowles developed the theme that liberal and progressive educational reform was self-contradictory in nature.

On the one hand, he showed how it has noble aims of social and economic equality, while on the other hand it mainly serves to stabilize the social relations of capitalist society and to perpetuate existing inequalities.

Later, Bowles and Gintis spoke on critiques of deschooling and Marxist analyses of schooling. They demolished the "factual" basis of hitherto largely unchallenged assumptions.

For example, they showed that:

— education's role in increasing mental performance does not explain why people with higher education receive higher income.

— while a student's educational attainments are strongly dependent on his/her social background, IQ makes practically no difference — that is, IQ differences across social classes

A Catalystic Conference

account for only a tiny amount of the difference in attainment.

— school grades are strongly correlated with students' personalities, as well as with their mental abilities.

— the school system rewards the same personality characteristics as does the job market.

Bowles and Gintis do not challenge the idea that one's education (years of schooling) is closely associated with one's cognitive attainments, nor do they deny that the more highly educated one is the better one's chances of economic success are.

What they do challenge, and find wanting, is the causal relationship between higher cognitive attainments and better economic prospects. They argue that only a very minor proportion of the existing substantial association between years of schooling and economic success can be accounted for by the school's role in producing or screening cognitive skills.

Among other speakers, Peter Stevens of Sydney University provided an intricate analysis of the functioning of ideology in society. From this analysis, he then demonstrated the crucial point that it was anything but accidental that the qualities and personality characteristics developed and rewarded in schools closely correspond to the qualities and characteristics required by the capitalist economy.

But Stevens' analysis indicated that they are not inculcated by deluded teachers, nor by a deliberate conspiracy of self-seeking capitalists. The correspondence comes about, regardless of the efforts of well-meaning teachers, because it is built into the very structure and nature of schooling in capitalist society. Stevens emphasized that, in studying schools it is essential to be aware of their inevitably political role.

Rachel Sharp, co-author of *Education and Social Control — a Study in Progressive Education (RKP)*, created some controversy by arguing that free schools, progressive schools, and the like were built on illusions, and were not genuine alternatives either to traditional education or to the state system. She asserted that they do not develop in children the personalities and abilities they claim.

She said that free schools also served the capitalist system by producing the same outcomes as conventional schools, through different mechanisms. They drew from the state system the parents and children who are dissatisfied, thus removing activists and unrest from those schools that most need insight, energy, and willingness to struggle for change.

Brian Abbey and Dean Ashenden, Adelaide political scientists, discussed a shattering headmaster-pupil conflict and placed it in the context of a Marxist analysis of South Australian society. The conflict, involving the Wilcox family, was investigated by a Royal Commission. The commissioner, the director-general, the headmaster and teachers all viewed the Wilcoxes as a "trinity of troublemakers" threatening the just authority of the state.

A correct analysis, however, would have revealed that the family's relationship with the school was a product of developing social relations involving a struggle against reactionary and quite irrational demands.

Doug White spoke on teacher militancy and educational reform in Victoria, illuminating some of the complexities of a situation where more than one teacher union was operating. He examined some of the implications of social and economic pressures forcing changes in the curriculum.

The last session drew together several points of view on the theme of the conference. A general discussion, involving many speakers, covered future problems and the theoretical and practical tasks facing those working for radical change in education.

Summing up, Sam Bowles said that any successful movement for radical educational reform could not be conceived in isolation from other parts of society; it must have a clear understanding of the relationship between the schools and the economy; and above all, it must be grounded in a realistic political consciousness.

And that is what RED G, and this magazine, are all about.

Square Pegs in Square Holes

THE FRASER Government has taken a first step towards shaking up and shaking out schools, colleges, and universities so that they more effectively service the ailing capitalist economy.

A small "expert" group is to be set up to review the education system and draw up planning guidelines until the end of the century. So that Australian capitalism can hit the year 2000 in good shape, special attention is to be paid to the relationship between the educational system and the labor market. Of course this relationship is of fundamental importance, and the neglect of it during the term of the Labor Government reflected the ideological blind spot of many liberal democrats in their attempts to equalize educational opportunity and social and economic outcomes.

The days of Karmel and McKinnon Reports are over. There is no mention of equality in Fraser's terms of reference for the forthcoming inquiry, though most of them are dressed up in rhetoric to make them sound unexceptionable (needs of special groups like the handicapped, ethnic groups, aboriginals and women; general community involvement.) At least this rhetoric implies a commitment from the present government to face some of the problems as they really are, for all that that's worth.

Bowles' challenge to radicals, to confront the issue of vocational education, is now an immediate and pressing one. It is now the educational issue in fighting Fraser.

The inquiry is instructed to take as given and not consider in detail the arrangements for funding and co-ordinating post-secondary education agreed between the State and Commonwealth governments "except insofar as such consideration is essential to the main theme".

Mr Fraser speaks through the Budget

THE political strategy embodied in the Lynch Budget could be described as "low-profile economic management"; i.e. the Budget avoids obvious cuts, except perhaps in minority areas.

In spite of a 15.3% increase in educational spending, an inflation, rate of 13.2% reduces the real growth rate to 2.1%, virtually no increase at all. A rough estimate of the expenditures required to maintain standards in 1976-77 gives a combined total of $2,409.4m. The corresponding figure in the Lynch budget is $1,691.2m. This represents a shortfall for the

News cont.

Advanced Education, Technical and Further Education, Schools) of $718.2m, or 29.8%, on their recommendations.

A major change in emphasis is planned in the tertiary sector. To achieve a "balanced" development, university intake and building programs will be frozen at the present level, while enrolment of CAEs will be increased by 10% and technical colleges will get 5% more funds next year. Yet all the education commissions have claimed that they cannot meet the government's guidelines without dropping their standards. The Universities Commission reports that, in 1979, real operating resources per student will be 3% below their present level. However, the loudest cry comes from the Technical and Further Education Commission, which claims that the technical colleges are so far behind the universities and CAEs that they need 6,000 more student places than the government guidelines permit. The Fraser government's increased emphasis on vocational training appears to have a greater reality on paper than in practice.

The difference between the budget and the Schools Commission report is even more eloquent. The percentage shortfalls from the recommendations of the 1975 report are as follows: disadvantaged schools, 8.1%; special education, 24.8%; services and development, 47.9%; special projects, 64.9%. On the other hand, funding for non-government schools has been increased by 24%, while the increase for government schools was less than half that — 11.48%. Is this what Fraser sees as funding on a needs basis?

Strike at Sydney University

THE struggle at Sydney University goes on. A meeting of eight hundred staff and students voted for a university-wide strike, called by the Movement for Political Economy, to begin immediately. That was on July 14th. Within days, thousands more staff and students had joined them.

The immediate cause of the strike was the vice-chancellor's decision not to establish a political economy unit and to suspend three students who had taken part in a demonstration the week before. This decision was a direct rejection of the advice of the academic board (a staff-student body), and was the latest in a series of oppressive moves against the political economy movement in the university.

In 1971, two staff members favoring the introduction of political economy courses were not reappointed to the department, and two more staff involved in political economy were lost in 1975-76. None of these four has been replaced, and so the effective teaching capacity of the department has been weakened. On top of this, Ted Wheelwright failed to get the third chair in economics last year, despite the fact that he is one of Australia's leading teachers in the field and the obvious choice for the job.

Why did the vice-chancellor so high-handedly ignore the wishes of the university community and the force of changing times? Since he is a neo-classical economist, who cannot be unaware of the growing popularity and strength of political economy overseas, we must assume that he feels threatened by this new discipline, which is widely regarded as more relevant to present-day society than his own background is. He appears to be safeguarding the future of classical economics whether the subject is useful or not.

However, the strikes did not achieve its immediate aims. A Political Economy Unit has not been established, and the fate of the suspended students is still uncertain. Yet it did achieve positive results. Firstly, it generalized specific issues related to the political economy struggle by bringing to the surface the hidden patterns of power which govern the whole university. Secondly, the large number of telegrams received from trade unions in support of the strike demonstrated how clearly these bodies perceive that they largely bear the brunt of conservative economic theories. Union groups and political economy people in the university have established a basis for an alliance in future struggles, and will work together for change.

Vocational Training in Australia?

FOR MANY Australian school leavers, the prospect of completing their schooling this year simply means years of floating free on the job market — not the sort of "freedom" they had envisaged. This trend had been observable for some time, but is much more so since the recession.

Many simply complete sixth form because no work is available, and will apply for a tertiary course for the same reason — any tertiary course. Passing time in tertiary institutions is simply a thinly-disguised form of unemployment which adds nothing to their marketable job skills.

According to Mr Peter Kirby (Department of Employment and Industrial Relations), the problems will get worse for young people because untrained school leavers will get very little consideration from employers. Compared with other industrial countries, Australia provides very little vocational training, and that which is provided bears an erratic relation to the job market.

Clearly, there is a strong case for the provision of increased vocational training for young people, not only at the tertiary level but also in the secondary schools. The present budget is moving in that direction, with a higher proportion of funds going to technical colleges and CAEs than previously; and the long-promised Commission into Education seems to be materializing.

But is this enough? Even if the traditional commitment to a life of work or to one's "profession" is eroded by the present economic climate, greater flexibility of marketable job skills is a necessity for sheer survival in the uncertain future. In view of this, we should be thinking in terms of training people in multiple job skills, of lifelong retraining, and of training programs which will produce a flexible, adaptable labor force.

RED Reading

Defrosting The American Dream

Schooling in Capitalist America: Educational Reform and the Contradictions of Economic Life by Sam Bowles and Herb Gintis. NY, Basic Books, 1976. US$13.95. (To be published in Australia by Routledge and Kegan Paul late in 1976.)

Schooling in Capitalist America is one of the most important books on education published this century, for in their profoundly original analysis of the economics of education Bowles and Gintis demolish both the reactionary prescriptions of conservatives and the pious aspirations of liberal reformers.

In essence, they provide a radical political economy of education in capitalist societies. While their empirical evidence and historical description focus on the United States rather than on "America" as a whole, Bowles and Gintis thesis is applicable to all capitalist economies.

Indeed, the fundamental challenge confronting Australian radical educators today is the formulation of a political economy of Australian education. *Schooling in Capitalist America* provides an admirable model for this task.

Reflecting on the conservative backlash to liberal reforms of the 1960s, the authors remark that the present educational climate is one of inertial pessimism. It is not a healthy conservatism founded on an affirmation of traditional values, but a rheumy loss of nerve, which is a product of dashed hopes. Liberal reforms, they add, have been reduced to a program of band-aid remedies whose most eloquent ideal is to make do with the inevitable.

The joint work of Bowles and Gintis began in 1968 out of a shared frustration at the mass of contradictory evidence on educational reform. In bringing to bear the theoretical, empirical and historical findings of social science on the problems of education, they have been influenced by a single, overarching preconception: the vision of schools which promote economic equality and positive human development.

What have been their findings? Firstly, that liberal strategies for achieving economic equality via education have been based on a misconception, for in the US the education system has never been a potent force for such equality. Bowles and Gintis have found that, despite a vast increase in college enrolments, the substantial equalization of educational attainment over the years has not led measurably to an equalization of income among individuals.

Secondly, the failure of reform cannot be attributed to inequalities among individuals in IQ or other measured cognitive capacities, whether of genetic or environmental origin. The authors argue that the bitter debate over the heritability of intelligence, recently resurrected by Jensen and Herrnstein, is quite misplaced. They suggest that, for the vast majority of people, economic success is only tenuously related to IQ, although it is strongly dependent on race and sex.

Thirdly, the free school movement and related efforts to make education more conducive to full human development have assumed the present school system is a product of mindless irrationality on the part of teachers, administrators and parents. Bowles and Gintis believe that the structure of educational experience is admirably suited to nurturing attitudes and behavior consonant with participation in the labor force. To support this contention, they have discovered a statistically verifiable congruence between personality traits required for proper job performance and those which receive high grades in the classroom.

Central to an understanding of the political functioning of education is the capitalist economy itself, whose primary motivating force is the employer's quest for profit. Capitalist production, the authors maintain, is not simply a technical process; it is also a social one. Workers are neither machines nor commodities, but human beings who participate in production with the aim of satisfying their personal and social needs.

From this standpoint, Bowles and Gintis see education in the US as performing a dual role: on the one hand, it imparts technical social skills amd appropriate motivations, which increase the productive capacity of workers; on the other hand, education defuses and depoliticizes the potentially explosive class relations inherent in capitalist production.

In short, *Schooling in Capitalist America* suggests that movements for educational reform have faltered through refusing to call into question the basic structure of power and property in economic life. The authors assert that the democratization of economic relationships is basic to any reform.

This means social ownership, democratic and participatory control of the production process by workers, equal sharing of socially necessary labor by all, progressive equalization of incomes, and destruction of hierarchical economic relationships. Such a program is of course socialism, conceived of as an extension of democracy from the narrowly political to the economic realm.

Bowles and Gintis are optimistic about the possibility of revolutionary transformation of both educational and economic conditions in the United States. Their view is that progress derives from a blending of reason and struggle. They write:

> *A revolutionary transformation of social life will not simply happen through piecemeal change. Rather we believe it will occur only as the result of prolonged struggle based on hope, and a total vision of a qualitatively new society, waged by those social classes and groups who stand to benefit from the new era. (p.17)*

Schooling in Capitalist America is a welcome, and long-awaited, step in that long march.

Bob Mackie

Classrooms of Resistance

Classrooms of Resistance compiled by Chris Searle, Writers and Readers Publishing Co-operative, 14 Talacre Rd., London NW3. $2.70

USING THE poems and compositions of working-class children, Searle provides us with an insight into the mentality and society of London's East End and into the nature of learning as well.

Some experience of working-class life would be a handy qualification for understanding the book fully, but it is not difficult to read. As a committed socialist teacher, Searle decided to use

Reviews cont

as the basis for all his teaching the one thing all his students shared, and he with them: their social class.

He was well placed to employ this method, because he taught several classes of junior English, where it was already accepted that compositions and assignments were the forms of work. So he took English out of the classroom, and into the community. He encouraged students aged from eleven to thirteen to write about the things which mattered to them.

He does not tell us that he adapted the methods of Freire to an urban setting (although he did just that), because it would mean less than the words of dockland youngsters expressing their feelings. Those feelings were exemplified when an old warehouse was replaced by a luxury motel, blasting a hole in the life of the community, and they were essentially a class response.

In later assignments, the young authors of the book extend their knowledge of the struggle in daily life to express solidarity with local workers, and then with workers fighting for freedom and justice throughout the world. From support for school cleaners against a government which is vaguely understood to be a tool of the ruling class, the students go on to compare this struggle with that in Chile, or South Africa. In one extraordinary composition, a student imagined the Chilean coup taking place in England. The opposition to police, government and the rich is so deep-rooted as to be almost instinctive.

The basic principle of *Classrooms of Resistance* is to be found in the conditions in which the children live, in the hovels of Stepney and Wapping, between the factories and the docks. As an extreme proletarian community, the East End demonstrates the notion that material circumstances determine consciousness. The ideas in the book did not come from any teacher; they came from the environment. And the role of the teacher was not to inculcate an ideology but to extend the kids' consciousness from those narrow streets out into the wide world.

Searle's importance and effectiveness as a teacher can be gauged from the fact that after the publication of an earlier book, *Stepney Words*, the school board sacked him. Seven hundred students immediately struck in support of him and eventually he defeated the board. This personal battle was entirely in character with his work, for in it he involved himself in struggle, understanding that struggle is the great educator.

The setting of this book is a particular one, but its significance for us in Australia is obvious. Poverty, proletarian solidarity and class consciousness are experienced by many. *Classrooms of Resistance* will help socialist teachers everywhere to recognize that, alongside workers in trade unions, they have to develop that consciousness and solidarity.

How Much Can We Boast IQ?

The New Assault on Equality: IQ and Social Stratification Alan Gartner, Colin Greer and Frank Riessman (eds). Harper and Row, New York, 1974. $2.35

The publishers of the American journal *Social Policy* are to be congratulated for drawing together in this book the best of that magazine's essays on IQ.

For few areas of educational controversy has there been such lingering infatuation as for that surrounding intellingence tests. During the early part of this century debates over IQ stagnates over the relative claims of heredity and environment as determiners of intelligence.

The literature was saturated with examinations of Spearman's "g" factor, Cyril Burt's twin studies, to say nothing of Terman, Binet and Thorndike. More recently Arthur Jensen, Richard Herrnstein and Hans Eysenck have reopened the dormant can of worms. It is principally with the contentions of these later writers that contributors to *The New Assault on Equality* are concerned.

When viewed as a whole the eight essays represent a devastating assault on the Jensen-Herrnstein-Eysenck position.

Leading protagonists in this demolition job are, not surprisingly, Sam Bowles, Herb Gintis and Noam Chomsky. The classic paper of Bowles and Gintis, "IQ in the US Class Structure" quite properly occupies pride of place.

As the editors remark, this presents a powerful and persuasive argument about the correspondence between the social relations of the school and the world of work. If the main input of the school is attitudinal rather than cognitive, as Bowles and Gintis suggest, then this must be the jumping off place for social analysis and social action.

Indeed their paper convincingly demonstrates that IQ is only marginally related to economic success. By far the most important determiners of economic attainment are family background, income level, race and sex. So when IQ is perceived in class terms the furore over heredity and environment is seen to be not only misplaced, but irrelevant.

Noam Chomsky's critique of Richard Herrnstein's *Atlantic Monthly* (Sept. 1971) article, "IQ", neatly uncovers its covert fallacy.

Chomsky points to the ideological commitment implicit in Herrnstein's avowal of an hereditary meritocracy. If society could be organised on the socialist principle of from each according to his ability and to each according to his needs, then Herrnstein's stress on a meritocratic IQ collapses.

Furthermore, as Chomsky acidly remarks, the assumption that people will only work for wealth and power is not only degrading and brutal, but central to capitalist ideology, behaviorism, and Herrnstein.

Chomsky concludes that possible correlation between IQ and skin color is of no greater scientific interest than a correlation between height and eye color. What is significant though, is why psycologists want to undertake such research. Why indeed!

The remaining contributors develop various facets of the IQ argument. Ross Evans, for instance, considers the racist nature of many intelligence tests in "Psychology's White Face". Jerome Kagan's "What is Intelligence?" contends that the concept of intelligence is theoretically misleading.

He agrees with Erich Fromm that IQ tests really measure speed of mental adaptability, rather than one's ability to handle real-life problems requiring concentration and involvement.

George Purvin's chapter, "Intro to Herrnstein 101" describes in graphic detail what it was like to be a student in Herrnstein's Harvard classes. Purvin's account of his own attempts to raise the consciousness of his fellow students to what Herrnstein was saying makes harrowing reading.

Purvin charges the academic community with guilt by silence for not speaking out against the Social Darwinism of Jensen, Eysenck and Herrnstein.

So much can we boast IQ? Not very much, for if *The New Assault on Equality* is correct then the whole notion of IQ testing should be revamped in terms of its social, political and class connotations in capitalist societies. Defenders of hereditary, racist meritocracies only emerge when forces of reaction are on the march.

Such a time is now, and *The New Assault on Equality* thus becomes an essential weapon in the ideological struggle over IQ.

Bob Mackie

RADICAL EDUCATION DOSSIER (RED) is produced and published three times a year by the Radical Education Group (RED G). RED G is a group of socialist activists with concern for education. As a member of RED G, you:

- will receive a monthly newsletter
- can participate in study groups
- can benefit from support groups
- can use the varied resource centres being set up
- can attend all business meetings
- can participate in all group activities

and of course you will be a member of a growing collective seeking to establish socialistic education in Australia.

Next Issue- RED 2 -contribute

RED 2 WILL APPEAR IN APRIL 1977.
In RED 2; Gintis on deschooling.

RED wants your contributions:

- articles up to 5000 words, typed, double spaced.
- commentaries and information items up to 1000 words
- book reviews, news of publications
- letters, notices, contacts, news, photographs, cartoons, poems .....

Send them to:

RED Editorial Collective
10 Reuss St,
Glebe, 2037

Copy for RED 2 is needed by the first week in February 1977

Subscribe to RED

Complete, clip and mail this form to: 10 Reuss St, Glebe, NSW, 2037, making cheques payable to THE RADICAL EDUCATION GROUP

Please enter my subscription to Radical Education Dossier for 1977 (3 issues)

Name .....

Address for Delivery .....

..... **Postcode** .....

Enclosed please find cheque etc for $2.40 ($2.60 interstate; libraries $5.00)

As well as Radical Education Dossier, I am also interested in membership of RED G. Please send me details on the group's activities and my nearest contact.

YES ☐

NO ☐