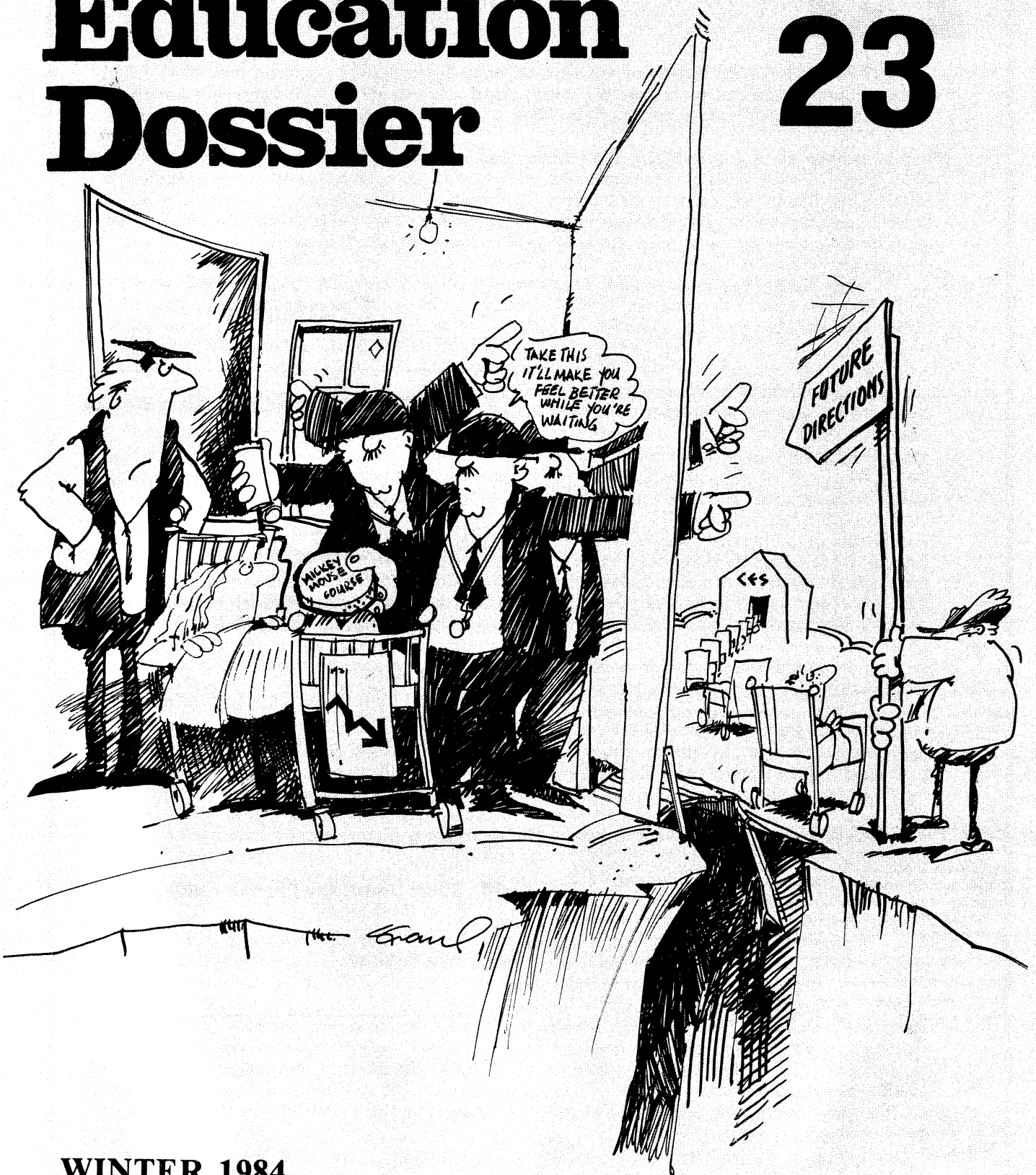


# Radical Education Dossier

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WINTER 1984

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## RADICAL EDUCATION DOSSIER

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*Radical Education Dossier* is produced by a group of teachers, students and university staff working to bring about democratic and socially progressive change in Australian schooling, as part of a broad political movement towards socialism in Australia. The magazine aims to present a socialist analysis of a wide range of theoretical and practical issues in education and is not affiliated with any political party.

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# What's in a Name?

We have been agonising for months over whether or not to change the name of the Dossier. There is ambivalence towards the complex issues raised. Concern about 'selling out' and nostalgia for tradition confront conviction about talking good sense to more people in the changed social conditions of the 1980's.

Our discussions have shifted ground but underpinning the various issues are a number of key questions. First, what is the function of a popular left magazine like the Dossier? Second, who is the readership and what changes have there, been or could be, in that readership? Third, what is the effect of capitalist crisis? Finally, what part can the magazine play in the present context? These questions may seem straightforward; in fact, they raise the recurring themes of the past century's socialist discourse and strategy. What is class consciousness? Who are the masses? How are they mobilised? What practices are appropriate in times of crisis, and to what end?

These fundamental debates will go in the collective. But at this stage, there are two broad issues which make it impossible for us to bow to nostalgia — the crisis and our understanding of the role of the Dossier in the crisis.

We all know about the 'recession'. Life has become very difficult for some. We also know about the 'recovery' — even though we teeter on the brink of an international financial collapse. But already, cold war winds blow and resurgent fascist groups make headlines. Already sellers of the Dossier have found people unwilling to buy a magazine labelled "Radical" or "RED". Already sellers are selective in offering the magazine, even though the content would appeal to a wide range of people. If there is a financial collapse, if the revolutionary struggles in the Third World or South Africa are successful, if "recovery" is not "just around the corner" then we must expect history to move very quickly.

If our analysis tells us anything, it is that capitalist crises require restructuring, rationalisation and increased productivity. These benign terms mean accelerated political, social and economic change and increased class exploitation. The room for individual choice and manoeuvre decreases as objective social conditions prise people out of warm, comfortable niches. Once out in the cold, where do they turn? The lines of the struggle are already being drawn, dominated by a strong and vocal Right which has appropriated popular themes and fears. But can we afford not to contest that domination when the future includes possible annihilation of humankind? Where are the Left rallying? Where are the progressive analyses which can help people see what the future entails and prepare them for that struggle?

So what should the Dossier do now — before the crunch? We believe that we must communicate with more people, not simply to increase numbers, but more importantly, to increase understanding. The Dossier speaks good sense, which can resonate with people's own good sense — embedded though it may be in contradictory consciousness. The ideological "shift to the right" has been paralleled by both a shift to the left and the mushroom growth of ideologically ambiguous New Social Movements. The progressive potential of these movements is vulnerable to fragmentation or fracturing on class lines; the people involved feel concerned and frightened. They are people for whom reality is increasingly difficult to reconcile with common sense. These are people who are asking important questions about society, the way it works and future prospects. The Dossier's good sense can speak to these people only if they come into contact with the magazine. Its name therefore should not exclude them. There is no point now, in 1984, just talking to ourselves. The Dossier, and the left more generally, must surely be battling for those on the ambiguous middle ground, particularly as the circuses of capitalist society become increasingly transparent.

In 1976 "Radical Education Dossier" was a challenge, a flag. Now perhaps it's a liability. Then, it represented optimism and certainty: we had the answers. But does it now represent foolhardy flying in the face of history? The Dossier has a part to play, but the struggle is too important to hang all we stand for on an emotive flag. Better we haul in the flag and be judged on content in which we can more adequately develop analysis, explore alternatives and allay fears which emerge from the media murk. There's just one problem — out of the infinite possibilities, what will we call the magazine?

# YOUTH UNEMPLOYMENT AND YOUNG WOMEN

Mike Presdee



*...“People may think it's exciting for the first couple of weeks but when you've been doing it since you left school it's just dead boring, you do the same thing everyday and, like, you're not meeting nobody, you're just doing housework all day long and I used to feel dirty after ... I just felt dirty ... I used to have a bath every day after doing all the housework”.*

*Lynn, 18 years.*

As the numbers of unemployed young people remains constantly high we are experiencing massive changes in Educational Policies aimed at training for work discipline that still ignores the cries from the young people existing in the twilight world suspended between school and work.

As there are profound distinctions between femininity and masculinity, women's work and men's work, and girls' and boys' subjects in school, so there are distinctions between young unemployed women and young men.

What happens when the old movement, from the abhorred child like status of the 'schoolgirl', to the entering of the more prestigious adult world of full-time waged work is blocked? How do they react to the loss of traditional women's work that brought with it the entry into the more supportive female culture which unemployment denies them? For young women the wage packet brought a degree of social and financial independence and adult status, accompanied by limited power in the home to avoid domestic work and to refuse to comply with parental restrictions on leisure time.<sup>1</sup> Unemployment breaks down this pattern of social development decaying the patterns of friendship groups formed earlier and accelerating the process of isolation in the home normally experienced by mothers and wives, but without the limited status that normally accompanies it.

Over the last 2 years I have interviewed young working class women in both Elizabeth, South Australia and Bristol in the United Kingdom. The similarities are both grave and depressing but it is here that our understanding of future education policies must begin by examining sensitively the relationship between youth cultures and unemployment. For all of them their future lives were rarely mentioned with their present energies aimed at the struggle against the isolation of unemployment exacerbated by the tendency to be absorbed into the deeper isolation of housework.

For Lynn, in East Bristol, unemployment resulted in a rapid Cinderella role as housekeeper for the whole family. The social consequence as related by her become far-reaching and deep, resulting in her leaving her family and becoming even further isolated, frightened and bewildered.

*“Well what with our Mum being at work and our Dad not being too well, it was like, get up at nine and do all the housework. I was doing it all myself, you know, I was looking after the house, you know I was doing it top to bottom not just one day of the week it was near enough every day. I'd finish all the housework at twelve then I'd go to the Careers Office till about 2.00... In the afternoon I'd sit down and prepare what we were going to have in the evening.... There were eight of us at home then and I'd have to check the whole lot to see if they wanted dinner. It was difficult.... I started to get niggly about things. I wanted to get a job. I started to back chat. They used to say, Lynn do this, just before I was going out. Things didn't work out.... Things rested on my shoulders. I feel I've degraded myself since I left school. Totally degraded myself..*

Lynn's feelings typically turn inwards. She is left totally puzzled, frozen out of the mainstream youth culture.

For Lesley in South Australia the absorption into housework had completely taken over her life too and she was now the accepted housekeeper after her mother's death. For her there was a dreadful inner depression that was suppressed by a veneer of gaiety. Throughout the interview, the longer she talked the more desperate she became as the hopelessness of her situation became apparent to both her and myself.

*“I haven't got time to go out — I've got to do the housework and cooking. Well, first of all I get up at 4.30 a.m. to get brother off to work — sometimes earlier...and go round the oval for a bit of a run, come back and get the paper from the shops, come back and do the housework — washing, ironing, dusting — just housework.”*

*Q. “Do you get paid for that?”*

*“No — I pay board. I lost me mum 3 years ago...Dad's retired now... He don't do nothing, nothing at all — stays in bed all day reading papers...”*

*“Well, I can't say anything see, it's his house — it's not my home, I can't say anything”.*

*Q. “But who says that you have to do this?”*

*“It's nobody's idea, it's just got to be done, someone's got to do it — I've got to do the housework and everything, then go out and look for a job.”*

*Q. “How long will this go on?”*

*“I'll probably have to do this for the rest of my life.”*

For most of the girls however, the notion of being 'absorbed' back into the house fails to take account of the tensions that are involved in that process for they are not 'absorbed' passively, they do not embrace the idea with delight but rather there is a struggle to find an alternative, something else to do outside the home.

It is in this struggle that the 'nothingness' they experience is situated, resulting from a failure to find real alternatives to the existing defined role of women. The question of 'nothingness' is complex; rarely did I find an empty 'nothingness' but rather activity perceived as being without meaning. But here the notion of nothingness is defined by the dominant values of a patriarchal capitalist society where almost everything that is non-productive is rendered meaninglessness and where what is valued, is endless production for profit rather than production for people. The alternatives to the home and shopping do not immediately present themselves in a culture structured in dominance, for there will always be a tendency for such cultures to control those who create it. But nevertheless, I found amongst all the group a questioning of the boundaries around them and a definite dynamic quest that illustrated their attempts to negotiate cultural structures rather than resist them.

*"It's worse being a female because I always think boys can always find something to do. Like my brother, he can always find something to do, or his friends. They fix their cars or they go and play sport or something — but sometimes I can't find anything to do!"*

*Q. "You mean you get up in the morning and there's nothing to do?"*

*"Yeah — after I've done the housework... Uh, I watch TV but I hate watching it. It's depressing... all the boys I know can find something to do... because boys, boys always have more friends than girls, boys hang around in a group but, most girls hang around, uh hang around one or two girls together —*

*"That's what angers me is, uh, you have to act like a lady, you can't go out like guys do and do this and that like they do — like going round, hanging round the shops, it's not a girl's thing".*

*(Chris, 15 years)*

And for Joan (18 years), living in a group with other unemployed young women was the beginning of a way of negotiating the existing dominance in her life.

*"Being unemployed and women brings us together... I felt a lot of pressure on me living without other females with me. There were three males here once. They wanted to do things and things I would like to have done as well but I couldn't do because I was the only female".*

*(Jean, 18 years)*

However, for most of the time these young women were well aware of the problem of being young women, searching for work in a male dominated labour force and it was this experience that was highlighting for them their position as young women. In some cases harassment at work had led directly to their unemployed state and very often misdirected anger was flung in all directions as gender barriers herded and directed them away from work.

*"Five of us left the pizza place because of him, because he started turning funny towards us, you know, touching us up an' things like that. Telling us to do this and that and we knew what our jobs were already. He was only there once a month or something like that... It was us who was running it."*

*(Sue, 18 years Bristol)*

*"I went to a CES interview not very long ago and I said I wanted to be a forest worker, I wanted to work in the pine forest — and the bloke that was interviewing me said that I had purposely chosen a male oriented occupation and I was silly to do so, I wouldn't be able to handle carrying a chain saw around a forest, I wouldn't be able to chop down a tree — he was going on like this."*

*(Barbara 17 years South Australia)*

When the anger came it found little direction and was hurled at those who are closely involved in their everyday lives — family, friends and other women.

*".... getting what I'm getting you might as well say keep it. To be honest, one day when I went down there (Social Security) I did tell them to keep it. I said you can keep your fucking money if that's all I'm getting."*

*(Jackie, Bristol)*

*"When I worked in shop-work and take-away I was really depressed doing it and when I went to the doctors he gave me tablets. I can't stay on tablets for the rest of my life. Then they stopped me sleeping so I had to go on sleeping tablets too... I was bad tempered and everything... I fought with people three times kicking over chairs an' that... I can't remember what it was about... Then I got worse... I couldn't talk about it and they sent me to the remand home, then they gave me the tablets when I was in there, 'cos I couldn't sleep, 'cos we had to go to bed at 9:30. I couldn't sleep... I took no notice of them when they said go to bed. I told the doctors and the staff... he gave me tablets as I took them two hours before going to bed... then there was a psychiatrist I had to see."*

*(Elsie, 18 years Bristol)*

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For most of the girls however, the notion of being 'absorbed' back into the house fails to take account of the tensions that are involved in that process for they are not 'absorbed' passively, they do not embrace the idea with delight but rather there is a struggle to find an alternative, something else to do outside the home.

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Elsie's counterpart in South Australia was Joan who experienced a straight-forward and rapid movement from unemployment and poverty, to the courts. She was a timid, quiet, girl who admitted —

*"I don't like mixing with people too good — not straight away anyways".*

And was escorted by two unemployed friends to the young offenders centre to give her the confidence to attend.

*"I'm here 'cos I got into trouble — shop lifting — I had to go in front of the children's panel."*

Her explanation of what had happened to her was unravelled in this way —

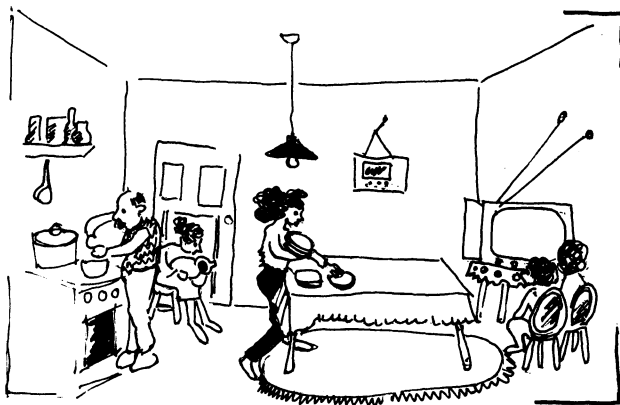
*"Um, Dad's just left us not so long ago. So Mum pays the money for the house and that, to get stuff for it and the groceries and me and my sister, we take it in turns to pay the rent — she gets a cheque every other week so I pay it one week and she pays the next, so Mum doesn't pay rent at all".*

*"I didn't do it for a real long time, I did it three or so times before I got busted. I wandered around looking at things 'an that — you liked them. I was waiting six or eight weeks for me dole to come through 'an that and I didn't have no money and I didn't like borrowing from me Mum. Stupid thing to flog things and that. At the time you wanted them so you had to get them somehow sort of thing. Oh things um earrings, tapes an' that".*

It is, for me, a very gentle explanation with no anger, little resentment but rather a puzzled account as to how, in living a 'normal' life, things could result as they did. And indeed, in all these young women there were periods of disillusionment and depression leaving a feeling of times stood still —

*"Nothing else is happening to me — in a sense you're going beyond the boredom".*

For young women who were both unemployed, single, and mothers, there was another durable myth confronting them that infers that unemployed young women are being encouraged to be promiscuous by the general welfare payments



that can be obtained by simply being, single, unemployed, and a mother. Hence we are confronted by headlines in the popular press such as

"Babes on Dole dodge by Teenagers." Daily Star (30/12/82) or the more reasoned statements by the 'quality' press such as the Observer's

"Young jobless women fall back on motherhood as an easy way to achieve status". (26/7/81).

In both cases there is a sense of taking the easy way out, or as one Liverpool consultant gynaecologist put it

"They were doing it quite deliberately to get free housing and cash handouts from the State".

We are left wondering what precisely is it that we are worried about? Is it the supposed lack of morality, or the 'easiness' of 'it' all, coupled with a strong feeling that they may have enjoyed 'it', whilst 'we' were paying their benefits from 'our' hard earned wages?

The reality of course is never so simple, and for single young mothers never so comfortable. Indeed the only comfort is that provided by the myth itself that assures the rest of Society that this group of unemployed is not only well off, but lucky. Lucky, that is, that 'we' bother to help them at all, considering it was all their own fault.

In East Bristol where unemployment amongst youth is near the 30% mark, single young unemployed young mothers with the help of community workers have formed a large young mothers group at Easton. Here nearly 70 teenage single mothers, all of whom have been unemployed, have had some contact over the last two years with the group, and as the original members are now all over 18 years old, a new group of younger mothers has been formed.

What then has been the reality of these young women in a period of their lives which normally would be seen to be a time of excitement and experiment? In this part of Bristol the illegitimacy rate amongst teenagers is certainly higher than the National figures, running at about 45% for 1980, although in some areas it is as high as 58%. But generally there is no evidence of increased promiscuity as unemployment has risen, and Colin Francome from Middlesex Polytechnic has shown that there has been no general rise in the illegitimate birth rate while there has been a fall in teenage mothers.

It is not surprising then that amongst the Easton group there is an anger and resentment that there are those in Society who still claim that unemployed young women, can and do avoid the worries of the 'dole' by simply getting pregnant. In reality these young women face a multitude of problems both in their everyday lives and as an organised group. With many of them still living with their parents unable to get separate housing, there is the emotional strain of being a daughter, a sister, and a mother, all within the same home, all within the same social group.

At the age of sixteen, at a time when other youth are experimenting with social relationships, these young women are confronted with a maze of possible relationships, that is daunting if not depressing in its magnitude. As Angela said,

"My son's nearly four now and I haven't got a place yet. At first I didn't want to move, I'd rather stay at home, but now I want to get out, and I can't."

Getting separate housing is not the easy task the 'myth' suggests:

"My social worker says — when your son gets older —right — your Mum can share a bedroom, you and your Mum — your son can have his own bedroom! — So I said to my social worker, it can't go that way 'cos my Mum likes her own privacy, she likes to have her own bedroom, — so do I".

For Rose and her eighteen month old son there has been a long struggle for her own place, but obtaining housing is not simple in times of shrinking resources, but for Rose and her group there is little hope for the dignity and status gained from being in their own home. They are trapped as dependants of others, whilst having dependants of their own. With the glitter of a modern youth culture easily within view, their reality is shared beds and rooms and continual struggles with agencies and authorities to ascertain and then assert their rights.

"My Mum and my sister have to sleep together, and me and Ruth. Because it's all women in our house the rule changes. My Mum's being asked to move for several years now, but now my Mum has to sleep with my sister."

(Group member 19 years old, daughter 3)

However, with the support of friends, relatives and the group they manage to survive in a material sense. Social survival is more difficult to attain and it is here in themselves, that the greatest scars are, resulting from the greatest struggles. These scars bear testimony to the personal struggles, the feelings of confusion and inadequacy.



"It's not like he's my son, it's like he's their son, and he's my brother — they take over too much".

(Angela)

"When I lived with my Mum we went through a stage where Ruth used to call my Mum 'Mum', and my Dad 'Daddy', and I was just like a sister in the end! They said I should be grateful to have a house to live in and don't interfere even if it is your child."

Parents in their efforts to live with the situation had the tendency to regard their daughters as immature, unable to be mothers and as a consequence appropriating the child that had been born and nurtured by their daughters. The confusion

of the young mothers is accentuated by the sudden movement from 'schoolgirl' to 'mother', exacerbated by their parents' responses. For them, instead of the more gradual move through work, engagement, marriage and then 'mother', which many of their friends make, there is a dramatic ripping away from their friends and their existing way of life and youth culture, into the blurred existence of single mother. For them there is a feeling of a lost youth, of not being part of something they should have been. Of growing old too quickly.

*"My life changed a lot when I got pregnant. I'm much more sadder than I used to be. You have to grow up quick like. You used to be able to sit and talk about nothing for hours at school. Do you remember in the dinner time you used to talk about nothing?"*

(Rose, 18 years)

Or simply the plea from Pauline

"I'd like to just act my age, but no-one will let me. I'm only nineteen!"

For these young women there is the 'living-out' of the contradictions between the vulnerability of youth and the maturity of a mother, that has resulted in massive personal struggles, the resolving of which has been helped by the strength gained from their organised group. Now that group is gradually loosening its ties with their 'helpers', who are concentrating on the formation of a new group of younger women. The original group will need financial help if they are to succeed in continuing their struggle against long-term unemployment, as their children quickly reach school age and the years of financial and emotional struggle take their toll.

The courage and abilities of these young women can only be termed impressive, but in the end no amount of group work can substitute for a job, or one's youth.

The loss of the 'wage' has profound affects on the patterns of crisis affecting youth, blocking the transition to full consumer, householder, and the status of full adult citizenship that is predicated upon the holding of a 'proper' job.<sup>2</sup> That is, a job involving the participant in the material and social reproduction of society.

What has not been appreciated by many is that, put simply, the aspiration of most youth is to enter paid employment, to work, because predominant cultural practices are based upon the buying and selling of labour and the creation of wealth through production. Those barred from this process are truly surplus population, that is surplus to the needs of a society based on a market economy. They become not only surplus to the Labour market but are excluded from the market place in general. They are not marginal to the system, they are outside it, surplus, not needed. They are in modern terms, "on ice". Growing old, maturing, but frozen out from the mainstream struggles contained in the relations of production and the social relationships created by the practices of the market economy.

It is here that the challenge facing progressive educators lies, in working towards that elusive working class education that will be truly organic to that class.<sup>3</sup> For if we fail to value large sections of young people in the everyday struggles of our society they will indeed be lost to us all.

#### FOOTNOTES:

1. See the work of Dr. Chris Griffin Birmingham CCCS and her forthcoming book "Typical Girls".

2. M. Presdee. "Education for the dole." *Society*, Vol. 19 No. 6. October 1982.

3. See "Making the difference."

Migrant 7 is a new magazine containing poems, short stories, photos, drawings, cartoons, songs etc. that relate to the experiences of migrants in Australia. We've reproduced below one of the poems that appeared in the second issue. Others also appear in this issue.

For further information contact:

Migrant 7  
Box 2430V  
G.P.O. Melbourne 3001.

I was trained  
for many years  
to become a  
bronzed Aussie/Ocker  
I've now broken  
loose of the lead  
but still,  
I sometimes forget  
and slip back  
into heel

Tony Birch

# Radical English Teaching: Towards The Cultural Dimension

Robert Lingard  
Gary MacLennan



## INTRODUCTION

We both were in the past secondary English teaches. However, we have not been for some time now. One of us presently teaches sociology, the other English method and media. What we attempt to do here is to draw on our experiences and understandings from a variety of sources to make a contribution to the debate about what is appropriate English teaching, a debate which is as old as the subject itself. We will raise issues which we think all English teachers need to confront as part of their struggle to develop an effective practice.

Our remarks are directed mainly to those secondary teachers who teach English in the large working class high schools of Australia's large cities.

Firstly, we would stress that all schooling, and in particular secondary English teaching, should be truly educational. As Connell et al (1982) have stressed, real education has connections with liberation and producing people who can take control of their own lives and own world. This might seem a rather obvious point to make, but it does seem to us that secondary schools in the name of a spurious meritocracy, have been more about competitively sorting and

selecting than about educating.

A brief example might elaborate the point without belabouring it. One of us participates in a school-based program with trainee High School English teachers. All first year students at the High School in question recently were given a comprehension test on a passage about two young people visiting Stonehenge. A large percentage of the questions required 'extra-textual' knowledge for them to be answered correctly. When we spoke to the students who had done badly on the test they indicated, amongst other things, that they had never heard of Stonehenge or the Salisbury Plain, nor could they cope with the question which asked whether the passage might have come from an Australian or an English encyclopedia, simply because most had never seen an encyclopedia of any pedigree. Similarly they were marked down for thinking/guessing that the term 'double-dutch' in the passage referred to the language spoken in Holland.

When the social and cultural bias of the test was pointed out to the teachers, the most common response was that the test was a good one because it produced a good spread of results — talk about bell-shaped teachers!

In arguing that schools should truly educate we believe that English is very important, because a critical literacy is central



to being able to control one's world rather than be domesticated by it. Moreover, English is a compulsory subject for all students. The 'Skills Approach' which emphasised grammar and spelling has dominated English teaching in primary schools and in the lower streams of the secondary schools where many working class kids are concentrated. As Hand (1976) has stated, the 'Skills Approach' to reading and writing "embodies a view of language as a form without content," which, he argues "is a concept appropriate to those who will not create the content of their own working lives, but will have it supplied to them by others." Thus the 'Skills Approach' with its emphasis on reading and writing as merely mechanical skills, and its heavy emphasis on spelling and grammar, has ensured a working class which while being technically able to read, have not been literate in the sense of feeling that they had anything to say or write which was of value.

The aim of radical English teaching should be to 'turn around' this depressing end result, that is, progressive English teaching should ensure a working class who have both critical literacy and the capacity to write. We believe the working class need to become critically literate so that "they shall not be manipulated by the printed word; they need it so that they become confident users of language for their own purposes; they need it so that they can seek out those books and writing which best speak to their experience and aspirations" (Rosen, 1982:22-23).

All of this is connected with our next point which is to state explicitly what has been implied to date: English teaching is inevitably bound up with politics, particularly cultural politics. Australian society is divided economically along class lines, but it needs to be stressed that this class conflict also has an important cultural component. Further, as Connell (1983: 148) has argued: "Class is from the start a cultural fact; cultural struggle is part of the process by which people constitute class relations...." English as constructed as a school subject relates to these broader class/cultural conflicts, witness the predominance of the 'Cultural Heritage' approach in the independent schools and the 'Skills Grammar' approach in the lower streams of the state high schools. We believe that one reason for the development of the liberal/progressive 'Growth' approach to English teaching, with its key notion of relevance, was working class resistance to both the 'Cultural Heritage' and 'Skills Grammar' models.

Now there is not the space here (thankfully) to consider in any detail the high culture/popular culture debate, which has been central to English teaching at all levels. Suffice to say that the 'Cultural Heritage' approach to English teaching, whose high culture genealogy can be traced from Matthew Arnold via F R Leavis, *Scrutiny* and T S Eliot has operated in a class/cultural way in the schools. Bourdieu's work, and the most interesting study by Uldis Ozolins (1981), provide us with an insight into how this approach, while giving the appearance of neutrality, operates in a class reproduction way, effectively reproducing relations of dominance and subordination. The successful appropriation of the high culture requires a certain style which the school demands, but does not supply.

The commercial side of popular culture is saturated by the effects of class/cultural conflict. Commercial culture is contradictory in its effect, containing both hegemonic and oppositional and potentially liberatory values. The latter is true of even the most 'repressive and conservative cultural forms' (Bennett, 1983: 21).

We believe English as a subject should move in the direction of 'cultural studies' (Eagleton, 1981) and that 'readings' of Television and Film should be included. The contradictory aspects of these popular cultural forms should be one focus for study in a progressive English practice. Our view then

differs from the left Leavisite and Frankfurt school view of popular culture as a seamless, manipulative monolith.

Rather, we see commercial culture as rent with contradictions.

David Rowe (1983) has written about the independent record industry in Britain. In his paper he outlines the process of 'independent cultural production' which in our view bridges the commercial/popular dichotomy. We believe that radical English teaching for working class kids should result in a profusion of such 'independent cultural production.' A key lesson from Rowe's research is how ordinary working class people broke through the mystification surrounding the music industry and acquired the confidence to produce their own culture.

What follows draws on what has been said to date but attempts to be more specific about both reading and writing and radical English pedagogy.

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**The contradictory aspects of these popular cultural forms should be one focus for study in a progressive English practice. Our view then differs from the left Leavisite and Frankfurt school view of popular culture as a seamless, manipulative monolith.**

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## READING: HOW AND WHAT

Crucial to the reading dimension of English teaching are the questions of how and what we should get the pupils to read. Teachers have more control over the how and it is here perhaps that most progress has been made. Liberal educationalists now stress that the reader should be encouraged to respond in a variety of ways to the text. Advanced notions such as the pupil-reader as co-author are now infiltrating the system. Admittedly they are effectively blocked in those states which still have external examinations and a list of set texts with their inevitable spawn of Study Guides and Notes.

However even in such 'difficult circumstances' the teachers must encourage and legitimate a reading of the set text which is counter-hegemonic. In actual practice this would mean, to paraphrase Monty Python and the Holy Grail, "bringing class and gender into everything."

Structuralist Marxists such as Macherey and Eagleton and feminist critics such as Mulford have provided a range of techniques which can be applied usefully to even the most seemingly intractable of texts. One possible technique is of course to interrogate the structured silences or absences in the text. For example in Episode 2 of the TV adaption of *Brideshead Revisited*, the working class appear just in time to touch their forelock as Charles and Sebastian stroll hand in hand through Paradise (that is *Brideshead*) Revisited. All this at the time of the massive class tensions in Britain which were to culminate in the General Strike of 1926. The other major structured silence in the text is women for this is of course a gay male paradise, albeit disfigured by class snobbery and mysogyny. However in the fact of its gayness lies the subversive and redeeming element of the text.



*I doubt that there are many primary teachers who feel they can compete with "Sesame Street"*

A point which we would emphasise here is that the activities devised by the teacher should be designed to restore those tensions evacuated from or suppressed in the text, for example possible activities on the *Brideshead Revisited* episode would be a scene retold from the gardener's point of view or pictures, drawings, models of working class homes of the period, or a debate on the Rev. Fred Nile's reading of the text. It needs to be stressed that we are not suggesting that *Brideshead Revisited* is an appropriate 'text' for study for working class kids. Something like *Home or Six of the Best* would be more appropriate.

The question of what to read cannot be left uncontested, even though teachers may feel they have little or no control. There are however some very fundamental issues, not to mention pitfalls, at the heart of the 'what to read' debate.

Firstly, we would renounce the liberal 'copout' of answering that the pupils should read everything. There just is not time, and to answer like this is simply to deny the central fact that there is always selection. The real question is what should be the basis for the selection of the texts we will teach. A traditional answer associated with Leavisites such as Holbrook, is to answer 'good' or rather 'great' literature. This has generally begged the question of what is great and not in any way confronted the question of what is literature. The issue of artistic or literary value is a veritable minefield and fortunately perhaps space does not permit...we are aware however, that as Wolff (1983) points out there is simply no easy way to codify aesthetic value. Even the arch defender of artistic merit on the left, Peter Fuller, is driven in his debate on artistic value with Terry Eagleton to saying in effect that "I can see this Turner is a great painting because it is" (Fuller and Eagleton, 1983).

We should come clean here and admit that our own conditioning as students of English literature has made us

confused and nervous about bidding even a reluctant farewell to the notion of literary value. Still, our real sympathies are evoked and guilt feelings exorcised by George Jackson's response in his prison letters to the "timelessness" of MacBeth.

However we are clear that the notion of literary merit has been used ruthlessly against those groups marginalized by our educational process — working class people, women and blacks. In many schools pupils are still expected to tiptoe in reverential awe around the 'Great Works' and then fail to be sufficiently sensitive, ie. have the correct cultural style at exam time.

A much more useful approach to the whole question of what to read would be to follow Williams (1977) and Eagleton (1982) and abandon altogether the category of 'literature'. We should take instead as our subject the field of cultural production or cultural studies and make our selection from the whole universe of discourse. Our selection here should be based on 'relevance' not defined in terms of some abstract class and gender free universals, but in terms of "those periods, organizations and writers whose work is exemplary for us in terms of our social and political struggle today" (Mulford, 1982: 189).

It must be admitted here that the traditions and excesses of the Proletcult movement, or even worse the programs and pogroms instituted by the Zhadonovists, and in more recent times the 'Gang of Four', weigh like a nightmare in the brains of contemporary radicals. The problem is very much more complex than simply high culture/bourgeoisie and popular culture/working class dichotomies (Bennett, 1983). Nevertheless, having said that, we still would argue that working class kids should first encounter the kind of English curriculum outlined in Christopher Searle's work *Classrooms of Resistance* and *The World in a Classroom*.

the main problems facing the working class in terms of writing: "the material obstacles of time, overcrowding, fatigue, anxiety, other priorities; also the cultural problem of underrating yourself; the lack of acceptability of what you are capable of or want to write; language snobbery, and more serious oppression of your language and thought; disbelief by the gate keepers of the published culture; (and) the tourist approach to poverty and working class life."

## FROM WRITING TO CULTURAL PRODUCTION

There has been a veritable explosion of interest in the field of writing in schools. Critical advances have been made through the work of Donald Graves and his populariser here, R D Walshe. Central to their approach has been the encouragement of the publication of writing for real purposes, to real audiences in a variety of 'appropriate' forms. We endorse much of this approach, but feel what is missing is any understanding of the difficulties working class people have with writing.

Such programs assume that their proposals are valid for both genders and for all times, classes and places. Because the specific problems of the working class are not directly addressed, such projects become yet another vehicle for middle class excellence.

What then are the specific problems of the working class kids in English classes and how would we like them addressed? Well, for us, a real breakthrough lies in the direction pioneered by the Federation of Worker Writers and Community Publishers in England. Morley and Warpole (1982) list as the main problems facing the working class in terms of writing: "the material obstacles of time, overcrowding, fatigue, anxiety, other priorities; also the cultural problem of underrating yourself; the lack of acceptability of what you are capable of or want to write; language snobbery, and more serious oppression of your language and thought; disbelief by the gate keepers of the published culture; (and) the tourist approach to poverty and working class life. (Morley Warpole, 1982:11).

There is no solution for many of the above, outside of a socialist society. But the left is slow and very painfully beginning to realise that we cannot sit around waiting for the first time careless rupture provided by a revolution! We must anticipate the socialist society as best we can and we would argue that the F.W.W.C.P. has provided a model with its emphasis on reading, understanding, supporting, answering, propagating and building into culture the writings of its working class members. Similar experiments have been mounted from time to time in Australia, but as yet no mass movement exists. It is a very important task for radical teachers to contribute as best they can to building such a movement.

We would stress that we are arguing that English teachers must see their work as linked to the attempt to build a progressive working class culture. The teacher must emphasise and facilitate, not just critical reading and writing, but full scale cultural production in a variety of modes.



There is a need for a radical pedagogy which demystifies the processes of reading and writing. In a much neglected work Ira Shor shows how he used Freirean collaborative teaching methods to help the open admission students of New York City University. Warpole and Morley (1982) outline similar techniques: "as the movement developed we learned how to work with writers at every stage of making the book. Either in dialogue or in a wider group or in team work, interventions were made, passages were re-written, re-taped, bits deleted, additions asked for ... then the making of the pages themselves, the choice of type, the placing of the pictures, the search for new pictures beyond the writer's own family album, the lettering at the start of each part of chapter, the design of the cover, the price, what else should be said in the book other than the author's main text (about the group and the Federation by way of introduction, or invitation for further submissions)...". It is work along these lines that we are advocating in working class schools. Our pedagogy must break down the classroom barriers to writing, totally abandoning anything akin to a 'Skills Grammar' approach is central here. Students must be encouraged to write and given very frequent opportunities to do so in collaboration with their classmates. One of the things that strikes us about 'traditional' English teaching is how little writing kids actually do.

Finally lest it should be thought that we are advocating a latter day revival of the Proletcult movement, we would **emphasize again that for us one ideal model is provided by the working class club in 19th Century Britain which encouraged working class cultural production, but also the reading of Shakespeare, Byron and Shelley.** But it seems clear to us that to get to that stage we may have to privilege working class production and concentrate on the consumption and production of those texts directly related to the struggles of the working class.

## CONCLUSION:

We have left a lot unsaid; for example, we have not addressed the class and language question. We have also studiously avoided the question of the cultural dependency of Australia and how this might be addressed in radical English teaching. Our main concern has been to emphasise the need for teachers of working class kids to transcend the liberal 'Growth Model' and move towards a truly liberatory education for working class kids.

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# Future Directions in N.S.W.

John Poulos



In June of this year, the on-going saga about restructuring secondary schooling in NSW reached yet another stage when Swan and McKinnon produced their final report, *Future Directions of Secondary Education: a Report*. An article by Bob Waits, elsewhere in this issue, outlines the developments which have led to the release of the document. The Minister of Education intends to introduce legislation to implement the recommendations early in 1985. In the following article, John Poulos comments critically on some major implications.

The Swan-McKinnon final report on *The Future Directions of Secondary Education* is probably the best example of how a bureaucracy can incorporate, not only terminology, but criticism of any kind and still be in a position of not having altered its initial position one iota. This will become clear when we look at a number of weaknesses in the report.

## Why ask for a blank cheque?

The reports major recommendation (recommendation 2) is that a statutory Board of Secondary Education should replace the current Secondary Schools Board (responsible for year 7-8) and the Board of Senior Schools Studies (responsible for years 11 and 12). It further recommends (recommendation 3) that the new Board have authority to determine the nature of the curriculum. The current two Boards, however, have already drawn up their curriculum plans. This became apparent last year when some of these plans became known and included a slashing of the core curriculum and the redefining of subject disciplines as areas of study, eg. English, was to become communication, where students were to do 8 semesters of which only years 7-8 were to be compulsory board requirements. Science, Mathematics and Social Science were also destined to be reduced. The reaction to such reductions was immediate and accompanied by a disbelief that the Junior Board could consider such proposals.

The Department's response was to remove the necessity of having to account to anyone for what they do, or plan to do — hence recommendation 3 in which a mandate for absolute power is requested. There are profound resource implications in this blank cheque approach. If the government, via the department and the board, doesn't articulate minimum requirements then there are no minimum resource guarantees. Of course, this is exactly what the Department and the government want. Why should they have to provide science teachers for 4 consecutive years when other arrangements are possible and less resource expensive?

Their view is expressed in terms of more flexibility for the administration, particularly with the falling enrolments problems in the primary schools about to flow over to the secondary area.

## Core Curriculum

We are further reassured that our analysis is correct when the report questions the usefulness of the term core curriculum.

"In our view the main, or perhaps only sense in which it is useful to use the term core is in reference to desirable educational outcomes" (paragraph 4.8)

Leaving the curriculum totally in the hands of the Board would leave us with a group of people who believe that the concept of a core has lost its usefulness. Switching to the question of outcomes without discussing the processes and resources that produce favourable outcomes, becomes rhetoric. The core, if any, is reduced to mere basic skills (paragraph 4.1 & 4.5)

## Building blocks:

Knowledge is to be packaged into capsules. Children are to be presented with learning blocks, many of which are not part of any sequential development, but merely a unit of say, the history of the goldrush, which could be all the history a student ever studies. The

'goldrush era' is not something which is developmental and takes its place in an historical context but as an isolated Building Block or semester unit.

## Lateral options:

The McGowan Report mainly came under attack for the way in which it proposed to force students via the failure and repetition mechanisms into lateral options on alternative stream courses such as consumer mathematics. The Swan-McKinnon Report has incorporated that criticism not by dropping such recommendations but masking the process by dropping the terminology. What we get now is short statements such as lateral options, short courses enrichment for talented pupils or catch up courses (for drop outs and failures) (paragraph 4.16 iii)

## Composite Classes

The very thing that plagued the primary and infants schools — composite classes based on pressures from falling enrolments: are now advocated for secondary schools. This, of course, is still in line with the McGowan recommendations to end LOCK-STEP-PROGRESSION. We are now offered in the Swan-McKinnon Report within-and-cross grade teaching to accomplish lateral options. The staffing formula will ensure that 30 students will end up in consumer maths.

## Subject areas

Subject areas are clearly under attack in the Swan-McKinnon proposals. It is not until we reach the senior years that the idea of specialist teacher is articulated and even here it is stated as "may have several specialist teachers". We will have courses broken up with mandatory and optional elements (4.16). There are no guarantees that the range of options currently available will be maintained. It is quite clear that subject departments are seriously under threat by these proposals.

## Comprehensive education

Senior Highs, Regional Highs, Specialist Schools, Community Colleges are advanced in the Report (6.2, 6.5, 6.6). There has already developed the movement towards more specialist high schools. Newtown is being earmarked as a School of Arts or as some have nicknamed it the FAME high School. The dispute over Whalan High School being converted to a Senior College is far from over.

## Record & Achievements

The abolition of the School Certificate and its replacement with a record-of-achievement has profound implications for all students. Every so-called small building block will be added to a computer printout of a student's schooling. This x-ray mentality is not only

educationally unsound because of its lack of understanding about how students learn and develop through theory and practice, but is an affront to the privacy of an individual. Historically there have been advantages in confining assessments for a credential to the final years, ie., Year 10 for the school certificate and Year 12 for the HSC. The advantages were that in Years 7, 8, 9 and 11 we did not have to respond and nor did the students to the pressures for a competitive credential. Each mark awarded never became a battlefield for credentialing.

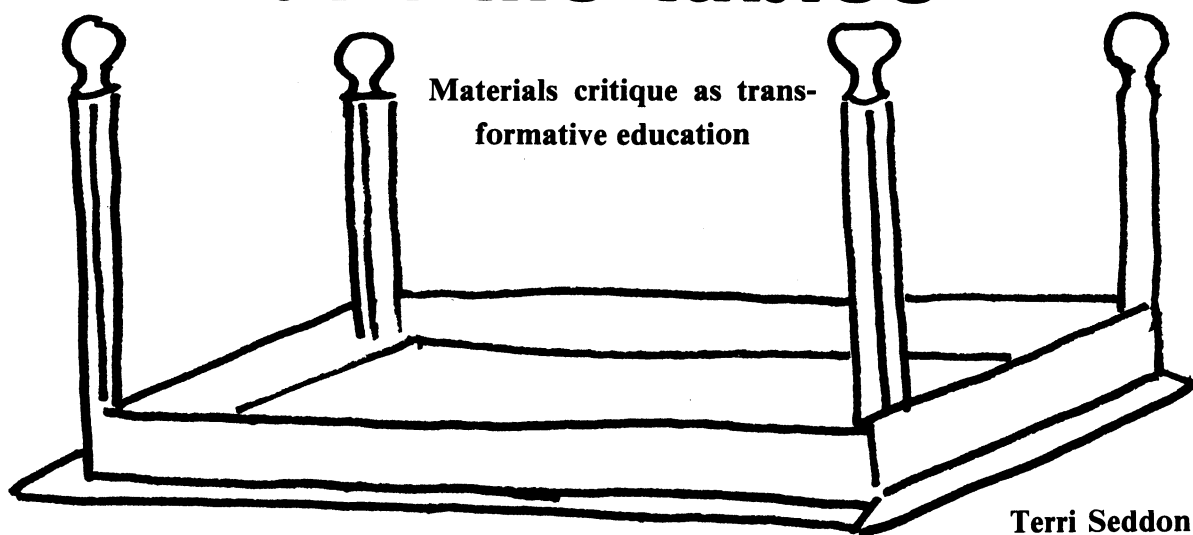
The new proposals not only add to the workload of teachers but threatens the whole relationship schooling has with its pupils. Students who develop an erratic profile in the junior school are likely to be totally discouraged by the enormous task of overcoming such a

record. The failure to hand in a particular assignment could have such far reaching consequences for a 12 or 13 year old. To say that these things will not happen is insufficient guarantee for classroom teachers and pupils.

## Conclusion

There is so much wrong with the 'Future Directions Report' that it has to be not only rejected by teachers and the community, but teachers must struggle against its implementation. In a lot of ways we are past the stage of re-debating the McGowan recommendations repackaged in 'Future Directions' because apart from the unsound educational philosophy it has profound industrial implications for teachers that failure to organise could mean setting back the education system sixty years.

# Turn the tables



Materials critique as transformative education

Terri Seddon

What kind of a world do we live in? A quick flick through the daily papers provides abundant evidence that our world is geared to the profit of the minority at the expense of the majority. But now even the profit of the few is threatened. Over 50,000 nuclear warheads stand poised to usher in a biologically fatal nuclear winter. Pollution of land, sea and air concentrates, enters food chains and returns eventually to us all. The over-exploitation of fundamental resources such as trees and soil bodes ill for future generations. As a species we, and our ecosystem face disaster.

Obviously, our present system must change if we are not to self-destruct. But equally obviously, piecemeal change even if possible in these times of crisis and superpower conflict, cannot be enough. Eco-rape and social degradation are forms of structural violence inherent in the class basis of capitalism and the pursuit of profit. The survival of humanity can *only* be ensured by moving beyond capitalism to a form of social organisation which is more socially and ecologically harmonious. This newest conservatism therefore, necessarily entails some kind of socialist transformation.

The rationality of this transformative project belies the practical difficulty of accomplishing it. The ideological fog

of modern capitalism, the alienating structures within which we live, and our individual atomisation makes it hard even to talk about transformation and socialism. But if there is to be any future, we must begin now, to grope towards both a vision of an alternative future and an appropriate praxis. In all this education is fundamental.

The education which can contribute to social transformation must do at least three things. First, it must raise consciousness of the "problems" we face and their structural roots. This will entail the acquisition of facts, an analysis which counters the fragmentation of experience by making links between seemingly discreet issues, and an ability to critically analyse and ask questions. Second, it must empower and enable action. Such empowering comes in part through increased understanding. But the social character of learning and teaching which in combination constitutes real education is also important. Countering atomisation and developing social support structures is just as important as sharpening intellectual understanding, if empowerment is to be more than a slogan. Third, education must be concerned with alternatives. Our educational practice must point towards the possibility of alternative futures. It must break out of the dreary and

unacceptable USA — USSR dichotomy and work toward a vision of a feasible socialism. But it must also counter utopianism by developing realistic intermediate steps toward social transformation on the basis of sober analysis and consideration of strategy. As Gramsci said, "Pessimism of the intellect, optimism of the will".

The rational necessity of social transformation, and the rhetoric about transformation education are easy to outline. But the social relations of schools are massive obstacles to transformative education. Obstacles also exist in the New Social Movements such as sections of the peace movement, because of their pluralism, and overconcern with numbers and respectability.

How many of us can practise, or even remember about transformative education, when we face our classes on Monday morning? How many of us can "think imaginatively of ways in which we can break the conventions of what can be spoken about and when, and define ourselves as educators and learners" (1) as we sit through one more meeting of the peace movement or P & C? Its easy to see the problems of the world and the need for education, but its often not easy to translate all that into educational practice.

Yet there are vehicles for meaningful education. One way is to educate via a critique of existing materials. Movements which work for social transformation confront the huge resources of big capital and the state which play on our atomisation, our insecurities and lack of access to information and communication channels. With our limited resources we cannot easily combat these powerful forces directly. But we can turn the tables, use their resources against them and learn from them for our own ends.

I have been looking at materials produced by the Uranium Information Centre (other materials could equally be grist in this mill) as a basis for education. Such material could easily be used in school science, English, general or social studies classes or in the peace movement. By considering the materials themselves in an internal critique, one can learn a lot about uranium, but also raise important social questions, make links, identify the strategies and techniques used to mystify issues, and develop critical and analytic skills. An external critique

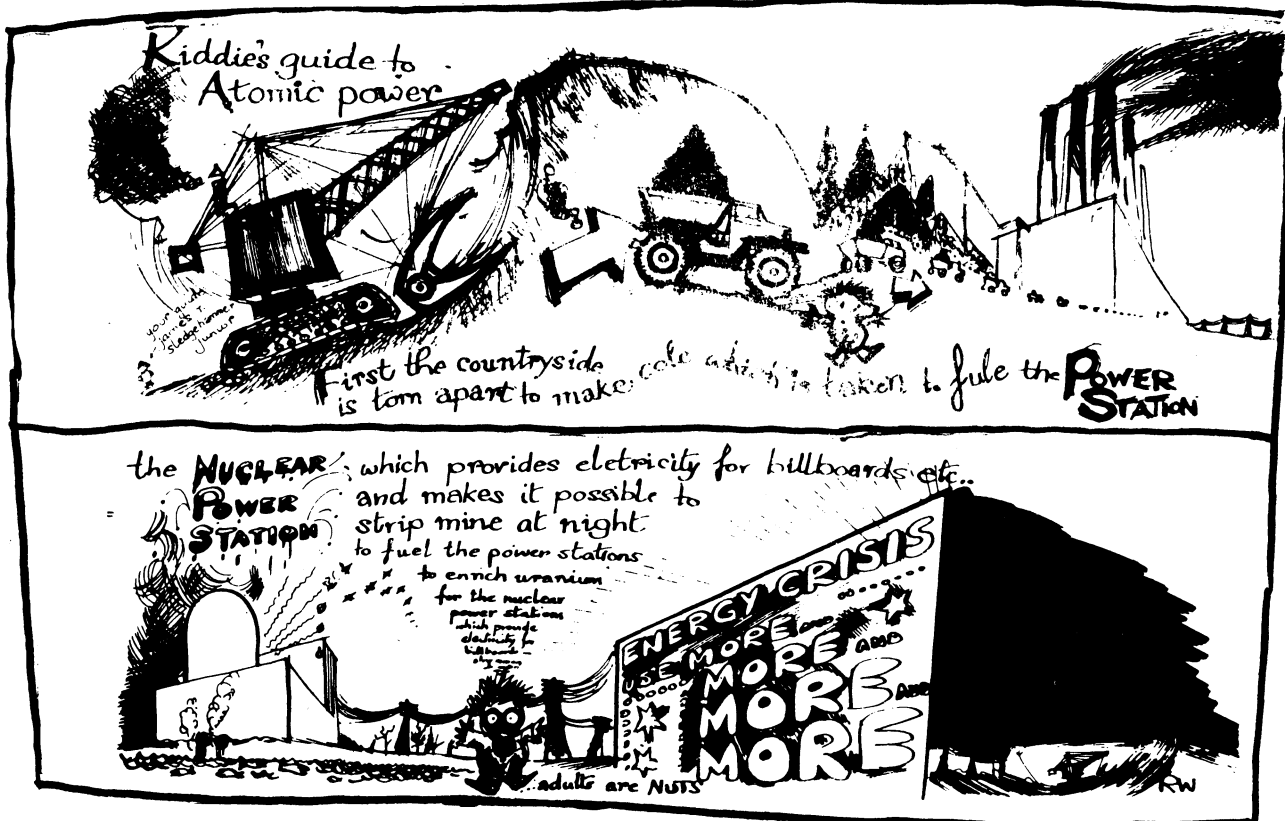
of the materials allows the identification of silences in the UIC case and raises even more questions. In the box I have outlined the nature of the UIC materials and suggested the type of discussion which could follow an of them. The sort of educational experience that might ensue from such an examination obviously depends upon the social character of the educational context, and the background of the participants. However, I think such a critique could be useful for example, in altering people to techniques of media mystification, the "hidden" messages which underly seemingly "objective" information, and the political implications of ideological interventions in public debates.

The UIC is only one of many bodies which kindly provide us with materials. By critically analysing those materials we can educate ourselves technically and politically. The materials are powerful forms of popular communication, we can learn from their techniques, use of language, metaphors and graphics, to increase the effectiveness of our own educating and communicating power. Their pseudo-scientific approach, the distortion which results from fragmented and partial disclosure of information, and their use of knowledge to confuse disempower and subordinate people, can be justly exposed as intellectually dishonest and anti-democratic. The patterns of silence in the materials provide us with clear pointers to our opponents vulnerabilities, pointers to the terrain of any public debate. But importantly, interventions of the UIC type can provide temporary focuses for school projects or progressive movement action, by concentrating the energy of those who cry, "but what can we do?"

Through our practice of teaching and learning together, we can begin to regain a sense of community, to counter atomisation — working and fearing alone — a community from which we can draw support and strength; we can begin to understand the complex links that lurk behind an apparently fragmented world; and we can begin to see that there are alternatives to a cut-throat, dog-eat-dog, suicidal society.

#### Footnotes:

1. R. Sharp, Reclaiming the agenda: Socialist directions. *Radical Education Dossier*, 21, 1984.
2. Some of these issues are discussed with suggestions for action in *Strategy Against Nuclear Power*. Canberra Friends of the Earth.



# A Critique of the UIC materials

## BACKGROUND

The Uranium Information Centre Ltd., is a Melbourne based company whose only voting members are "companies engaged in exploration, development, mining or processing uranium ores in Australia" (UIC pamphlet). Other companies can participate in the UIC, but individuals are excluded from general meetings and therefore, from voting. Decisions about the program and budget of UIC are taken by the Advisory Council, comprising a representative of each voting member of UIC and any other company members as the directors see fit.

The UIC has three main aims

- "to provide information about the development of the Australian uranium industry, the contribution it can make to world energy supplies and the benefits it will bring to Australia;

- to promote a flow of factual information on all aspects of the mining and processing of uranium, the role of nuclear energy in supplying part of the world's electricity needs and the associated nuclear fuel cycle;

- to promote an understanding of the position of nuclear energy in relation to other energy systems."

It achieves these aims by producing and distributing information through the media, schools, seminars and public meetings.

The UIC is clearly an off-shoot of the uranium industry. The effect of the UIC materials is an attempt to define the limits of the public debate over uranium; undermine critical readers' confidence and conviction; and provide ready made arguments in support of uranium mining to the conservatives and "fence-sitters" of our society. This apparently democratic intervention by the UIC in the provision of information and facts about uranium, in reality undermines democratic processes by inducing political passivity and the abdication of our democratic responsibility to experts.

## Availability

The materials are available free from the UIC (PO Box 1649N, GPO, Melbourne 3001), and I'm sure that in the interests of education they would be only too happy to send copies to you.

## What form do the materials take?

The form of the materials induces a sense of professional command and competence. The materials are high quality, brightly coloured glossy productions — as one would expect of materials funded by large mining interests. The use of colour is clever. Some bits of information in canary yellow stand out sharply, other bits in dull, dark or toning colours are far less obvious. What is highlighted reinforces notions of ordinariness, safety or universality. What is downplayed is often the crucial information about uranium! The style of the language is significant too. It is impersonal, uses simple technical terms which are laboriously defined, and provides simple explanations of scientific procedures. Although the materials have been produced for the general public, many are written at the standard of about year 7 or 8 students (12 - 13 years). The effect is to give the materials a rather paternalistic tone...experts, *who know so much* taking time to explain *the facts* to us, the general public. The danger of paternalism is of course, that we take information on trust, accept parameters set by the pamphlets, and are disarmed because we cannot compete and question on the technical terrain that is set for us.

**DISCUSSION** *This could centre on personal reactions to the materials, identification of techniques of communication and discussion of the generality and morality of the techniques.*

## What is the content of the materials?

The content is very diverse. Some pamphlets provide information about uranium itself, others focus on the peaceful uses of uranium and of its treatment before and after use. Finally some pamphlets discuss limited socio/environmental issues which can be linked beneficially, to the nuclear debate. Eg. acid rain is discussed to emphasise how clean nuclear electricity generation is compared to traditional generation methods. Behind this diversity clear themes stand out; uranium is everywhere, uranium is natural, uranium is clean, uranium is not very dangerous, uranium has many uses, uranium is a source of energy that is widely used to produce electricity. Underlying these obvious themes are assumptions including; what is

modern and technologically advanced is best; the future will be one of continued growth, with no change in the status quo; social divisions do not exist (there is some recognition of "under-developed countries"); history equals progress and all branches of technology progress equally.

These themes and assumptions are communicated through the text, graphics, and graphs by particular language, the slurring of facts, familiar metaphors, and spurious statistics and comparisons. For example, the pamphlets either ignore history or present an oversimplified picture of history as either ignore history or present an oversimplified picture of history as uniform progress. This leads to a sense of life always being as we know it now. Metaphors such as the teacher and class, failure, being overweight, living the easy life, are used to present concepts in an immediately accessible and benign way, for example, "chunk, pop" — not a well-known breakfast cereal, but a diagram of a chain reaction. Statistics and comparisons often in graphic form, are used extensively.

Eg. "Uranium averages about two parts per million of the earth's crust" (Australia's Uranium, p.1).

This is not very useful information when one considers the concentration of uranium at Roxby Downs or other mines! Ora Graph compares the level of radiation in common liquids: 2 glasses of milk — 1240 "unit", 1 glass of beer — 390 units, 3 glasses of drinking water — 2-7 units, "increase in radioactivity of a river due to a nuclear power plant — less than 1 unit". Compelling! But we don't know anything about the geographical relationship between the river and power plant or the effect of river volume and flow. And in any case, why is milk so radioactive?

**DISCUSSION:** *One could question the themes: how clean is nuclear power? how extensively is it used in the generation of electricity? What is the place of uranium in modern society? What links exist between nuclear power/weapons and various political, economic and social issues? And the assumptions: What is the relationship between capitalism and technology? What gets funded and researched? Who benefits? What is progress? Can the world afford continued economic growth? And the materials' message: what is it? How is it transmitted? What would its effect be?*

## What don't the materials say?

The UIC materials give some facts but what they don't give information on is if anything more important. There are some complete silences, while other issues are briefly mentioned but in a way which underplays their problems. These and the silences allow us to see the weak or sensitive points in the UIC/Uranium Companies' case. It is these that should form the terrain of the debate about uranium.

## a) Underplayed issues:

The link between nuclear power and nuclear weapons is mentioned but not the classic example of Canada's supply of "peaceful" nuclear technology and plutonium to India, who then developed and exploded a nuclear bomb; waste disposal is raised so it appears that Synroc has solved all our problems; little is said about the dangers of nuclear reactors in terms of the release of waste, either as direct release, eg. in the 1983 disclosures about Windscale's release of nuclear waste into a stream which ran across a popular beach, or in the event of a nuclear strike creating a truly massive 'exploding device'. The Non-proliferation Treaty is much lauded but there is no comment on the possibility of Australian uranium reaching non-signatories of the Treaty through international trade.

## b) Silences:

There is nothing about the threat which uranium mining poses to Aborigines; the capital intensive nature of uranium mining and nuclear power, so massive capital outlay will not produce many jobs; the termination of many nuclear power contracts in the USA; the pattern of supply of nuclear technology to the Third World, particularly military dictatorships; and the intrinsic character of nuclear power which perpetuates and strengthens existing structures of power and control through its centralised, monopolist, and anti-democratic form.

**DISCUSSION:** *Any or all of these issues could form the basis of a powerful discussion. But one could also consider why silences exist, and the effects and ethics of supplying only partial information.*



Dear Collective,

Eight years of continuous, regular publication of a magazine produced entirely on volunteer labour except for typesetting and printing is an achievement in itself. RED has obviously been seen to be worthwhile by the scores of contributors and collective members, and the thousands of readers, who have kept it alive. More than this, I think RED has had a real influence on Australian educational thinking, and maybe even on Australian education!

From the late 60's to the mid 70's the word "radical" attached to "education" was likely to be understood as that collection of ideas associated with so-called free schools. Anyone opening a copy of a new magazine called Radical Education Dossier in 1976 could have expected to find, e.g., metaphors about children as flowers and teachers as gardeners. At that time "progressive education" was a fairly popular alternative movement, and was thought by its adherents to be very political. The theory was that free individuals — the products of a progressive libertarian education — would go on to create a free society.

Well RED never went in for any of this sort of theory, and from its first issue made it clear that here "radical education" was going to mean something considerably more hard-headed: primarily the use of the tools of Marxism to analyse the relations between schooling and the larger political and economic forces of our time. RED intended particularly to highlight the contradictions in those relations which could provide points for intervention by socialist activists. (It is important to remember that the magazine began as the publication of an activist organisation, the now defunct Radical Education Group). For eight years RED has kept more or less on the same track, and in Australia "radical education" is seldom, if ever, now associated with hippie ideas about love and freedom.

RED's analysis has helped to educate a generation of teacher activists. These people have become influential beyond their numbers, especially in the NSW Teachers' Federation and in teacher training institutions. They have been prominent in the various struggles to defend public education (where the deschoolers may have applauded its demise) and to expose the class nature of the public — private division (despite a contrary interpretation by the political party which once claimed to represent the working class).

RED has always tried to be sufficiently readable and attractive to appeal to stressed and busy teachers. I think it has succeeded as well as is possible in this regard — after all, you can't sell Marxist theory like Coca Cola, and you can't produce The Woman's Weekly on a couple of thousand dollars!

RED has also sought to offer teachers practical help along with radical analysis, and in this it has perhaps been less consistent. The inclusion of lesson plans, teaching resources and resource lists has been a welcome, but only occasional, aspect of the magazine. Perhaps now that Australian Teacher is doing some of the other

Over recent months, the RED collective have been anguishing about changing the name of the magazine. If you read the editorial in this issue, you will see some of our concerns. More important than the simple change of name is the need to reflect more generally about our past and our future. The collective itself of course is engaged in this process, but we would like wider input from past collective members and present readers.

To begin the debate, we approached several previous collective members and asked them to write short responses to the following questions:

1. Has the Dossier lived up to its expectations? What have been its strengths and weaknesses?

1. Has the Dossier lived up to its expectations? What have been its strengths and weaknesses?  
2. In what direction should the Dossier go in the future? Is there still a need for the magazine? What theme should we be exploring?

3. What do you think about changing the name? Any suggestions?

We think the responses are valuable, and we print them in the article below. Also included are a couple of letters from readers that address the change of name issue.

**BUT WHAT DO YOU, THE READER, THINK?** We do want your views as well. How would you like the magazine to develop? We have inserted a small questionnaire into this issue of the Dossier, and we urge you to jot down your responses and post it back to us. We look forward to hearing from you!

# WHAT NEXT?

things on which RED has concentrated in the past, RED could put more emphasis on the resource area.

Finally, about the name: if the official Labor Party paper in New South Wales can call itself The Radical, I don't think RED need worry about identifying itself too far to the left!

Janet Kossy

Dear Collective,

I met my friends, Chris and Ken in the Riviera Cafe and we thought about those questions that you put to me. All three of us are experienced secondary teachers. We consider ourselves left-wing. What do we want from a radical education magazine?

We want more practical advice, knowledge and contracts. We want to read about how people have in fact manoeuvred in their schools, unions or departments. Both successful and unsuccessful tactics are of interest to us. We want to have up to date lists of funding sources,

information and resources. There is a crying need for a 'clearing house' of left-wing classroom materials in easily useable form, especially about standard traditional topics in schools.

We are aware that RED collectives have always tended to be made up of academics and Dip Ed students. These people have the time, direct interests and day to day experience to work on the magazine. Not surprisingly, their input tends to be theoretical and not tied closely enough to practical school level circumstances. All too often, active teachers don't have the time to read such articles. Nor do they have the time to write the more practical articles that we need. One way out of this dilemma is for the Red collective to become practiced at interviewing teachers and others in schools and transcribing these interviews into articles.

RED has mostly concentrated on one theme per issue. We felt this created an artificial constraint on developing themes and continuing discussion. A better general format would be one major article on a topic, smaller pieces developing this theme, and other pieces that update themes in the past or that might develop into major articles in the future.

This is not the time to think about disbanding the magazine. It's exactly in the context of the 'new McCarthyism' that such a magazine is needed.

The one great strength of RED is its continuity in 'looking at schooling differently'. We felt that this aspect should be developed most with occasional articles about the history of the magazine. As for the name, we felt it should not be changed unless the actual survival of the magazine itself was at stake. In that case, much more than the name would need to be considered.

Sam Altman.

Dear Collective,

The strength of the Dossier is that it has existed as a critique of educational theory and practice for the last 8 years. In that time it has been a focus for "left and progressive" people, it has advertised the existence of the left in education and has aided in the development of theory and action supported by theory for particular issues relating to education. It has not expressed a theory of education, but has been the vehicle through which criticism and analysis from various left and progressive viewpoints has been aired.

The Dossier is regarded by active unionists involved in education as a worthwhile and respected left publication. The magazine should continue being produced at all costs, especially in these times of massive attacks on secondary education in particular and education in general.

The major weakness of the Dossier is that it does not have a wide readership. This is not because the articles within it are extreme in their views. There have been instances where articles from the Dossier have been reprinted in "acceptable" publications. It is more that the title of the Dossier makes it unacceptable for most practicing teachers to even consider opening.

The aim of the collective should be to gain as wide an audience as possible and then expose more people to these critical views.

A further weakness is that the connections between the collective and those people active in trade unions and parent organisations are very few. It is the activists of the education trade unions and parent bodies that are defending the State school system from massive restructuring to downgrade public education. It is these bodies that are attempting to stop the massive amounts of government money going to the private school system at the cost of the State schools. It is critical that the Dossier provide analysis of these attacks; that it provide comparative studies from overseas of similar attacks and that it reveal possible strategies, if any, used elsewhere to defend and improve State education.

The Dossier must continue. The practice of selecting themes for issues seems acceptable. The name of the Dossier should be changed to make it more accessible and attempts should be taken to establish stronger ties with parent and union activists.

Peter Wilson  
Cath Cussan

continued next page.



**Dear Collective,**

RED could never have lived up to its original expectations because the broad movement towards socialism in Australia has not developed, and so the political force which it wanted to be part of has come to seem—looking back on the heady days of 1976—hopelessly unrealistic. Having said that, it has lived, which is some kind of testament to volunteer labour and sheer tenacity. It would be nice to think it occupied a place of some importance in the spectrum of Australian left thinking.

The strengths and weaknesses in RED's content have always been symptomatic of the left in general, and the academic left in particular: a socialist perspective explains the big picture better than Brand X analyses do, but is often a bit shonky in the detail. It's much easier to write a three-page global analysis of the evils of capitalism than to report on the specifics of particular educational innovations or provide useful curriculum suggestions. A small group, operating on a shoestring budget, will always have to live with that problem, while progressive curriculum innovators are likely to be re-inventing the wheel for some time to come, as Anne Junor mentioned in RED 22.

As one who is not directly involved in schools, I can't be very precise about future directions and themes—though I do think it would be useful for the magazine to continue. Most of RED's issues appeared under a

conservative federal government, and the advent of Hawke raises new questions. Labor may be less barbarous than Fraser was, but will still out poor people at the drop of an opinion poll. So the function of left groups and organs becomes more one of whistle-blowing than conducting trench-warfare (sorry about the mixed metaphor).

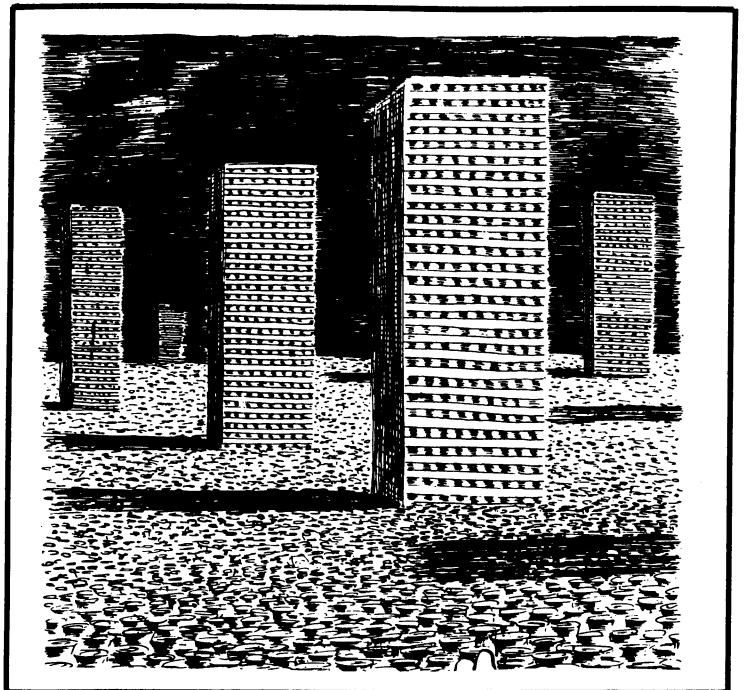
The other new element I think needs consideration is the appearance of *The Australian Teacher*, which contains a lot of similar stuff and probably has overlapping readership (and writership). With far greater resources and wider circulation, it can fight battles you might have fought if it didn't exist. Differentiate?

The topics you have worried about in recent issues—jobs, private school subsidies, relevance vs streaming, etc—seem to me the ones you should be worrying about.

Keep the name *Radical Education Dossier*. Presumably the push for change stems from a fear of alienating those who are frightened by words like 'communist' and 'radical'. The concern is understandable, but if the left is to make people who have imbibed flat-earth ideas about socialism almost with their mother's milk, and by distancing progressive forces as much as possible from the Stalinist tyranny which most people identify as communism.

Keep up the good work.  
Clift Barnard.

Driving along Elizabeth St., Richmond  
in the work truck  
we pass the high rise flats  
home for thousands of Vietnamese refugees  
comments from the crew come thick & fast  
Johnno calls it  
— a little Saigon  
Macca calls them  
— dog eating slops  
Mick says  
— most of these bitches are riddled with V.D.  
but i'd poke 'em anyway  
(the boys laugh)  
Peter says he knows as fact  
— they come out here with an arse full of gold  
Charlie, a god fearing christian, says  
— i'm no racist but we must draw the line  
And young Danny fires a barrage of bullets  
from an imaginary machine gun  
at a group of children  
waiting to cross the road  
And me  
I'm worse than any of them  
I hear this talk everyday  
and say nothing



Tony Birch

# Peace Education: Countering the Critics

John Fien

I've come across a real contradiction in my reading lately — a contradiction in the interpretation of the value of peace as an educational goal.

In a report on a peace education conference held in London on March 3, 1984, I found that the chief inspector for secondary history in Britain was urging teachers to reclaim the word "peace" from the politicians and restore it as an honourable goal of education.<sup>1</sup> I liked what he was saying and wished I had been there to hear his talk.

Then, only a few days later, I read the peace groups had "kidnapped" the word "peace" from the English language in much the same way as "gay" had been pilfered by *others*. I read on and found that teachers who are concerned to promote a consideration of peace issues in their classrooms were part of "a hidden agenda of social engineering" which was seeking to "destroy freedom", "indoctrinate rather than to teach" and was "incompatible with the constitution of a democratic society."<sup>2</sup> Since then, I have found these contradictory interpretations in the "Letters" sections of most major newspapers around Australia and, most recently, in a feature in the *National Times*<sup>3</sup>.

The conflict of interpretation in the value of seeking peace through education is an unfortunate, but perhaps inevitable result of the tension between competing ideologies — ideologies that divide national and international societies between those who seek peace through "common security" through disarmament (as the Palme<sup>4</sup> committee called its program) and those who seek peace through strength and deterrence.

On the educational level, these ideologies are reflected in the critical and conservative approaches to schooling, respectively. Conservative educators seek to defend rational self-interest and promote nationalistic loyalties through a study of the history of Australia and "Free World" achievements, victories and "great men", whereas critical educators see their political task as fostering social justice in and between groups, and their educational task as one of evoking loyalty to the global community and developing the skills and attitudes to act for just causes<sup>5</sup>. Instead of history alone, critical educators look to other disciplines, such as political economy, geography and sociology, to provide students with insights into the nature of global society, inequalities in social well-being, the arms race, North — South conflict and structural violence.



## Mounting Opposition

I came to peace education by way of development education where I had been embroiled in major debates<sup>6</sup> (and sanctions at times) over what it is professionally ethical to teach young people about North-South issues. These issued included: the historical geography of colonialism and its legacy for people today in the Third World, the role played by agribusiness transnationals and inappropriate foreign aid in maintaining global hunger, the "necessity" for oppression and torture in some Third World industrializing nations to support our standard of living, and the effects of military spending on development. The links are definitely there between development education and peace education. Maybe, I even thought I would have a more peaceful time in peace education. How wrong I was!

The forces opposed to peace education, especially in my state of Queensland are very powerful and reflect a union of social, political and educational interests. I suspect they exist in other states as well, but are kept at bay by ALP governments in Victoria, NSW, South Australia and Western Australia who are giving support to peace-minded teachers in their states. On the federal level, Hawke came to power on a platform that included a promise to spend 0.1% of the defence budget (\$4m) on peace education, and signals from Senator Ryan, CDC, and the 1985 International Year of Youth and 1985 International Year of Peace committees are encouraging on that front. But what support will peace educators have for any curriculum development materials that explore the links between uranium mining and exporting, nuclear weapons, rising international terrorism, increased nuclear tension and Australian vulnerability to nuclear attack should the conservative forces in the ALP win-out at the ALP's July National conference on the uranium mining issue?

My involvement in peace education has already been a rocky one. I've had many wonderful experiences with teachers and students, but find that some teachers have been warned by inspectors to be wary of me and that "Kelvin Grove putsch" concerned with peace education, and to keep a close eye on a geography teachers conference I am organising. Other colleagues in the "Kelvin Grove putsch" have had similar experience.

The major charge against peace educators is that we are

undermining national security by frightening students with tales of Hiroshima, and the effects of a possible nuclear war, and by encouraging students to question the nature, purpose, causes and consequences of war along with "dangerous notions" about alternative defence strategies for Australia. Accusations of "indoctrination" and "political bias" are but the stones our critics throw at us. Their motivation is a fear that the willingness and capacity of young Australians to enter the armed forces, fight overseas or at home and protect the prevailing social and economic order will be undermined and that Australia's defence alliances with the United States which protect important economic and trade interests will be jeopardised.

## Answering the Criticisms

Peace educators have defended their goals and practices by denying such charges. Our main defence has been that peace education is a much more inclusive concept than disarmament education. We have said that peace applies throughout all education, permeating all subjects for all ages of students and that it involves questions of school organization, interpersonal relationships, structural violence, human rights and environmental quality equally as much as it involves questions of conflict, war of nuclear bombs. David Hicks toured Australia in March this year and distributed his "outline map" of peace education (Figure 1) with which we were able to conceptualize nuclear and disarmament issues as only one small part of education for a peaceful world.

### EDUCATION FOR PEACE: AN OUTLINE MAP (by Dave Hicks)

#### 1. Introduction

Consideration of different approaches and theories relating to: peace, conflict, justice, welfare and ecology.

#### 2. Personal Level

Interpersonal skills and small group *relationships*. The nature and origins of *prejudice*. The problem of *violence* in contemporary society. The *aggression* debate: nature v. nurture. *Peaceful cultures* and violent cultures.

#### 3. Social Level

Generational conflict, issues to do with *age* and ageing *Race* relations and minority questions. The role of *women* in society. The debate over *animal* rights.

#### 4. Global Level

*Nationalism* and the state. The development of *war* as an institution. Issues of *development*: the North-South conflict. The *arms race*: East-West confrontation. *Flashpoints*: e.g. Northern Ireland, Middle East, Southern Africa.

#### 5. Peaceful Change

The work of the *United Nations* and its agencies. A *New International Economic Order*. *Disarmament* and alternatives to war. *Non-violent action* e.g. Gandhi, Martin Luther King. *Visions* of the future: past and present.

FIGURE 1

## Two Mistakes

I believe we have made two mistakes in adopting this style of answer to the conservative critics of peace education.

Firstly, we have been very naive in thinking conservatives would agree with us on the desirability of teaching young people about human rights, structural violence, alternative futures or any of the other themes in Figure 1.

Education about such issues constitutes a very grave threat to the entrenched position of conservatives at the head of the dominant, political, social and economic systems. Teaching about nuclear war only threatens conservatives in the long term. Teaching about structural violence and alternative forms of social organization threatens them much more immediately. Perhaps, we should be preparing our arguments and lobbying skills for the debates and struggle ahead. Fortunately, much groundwork has been prepared in the literature of global and development education and critical approaches to teaching<sup>7</sup>.

Secondly, we have not answered doubts about what we actually do teach about nuclear issues. Maybe the charges

are not worthy of a reply at times. But in the interests of public accountability and public relations in peace education it is important that we meet with our conservative critics and tell them what we do teach about the arms race and nuclear war. I am amazed by what some of these people believe, and shocked by the conjecture and lack of evidence that characterizes their descriptions of our teaching in the popular press, descriptions such as:

"Students are supplied with magazines, pamphlets, books and posters depicting in graphic detail, all the horrors of nuclear war and the results of the atom bomb on Hiroshima. Films such as *The Day After* and films of the Vietnam War are shown with close-ups of mutilated limbs and terror — stricken faces. The material and commentary has a strong political bias: it shows Western, not communist, atrocities.

During such sessions it is not uncommon for children to be physically sick, to faint or to become hysterical. The aim of the course is firstly to shock, to numb, to promote feelings of despair, guilt and hopelessness, and to create a situation where the teacher's own stance on the issues — the teacher's own ideologies — are readily acceptable<sup>8</sup>.

In Australia, we need publicly scrutinised and developed examples of curriculum packages on the arms race and nuclear issues to counter this sort of misrepresentation of the efforts of teachers. Several such packages exist in the United States, one of which is a book of ten lessons, called *Choices: A Unit on Conflict and Nuclear War*<sup>9</sup>. Figure 2 is taken from the front of the book and provides parents and community members with a description of what is being taught in the classroom and the materials and methods employed. The book was prepared by representatives of the Union for Concerned Scientists, the National Education Association and a teachers' union. We need such a coalition of support for peace education in Australia.

### OUTLINE OF THE US CURRICULUM PACKAGE. *Choices: A Unit on Conflict and Nuclear War* (9)

#### Lesson 1

Introduces students to the effects of the first atomic bomb. Students examine the reasons for studying nuclear war and see that their participation with others can help prevent nuclear war.

#### Lesson 2

Begins with an explanation of conflict. Before studying war — the most extreme form of conflict — students examine conflict on a personal level. Both sources and means of resolving conflict are explored.

#### Lesson 3

Builds on the understanding of conflict gained in the previous lesson. Communication, negotiation, and compromise are introduced as means of resolving personal and group conflict. Games help illustrate the complexity of conflict resolution.

#### Lesson 4

Takes conflict to its worst end point — nuclear war. Students study the weapons of history and recognize that nuclear warfare represents a leap beyond previous weaponry. The chemical and biological effects of nuclear weapons are introduced.

#### Lesson 5

Deals with the arms race, escalation, and the economic consequences of building nuclear weapons. A quiz on Lessons 1 through 5 is included.

#### Lesson 6

Elicits students' feelings about Soviet — US relations, while also examining national foreign policy goals. An exercise on federal budget priorities is included.

#### Lesson 7

Examines ways of reducing the risk of nuclear war among the super-powers. Several future national security options are discussed.

#### Lesson 8

Encourages students to develop their own opinions apart from the many influences in their lives.

#### Lesson 9

Emphasizes the use of imagination in considering alternative futures.

Figure 2:

Perhaps, we should use our lobbying skills and visit P. & C. meetings, Rotary, Lions and Quota club winners, PND groups and local, state and federal politicians and tell them what we are teaching about the arms race and nuclear issues. We need to enlist their endorsement and support for what we are trying to achieve for *their* children and their country's and planet's future. We need to enlist the help of local politicians, scientists, doctors and parents in preparing lesson content, resources and structure for teaching units on topics such as "Nuclear Issues for Australians", perhaps by circulating a suggested outline for the unit (See Figure 3) around the school's community and asking for co-operation and assistance. Peace education is an area in which our teaching needs to be seen to be public if we want community support.

**FIGURE 3: SUGGESTED OUTLINE FOR A TEACHING UNIT ON "Nuclear Issues for Australians" (by Dave Hicks and John Flen)**

#### 1. Super-Powers

Students will examine the perceptions, mis-perceptions and stereotypes that the USA, USSR and their allies have of each other. They will evaluate the need for "images of the enemy" to fuel the arms race.

#### 2. Arms Race

Students will learn about the arms race, both conventional and nuclear. They will examine its history, its global dimensions, the arms trade and its effects on social and economic development, especially in the Third World.

#### 3. Fuel Cycle

Students will explore the links in the nuclear fuel cycle: from uranium mining, enrichment and nuclear reactors to reprocessing, waste storage and the use of plutonium for weapons. Australian and overseas examples will be used.

#### 4. Nuclear Testing

Students will research the effects of nuclear tests on the enrichment and people in North America, USSR, Australia and the Pacific Islands.

#### 5. US Bases

Students will look at the location of America military bases in Australia, their global connections and their various functions. They will expand the scale of their study to compare USA and USSR military bases and operations worldwide. They will then weigh-up the arguments both for and against their continued presence in Australia in terms of national and global security needs.

#### 6. Hiroshima and Nagasaki

Students will examine the events that led up to the atomic bombing of Hiroshima and Nagasaki in 1945. They will study both the immediate and long term effects on Japan and the world.

#### 7. The Effects of a Possible Nuclear War

Students will research the different ports of damage that could be caused by nuclear weapons on people and the environment today. They will do this for towns in Australia and on a global scale.

#### 8. Living in a Nuclear Age

Students will discuss the psychological effects on people, especially young people, of living in a society of mounting tension and the threat of "the bomb". They will read how other people feel and contrast this with their own hopes and fears for the future.

#### 9. The Peace Process 1

Students will investigate the roles and aspirations of peace movements in Australia and overseas. The links between medical, scientific, educational, church and populist groups in the peace movement will be explored, as will its strategies, successes and failures.

#### 10. The Peace Process 2

Students will learn of international peace processes, such as disarmament conferences, the work of various United Nations bodies and the development of nuclear-free zones.

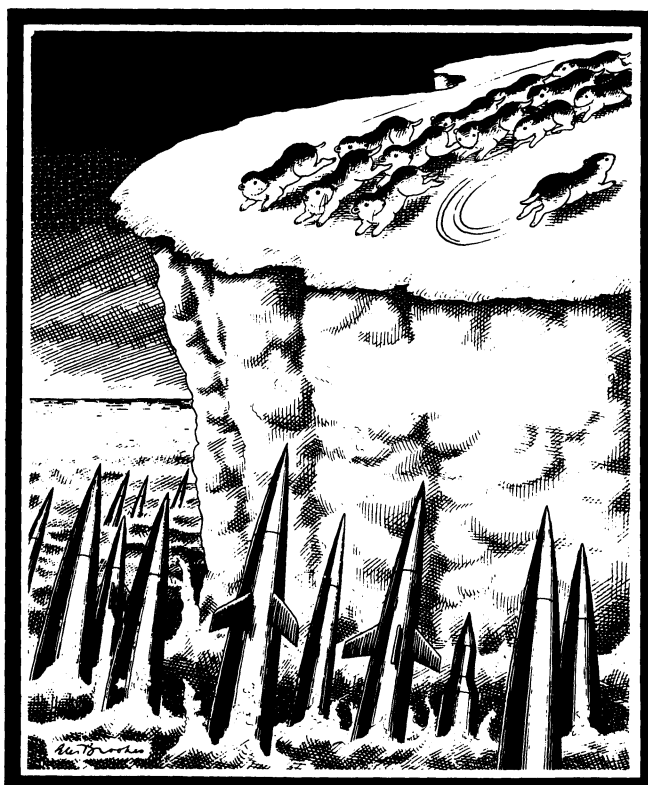
However, more important than seeking support for *what* we teach, as peace educators we need community endorsement for *how* we teach. I am more "guilty" than most people of using the "broad definition of peace education" argument in reply to our critics. I now believe a far more *professional* response is to elucidate the educational strategies we use in the classroom. Such an approach is neither evasive or defensive. Rather it directly answers the charges of bias and indoctrination by explaining the ethics and classroom skills of a trained, experienced and well read professional person.

Perhaps, three areas we could elucidate are: the *goals* of our teaching unit, the *process approach* to teaching and learning we employ and the *classroom climate* we seek to create. For

example, the *goals* of the unit on "Nuclear Issues for Australians" (Figure 3) include:

1. To air and deal with student fears, thoughts and questions about a possible nuclear war.
2. To understand why the Superpowers are in conflict and how this affects other countries such as Australia.
3. To explore the variety of alternative viewpoints on controversial issues in Australian and world society.
4. To encourage students to make informed decisions on issues and to act on them as productive citizens.
5. To value non-violent solutions to conflict and seek to maintain peace and co-operation in their personal relationships and in national and global affairs.

Do most parents and community members know what the *process approach* to learning is? In relation to peace issues,

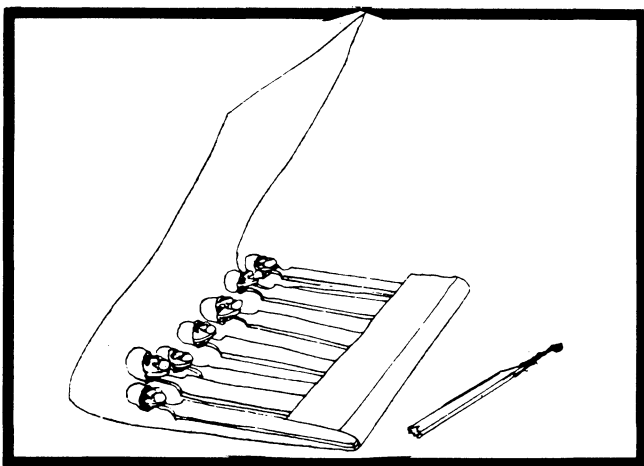


NEW INTERNATIONALIST

the process approach was well summarized in the *Final Document of the World Congress on Disarmament Education*<sup>10</sup> which described our task as to teach students *what* to think about nuclear issues but *how* to think about them, not what to value about nuclear issues, but how to analyze values and make decisions and act upon them.

Thus, we should tell the community that when we teach, we:

1. Provide students with background information in a variety of forms and give students training and opportunities to find more information.
2. Ensure that a wide range of perspectives are represented so that students see the values operating in the issues being



investigated.

3. Train and encourage students to test the information they use by requiring them to differentiate fact from opinion, investigate and verify sources, and recognize claims that are difficult to prove.
4. Ensure that students analyze the pros, cons and implications of each argument.
5. Encourage students to evaluate the arguments presented by comparing, contrasting and clarifying them.
6. Use probing questions to help students identify the deep fundamental values that underline the various arguments.
7. Encourage students to clarify and take their own values into account when evaluating others.
8. Once this is done, provide opportunities for students to choose freely *their* position on the issue.
9. Insist, however, they are able to give convincing reasons for their decisions and show evidence that they have considered the consequences and implications of their decisions.
10. Provide information, opportunities and/or encouragement to students to act on their decisions.

The process approach to teaching and learning is a professionally ethical one. Additionally, for critical educators, it can encourage the development of a critical consciousness in students and help them find their voice and take their place as informed and involved citizens.

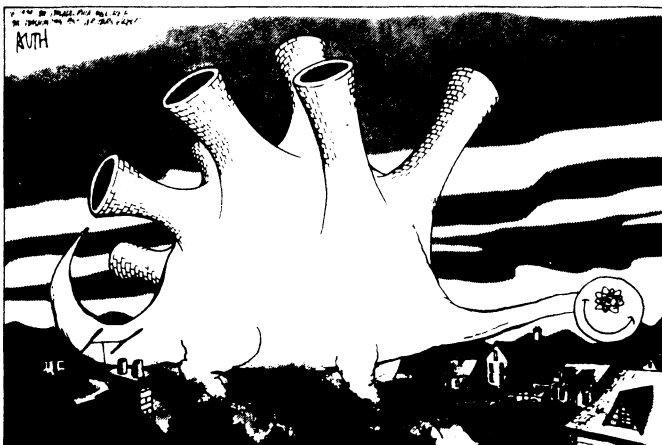
Finally, we should acknowledge that in dealing with nuclear issues we are dealing with powerful and sensitive issues — both in the community consciousness and student psyche. Psychological research in the United States, Western Europe and Australia indicates that young people are worried about the threat of nuclear war, have a sense of futurelessness and distrust adults, many of whom they blame for creating the nuclear madness and then refusing to talk about it with young people.<sup>11</sup> Peace educators should tell the community we appreciate and empathize with these concerns and are responding by a warm and supportive *classroom climate*. We do this by:

1. Encouraging students to listen to what others say, whether they agree with their statements or not.
2. Not forcing our own views and opinions on students, but responding openly and honestly when asked.
3. Asking questions that help students to clarify their own thoughts and feelings.
4. Urging students to share their feelings.
5. Affirming life-valuing and social justice principles as the criteria for evaluating alternatives and making decisions on all issues.
6. Reassuring students that they are not alone in fearing the “nuclear shadow”, and that many people, organisations and world bodies are working to create a safe and peaceful future for them.

## Conclusion:

Increased public awareness and understanding of the goals, content, process approach and classroom climate used in peace education, especially when teaching about the arms race and nuclear issues can take the ground away from under the fears and the accusations of conservative critics of peace education. While not denying the vital importance of the “broad definition of peace” approach to peace education, let us not hide behind it and evade the accusations that come to us from the powerful, but nonetheless small right-wing fringe over our teaching of nuclear matters. The groundswell of public support for the peace movement in Australia as evidenced by the 250,000 people who marched on Palm Sunday can be ours. It only awaits our going out to the public, explaining our case and it will be ours.

1. *Times Educational Supplement*, 9.3.84.
2. *The Australian*, 10.4.84 (Letter by S Francis). See also J Whitehall, “Peace Studies in the Classroom” *Quadrant*, Jan-Feb., 1984, pp. 81-86.
3. *National Times*, 8-14.6.84, pp. 13,15.
4. O. Palme, *Common Security: A Programme for Disarmament*, Pan Books, 1982.
5. D. Hutton, “Educating for Peace in Queensland Schools”, *Queensland Teachers Professional Magazine*, October, 1983, pp. 31-34.
6. See, for example, *Contemporary Issues in Geography and Education*, Vol. 1 (2) for an account of the efforts of some English geography teachers to publish materials on Third World issues along structural and dependency lines. Readers might also like to contrast the original manuscript of a book on *Alternative Approaches to Development* I prepared for a School Council project in 1983 and the deletions after it had been to the “reading group”. See also the attack on development education by B.A. Santamaria in *The Australian*, 17.4.84.
7. See, for example, D Hicks and C Townley (eds.), *Teaching World Studies: An Introduction to Global Perspectives in the Curriculum*, Longman, 1982; and I. Shore, *Critical Teaching and Everyday Life*, Boston: South End Press, 1981.
8. *The Australian*, 10.4.84 (letter by S Francis)
9. Union of Concerned Scientists, *Choices*, Washington: National Education Association, 1983.
10. *The Final Document of the World Congress on Disarmament Education*, UNESCO, 1980. Available from the Division of Human Rights and Peace, UNESCO, 7 Place de Fontenoy, Paris 75700.
11. American Psychological Association, *Psycho-Social Aspects of Nuclear Developments*, Washington: APA.



Auth. The Philadelphia Inquirer

# Just PEPper on the soup

Bob Waits



It is always easier to publicly discuss and officially respond to the *symptoms* of a problem in society, rather than its true causes. The prime example of this approach over the last decade has been government action in response to youth unemployment.

Kids who previously left school before the senior high years can no longer find work on the bottom rung of the career ladder. Researchers have now validated what adolescent dole-queuers knew a long time ago — that HSC graduates are now applying for the apprenticeships and trainee positions that previously went to Year 10 school leavers. Whereas once it was acceptable, in society's terms, to leave at Year 10 and start as an office hand or factory dogsbody, those options have been closed off.

Several different responses have come from the political arena, and a discussion of the Participation and Equity Program (PEP) should begin with a brief review.

## Pre-PEP Strategies:

Between 1971 and 1981, the overall number of full-time teenage jobs decreased by 7% compared with an increase of 5.3% in total employment. While employment opportunities for teenage males showed a decline of only 1.4%, females suffered a drop of 20.3%. But even male teenagers experienced a narrowing of employment prospects as most of the jobs were in blue collar areas, where semi-skilled and unskilled expanded slightly, rather than in skilled jobs where the number contracted.

During the Fraser years, unemployment among 15-19 year-olds grew to 23%. That reflected a trend in unemployment between 1970 and 1983 of 790%.

The Federal response to this crisis was to introduce several programs to provide for the casualties among the 15-19 year-olds. Apart from unemployment benefits (payable after the age of 16) the Fraser government introduced the Transition from School to Work Program (Transition Education), and a plethora of community support programs. Among these were the Community Youth Support Scheme (CYSS), The Education Program for Unemployed Youth (EPUY), the Special Youth Employment Training Program (SYETP) and others with even more imaginative acronyms (REDS, NEAT and CRAFT).

In general, these programs did little to alleviate structural unemployment and by 1979 emphasis was placed on Transition Education as the major school-based attempt to solve the problem. Transition Education worked both within schools and between schools and TAFE colleges in what were described as Link courses. Dwyer, Wilson and Woock, in their recent book, describe the division and confusion among the various state and Federal bodies when they implemented the program. They cite the study by Peter Cole who isolated four common weaknesses in the program.

- \* 'blame the student' — change the individuals attitude to satisfy employers.

- \* 'train for unemployment'—accept the inevitability of joblessness and learn to cope.

- \* 'tinker with content'—dilute curricula to focus more on work and job applications.

- \* 'terminal streamed programs'—give low achievers narrow job skills just before they leave school.

In practice, the Transition Education initiative was a cynical gesture from the beginning, but committed teachers managed

to make something of it, if only a method of morale boosting for alienated early school leavers. If activists used the confusions to create their own systems for supporting kids, this was always on the understanding that success came despite the intentions of the scheme and not because of them.

### Participation and Equity:

So that's how things were when the Hawke Government came to power in March 1983—or, as one group of unemployed young people from Canberra put it, "When Hawkie Talkie came to town". Education Minister, Susan Ryan announced in the Government's first budget in late 1983, a new scheme for young people. The Participation and Equity Program was unveiled in December, 1983, with the twin aims of making school more attractive to early leavers, and also to make it more equitable in terms of the outcomes they experienced. Fraser's Transition Education created the image of "helping them get over the hurdles of their own attitudes and abilities, and into the workforce; or else accepting their ultimate unemployability". But PEP was now going to "make school more relevant for them, treat them more equally, help the disadvantaged, and reform teacher attitudes and outdated courses."

The immediate plan was to spend about \$75 million on PEP in 1984. Most of the funds would go to continuing Transition Education schemes which weren't too offensive ideologically, while the rest would go towards setting up a new masterplan and piloting some initial programs. PEP would aim to redress the particular problems faced by girls, migrants, Aborigines, the disabled and socio-economically disadvantaged students. But, like all the popular "motherhood" policies brought out during the last few years, none of the details as to how these changes would occur were listed. In the Schools Commission's official PEP advice document, requested by Susan Ryan and released in December 1983, the chapter on "Operation of the Program" simply says:

*Initially (at least for the 1984-86 triennium) the emphasis within the program will be on specific efforts to meet the needs of schools serving students who have not been well served by schooling ... providing for the program's priority target groups of students. The remainder will be for authorities to develop programs and services to assist, encourage and facilitate schools' actions and initiatives, and to foster broadly-based changes ... Discussion, planning and development will be the main program activities for 1984. Schools will need to ask themselves how well they are providing in the contemporary social, psychological and economic context, for young people to continue their schooling until the age of 17 or 18 years of age. (PEP in Australian Schools, p.26)*

Detailed planning is left to Commonwealth-approved committees in each State and the program itself will only start being felt towards the end of 1984 when the first changes occur in school systems and course design. The document makes it clear that although curriculum is the main target to be 'pepped', there will also be 'new agencies and procedures for student assessment', 'structural and organisational change', 'educational networks' and 'more flexible assessment and credentialling arrangements.' Whereas Transition Education was a scheme designed for a specific group, PEP will initiate changes in schools that will affect all the population.

It is within that framework of total school organisational change that States about to implement new structures of their own design will be able to do so with a healthy financial boost, thanks to the vague and vulnerable PEP guidelines. This is certainly the case in NSW, where the PEP program happened along at the convenient time when the Department was about to overhaul its whole high school system.

### Implementing PEP in NSW:

Over the last five years, winds of change have been blowing through the corridors of NSW schools. In summary the main events have been as follows:

- \* November 1979: the State government established a committee to investigate the School Certificate. The committee published its report (The McGowan Report) for public comment in May 1981.

- \* July 1982: the Board of Senior School Studies (responsible for years 11 and 12) released a discussion paper on the curriculum—'Restructuring Years 11 and 12'—and called for public comment.

- \* February 1983: Education Minister, Ron Mulock called on Ken McKinnon (former Chairman of the Schools Commission and current Vice Chancellor of Wollongong University) and Doug Swan (Director-General of Education) to initiate public discussion on secondary education. In April 1983, they released a discussion paper—'Future Directions of Secondary Education in NSW'—and called for public comment. After more than 33 submissions, a final report was issued in June 1984.

All that convoluted history serves to indicate the amount of hoo-ha there has been about secondary schooling over the last few years. Coming out of it was a final report that recommended the scrapping of the two boards controlling secondary education; the replacement of the School Certificate with a Certificate of Secondary Education; and increased school-based course development. The new controlling force over schools would be a single Board of Secondary Education set up as an arm of the Education Department, chaired by the Director-General, and with a committee within it controlling the Higher School Certificate.

In practice that means the Education Department would control all aspects of future course development, school organisation and accreditation. When the Swan-McKinnon Report recommended a four yearly report from the single board to the Government, on the current policies and future directions of education, it left very little open to public scrutiny, as far as accountability went.

Next came the introduction of PEP into this melting pot of change. The department took this in its stride, preparing a "Consultative Paper" for its officers, detailing just how the \$25 million in PEP funds devoted to NSW would fit the plans for change.

The 27 page consultative paper (advertised on its cover as presenting a "negotiated proposition and making suggestions about the implementation of the PEP program in 1984) was said to be the basis of discussion to include community organisations, but it was also marked "distributed in confidence as a basis for consultation".

Such awkward appeals for privacy don't seem in the best interests of public accountability.

The paper outlines a detailed plan to use PEP funds to implement changes in high school organisation, course offerings, regional and central administration — all of which pass more power over to the bureaucracy, and leave the students, parents and teachers in minor roles in the overall system. It seems to present a plan to build a streamlined stockyard in the public education system, with all the expense and skill going into the processing machinery, but with very little touching the stock.

After a five month delay, the first meeting of the NEW PEP committee was held in late April 1984. \$10.6 million of the State's \$25 million handout had already gone to TAFE, \$1.5 million to the non-government sector; and \$6.2 million went to continuing Transition Education schemes in government schools. That left another \$6.6 million still to be allocated before the end of the 1983-84 financial year—exactly eight weeks from the day the committee received the Department's consultative paper.





In the words of the committee's organising secretary, things were probably moving "faster than we would like, but we didn't have much in the way of guidelines from the Commonwealth." Still, PEP was supposed to go through a "developmental year" in 1984, and everyone understood there would be a "bit of confusion", the friendly secretary said. They would "prefer to get it right" first. Obviously the advantage lay with Department's representatives on the committee, as they had the only ready-made shopping list with which to lay claim to the PEP funds.

Senator Ryan had said early in the year she was planning a mid-year national conference of PEP personnel, to pool their expertise and come up with further proposals. She admitted it would be hard to make changes in a system as big as the NSW public schools network, but she thought there was enough direction for local programs in the Schools Commission's PEP document, released in March 1984.

Unfortunately, the Schools Commission's general vagueness leaves the door wide open for bureaucratic manipulation; as shown by the final page of the NSW Department's consultative paper which finishes with a mention of "Contingency planning for the remainder of 1984":

The expenditure of the PEP budget for 1984 will need to occur over a condensed period of time, resulting in actual expenditure eg. salaries, being less than full year estimates. Therefore, special arrangements will need to be made in 1984 to ensure that funds are spent in the most effective manner ... It may be appropriate to consider whether the guidelines concerning 75 per cent of funds being committed to proposals from schools needs to be maintained each year, or whether it could be achieved on an average over the life of the program.

The whole presumption here is that schemes like the

McGowan Report, Future Directions of Secondary Education (the Swan/McKinnon document), and Restructuring Years 11-12 "foreshadowed the reforms" called for the PEP program. The paper even goes so far as to say "PEP...should provide valuable support structures assisting in the total process of reform which is underway in NSW...Policy development will not be enhanced by the simple provision of funding for schools identified on the basis of an index which reveals deficiencies in participation and/or equity outcome." So PEP will be used to consolidate changes which were already on the drawing boards, and which had received no public exposure or discussion.

### Recipe for 'Reform'?

Divided into nine sections, the consultative paper begins with a cursory review of the Department's interpretations of the Hawke Government's plans for reforming education. In its first four pages, covering sections 1 to 4, the paper justifies why the PEP program fits snugly into the Department's established plans for implementing the Swan/McKinnon proposals, as part of an overall "package for change". In the following 23 pages the document outlines a framework for: program management and development; modes of school involvement; a scenario for school-level implementation to achieve the objectives of PEP; regional implementation, and control implementation. A detailed look at how this "implmentation" has been drafted helps to illustrate the PEP scheme's vulnerability to State reinterpretation and perversion.

Section Four explains: "If worthwhile school-level change is to gain widespread acceptance, then: ... it may need to incorporate a provision for the changing of people's attitudes and practices (the people include teachers, employers, students, parents, community members, administrators and educators from other institutions)."



Other phrases, such as "more attractive outcomes for students" and "the school's total package for change" indicate its slick, mesmerising presentation.

Section Five, on "Modes of school involvement" refers to the 1984 PEP developments as some way off in the future — indicating that the Department had prepared this document far in advance of the Schools Commission's PEP guidelines being released (in March '84). Three types of schools will receive PEP funds, the Department has decided:

The criteria include factors related to unemployment and participation and geographical, socio-economic, social and cultural disadvantages, will be used to identify schools which should be included in the initial list of *Target Schools*.

**GROUP 1 Pilot Schools** Selected on the basis of ability to contribute to policy and program development, and should not exclude schools which by virtue of currently operating initiatives (eg Trans Ed), may have already increased participation rates (however measured).

**GROUP 2 Developmental Schools** Selected from schools on the Target List but not identified as fitting GROUP 1.

**GROUP 3 Identified Schools** These schools remaining on the Target List, not in 1 or 2, are those showing the greatest potential for benefiting from involvement in the program.

In other words, the Department will impose its own selection criteria on those schools identified as targets by the Schools Commission.

Section Six, on Program Management and Development,

outlines how Transition Education has made schools accept changes in "curriculum offerings" and "the ways in which students are taught and managed." It provides a broad description of administrative structures to ensure attitudes are brought into line and students are placed in situations which the Department thinks will best suit them: eg. part-time school; specialist schools (such as the planned "Fame"-type dance school at Newtown); and buying teaching time from TAFE".

The Scenario for School-level Implementation, Section Seven, includes an Action Plan for Social Activity that is centrally dominated and directed. It suggests "School Process Leaders" will provide leadership and direction, then goes on to stress "implementation of Departmental policy through responses to the needs of special groups (girls, Aborigines, non-English speaking backgrounds, handicapped, disturbed, talented, and broken schooling)." Other suggestions include "to negotiate with employers", "to develop/adapt student management", and "cash to fund activities for students for...contracting teaching, contracting services, and experimenting with and establishing structures."

"Professional development" will include "taking teachers out of the school for a short course"; "work experience type programs, for teachers to experience other work places, including personnel management and industrial training"; and "training programs available from other organisations". This sounds like schools will be switching over to manpower planning factories! Whatsoever, the identification of the "pilot" schools will be closely tied to whether they have already displayed a willingness to fit the department's model:

*In 1984, up to 50 schools might be identified as pilot schools, with the basis for this identification being on regional advice of the school's potential to contribute to policy and program development and provide models for other schools. It is anticipated that each region would be able to nominate a minimum of three pilot schools.*

Pity the poor school that has heaps of PEP potential students but doesn't happen to fit the department's model for "potential contribution".

"Pilot Schools", which will number about 50 in NSW in 1984, will be provided with a "support package" including a "School Process Leader". This will be a teacher released for 12 months to "facilitate, identify and secure support for, and give expert leadership to school development activities". Just to ensure things don't get out of hand, the document goes on to say "It would be necessary for these people to receive initial training and orientation to assist them in performing duties". The process leaders are also nominated as members of Regional PEP Task Forces.

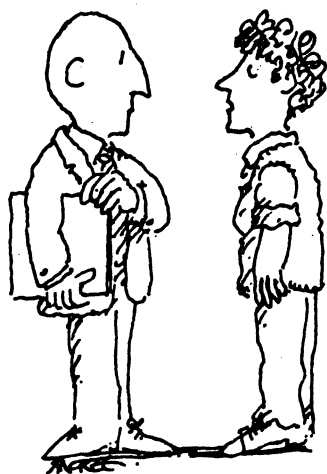
What are we planning here, search and destroy missions against the urban Vietcong?

Cynics have already labelled the process leaders as the "PEP pied pipers", who will be joined on the regional task force by the Board Liaison Officer, regional consultants, teachers and community persons with special expertise and "appropriate Head Office personnel".

Costing for all this includes \$26,401 x 50, for the process leaders, plus \$250,000 for an average 2500 relief days, with a grand additional sum of \$150,000 cash for "materials, fees, travel and to support trial implementation" — all totalling \$1.7 million.

Next come the "Developmental Schools", which will number about 30, warranting the equivalent of 0.6 teachers each. They will "undertake development activities and implement some changes", but it "is anticipated that these changes will... require a more extensive staff development program" (than the Pilot Schools). The bill for these B-grade targets is: 30 x 0.6 teachers \$475,218; relief days (3,000) \$300,000; and cash (\$3000 per





*No Mr Hetherington, I'm not back because I couldn't get a job. I'm back because I'm the new caretaker.*

school) \$90,000 — totalling \$865,218.

Then come the C-grade "Identified Schools", "which will, on the basis of selection criteria used (as indicated also by Regional Consultation), display the greatest potential for benefiting from involvement in a change program, in terms of the aims of the program." These lucky suckers will "initially...need to be brought to a position of acknowledging the circumstances in which they are operating. Therefore by implication these schools will become the focus for a Regional intervention program, with central assistance as required."

In other words, the last group of schools, most likely to be populated by the very students PEP is designed to help, will be subjected to concentrated pre-programming by the Department's "Thought Police" task force. As the document says:

*Following these activities (ie. being brought to a position of "acknowledging the circumstances in which they are operating") the Regional Consultant and the Regional PEP Task Force will, in conjunction with school personnel develop a program of activities with the objective of heightening the awareness of teachers, students, parents and members of the community.*

This grand plan will be funded to the tune of: "Say 20 schools" x 0.5 teachers, at \$264,010; relief 1,000 days; and cash (\$2000 per school) of \$40,000 — totalling \$404,010.

When those three schemes are compared, the bias of the Department's plans is not hard to spot. Obviously the bulk of the funds will go to the "Pilot Schools" — those which will push thru Departmentally-developed schemes. When the costs are added up, it turns out 27 per cent of PEP funds will be poured into the Pilot Schools, 13 per cent into Developmental Schools and only 6.4 per cent into Identified Schools.

But what makes this a particularly nasty exercise is that the PEP funds are being directed into establishing a new model of public education that has been kept secret from the public themselves, and which has not even reached ministerial release stages yet. The whole superstructure will be set up and in operation before ordinary people even hear the whiz-bang release details.

After eight out of its 27 pages have detailed the Department-dominated "scenario for school-level implementation", the document switches into top gear for its final *third*, and outlines in Sections 8 & 9, "Regional and Centre implementation to achieve objects of PEP", which include:

Research and Data Gathering — (ie. more computer networks) \$200,000; Individual Student Data Base — the crunch Big Brother operation, "approximating a total cost to all regions of \$2.7 million", of which \$629,840 is requested for 1984 development of "materials and procedures including some trialling in schools, followed by a proposed Pilot Study in 1985 costing at \$418,540."

Add to that Publicity costs for 1984 of \$40,365 — ie. a person to join the Head Office community relations and information unit to "inform the community about changes, developments etc" — and you have a sophisticated operation.

One top of all that comes the section on "Assistance to Study Board Activities" — where Big Brother moves into the schools, to ensure the curriculum changes outlined in the Future Directions (Swan/McKinnon) document are achieved. Staff to the tune of \$833,537 (or 13 per cent of PEP funds) will be employed under PEP to guarantee the new Board of Secondary Education (combining the old Boards of Senior School Studies and Secondary Schools) has workers in the field to apply its master plan.

Program Coordination and Administration will total \$596,214 — to centralise the links stretched out in the previous section, using staff appointed to the Directorate of Special Programs. Another \$115,557 will go to extra staff at the Directorate of Studies, to form a PEP Curriculum Coordination Team. And \$210,835 will be allocated to the Division of Services, "to play a major role in the provision of a range of support services" and "coordinating the buying of time for teachers to develop programs and expertise to deliver those programs". These include "learning packages for teachers, withdrawal courses to be run by the retraining unit, suggestions for real life application and skills practice through on-the-job projects".

At the end of the document, tucked in just before the "Contingency plans" page, is one paragraph detailing that \$35,000 will be used to fund Youth Forum, (an annual "student summit" for NSW, sponsored by the NSW Law Foundation, Esso and the National Australia Bank), "as a means of encouraging student participation and developing a student network (discussion necessary re extent of inclusion of government schools, committee representation, Forum themes etc)." So, out of a total of \$2.8 million devoted to "Regional and Central Initiatives", exactly \$35,000 has gone directly to a student-based activity — and that itself has only limited Statewide representation, including a minority of PEP's target audience.

This whole scenario indicates the extent of sophistication our bureaucratic baby-sitters have achieved, in pulling off a massive snow job, on not only the Federal Government, but also the public who will pay for all this stockyard machinery. Susan Ryan expressed concern over likely bureaucratic resistance to the stated aims of the PEP scheme. But she had no idea of the advanced state of Papergate perfected in Bridge Street, Sydney. PEP promises to be one of the great educational rip-offs of the last two decades. But it seems it will be hidden by the whole systemic reorganisation that is about to be carried out in NSW.

Transition Education was an infant scheme. Because of that, activists were able to interpret its original cynical "window-dressing" aims into effective youth-support programs — even if they didn't achieve much in transferring many individuals from "school to work". But PEP is being introduced to war-hardened administrators, skilled in the art of double-speak, and armed with advanced plans of their own for any funds which may drift their way.

It's going to take a lot of footwork to get the disadvantaged "target" group out of this spider web of centralised control, and actually help them achieve equal outcomes.

# real land

Joanne Burns

this must be the fifth bloody time this month ive spent the day sittin in this corridor. its a real cold hole deadset. might as well be in Siberia. as if theyd care all them jerks of teachers sittin with their bums on top of the heaters in the classroom all day. she said that Miss Lovall i'm putting you out here near my office for your own good Cheryl. yeah i say theres no need to bung it on i get the picture. that will be enough she said Cheryl. here is a book of maps for you to draw. this will keep you busy. i want you to complete the first ten maps before lunchtime. you might learn something. at least when you're holding your pen you might be able to hold your tongue. she goes back to her office. and ive been sitting here for ages at this grotty little table and wobbly chair. shell be real tickled when she sees i'm only up to map three, cant hack all these squiggles and lines and all this kindergarten colourin in. real land doesnt look like this who ever heard of pink and blue earth. might smarten up this joint 'ere on the map with a bit of me Orange Tropical Glow nail polish — just touch up this bit 'ere round the Cape of Good Hope, then i'll put a bit of purple eyeshadow 'ere on Antarctica —brighten it up a bit — sounds like a dag of a place to me — all that ice. all these countries strange bloody words they got for names some of these places. must be queer or somethin. this maps stuff is too neat for me sissy stuff — like making cakes and sewin classes. all that dumb embroidery. little chickens on aprons for mumsie on Mothers Day. makes you wanna spew. come on Cheryl Mrs. Cotton used to say you could stitch nicely if you try. look lady i said to her ive already got six stitches on me chin from when i jumped and fell out of the Detention Room in Primary school. i know as much about stitches as i'll ever need to know. gees this place gives me the creeps all them teachers wierdos thinkin they know whats best for you when half the time they dont even know how to spell yr name right. who are they trying to kid. and when they played detectives trying to find out who set fire to the dunnies last week. old 4 eyes had to look up the roll to see who was in his class. really on the ball that jerk. just wait till i get my hands on that little punk Dwaynie Dickson for dobbin' me in. it was him who gave me the matches. got me a 2 day suspension and now i'm sittin in this bloody corridor. he'll be packin it when i get 'im. anyway they never found who burnt the toilet rolls in the garbage bins. geeze it made a good blaze. i cant hack some of the guys in this school. when they hang in a group they act like Superman. but get them by themselves theyre as weak as bubble gum. think theyre really spunky call us girls moles — if anyone says that to me i just walk up to them between the eyes and say look here jerk if you call me a more again youll grow warts at the end of your tongue. wonder what the time is — i'm getting sick of this. guess its better than writing lines like i had to when i tried to grab my jewellery back out of old Fowlers bag. i

must keep my hands to myself one thousand times. jesus that wasa bastard. she had no right to take me silver marijuana leaf charm and me Sid Vicious badge. she didn't buy em. jeez it was funny when we were both pullin at her bag in front of the History class and the handle snapped and everything fall out on to the floor. the things she had in her bag. must have been at least 20 old photos. must carry all her past round with her. no wonder shes a history teacher.

when i get out of this place therell be no more dumb books for Chezza. i'll please myself, do what i like. no washin' nappies and listening to babies cryin like me sister Fay. 20 year old and she looks like a hag with them brats a kids and that slob of a guy shes married to. never has a moment to herself. naw. i'm gonna be free. travel, round and see real land. not maps in books, travel round in me own wheels. not gonna have any boss breathin down me neck all day. think i'll be a semi-trailer driver. out on the road with me tranny. ridin high in the cabin wearin what i like. i'll be good. got good eyesight. could drive me brother's Falcon when i was eight. took it out for a spin while he was mowing the lawn one day. dunno what all the fuss was about. i could drive better than all them jerks you see on the road crawlin along like they was sleepwalkin. yeah i'll get me licence real easy no risk. then one day i'll have me own truck. Chezzas Transport Company. yeah, you'll see all youse teachers —

ooley dooley  
Cheryl Cooley  
she's no foolley

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#### Previously published/Broadcast in/on:—

1. *Hot To Trot: (poetry on the move)* S.C.O.T.S.S.S. SCETS. Education Dept. of Victoria (1980).
2. *Writer's Radio* — 5.U.V. Adelaide (1980)
3. *Ventriloquy* — Sea Cruise Books (1981)
4. *A Book to Write Poems By* Australian Association for Teaching of English (1983)
5. *The Coming Out Show* A.B.C. (1983)
6. *And So Say All Of Us* Second Back Row Press (1984).





## New Material for Teaching about Critical Social Issues

I would like to let people know about the material I am developing for teaching about "limits to growth" issues (ie the affluent consumer society; resource and energy, destruction of the environment; Third World poverty and underdevelopment; conflict between nations; the quality of life; the growth economy; production for profit; and the nature of a sustainable alternative society).

The aim has been to distil from the mass of literature on these issues clear and simple analyses, which show how all of these problems derive primarily from our commitment to affluence and growth. This literature is saying that these are not separate problems and that the basic solution must be fundamental change to a quite different sort of society, especially to a very different economic system and to less extravagant and more self-sufficient and cooperative ways of life.

At this stage, there is available the set entitled *The Limits to Growth* which gives an overview of the whole field and the set entitled *Third World Development* which deals at more length with one of the problems included in the "limits" set. Sewts of materials entitled *Our Economic System* and *Why War* are in the process of development.

Each set includes:

- (a) an approximately 50 page *Issue Summary* booklet for use by students and/or teachers, including much graphic and cartoon material;
- (b) an approximately 150 page collection of evidence documenting the points made in the *Issue Summary* booklet; and —
- (c) about 10 lesson plans and 25 overhead masters, accompanied by notes for teachers.

In addition, colour video tapes have been made on each of the two above topics and three games are available illustrating what happens when market forces and production for profit are allowed to determine what is produced and how it is to be distributed.

The material is designed for use between years 8 and 12 and at early tertiary level. *Inspection copies will be sent on request.*

# RED NOTES.

Prices are:— *The Limits to Growth*, set of three \$11.00; *Third World Development* set of three \$9.00. Video tapes: hire — \$10 (\$30 deposit); purchase — *Limits* (55 min) \$82, *Limits* (35 min) \$77, *Third World* \$31. Games — \$1.30 for set of 3. Postage for each set of written materials and for each video tape \$1.85 (Sydney) \$2.65 (other NSW).

For further information please contact  
Ted Trainer  
Critical Social Studies Project  
C/o School of Education  
University of N.S.W.  
Kensington, 2033 NSW.

## Radicalising Schooling

The current edition of *Social Alternatives* Vol. 4, No. 2, June 1984 is entitled *Radicalizing Schooling* and is edited by Janet Hunt, Drew Hutton and Bob Lingard. The emphasis of the issue is on classroom practice and as such provides a nice complement to *Red 22* on education policies. Available from *Social Alternatives* Division of External Studies, University of Queensland, St. Lucia, Qld. 4067.

## LETTERS

Dear Collective,

I am not surprised but am strongly opposed to a change in the name for the journal.

Are we 'progressives' in Education on such a retreat currently that we are afraid to be 'upfront' even in the title of a small journal? 'Radical' has a fine history and tradition. As we know, it can be left or right. I wonder what the collective will do with readers' comments?

RED has a deal of respect with large numbers of teachers and people interested in Education policy.

Sandra Kessler.

Dear Collective,

I thoroughly support the search for a new name for the Dossier. In the 1940's there was a deliberate attempt by the ruling class to stop using the phrase "the capitalist system" and to talk instead of "free enterprise". The latter term conjures up positive images, whereas the experience of the 1930's and 40's had given capitalism a bad name. We have to confront the success of bourgeois hegemony in giving the label "radical" a bad press. Who wants to associate with ratbags and extremists? If our aim is to encourage more people to read the journal we surely have to find a name which speaks to people's felt needs and aspiration. It is sheer sentimentalism to cling to RED which only speaks to the already converted. It is the socialist editorial policy of the collective alone which is worth preserving. Everything else *must* move with the times.

Rachel Sharp

# The Phoney Falklands War Kills Real Men

He mucked up in class. He was cheeky, he swore. His teacher with the long red fingernails handed him over for discipline.

Oh but Jamie, said Mr Hamilton, Deputy Head, you must do better than that. And he shoved him against the wall. Perhaps that will teach you. Jamie cried a little. Oh poor little Jamie, said Mr Hamilton, turning to us. One of us laughed. It wasn't very funny.

Jamie came back. He'd done it again.

But Jamie I told you before, said Mr Hamilton, we can't put up with that.

I didn't do it, Jamie whispered.

Speak up, said Mr Hamilton.

I didn't do it, said Jamie.

I didn't do it *sir*, roared Mr Hamilton and he picked him up under the shoulders, shook him, threw him away. You are trying to tell me your teacher is lying?

Jamie was crying.

Well poor little Jamie! said Mr Hamilton to us. We were doing a spelling test. Some of us laughed. It wasn't funny. Why did we laugh? Why didn't he pick on someone his own size?

And of course Jamie kept on coming back. Often. We hated seeing him. He was so small, so meek, in our classroom. Why didn't the lady with the long red nails look after him?

Then there was the last time. Jamie stood still at the door.

Well come on in, said Mr Hamilton, jovial, or shall I carry you? Back for more of the same, eh?

Jamie nodded. His feet took him to Mr Hamilton's desk.

Well nice to see you, said Mr Hamilton. He stood up. But I don't want to see you again, he said softly. Never! he shouted. Do you understand?

He shook him, threw him down. Jamie stumbled against the corner of the desk and landed in a heap on the floor.

And now he'll cry, said Mr Hamilton, poor little Jamie. We laughed.

We laughed.

And Jamie was dead.

★ ★ ★

Come on, said Mr Hamilton, sing the school song.

There we were, bellowing away

laugh laugh

laugh at the weak and the poor

crawl crawl

crawl on the floor

and lick the fat arse

of the rich

when the police came.

Good kids, they said, you've got the right idea.

**Betty Johnston**

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# RED REVIEW

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## On foreign soil

*For Australia's sake — a history of Australia's involvement in nine wars* by **Helen Simmelhaig and G.F.R. Spenceley**. Published by Nelson Education. \$11.56.

*For Australia's sake* is the title of a recently published history and social science text designed for the use of students in years 10 to 12. The co-authors Helen Simmelhaig and Geoff Spenceley combine a clear and very readable account of Australia's involvement in nine major conflicts together with original documents, photographs and cartoons. Included are sections on the part women have played in various wars, from the first trained nurses in the Boer War to "The long haired Army" of South Vietnam.

A stated aim of the book is to have readers draw their own conclusions on the controversial issues inherent in war. To this end Geoff Spenceley's commentary tries to take a balanced view of issues like the conscription debate of World War I and the years of fervid anti-communism prior to Vietnam. The excellent source material compiled by Helen Simmelhaig carries the emphasis further providing primary and secondary documentation to extend the reader into topics as diverse as wartime strikes during World War II and the use of germ warfare in Korea.

*For Australia's Sake* is a book of social as well as military history, seeking to trace links between the experiences of war and subsequent changes in the Australian milieu. War, it seems, has had a profound influence on the course of Australian history since white occupation. Of particular importance are the economic and political changes which wars have wrought. Despite the high financial expense of war and heavy casualties in proportion to Australia's small population the conventional wars of the past have shaped our political

institutions, accelerated technological development and created new industries.

Over eighty thousand Australians have died in nine wars fought entirely on foreign soil. In the past Australians went more or less willingly, believing the cause to be both necessary and just. Yet, as the authors of *For Australia's Sake* make clear, our involvement in war has come about largely as a result of our status as a small dependent nation tied to powerful allies. We have, it appears, fought battles more for the sake of maintaining traditional alliances than because of any immediate threat to our shores. With hindsight, these conventional wars seem to have brought some benefits. But this will not be true of conflict in the nuclear age. In the light of the current debate over the presence of U.S. spy-bases on Australian soil one cannot but question whether or not the time has come for Australia to stand alone. *For Australia's Sake* is a book to encourage such questioning, providing as it does a clear illustration of the causes and terrible consequences of war.

**Julienne Coates**

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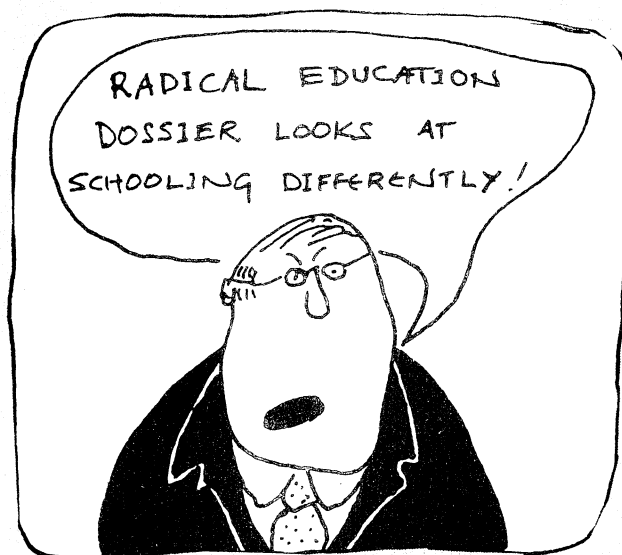
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