



The Power of the People

18

RADICAL EDUCATION DOSSIER

Contents

DEAR READER . . .

The *Dossier* normally comes out three times a year. This year, however, the new collective has managed to produce two issues, numbers 17 and 18. But next year we are right back on schedule! We are well into planning *RED 19*, which will be on the theme of Peace & Disarmament Education, and you can expect it next February. *RED 20* will include a range of articles on various themes and will come out at the beginning of the second term. *RED 21*, due out in the third term, will be on the theme of Aboriginal Education.

Subscribers please note that your subscription covers three issues, and is not effected by our temporary lapse in production.

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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The Future of Public Schooling.

Public schooling is on the defensive. The trends are clear enough.

- Massive amounts of public revenue are being transferred to the private schools.
- Private schools are growing at a time when public schools face shortages, amalgamations and closures.
- Media campaigns harp on the alleged "failure" of public schools to maintain standards and discipline.
- A rightwing offensive uses slogans of "efficiency" and "choice and diversity" to accelerate the drift to privatisation.

The situation is indeed serious. We find ourselves fighting on a new terrain defending past gains against opponents who wish to selectively dismantle public provisions.

What can we do about it? Can we develop a strategy that regains the offensive and defines the issues? We suggest that the following are important steps in this process:

- 1 In the immediate political context it is imperative that we join with teachers, parents and community groups to defend public schooling against the drift to privatisation.
- 2 It is also important to combine with workers in the social wage areas of health, child care and social work to resist cuts in public provisions in those areas.
- 3 In defending the gains of the past, we must not avert our eyes from a critical look at public schooling itself. Will we have to transform public schooling to create the coalition of popular support that is necessary to undercut the present attacks?
- 4 We must think beyond the present issues and slogans and develop a socialist and democratic conception of what public schooling ought to be.

None of this is easy! And it is not made easier by the fact that we do not have in Australia a vigorous tradition of socialist writing about education. This issue of *RED*, in its modest way, sees itself as part of this strategy.

To provide a national perspective, we have devoted the bulk of the issue to State Reports which examine the skirmishes and struggles around public schooling. Nance Cooper has contributed an article which looks in more detail at the politics of educational funding. The Collective itself has written an overview which examines the meaning of public schooling, where we have come from and directions for the future. *RED 18* also contains a Review Symposium of a recent and influential book, *Making The Difference*, which contrasts public and private schools. Our hope is that this issue of the *Dossier* will assist the development of a socialist conception of public schooling.

In the course of producing this issue of *RED* on the future of public schooling, the collective became aware of the urgent need for an ongoing debate about the meaning of public schooling. The inherited notions of public schooling seem to us weak and inadequate for regaining the initiative in deciding the agenda for future policies about public education. What would a socialist conception of public schooling be like? We hope that our thoughts and questions might draw responses from our readers so that the debate can continue in future issues of *RED*.

The distinction between public and private has assumed immense ideological significance since the development of bourgeois society in the nineteenth century. This was nowhere more important than in education itself. When as a result of legislation, the public schools were created in the late nineteenth century, the notion of public was used to mean that the schools belonged to, or were accessible to the people or the community (the word, public, derives from the Latin, publicus meaning "the people"). But in a very important sense, that meaning concealed the realities of class and cultural power at the time. The new public elementary schools were provided by the bourgeoisie for the working class, and the purpose was not to empower that class but to control and shape popular working class culture and aspirations. From the beginning the notion of public schooling concealed the fact that in no sense did public schools belong to the people and that Australia was deeply divided along class lines.

Since that initial obfuscation, we have had one hundred years of public schooling. How has the definition changed? Have the public schools become the "people's" schools in terms of popular democratic control.

This has not been the route followed by the labour movement in Australia. Control has remained firmly in bourgeois hands, and the idea of public schooling has taken on a peculiarly social democratic meaning whereby the move to democratisation was seen in terms of widening access to state provided institutions. This central concern with access is seen clearly in the efforts of the labour movement to extend schooling for working class young people through the provision of public scholarships, the development of technical education and the extension of comprehensive secondary schooling for all.

There is no doubt that this social democratic notion of public schooling did serve the interests of working class individuals. Simon Marginson has this in mind when he sums up the wider implications of its postwar expression as, "the development of social consensus by provision of opportunity for upward mobility for favoured working class individuals"¹. We can see now that this meritocratic, individualistic notion of

public schooling reached its hightide in the late 1960s and early 1970s. The economic expansion of the long postwar boom had opened up a range of occupations for upwardly mobile working class individuals, and the opportunities were matched by a surge of popular demand for schooling by the working class.

Now, of course, the opportunities have faded in the face of massive unemployment, and the popular demand is somewhat tempered. The meritocratic conception of public schooling, which was never a socialist conception, is seen to be flawed as the economic grounds for its credibility are eroded by the depression. Inequalities are on the increase as the private school system reasserts its dominant and traditional role of perpetuating the class position of those with cultural and economic capital. As the debate about "privatisation" is beginning to make clear, we are witnessing a contraction of the public schools and a partial reversion to their traditional position of providing an extended elementary and vocational education for the working class.

What meaning can we give, then, to public schooling in the 1980s. We are very much at a watershed. Do we conclude by arguing that as socialists our concern is with the education of the working class, as opposed to individuals, and that these class interests can never be served by a system of public, State provided and controlled schools because such schools inevitably extend the domination of the ruling class? Can we realistically conceive of working class controlled schools outside of a public system? Or do we merely require a public relations campaign to convince the electorate and the politicians that a vigorous public school system is necessary if we wish to maintain and enhance our democratic, equal, open, pluralistic, free society . . . ? What kind of socialist agenda should we be working towards?

A Socialist Agenda For Public Schooling

We think that the above strategies shy away from the close analysis of the politics of schooling that is required if we are to

construct a socialist conception of public schooling. The generic term, "public schools" conceals the reality of diverse publics with different and often antagonistic needs, experiences and interests. As socialists, we should be sceptical of connotations of public schooling which imply harmony and consensus. But there are popular, democratic accents within the notion of public schools as well. In this sense, public schools belong to and are responsive to the people. Not the people in some populist, homogeneous sense, but the young people, teachers, parents and community members whose relationships and practices in fact comprise what we know as the public school. It is in the direction of popular, democratic control and participation that a socialist politics of public schooling can develop.

Within the space of this editorial comment, we cannot do more than indicate a few directions and we hope that the issues will be taken up and developed in future issues of the *Dossier*. We are in no position to be dogmatic, and the questions we raise about access, control, curriculum and context are agenda items for a much wider debate.²

Access

This has been central in the strategy for the labour movement to extend public schooling so as to equalise life chances between children from different social classes. While we would not argue against the notion of universal, compulsory schooling, we would argue that the definition of access needs to be widened. Should we not question the taken for granted separation between adults and children? Does not such a split weaken the collective class identity and culture of working class children? Is there not an urgent need to extend public forms of access to adult and continuing education? Has the labour movement seriously attacked restrictions on access based on gender, race and ethnicity?

Curriculum

As socialists, we cannot be content with access, for we know that schools are not neutral institutions that transmit pure knowledge. A socialist conception of public schooling must

take account of the way that schools transmit individualistic capitalist values and construct relations of class, gender and race. Is the traditional academic curriculum a suitable vehicle for helping students to understand the processes that lead to their subordination? Is the relevant curriculum? We have hardly begun to think about whether there is a distinctly socialist pedagogy.

Control

Socialist change demands the transformation of the public schools themselves. At present, public schools are top down, bureaucratic institutions, insulated from popular participation and control. Should we, as socialists, fight against teacher professionalism and bureaucratic "expert" claims to power? How can we develop ways to widen democratic participation, both within schools and between schools and the community, so that public schools may form organic links with the wider class?

Context

Questions of context are paramount at the present time. Both the school-work relation and the public school-private school relation have shifted during the current depression and we have some very important questions to face. Will the public school system always be the poor relation while we have a private sector? Should we urge the abolition of the private school system, or should we push for its integration and accountability? How do we envisage the relation between public schooling and work (or unemployment)? Can socialists intervene to counter the competitive, meritocratic model? How can we move beyond a critique of the system to practical, alternative policies?

References

- 1 Marginson, Simon, "The Privatisation of Schooling in Australia", A Preliminary Position Paper, Australian Teachers Federation, Canberra, 1982, p21.
- 2 We have drawn these terms from a recent book which looks at the changing definitions of state schooling in England. Centre for Contemporary Cultural Studies, *Unpopular Education: Schooling and Social Democracy in England Since 1944*, Birmingham, 1980.

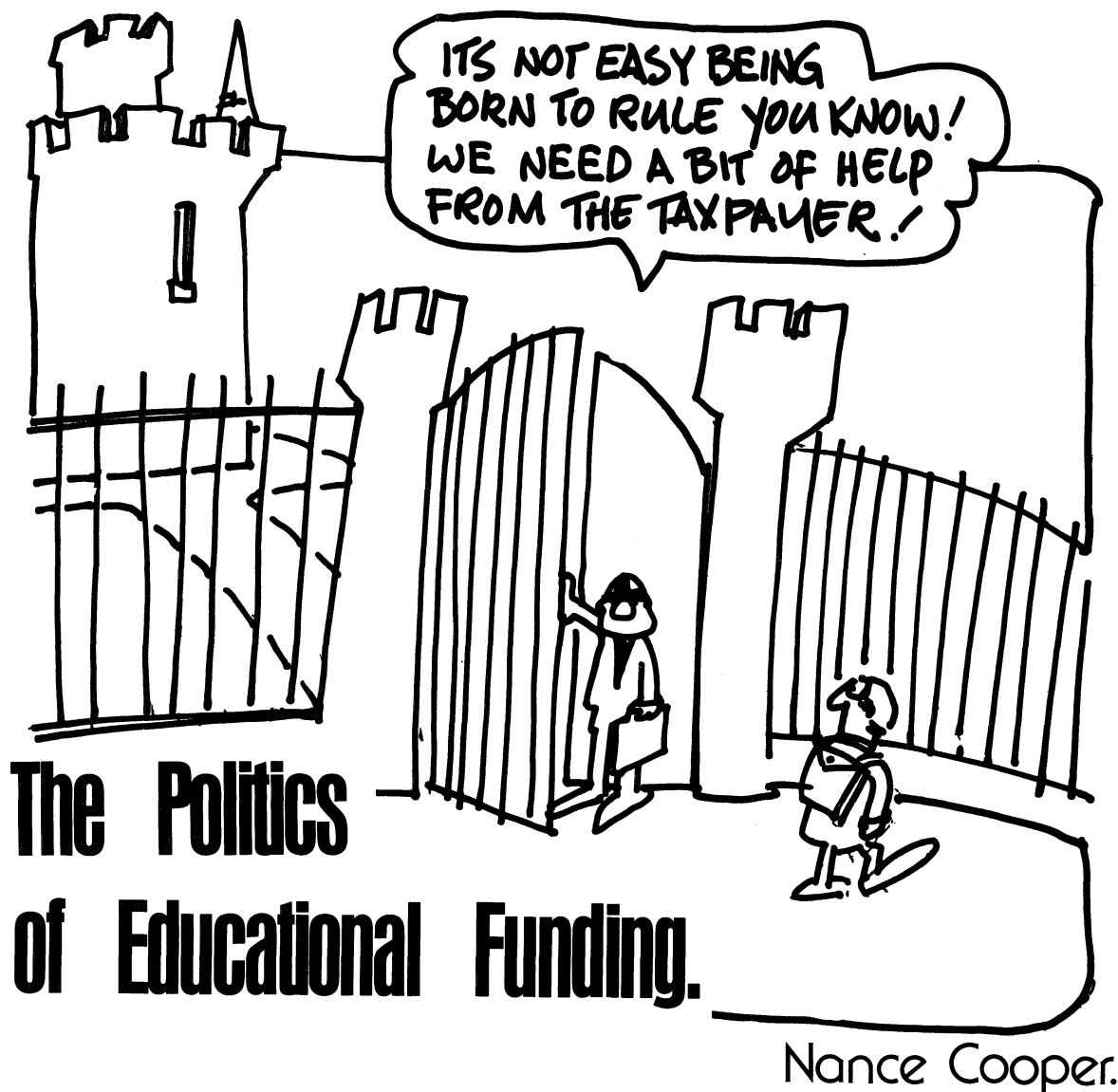
6th Marxist Summer School

15th - 23rd January, 1983

Each year the Marxist Summer School brings together hundreds of progressive people in Australia's largest socialist educational event. Over nine days such topics as feminism, working class history, Australian unionism, international events, and many more are discussed in depth.

The next MSS will be in Sydney from January 15th to 23rd, 1983.

For more information and offers of papers, write to the MSS Organising Collective, 4 Dixon St, Sydney. 2000. Or ring 264 2161.



One of the most politically disquieting documents handed to me in recent times was one with the title "The Discrimination Gap in Public Expenditure on Government and Non-government Schooling 1980-81".

The source of the document is the Catholic Education Commission but its contents have received ecumenical applause and distribution. The thrust of its argument is simple — that schools that receive only 13% of the total educational budget contain 23% of the students.

The widespread distribution of this and similar documents all containing this "statistical fact" shows that we have reached a point in the educational funding debate when traditional assumptions no longer hold. Where once arguments were put forward for the granting of government finance as a means of **supporting** private school parental and organisational effort, it is now being clearly seen as a **replacement**.

In fact, the use of the word "discrimination" with its implications of rights denied is undoubtedly part of the general campaign to create a political climate in which any need to justify the use of public money to support a private organisation no longer exists. Instead the government sector of

education is now reduced to being one of many possible educational structures all entitled to equal access to public money.

In his paper "Small Government and the Policy of Redistribution", Richard Doyle of ACOA analyses the dismantling of the public sector and the transfer of government functions to the private sector not only as an economic issue but as an essential part of the campaign to halt the redistribution of power to the people that began with the growth of democratic public sector institutions in the late 19th Century. He quotes John Kenneth Galbraith on the tactics of the Reagan administration as being equally relevant to those of the Fraser Government:

"There is, however, a special problem in legislating for the rich; a two hundred year old tradition in economics and politics requires that by some camouflage, however exiguous, the reality be concealed."¹

Doyle points in his paper to one of the aspects of Galbraith's camouflaging operation:

"In particular as their power has been threatened, the conservative forces have anticipated loss of 'freedom of choice'."²

He goes on to analyse the imposition of staff ceilings in the public service and the dismantling of many public service instrumentalities as part of a general move to bring to a halt the redistribution of power to the general mass of the Australian people. I would argue that the current educational funding policies of the Federal Government must also be considered within this same politico/economic context.

It is no accident, for example, that the Schools Commission now safely under the control of an educationally conservative Chairperson, Peter Tannock, should publish guidelines that contain the following statements:

12.40 No parent or school community need be financially penalised by the adoption of this development to the subsidy scheme. And given that the purpose of the grant will be extended under the proposed scheme – from striving for increased standards to covering the objectives of promoting choice and facilitating access (by allowing schools to opt for their own level of operation) – the Commission will no longer act on the presumption of any “maintenance of effort” in relation to expenditure from private sources or recurrent resources in schools.

12.41 The Commission restates its adherence to the goal of ensuring high standards of service in schools. Indeed, its persistence over the past seven years in upholding the values and principles underpinning its general resources programs is testimony to a concern for quality in education. The Commission’s reinterpretation of need to accord with government policy and the realities of the present situation is a logical next step.

(Emphases present writer’s.)³

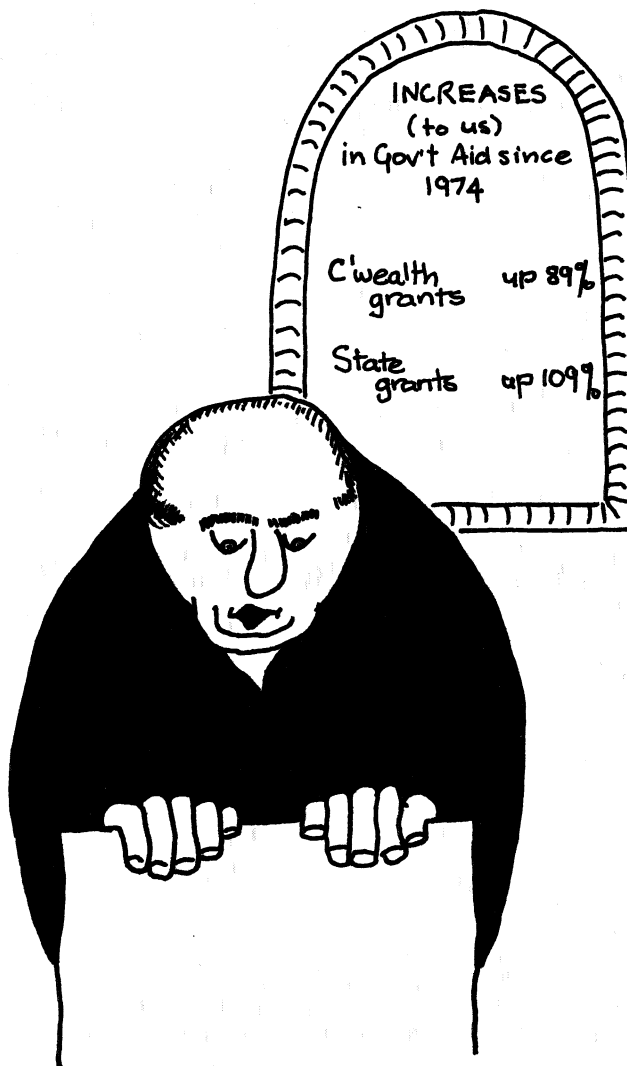
There are two significant pointers to a future political restructuring of education following the successful dismantling of the public sector.

The first is the stress on the promotion of choice and the removal of any financial impediments to anybody who wants to open a school. The second is the political implications of the “reinterpretation of need in accord with government policy” and the weapon such a policy can be in the hands of a conservative government.

The great danger facing the public sector of education is the fact that most people involved in the debate are fighting on a battlefield from which the important adversaries have quietly departed. After all, freedom of choice involving a diocesan high school is one debate. Freedom of choice involving a school such as the following takes in that initial debate but introduces as well a whole range of new political and social aspects:

“Students would not be doing the School Certificate or the Higher School Certificate because the teaching material is the antithesis of our philosophy.”

The speaker was Pastor White of the Campbelltown Christian School (an Accelerated Christian Education school) quoted in the *Sydney Morning Herald*, 15/10/81. It is worth questioning just how many people really know that the current Federal Government’s education policies make it possible (by providing the money) for large numbers of future Australian citizens to be “educated” in a way that will permanently debar them from participation in the economic life of the nation. Lest Pastor White and the ACE schools be construed as advocates of a latterday deschooling philosophy let me hasten to disillusion anybody with this idea. The ACE programs are the most intense forms of programmed learning to pollute the Australian educational scene. The students sit in compliant rows, cut off in personal cubicles, social contact at a minimum, being fed concentrated doses of authoritarian, anti-intellectual material imported from the fundamentalist Christian heartland, mid-

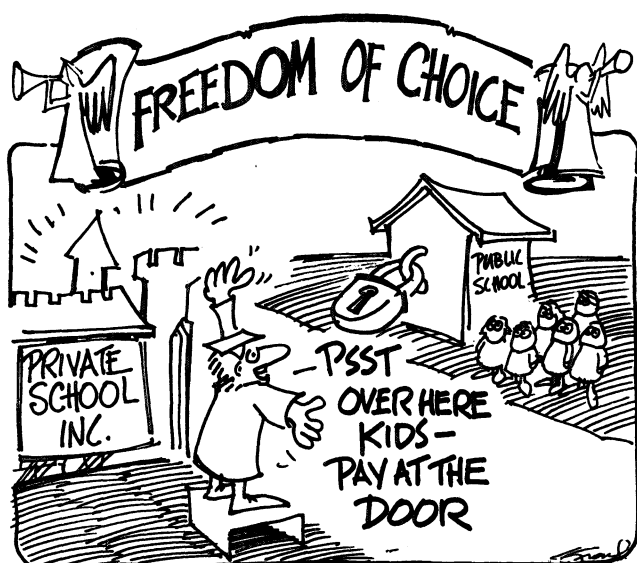


School - Let us now sing together "Now Thank We All Our God".

West USA.

Many have expressed surprise as well as disquiet at the apparent failure of the Federal educational authorities to recognise the inherent social problems such an open-handed unquestioning funding policy must produce. If, however, one is examining the political rather than the educational or social implications of this policy then the funding of ACE schools (or the Ananda Marga or the Hare Krishna or any of the thousand and one small sects all busily drawing up their school plans) becomes frighteningly logical in the framework of the conservative reassertion of authority and control. One need have no fear of any of the products of such schools being a future threat to a conservative ruling class.

While the funding policies that encourage the opening of ACE schools and their like must be opposed, they must never be allowed to become a major diversion in the political battle to defend the government sector of education. The main beneficiary of the conservative attack is still the Catholic



Church, hardly a surprising state of affairs in view of the traditional support the institution has provided over the centuries to politically and socially reactionary regimes. The assiduous cultivation by Church propagandists of the "Poor parish schools are working class schools" syndrome has effectively stifled a great deal of opposition on the part of working class activists to the Government funding policies that have made possible the survival of a major educational organisation expressly designed to ensure the maintenance in power of a socially and politically conservative ruling class. The valuable byproduct, the reinforcement of conservative political and social attitudes in a large proportion of the working class must not be overlooked. Think, as an example of this, of the use made of the diocesan schools in the Right to Life campaigns round abortion.

Any analysis of the funding mechanisms used to provide the financial support for the educational policies enunciated by the Schools Commission on behalf of the Fraser Government will support the thesis of a deliberate political movement to reassert conservative political and social control.

A major mechanism is the creation of a climate of confusion and uncertainty in the funding area itself. The Federal Government produces two completely different sets of figures, one based on the financial year, the other (the Schools Commission Guidelines), based on the calendar year. The State Education Budget uses terms that suggest that what we are looking at is expenditure on government education and it is not until we get to the small print that we discover the total subsumes private sector components. Some figures are presented as simple totals with no indication as to how big a percentage of that total went into private school costs. The Catholic Education Office produces yet another set of figures more suited to its propaganda efforts, this time a pseudo statistic called the total education cost. The Schools Commission produces a figure called the Standard Government School Running Cost and uses this as the basis for the funding of the private sector (eg all Category 3 schools will receive 40% of this figure from

the Federal Government with at least another 20% from state governments on top). The fact that this figure is an abstraction with little connection with reality is provable from the following:

Cost Of A Government School Student In NSW, 1982

Type	Schools Commission	NSW Ministry of Education
Primary	\$1,480.00	\$1,132.00
Secondary	\$2,402.00	\$1,903.00

It is interesting in passing to work out how much a private sector school profits from this little exercise in pseudo-statistics. At the moment a diocesan high school receives \$1,313 per student for 1982. This is made up of a Federal subsidy of 38% of the government school figure from the Federal Government (\$913) and a further \$400 from the state. If this process had been applied to the actual state costing of \$1,903 the subsidy would have totalled just over \$1,100. So it is safe to point out that this use of pseudo-statistics at the Federal level is leading to a \$200 per student head ripoff in just one area of funding of the New South Wales private sector. This would mean a \$14 million difference in New South Wales alone for 1982, no mean figure in a period of actual financial cutbacks in the public sector.

Mere use of conflicting figures is not the end of the story. One of the great barriers in the way of genuine community involvement in education has been a barbed wire entanglement of educational jargon and fractured syntax. Educational funding has more than its fair share — we have the current resources, systemic and non-systemic, category, per capita subsidisation, private input, contributed services, disposable income, joint programs, interest subsidy reimbursement — and on and on until we reach the logical conclusion of complete public non-comprehension.

It is in this atmosphere of cultivated confusion that the interests of the powerful, conservative groups are being well served at the expense of the government school system that is so essential to the maintenance and extension of democratic control of the nation's life.

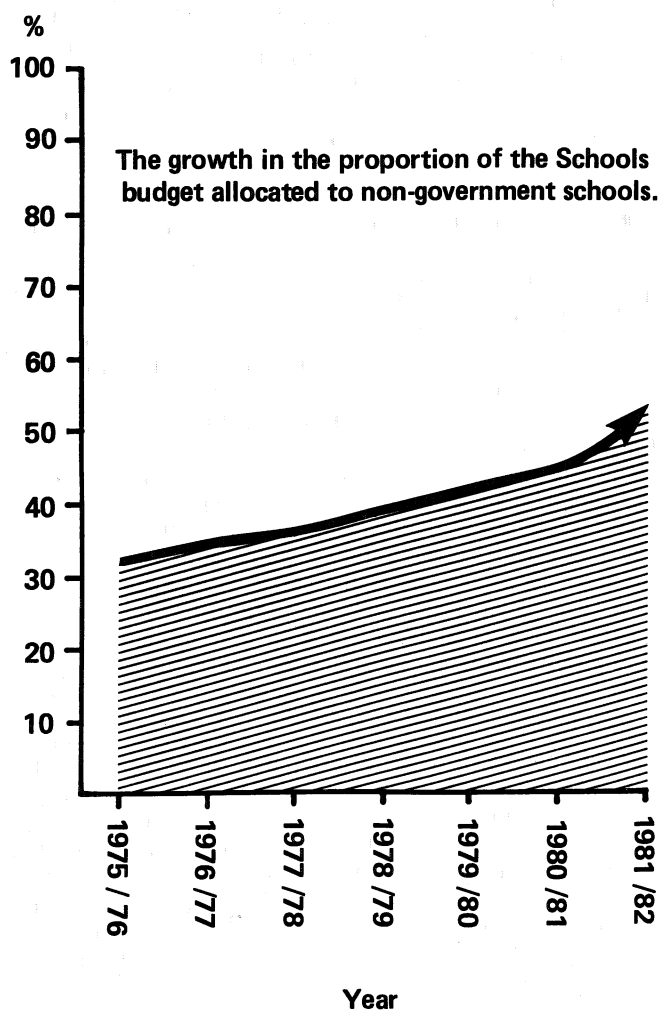
Behind the confusion of systemic/non-systemic Schools Commission categories and the rest lies the simple fact that some of the wealthiest schools in Australia have achieved "poorest school" classification and are being funded accordingly. The Category 3 non-systemic listing is a rollcall of elitism, particularly Catholic elitism. A reading of the Schools Commission "Report for the Triennium 1982-1984", particularly Chapter 3 "Public and Private Schooling" and Chapter 12 "The Non-Government School General Resources Program" would indicate that there is some disquiet about the extent to which the elite schools have taken advantage of loopholes in Schools Commission procedures.

12.5 Hence, since the Commission began its work in 1974, there has been no attempt to assess parental capacity to contribute to school recurrent resource levels. At present it makes no difference at all to a school's Commonwealth grant entitlement whether its community is unable or unwilling to contribute more to low resource schools. The only criterion is whether expenditure from private inputs is relatively low or high. Even though the policy of ensuring "maintenance of continuing effort" has been stated, measures of effort have never been related directly to ability to contribute and legal sanctions are non-existent.⁴

One can only view with some degree of astonishment the proposed solution to this problem. It only serves to underline the extent to which the conservative interests of this country have regarded genuine public opinion with contempt that such an elementary bookkeeping principle as outlined in the first sentence of paragraph 12.30 should be presented as a major policy change.

12.30 The first modification is designed to take account of total income available to a school as well as the school's actual expenditure from private sources at present. Currently, a school is classified for grant purposes on what it actually spends on recurrent resources. If it chooses to allocate large proportions of its private income for purposes other than its operating expenses and debt servicing and thereby reduces its actual expenditure on recurrent resource allocations for students, it can receive additional Commonwealth grants on the basis of its "assessed need" for additional resources. Such a practice is not only patently unfair but it is also inappropriate in terms of Commonwealth grants achieving their objective of improving resource standards.⁵

The encroachment on the public sector of education by conservative interests is easily assessed from an examination of the Fraser Government's budgets. Figure 1 clearly indicates the trend.



In actual money terms, the Schools Commission Guidelines have allocated \$458.9 million to the government schools and \$475.8 million to the non-government for 1982. The 1983 figures continue this process with the respective figures for

1983 being \$463.7 million and \$506.7 million. Such figures represent a political as much as an economic statement and provide an illustration in the most concrete terms of the Fraser Government's commitment to class based educational structures in this country.

At the beginning of this paper I discussed the shift that has occurred in the whole private sector funding debate from seeing government money as supporting parental effort to seeing it replacing this. This is not merely a theoretical argument — it can be argued by reference to the financial tables. Taking the period 1974 to 1979, the group of elite schools that are grouped statistically as "Other Private Secondary" produced the following interesting figures:

Source of Money	% Change 1974-1979
Commonwealth grants	Up 88.8%
State grants	Up 109.9%
PRIVATE INPUT	Down 14.2%

Against those type of figures it is interesting to put the comparable government secondary figures:

Both state and Commonwealth	Up 32.6% ⁶
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One noteworthy change in the political climate of educational funding is that of the Catholic Church.

The statement has appeared in many places in many versions but in an official document from the Catholic Education Office it appears as follows:

"Hence from both sources non-government schools will receive a total of \$248.5 m in 1982. This represents about 13.3% of total government money provided for all schools in New South Wales in 1982. In 1981 about 23.1% of pupils in New South Wales attended non-government schools."⁷

No longer do we have any attempt to enunciate the Church's role as containing a special responsibility to care for the education of the poor and needy members of the faith. A previous generation of Catholic educators would not have considered their function as that of being merely one part of a general non-government sector of education in which the wealthiest members of society stood on an equal footing for government funds with the poorest members of an inner city or rural parish. But that is exactly the public position it now adopts.

Such a statement as the above says as much about the political climate of this country as it does about the funding of education, government or non-government. Perhaps the quotation from Galbraith about the problems of legislating for the rich is not really applicable to Australian political conditions at all. Some form of camouflage may still be needed in the United States. In Australia we would seem to be able to dispense with such niceties altogether.

References

- 1 John Kenneth Galbraith, address to National Press Club, Washington DC 29/4/82. (Quoted in "Small Government and the Policy of Redistribution" by Richard Doyle, July 1982.)
- 2 Richard Doyle, "Small Government and the Policy of Redistribution". (Paper circulated by ACOA, July 1982.)
- 3 Commonwealth Schools Commission "Report for the Triennium 1982-1984", Canberra, March 1981.
- 4 Ibid.
- 5 Ibid.
- 6 Commonwealth Schools Commission "Recommendations for 1983" (Table 6, pp 34-35), Canberra, March, 1982.
- 7 Catholic Education Office, Sydney, "Some Facts On Government Spending on School Students in NSW", July, 1982.

No Frills Schooling for Depression Days

One of the aims of this issue of *RED* is to describe what is happening to public schooling around Australia. Too often, we become so embroiled in the day to day problems in our own particular states that we fail to see what is happening elsewhere. There is much to learn from the successes and failures of teachers and parents around Australia. Public schooling everywhere is confronted by new limits and pressures, but the issues, attacks and responses are not all the same. Here are a few of the key points to emerge from the following state reports:

- 1 A mounting concern to counter the shift of resources to the private school sector.
- 2 A cutback in resources, consultancy services and teacher aides.
- 3 An effort to impose narrow, cost-accountancy types of controls over teachers and their work.
- 4 A blurring of the public and private distinction with efforts to introduce the user pay notion into public schooling and to allow private schools to use public school facilities.
- 5 Efforts by the state to restructure public secondary schooling.
- 6 The central importance of curriculum and assessment as arenas of struggle in transforming public schooling.
- 7 The importance in any conflict to construct close teacher and parent action for progressive policies.

(Note: Despite our efforts, we have not been able to include a report from the Northern Territory. We apologise to readers in that state, and invite them to contribute a report to us to publish in a future issue of *RED*.)

Vic: Curriculum Reform Still the Focus



Phil Noyce

Yes, state schools in Victoria are under attack on a number of fronts. No plaudits for that observation; the question is, "which fronts do we take a stand on?" There's no shortage of angles, all of which themselves, are multifaceted: political, economic, pedagogical, governments state and federal, transnational companies are some springing readily to mind.

Context and history shape the strengths, weaknesses, emphases and choice of fighting fronts for defenders of public education. For anyone outside Victoria, this report could then profitably start with a brief background.

I'm writing as a secondary teacher and VSTA member. For the last fifteen years, three teacher unions, the Victorian Teachers Union (VTU), Technical Teachers Union of Victoria (TTUV) and the Victorian Secondary Teachers Association (VSTA), have worked in widely varying degrees of cooperation and more recently have agreed on demarcation lines to represent primary, technical and secondary teachers. These divisions are, as of this year, abolished as part of a Departmental restructure, leaving the unions in a more than curious position. (To continue this aside, the VSTA is currently undergoing its first ever rank and file elections, for the positions of its four senior officers: President, Deputy, Vice President and Treasurer. Previously, these positions were elected by and from a forty member, regionally elected Central Committee. The elections themselves were introduced by a group that we call *VSTA Reform*. Our two campaign themes for these elections are:

- ongoing reform of the teacher unions;
- putting VSTA policy into government practice.

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The first theme is perhaps a trifle cheeky — we're presuming to reform not only the VSTA but the VSTA in order that we can bring about federation and/or amalgamation of the VTU, TTUV and VSTA. But then, each union has its panorama of positions within it on this vital question.

But, to return to the theme — attacks on public education and how we're reacting. The economic analyses have been sparse — coming largely in the past few years from Robert Bluer and Simon Marginson, now both with the Australian Teachers Federation. We're going to have to come to grips with privatisation strategies at state and federal levels.

Labor In Victoria

The election of a state Labor Government drives home the fact that we have enormous amounts to do on the funding and economic decision-making front, if government policy is to be translated into action by a bureaucracy born of twenty-seven years Liberal rule. Our success here will hinge largely on the performance of the proposed State Education Board. Its setting up is to bring about a division of lines of advice to the Minister — policy advice (what is to be done) and management advice (how it is to be done) — from the State Board on one hand and the Director General's Department on the other. It's too early to hazard a guess as to its success in our terms, but, chilly winds of the NSW Commission notwithstanding, we're currently optimistic. Many traps, some chances. Additional to state level concerns, we should be going over the State Aid

debate from first principles in order to devise a strategy that:

- 1 brings Fraser down at the next Federal elections;
- 2 raises the flag for public schooling;
- 3 can't be abused in the way that the posh schools have abused the Needs formula over the last six to eight years.

Our Strength — Curriculum Reform

For me, the emphases and the strengths of parent and teacher activists in Victoria have centred on curriculum reform. Without a clear view of the political and social goals of the style of education we want to pursue, there's not much point in fighting for a state system. Putting it another way, if we accept the forms, structures and values of the ruling class schools, almost by definition we're going to inherit the fag end of their system. Only by confronting their hegemony can we start to find directions that will be of use to the children we teach. We've been less preoccupied at both grassroots and central levels with "public" schooling because we've been building a broad curriculum strategy with its focus not at the state level, but right down at the school. It's been founded on the proposition that at least for the compulsory years, curriculum planning should be directed at the attainment of experience of success for all children.

That premise has given rise to a number of principles:

Opposition to ranking of students

Letter grades, numerical marks, mechanisms such as moderation and standardisation at year 12 all rest on assumptions of failure being built into schooling. We've been developing alternatives, the most refined one being dubbed democratic curriculum. It's assessment component is predicated on whether goals decided at course commencement have been completed. Assessment goals should be constructed in such a way that they can be demonstrably attainable, and attainable for all who do the course.

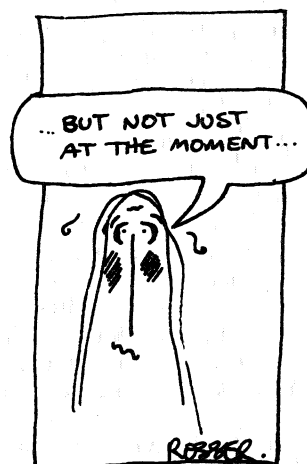
Curriculum to extend every student

Failing the student is the traditional method of resolution where course and student don't work out. Democratic curriculum separates questions of student **assessment** — was the work done? from questions of course **evaluation** — was the work worth doing? That is, it's necessary to evaluate where the course fails the kid as much as it is to assess where the kid fails to complete the course.

School-based, Negotiable Course Construction

The learning group is best placed to work out what is to be learnt or at least, what are the areas of investigation. Naturally it depends on teacher selection. It also depends on resources available, interest expressed, relevance to economic, social, ethnic context. Good courses are: socially critical, sexually inclusive, non-racist, exploratory and many other attitudes that aren't always fostered by schools.

We've achieved considerable success with these principles. They're even embodied in the constitution of a fast growing group of schools called the STC Group who in 1981 were accredited by the Victorian Institute of Secondary Education (VISE) to be issued an HSC certificate. That was the end product of moves by VSTA members in 1974 to boycott the old HSC, run then by the Victorian Universities and Schools Examination Board. VUSEB was abolished in 1976 when VISE was established. The High School Certificate had to undergo major surgery in order to make provision for the old (now called Group 1) and the new (now called Group 2).



Pessimists aside, we're winning. Group 2 is showing phenomenal growth, although after two years operation it accounts for only 10% of the student population. Group 1 is in crisis and will have to be even further modified. One of the "sleepy" policies of the Labor Government is to instruct VISE to abandon the "standardisation" process, a statistical device which its supporters claim allows the adding up of marks from different subjects as legitimate. Even here, there isn't a measurement expert remaining who's still prepared to defend the process, at a time when there is no amount of confusion as to a replacement system.

All of which reads as sweeping assertion, but then I have been asked to write on Victorian education in fifteen hundred words. Backup literature from the VSTA, the STC Group, VISE is now quite vast. In curriculum terms, state secondary schools have come a long way along the road from opposition to substitution. We still have, however, had plenty of opposing to do in recent times. National testing, core curriculum, the Greenpaper, the White Paper, the PA Management Consultants report on "Restructure of the Education Department" all got a solid mauling from parent and teacher organisations before the Labor government delivered the formal *coups*. So too, but still kicking, did the "Gifted" Children Program and Selective Entry to the three would-be "private", state schools, University High, MacRobertson Girls and Melbourne Boys. Currently, a Ministerial Review on University High's selective practices is considering its future, after hearing submissions. As in many other areas, in this the honeymoon period of Labor in power, we're feeling confident that the reform road is going to be smoother than we've known for a while. All that means of course, is that we'll be going faster. Puff puff.



NSW: Secondary Schools Under Review

Only two years ago the state schooling system in New South Wales celebrated its centenary. It was a notable milestone, providing an appropriate opportunity for re-evaluating the performance of what Education Department bureaucrats are fond of calling the largest schooling system in the southern hemisphere. Largest, but certainly not the best. Reconsidering public education in New South Wales does not provide many prospects for overall improvement. This is not to say that many well-intentioned reforms have been mooted in recent reports and policy documents. Rather it is to repeat yet again that such reforms reflect short term reactions to the crisis, not fundamental solutions.

The crisis in New South Wales public education was evident in the centenary year and is even more apparent now. Its bases lie in the assault upon funding for public schools which emanates from Canberra and is augmented by Macquarie Street. The Fraser government has been shifting school funding to the private sector for a number of years, ever since former minister Carrick's infamous "handful of dollars" pronouncement in 1977 (see RED 3). More recently the Wran government has further facilitated the move to privatise schooling at public expense. In June this year the Bureau of Statistics produced its annual *Schools Australia* (1981) report wherein it was revealed that retention rates nationally for private schools were nearly double those of state schools. This ratio is reflected in New South Wales as well. Nationally the state system of allegedly free, compulsory and secular schooling is being rapidly eroded and delegitimised — one feature among many of the rightward shift in cultural politics. Particularly startling in the Bureau's report is the rapid growth in the exotic schools: Hare Krishna; Ananda Marga; Falwell inspired Accelerated Christian Education; Rudolph Steiner; and so on are all indices of a serious, sickening trend. At the moment if someone was to establish an academy for garden gnomes they would probably score state funding. We should not forget who pays — us, and who loses — below all are aboriginal students and those from non-Anglo-Saxon backgrounds. The Australian Teachers Federation biennial survey of eight hundred and fifty schools released in August this year bears eloquent and sad testimony to the divisive effects of the Fraser-Wran funding fiasco.

Within New South Wales these developments have contri-

buted to a lowering of public endorsement and support for state schools, a shift which reached its nadir when Doug Swan, the Director-General, opened this year's Education Week in a parochial Catholic school in Newcastle. Dutifully he intoned the week's slogan: community participation for a better education — Vacuity rules, not OK!

Still the centenary year and subsequent did witness one major administrative change in New South Wales education, the arrival of the NSW Education Commission. Populated by union, parent and ministerial personnel, the Commission has replaced the eminently forgettable Public Service Board. Yet, although names change things remain the same. The breakthrough politically is that teachers and parents (not students, of course) now have some, albeit bureaucratised, self-determination in public education. A brief existence is no grounds for permanent illumination, even though the Commission has tried strenuously to involve interested parties in their deliberations. A Commission it may be, with statutory authority as well, but whether it can conquer the Bridge Street braggards has yet to be seen.

Without doubt the Select Committee on the School Certificate, established by Paul Landa and chaired by State MP, Mr B McGowan, has cast the longest, perhaps darkest shadow over New South Wales schools. The McGowan Report (1981) has become the major focus of teacher and community discussion, and, while it began as an investigation of the School Certificate, has blossomed into a fullscale examination of junior secondary schooling. McGowan has recommended that:

- the School Certificate be abolished and a Certificate of Secondary Education issued at any time between years 9-12;
- such a certificate would contain a complete school record, including non-academic activities;
- semesters of six months would replace year long courses, with schools developing their own curricula provided they are approved by the central authority — of course;
- school based assessment and publication of courses, along with abolition of the zoning system;
- the "talented" to be accelerated through sequential units.

The government has yet to act on these proposals. The NSW Teachers Federation, however, has expressed opposition to the dezoning proposal and voiced fears about the concept of failure which the report enshrines. But possibly more insidious than these, is the identification of the "talented" — doubtless on the basis of the much discredited IQ score (see RED 4). Stratification by ability joins the interschool competition for students to herald the arrival of McGowan's free market principles in education. And, of course, none of this is alleviated by the Wran government amalgamating inner city schools, and blatantly selling off Dover Heights Boys High to a nearby private college. The government's message could hardly be clearer.

At the senior high school level controversy continues to surround the Higher School Certificate. Most recently, following complaints concerning the disparaged standing of some modern language subjects, the Board of Senior School Studies appointed a small committee under Dr Ken McKinnon, Vice-Chancellor of Wollongong University, to investigate the HSC.



Interestingly, this report, submitted in August, has not yet been released for public discussion, despite press reports concerning its contents. The *Sydney Morning Herald* editorialised (August 20) that McKinnon's report had confirmed the arcane, remote, self-serving and secretive attitude of the Board to its exam. Moreover, McKinnon has recommended the abolition of the aggregate mark compiled from the best ten units. But unfortunately the problem is the exam itself and the authoritarian intellectual straitjacket it exemplifies and endorses.

At the tertiary level things are little different. April 1981 saw the edict from Fraser's "Razor Gang" that CAEs should amalgamate with universities in Wollongong, Newcastle and Armidale. Other than financial saving through staff reduction, no rationale has been provided for this. The intransigence of Fife and Baume on this question has traumatised students and

staff at the institutions mentioned. And let's not forget the periodic ritual fanfare of concern about teacher education which issued forth a few years back in the Auchmuty and Correy reports. Both have sunk to the bottom of the harbour. In teacher education there's no change like no change.

What should socialist teachers do about all this? One is tempted to say, emigrate! But more seriously the short answer is to develop revolutionary strategies and practices. A good start can be found in "How to Survive as a Radical Teacher" in *RED 3*, and in Kevin Harris', *Teachers and Classes* — especially the last chapter.¹

Read them!

Enact them!

Reference

- 1 K Harris, *Teachers and Classes*, London, Routledge and Kegan, Paul, 1982.

WA: State of Indictment

Lindsay Benfell



Having sustained several years of funding cuts, the State school system in Western Australia is about to be reorganised with significant disadvantages for left teachers and the majority of working people unable or unwilling, to join the growing ranks of private school supporters. In retaliation for a successful mobilisation of public support against education cuts, the State Government decided to discontinue deducting union dues from the pay of members of the State School Teachers Union (the WASSTU which covers TAFE, secondary and primary teachers). This has created severe financial problems for the Union and limited its efficiency in combating further funding reductions and maintaining broadly based education opportunities for the community.

Funding

Despite living in the "State of excitement" with projected growth of school age children, funds for education and trainee teachers' intakes have been cut. Primary class sizes in Western Australia are still unacceptably high, leaving teachers little opportunity to provide the individual assistance many students require. The Union is attempting to increase DOTT time (Duties Other Than Teaching) to allow teachers greater preparation and marking time. In 1981 the Union was able to co-ordinate schools refusing to accept transfer of support staff from the central and regional offices to the schools. Nonetheless, according to the Union's *Western Teacher*, "some specialist services have had their staffs reduced by as much as 50%, and others report budget cuts of 40% . . . even as high as 60% when previous cuts over the past few years are taken into account."¹ The lack of specialist support and advisory staff for school visits is particularly damaging for schools geographically isolated in the huge land area of Western Australia. Curriculum development, specialist remedial programs, and other innovative work are the worst areas affected.

Teacher Stress

The combination of high class sizes, inadequate DOTT time, lack of specialist support and advice, and constant public attacks on the integrity and capabilities of teachers have resulted in higher levels of teacher stress. A recent survey by the WASSTU found that 40.9% of teachers feel under considerable

stress.² The attempt by conservative elements to label the education system as the cause rather than effect of Australia's economic crisis, has not only provided the rationale to reduce the funding and quality of State school education and allow a transfer of resources to private schools, but has also encouraged teachers to adopt a defeatist attitude towards progressive education reform, and improving their working conditions.

Secondary Reorganisation

Against the backdrop of negotiations between the universities and colleges to develop common entrance requirements by a modified Tertiary Admissions Examinations (HSC equivalent), the Education Department is holding an internal inquiry into secondary education. The inquiry does not include a teachers' union representative, and terms of reference have yet to be determined. The inquiry is expected to adopt a similar model for restructuring as the recent McGowan Report in New South Wales, with heightened division between students preparing for tertiary education and those preparing for early entrance to the workforce (dole?). The school system is being restructured to replicate and reinforce the stratified division of labour. Working class kids will receive prevocational training while socially advantaged pupils, concentrated in private schools, will receive pretertiary training with minimal opportunity for interchange between the two streams.

TAFE Restructure

The State Government is continuing its efforts to undermine the working conditions of Technical and Further Education (TAFE) teachers. The development of community colleges in Kalgoorlie and Karatha has severely limited teachers' working conditions, and opportunities for transfer and promotion, as they are employed by the colleges rather than the Education Department. TAFE teachers are also being coerced into accepting a longer teaching year.

In June of this year the Minister for Education announced a panel to review staffing policies and procedures of the Technical Education Division (TAFE). According to the Minister, "rapid advances in technology called for equally rapid responses to meet industry's needs for highly skilled and specialist staff . . . The capacity of the Technical Education

Division to meet industry's demands has been limited by the existing staffing provisions within the division", (and so) "the review panel will advise on changes that may be necessary to improve the efficiency of the division."³ Teacher union representation is not provided on the panel.

The intent of the inquiry is obvious; technical teachers face decreases in their working conditions and security to enable the State to remodel TAFE education to more accurately provide for the needs of industry, rather than respond to community demands for both vocational and non-vocational education facilities.

TAFE education has already been partially restructured with part time study during the day now only available in three metropolitan campuses. Non vocational study has been transferred from technical colleges to senior colleges, leaving the former to provide for the whims and needs of industry.

Following a successful public campaign to avoid the closure of the Claremont Technical College which concentrates on Art and Design, the Education Department announced a 25% cut in art classes in all technical colleges. The ability of the TAFE sector to provide resources for people wishing to develop their creative abilities is seriously jeopardised, making way for greater "hands off" job training.

Following the successful campaign to blame the education system for our current economic crisis, and the restructure of post-secondary education emphasising vocationally based courses at the expense of courses encouraging critical social inquiry, the State has now directed its attention at the TAFE sector. The secondary and primary sector will be the next target.

Entrepreneurship In Schools

The *Western Teacher* in April of this year alerted members to

the dangers of the activities of Enterprise Australia, a front organisation for major transnational and national corporations charged with promoting procapitalist values in the classroom⁴. One of Enterprise Australia's educational packages, endorsed and promoted by the recent Ralph Report into Management Education, has been adopted by two metropolitan secondary schools. The Ralph Report, "commends programs already established in some secondary schools which seek to stimulate student interest in entrepreneurial activities"⁵.

School-to-work transition funds are increasingly being used for entrepreneurial projects in senior high schools. Projects include a BMX bike design by Wanneroo students which has realised \$80,000 in royalties; a tea towel making business at Pingally District High which employs fourteen women from the town; and a catering business at Gnowangerup.⁶

The overall emphasis of such programs is to encourage pupils to accept corporate capitalism as an immutable fact. The only way to improve our current economic and social crisis, it is argued, is to give greater support to "free enterprise" which benefits both workers and employers alike.

The exploitative social relations and division of labour that support capital accumulation is not given consideration by such free enterprise supporters. With inadequate DOTT time and decreasing curriculum development resources in the schools, the readymade curricula of Enterprise Australia may fill the growing vacuum. The accelerating introduction of computer aided learning in primary and secondary schools allows greater scope for organisations like Enterprise Australia to design software for the computers than for teachers in the schools. Left teachers should closely scrutinise such developments and propose alternate programs and strategies wherever possible.

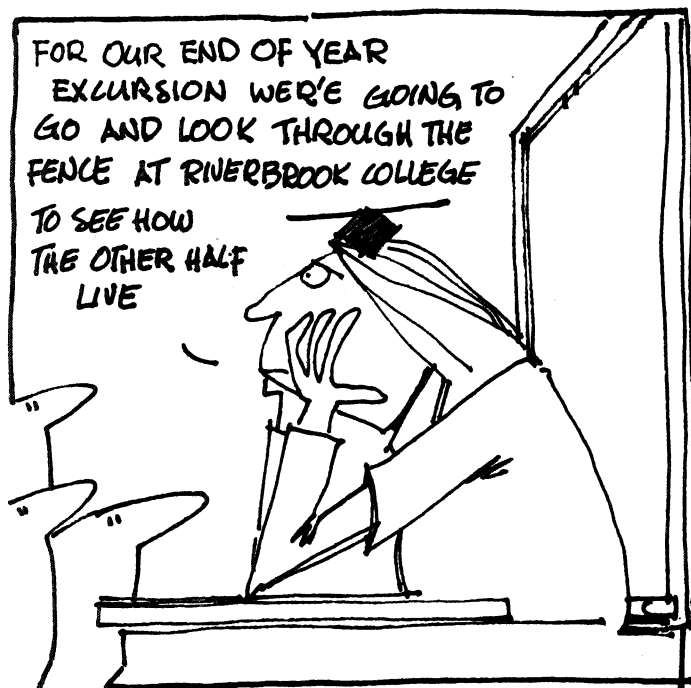
Teacher Supply

The Education Department is already expressing concern over the projected shortage of teachers in the coming years. This shortage results from the dramatic reduction in places available for trainee teachers in post-secondary institutions, and is exacerbated in Western Australia by the inability of institutions to attract enough students to fill the reduced trainee teacher quotas. The shortage will lead to further deterioration in class sizes, teacher stress, the quality of education and teachers working conditions.

The State Government has continually shunned teacher union criticism, while refusing to deduct union dues from members' pay. The absence of a financially strong and militant union obviously assists the Government in its plan to restructure the provision of education. Progressive teachers must endeavour to revitalise the WASSTU and maintain the strong support of parents and the public mobilised last year in defence of state school education.

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- 2 *Weekend Australian*, 7-8/8/82, p2.
- 3 *News Release* issued by WA Minister for Education (Mr Clarko), 12/6/82.
- 4 For further information on activities and motives of Enterprise Australia, see *Western Teacher*, 16/4/82, p6, "Corporations and Corporatism" and "Selling The Enterprise" in *Unions Under Attack* (Transnational Brief No 7, produced by TNC, PO Box 161, Sydney) September 1981, pp 16-19.
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- 6 *West Australian*, 4/8/82, p20.



TAS: Gray Days for Schools

Helen Bound & Ans van Heyster



Readers in other states may find it difficult to understand the educational scene in Tasmania without knowledge of some features which are peculiar to this State.

- The retention rate for grades 11 and 12 is much lower than the national average. In 1977, for grade 12, it was 25.4% for all Tasmanian schools as against the Australian average of 35.3%¹. Tasmanian figures in 1981 indicate that the rate for grade 11 for government schools is only 23.1%. (This figure hides the enormous differences in retention between metropolitan and rural areas: Hobart – 39.6%; Launceston – 25.0%; country areas lower, the lowest being 16.2% for the southern region².)
- In Tasmania, grades 11 and 12 are studied at further education colleges which are separate from the metropolitan high schools, and the rural district high schools. There are only eight such colleges at present, and they are administered by the Division of Further Education within the Education Department. The Division was created in order to set up these so called community colleges: colleges in which students can study the whole range of Further Education subjects, including Higher School Certificate³. The structure was imposed from on high by the Department and its inception has caused difficulties from the beginning.
- Tasmania's rural population is proportionately greater than elsewhere in Australia, and this helps explain the existence of district high schools. (District high schools look after the whole range of education from Kindergarten to grade 10.) The Tasmanian Teachers Federation (TTF) has negotiated special conditions for teachers in rural areas, including a nine day fortnight in Strathgordon.
- Since 1946 the upper limit of compulsory schooling has been sixteen years.
- A lower proportion of children are educated in non-government schools than in other states. (About 15% in 1976⁴; the figure for 1980 is 16.7% according to the TTF.)
- The Education Department still uses the bonding system to secure the intake of new, young teachers, although in recent years fewer prospective teachers are bonded.
- All children in government schools experience metalwork, woodwork, sewing and cooking. (The length of experience differs from school to school.)

A Flurry Of Reports

Over the past five years, the Government has produced four major education reports:

Committee On Primary Education (COPE) 1980⁵

The COPE Report places a great deal of importance on the growth and development of the child. Parents and schools are seen as having joint responsibility in preparing children for a changing society. Thus emphasis is placed on building up long term community-school relationships.

Schools are seen as being responsible for curriculum development, evaluation and utilisation of resources. The role of the teacher is that of facilitator and coordinator. To achieve these aims, the Report urged that greater emphasis in pre-

service training be given to child growth and development, knowledge of exceptional children and their needs, skills of observation and the use of diagnostic tests. In addition, the committee pushed for increased inservice training in management, schoolbased curriculum development, evaluation and accountability.

Secondary Education In Tasmania (1977)⁶

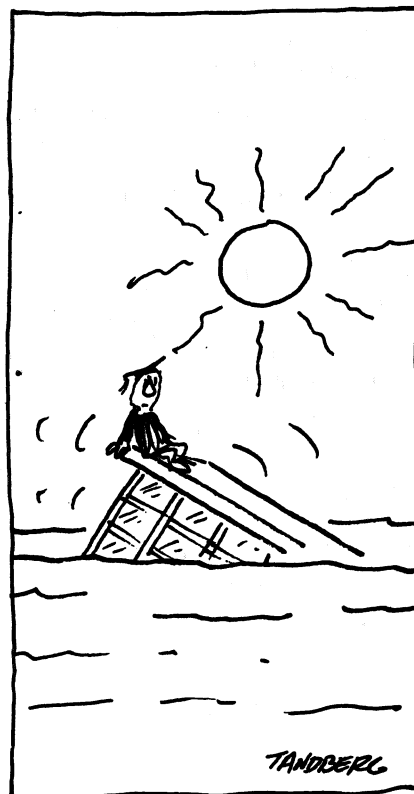
This Report has a very different emphasis to that of the COPE Report. Curriculum planning is centralised, with freedom for teachers only within the curriculum guidelines. The Report supports the abolition of the statewide School Certificate, and the issuing of schoolbased certificates. In order for schools to become competitors, dezoning is recommended with obvious disadvantages for schools and exit students in disadvantaged areas.

Tasmanian Education: Next Decade (TEND Report), 1978⁷

This Report, presented to the Government in 1978, assessed the state of compulsory education in Tasmania. Its main concern is with the quality of education (raising the standard of numeracy and literacy, improving education for disadvantaged children and strengthening school-community relationships) and the administrative changes necessary to bring this about. Overall there is little that is controversial about the Report.

The White Paper, 1981

The TEND Report urged the Government to formulate a policy that would embody a vision for the educational direction of



the State. The White Paper represents the first attempt by the Tasmanian Government to do just that. Its key proposals are schoolbased decision making, community involvement in the running of schools (school councils) and quality control of teachers.

In the current climate, the Paper sets the stage for conflict and speculation. It formulated a great number of "wishes", without spelling out priorities, at the same time as admitting that resources were more limited. Conflicts with interest groups might be avoided in the "fat" years, but in the "lean" years the publication of a comprehensive education policy is bound to lead to conflict. In fact, since May of 1982, Tasmania has had a Liberal Government which does not support the recommendations of the White Paper.

Where The Action Is

The most controversial issue in the education system at the moment concerns the organisation of further education where the new Liberal Government has stated it will break up the secondary colleges; HSC is to go back to secondary education. This implies a stop to the growth of the community colleges where all types of education can be studied by people of all ages for hardly a fee at all. The enormous increase in adult enrolments over the last few years shows the popularity of this concept.

One of the consequences of the proposed change is that course programs which do not readily fit traditional administrative categories and which have become important features of community education programs are put in jeopardy, (eg women's access to TAFE courses and the Adult Literacy Scheme).

The motto of the Liberal Party is: *Keep the public purse as tightly closed as possible!* This "priority" is largely responsible for creating a climate of fear in the schools, which in turn has led to divisiveness within the various sections of the teaching service. Consider, for example, the following:

- Formerly agreed upon staffing quotas are strictly applied. Under the Labor Government some schools had over-quota teachers on their staff but these are now to disappear by "natural wastage".
- "Natural wastage" has frightful implications for students because it means larger classes, less specialist help, fewer funds for relief teaching and irritated, overworked teachers.
- We live in a period of falling enrolments due to a declining birthrate. Since schools are dependent for funds on enrolment numbers, high schools now more and more engage in publicity exercises towards their feeder schools (zoning is alive and well in Tasmania, but it is relatively easy to get an exemption).
- When "natural wastage" is the watchword, and where in general a very tight job situation exists, promotional opportunities have become virtually nil.
- Schools have to defend themselves against attacks on literacy and numeracy standards which apparently fell overnight when youth unemployment increased sharply in the late seventies!
- The strict application of staffing quotas divides the teachers of the compulsory subjects from those who teach choice subjects. Divisiveness between sections of the teaching service has taken such proportions that recently a third union was formed. Apart from the Tasmanian Teachers Federation (for kindergarten, primary and lower secondary)

and the Tasmanian Technical College Staff Society (for TAFE) we now have a union for upper secondary (years 11 and 12) teachers.

- Another threatening measure is the thorough "review" of maternity leave provisions for public servants. This comes after the abolition of the position of Women's Adviser to the Premier.

Responding To The Pressures

Perhaps one of the most public and effective campaigns was waged around the struggle to employ the 1980 bonded exit student teachers. Some two hundred exit students, who faced unemployment, gained the support of the TTF. A mass meeting of teachers, students and parents was called and some one thousand people attended in a show of defiance. The President of the Tasmania Parents and Friends urged restraint, but despite this, all students on studentships were employed and the staffing agreement between the TTF and the Education



Department to employ an extra six hundred and seventy-two teachers was also maintained.

For sometime there have been grumblings of discontent about the increased workload, and the necessity of cutting back educational programs, including aspects of pastoral care. Left teachers, through the as yet small, recently established Left Teachers Group, are only beginning to come to grips with this situation through trying to formulate a sensible staffing policy (present TTF policy is contradictory) to put forward to TTF members, and urging for reaffiliation to ATF.

Many teachers, particularly those teaching in working class areas are very concerned about the moves towards greater inequality in education. This has been taken up, through the Federation, using the move to dezone schools as the immediate prime offender.

We are unaware of any organised parental response to issues facing education. However, individual parents and friends schoolbased groups have responded to schoolbased issues which affect their children, eg the lack of a teacher in a specialist area, or the lack of certain types of equipment. Letters to the Minister and the press have been used to apply pressure.

An important attempt to contact parents through their unions and raise the education issues was made by the Labour Research Group. The Group put together a pamphlet explaining the erosion of educational funding and therefore the quality of education. This pamphlet now has to be rewritten in the light of the new Liberal Government and the coming September State Budget and the Left Teachers' Group has taken over this task.

The Way Forward For Socialist Teachers & Parents

Many of the issues now facing us go back to funding, teacher unemployment, divisiveness between teachers, increases in class size, broken equipment . . . all of which lead to a decline

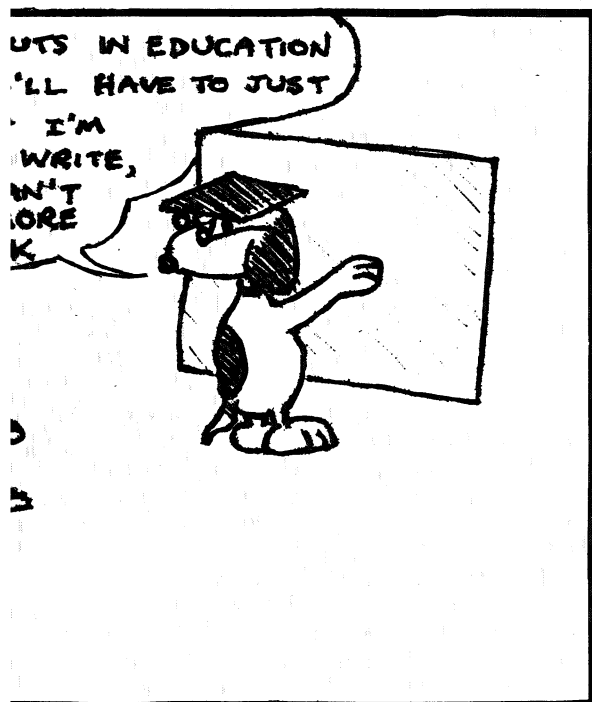
in the quality of education. Teachers must point out to parents how the child-centred approaches outlined in COPE and innovations more generally suffer because of cuts to funding. We have a Government committed to investment in the direction of capital, rather than in the direction of social interest. Under the pretext of the (bust) resources boom, money is directed from the public sector to provide infrastructure for the multinationals. Socialist teachers and parents must trace back these connections.

The apparent need of the Tasmanian Government to formulate an education policy in the lean years is partly a result of the media and business communities' attacks on levels of literacy and numeracy. This has resulted in an attempt to make schools more accountable to their local communities. Proposals for school councils and teacher quality control, are in the long term positive proposals, but in today's situation dangerous. Teachers must first work towards a close involvement of all parents in school programs, before such a proposal can be viable. Teacher quality control is likely to be used against non-conformist teachers. Any assessment of teachers must include peer assessment, and for the older age groups, student assessment.

Socialist teachers, parents and students must "translate" the educational issues into political issues. They must be active in trade unions and the wider labour movement and the socialist parties to work towards a socialist society. Already the TTF has joined with twenty-five other unions against Premier Gray's job threats to Tasmanian Government employees. Teachers and parents, through their unions and parent bodies must join together in this manner. The social wage campaign is an important means of achieving this.

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- 3 Tasmania, *Further Education In Tasmania*, Hobart, December, 1978.
- 4 R Selby Smith, op cit, p5.
- 5 Tasmania, *Primary Education In Tasmania*, Education Department of Tasmania, Hobart 1980.
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- 7 Tasmania, *Tasmanian Education: Next Decade*, Education Department, Tasmania, Hobart 1978.
- 8 Tasmania, *White Paper*, op cit.
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SA: Pay as You Learn

Since 1975 there has been a determined attempt by the Federal Government to tighten its control over the education system. Its policies have been heralded by a string of reports that have provided the technical legitimation for its actions, underpinned by its general philosophy of "user pays" and Federalism.

It is not surprising then to find that the Liberal Government in South Australia has continued this process with its own inquiries and reports that will, it hopes, provide for it the rationale for change. In the last twelve months the Govern-

ment has released a trinity of reports; Keeses 1 and 2; Touche Ross; Marsh Barr. These reports herald the introduction of new directions and priorities within the education system of South Australia that are beginning to produce the rumblings of open dissent from parents, students and teachers alike.

Privatisation And Cost Accounting

The reports have two main strands. First to re-establish the control of the Education Department over the curriculum, and secondly, to create a new understanding of the financing

RED 17



Mike Presdee

of education that will act as an explanation of educational cutbacks and financial constraints. To this end, the final Keeves report is permeated with the language of modern business management, namely cost efficiency analysis. Terms new to educationalists but used constantly by the cost accountant become an essential part of the educational debate. "Program performance budgeting" — or what used to be called payment by results, is seen as a major part of any evaluation (K2, R13.5). "Inefficient service provision" (K2 R4.7), is discussed within an educational context, as if the education system could be run in the same way as a biscuit factory or a mine. No longer efficient? — Stop mining, sack staff. Education expensive? — Stop providing it, sack staff. Keeves feels quite sure who is demanding this new approach — the people of Australia!

"... a strong dissatisfaction has developed that is relatively widespread across Australia, associated with what is seen to be a failure of educational services to **yield benefits** that are commensurate with the high level of financial resources that they consume ...". (K2, 1.22)

He produces no evidence of this "feeling". It is simple. He knows! Everyone knows! The foundation for the changes within education becomes no more or less than random feelings plucked from conservative ideologies.

The practical consequences of these changes are twofold; a shrinking teaching force with a reduction of four hundred teachers for 1983, and an attempt to introduce new methods of marketing education based upon the concept of "user pays". These new methods entail changes in organisation based on cost efficiency; control over what is taught and how, and better methods of quality control, now called "evaluation". If we are to treat the whole of education as a free enterprise "industry", then there are a number of relationships that develop around the buying and selling of services:

- a Schools buying services from the Department.
"Government and non-government schools engaging the services of ... Regional Service units **would be required to pay for the use of these services**". (K2 R4.7)
- b The community buying services from schools.
"... income attained by a school, **from leasing its facilities**" balanced by
"A school should be charged leasing fees for facilities held that are surplus and above standard requirements." (K2 R16.4)

A school with good facilities will be forced to rent those facilities **rather than to use them** in order to pay the Education Department's lease fee.

- c Parents buying services from schools.
Here, in this relationship, is the final move towards the privatisation of public education, for it is recommended in the Touche Ross Report that **charges to parents be made legal** and written into the Education Act, serving as a direct education tax.
"The time would appear to be overdue when schools should be given legal powers to level such funds at levels or ranges to be determined by the Government." (TR p45)

The move by Liberal governments to sell off social capital to private enterprise is to be extended to the realm of education, so that in the end only "successful, confident and client oriented schools would have the **right to survive** or be **rewarded**

with improved resources".

The new motivation **within** education becomes not something to do with the needs of children, but with the acquisition of money. No longer will new curricula be introduced because of perceived new needs, but rather as a part of a scramble for money incentives. Keeves makes this quite clear when he states that there should be "Money incentives to introduce new curriculum" (K2 R12.3). What is happening in South Australia is the beginning of the privatisation of public schools that will see the end of free State education and even the end of State education as we know it!

However, just as governments seek to control the standards of products and the market places within which commodities move, so Keeves attempts to bring central State control over both what is taught and how it is taught. He recommends the moving away from school based curriculum to a recommended Education Department curriculum containing a State approved core of knowledge, whilst at the same time attempting "quality control" by introducing a regular "review" of all schools. The rationale for this is simply that the present system is voluntary and school controlled, which **automatically** results in some schools "not yielding worthwhile results". (K2 p204)

Strategies Of Resistance

In South Australia reorganisation is meeting with resistance from within the State Department, schools and by parents. The Department is holding strongly to its views on parts of curriculum content, whilst at the same time beginning to reorganise internally along the lines of cost efficiency (see the Marsh Barr report). In the city of Elizabeth, a large cohesive industrial working class area north of Adelaide, there is under way an attempt to reorganise all its high schools in order to reduce the numbers of teachers to bring into operation Keeves suggestion that "schools should be required to undergo reductions in the teaching force". (K2 R16.3) It is proposed, in Elizabeth, to split secondary education into three junior high schools, grades 8-10, one senior high school, grades 10-12 and two normal high schools, grades 8-12. The major alternative to this plan was the proposed closure of **one or more schools**.

The campaign of resistance to the removing of matriculation classes from the view of most children and the reduction of teachers in Elizabeth schools is well under way with public meetings called by both parents and the teachers' Union, organising on behalf of teachers. It will not be long before other measures will be tried in other areas to reduce the overall provision of education in this State. It is, therefore, around these early struggles that parents, students and teachers must come together to discuss how best they might counteract reorganisation moves and how best they can halt the proposed reductions in educational provisions. These deliberations and strategies may change from area to area, but what is certain is that parents, students and teachers must all demand a real part in the decision making process concerning the need, if any, and type of reorganisation.

There is a strong possibility that the moves in South Australia away from comprehensive education will not be replaced by energetic working class schools, but more likely by the dominated and controlled institutions of the past that produced neither an exciting education nor a cohesive working class consciousness. For teachers and parents the struggle must now centre on the system of education rather than matters such as the curriculum taken in isolation, otherwise we may find little room to manoeuvre in the future.

ACT: Federal Cutbacks Come Home

- Joan Corbett



During most of the sixties and early seventies, Canberra's population grew in excess of 10% annually. The virtual no-growth situation present since 1975 which is related to Liberal policies to "contain" the public sector — both in size and in cost — has set education planning back by some years. The changing pattern of needs for schools and colleges is further obscured by current conservative political thinking. Progressive educators have reacted defensively and are forced to spend much energy on protecting what has been achieved in more enlightened times. The loss of morale about public education is one of the hardest problems to combat and one of the most costly to rectify. For a system still newly independent from New South Wales and resourced in its early development by the Whitlam Labor Government, the attack is not surprising — just wasteful.

While there are still growing areas on the suburban outskirts of Canberra and shifts of population away from the inner suburbs, planning continues. Changed ideas about new developments reflect the limited outlook of current policy on public education just as clearly as do proposals for "rationalising" existing programs. Some aspects of a progressive system have survived, so far, and are relatively safely established. These include school based curriculum development, school based determination of philosophy and objectives, continuous assessment of student progress at the school level (no public exams!) and community and teacher representation on both school boards and the ACT Schools Authority. A continuing commitment, in principle, to choice and diversity within the system is now inevitable because it is a basis of the system and has been well accepted. The extremes of the continuum, of course, are constantly under review.

Current Government Influences On The System

Funding

A policy of "no betterment" of resourcing for the ACT education system has existed with the current Government. This has hindered the maintenance of facilities as well as curtailing improvements. During first term of 1982, for example, access to repairs of school electrical equipment was cut so that there is a growing stock of useless capital. Many needed building works are on the end of the "Never List" and increasing numbers of health and safety risks are reported ranging from potholed bitumen in playgrounds and insecure roof supports, to inadequate heating and air circulation which has led to increased rates of illness among staff and students in some schools.

Staffing Levels

Both teaching and ancillary staff are covered by inflexible Public Service staff ceilings. Formulae have been introduced to allocate staff to schools in such a way that administrative positions have been eroded and job opportunities severely limited. Class sizes of well over thirty exist in almost all primary schools. Recommendations of a recent "Review of Primary Education" to increase staff, particularly at the early childhood level, have been shelved indefinitely even though described by the Schools Authority as of highest priority. At

secondary and TAFE level, curriculum options are under continued threat and areas of professional expertise are being lost to the system. TAFE teachers had their borrowing rights withdrawn by the inadequately staffed Teaching Resources Centre (Government run) and this was only remedied when ancillary staff were reallocated to the Centre from the colleges themselves.

Non-Government School Development

"The proliferation of non-government schools" has become a tired phrase in the ACT because of the accuracy with which it describes a major form of attack on us. Not only do we have a number of small private schools seeking and gaining funding at times when perfectly viable government schools are being forced to evaluate themselves and justify their continued existence, but also some non-government schools have been accommodated in government school buildings despite strong resistance from government school teachers and parents. Early this year an action by the local Trades and Labour Council to ban construction work from altering a government high school, saw teachers picketing the school to implement the bans. The high school was growing in size and needed the five classroom wing that was being separated off for the temporary accommodation of a Christian primary school of about seventy students.

Recently, a proposal for a third Anglican school for Canberra has been publicly debated. The application for \$2.5 million for capital expenditure on the school was opposed by a cooperative effort of the ACT Teachers Federation and the ACT Council of Parents & Citizens Associations. The production of an action kit for all school staffs and P&Cs started the campaign and much discussion was generated. The school was granted \$188,000 of its claim in the Federal Budget. It is to be built in an area where existing schools have declining enrolments and urgent needs for maintenance and it will cause reduction of curriculum options for high school students in the area. The right to choose private education is once again being used to justify real attacks on the education available to the vast majority.

Youth Unemployment

Job opportunities in Canberra for inexperienced workers are scarce. The attack on education — public education in particular (at last recognised for representing the vast majority of the population — of the unemployed anyway!) — for not equipping school leavers properly for the labour market, marches on. Though uninspired, this argument succeeds in causing an injection of funds for "transition education" to try to undo the damage. Secondary and TAFE teachers battle on with the dilemmas of dealing constructively with young people who have little to live on and nowhere else to go, because there is no demand for their labour.

Reviews And Evaluations

For its open attempt to achieve some progressive educational goals, it is not surprising to find the ACT system under constant scrutiny. The administrative function of review and evaluation does not seem to be under budgetary threat. Recent reviews have: rationalised Special Education (cutting down the access of students to teaching of English as a second language

and to remedial reading assistance); adjusted staffing entitlements downward; recommended positive improvements that go unimplemented for lack of resources; damaged morale and industrial relations; and, left many dedicated educators gasping for breath.

Teacher Salaries

A protracted and bitter campaign for a salary increase for teachers early this year opened the eyes of many a previously moderate thinker. The Public Service Board argued strongly against an increase for teachers on the basis that Commonwealth Teaching Service salaries should be set at a market average for all teachers in Australia. A work value decision in 1975 had indicated there was clear justification for ACT teachers to attract salaries higher than other Australian teachers because of the different duties performed here. Teachers were stood down under provisions of the Commonwealth Employees (EP) Act during the dispute and given a fullbench Arbitration Commission decision which eroded that salary margin as well as failing to allow any catchup for the relativity with average earnings that has been lost by most public sector employees. The effects of this campaign on industrial relations are still to be felt. The Union was made more determined than ever before by such attacks and despite the attempts by Government to downgrade the status and influence of teachers in the community, general support has not been lost. But the morale of teachers has been dealt a very basic blow.

Proposals For Change

Community College At Erindale

The seventh of Canberra's secondary colleges to open had a fight to the finish over its establishment. Providing year 11 and 12 students with normal daytime education and a successful Community Adult Education program for over 1,000 students, it faces a number of problems created by the free-enterprise style community centre housed in the same building and providing recreation and sporting facilities. The same building provided accommodation for another small private school for the first year of its operation and issues such as community use of the college library are not yet satisfactorily settled.

Tuggeranong South Restructure

Recently a proposal from the ACT Schools Office has been circulated. It completely restructures the school system in one developing region of Canberra. Instead of the preschool, primary (year 1 to year 6), high school (year 7 to year 10), secondary college (year 11 and 12) structure that works elsewhere, the new idea is for three tiers: primary (up to year 4), a "middle school" (year 5 to year 9) and college (year 10 to year 12). One of the most worrying aspects of this proposal is the method of its presentation. Consultation before circulation of the document was minimal and the recommendations of standing committees of the Schools Authority not to proceed with discussion of it was ignored, as were the recommendations which had led to the present structure, set up only six years ago. A review of high school education (for year 7 to year 10 students) is currently underway!

"Back To Basics" Cry

A recent series of *Canberra Times* articles presented the views of selected parents about their choices to send children to non-government schools. Government school bashing is a theme that has earned much local press coverage. It is linked with



discussion of declining standards of education and a call for the more disciplined approach and greater formal emphasis on 'Reading 'Riting and 'Rithmetic of traditional education.

Parents have reacted against open plan innovation of many primary schools and this is cited as a cause of drift to non-government schools. It is when conservatism is rife that community involvement in decision making of schools can become most destructive.

The current conservatism will certainly be enhanced by the lack of new curriculum development. The Curriculum Development Centre based here was subjected to massive cutbacks in staff and resources last year at the recommendation of the Razor Gang. Other resource development and curriculum consultant functions have been sacrificed since then. With little or no continuity of staffing in this area, it will be a slow redevelopment even with adequate resourcing. This is an effective way to ensure a minimal input from progressive educators.

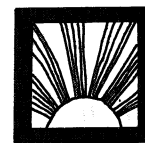
Where To Go - What To Do

The major attacks on education in the ACT are loss of resources and conservative social pressures. What's at stake is a small and viable system based on more progressive educational ideas than have been achievable elsewhere. Students, parents and teachers have a lot to lose if political pressures succeed in ending the early trends towards progressive and innovative education. The campaign to resuscitate public education makes little progress with the current Federal administration. Attempts to counter the editorial prerogative of the existing local press are necessary but can be unproductive - especially if taken on by small groups of active teachers and parents. Larger groups have better chances to be heard. More important is the direct influence on votes that may be gained by local discussion focused around community schools.

Teacher unions, the labour movement in general and other supporters must make vocal the demand for excellent public education for the seventy-five percent of students now in public schools and must work towards removing fee-for-service elitist schools in ways that are imaginative and effective. The mass support for public education that exists must be made more obvious.

The next Federal election is of obvious importance for provision of improved public resources and facilities. The call for public education should not be lost among the calls for improved health, welfare and other services. Socialist parents, teachers and students must make clear demands for resources, innovation and new energy. Public education is, after all, a major politicising influence for us all.

QLD: Boom for Whom?



Bob Lingard

Introduction

The economic restructuring and recession in Australia has been accompanied by an attempted restructuring of the education system by both the federal government and the state governments. Because of Queensland's demographic and economic idiosyncracies the attacks on liberal/progressive schooling have probably been sharper in Queensland than elsewhere. However, the schooling/economy relationship is a complex, indirect and mediated one which is often fraught with contradictions (Dale, 1981; Hall, 1981). Even in Queensland, where the state seems to represent very clearly the interests of international mining capital, while attempting to protect the interests of the rural industry, this is the case. The Bjelke-Petersen government's authoritarian attempts to tighten its control over schooling have usually been successful, but they have been contested and hopefully will be contested more successfully in the future.

The specific events which indicated that the "social democratic settlement" in education had been broken were the banning of MACOS and SEMP in 1978. A series of direct political interventions, eg banning of certain textbooks, had occurred prior to the more publicised MACOS and SEMP bannings (see Freeland, 1979). The public furore over these bannings led directly to the establishment in 1978 of a *Select Committee on Education in Queensland* chaired by Mike Ahern, the National Party member for Landsborough. More long term influences included the general conservative backlash against liberal/progressive schooling, the government's desire to strengthen its control over schooling plus the Premier's 1977 election promise to review the Radford schoolbased method of assessment. All these factors interrelate and are linked to the new economic recession.

The Select Committee tabled its Report in the State Parliament on March 18, 1980. This consisted of "The Final Report" plus six interim reports: "Composition and Functions of the Board of Secondary School Studies and Secondary School Assessment", "The Aims of Our Schools and the Future of Social Education", "Literacy and Numeracy", "Human Relationships", "Isolated Children and Isolated Schools",

and "Post Secondary Education".

These reports are an interesting mixture of liberal and right-wing rhetoric, analysis and recommendations. For example, the reports, if implemented, would greatly increase the power of the Minister over education, while the "Human Relationships" report in liberal fashion recommends the introduction of sex education into Queensland schools. Smith and Knight's (1979) assessment that the "surface" ideology of the Report is liberal, while the "deep" ideology is conservative is an apposite one. The Report can be seen as an ideological statement which serves to legitimate previous direct political interventions in schooling, eg supporting the ban on MACOS, although few of the Ahern recommendations have been implemented to date.

It is essential to place these educational developments in their political and economic context because without such an understanding it is difficult to develop an appropriate form of political resistance. Nationally, there has been a substantial decline in labour-intensive manufacturing, which is concentrated in New South Wales and Victoria, and an increased economic dependence upon capital-intensive, multinationally controlled mining industry focused largely in Queensland and Western Australia. Bjelke-Petersen speaks loudly and frequently of Queensland's economic boom against a backdrop of an Australia wide recession. The substantial net migration into Queensland indicates that his rhetoric works at the level of attracting population. However, this increased population places further strains upon public utilities such as housing, hospitals and schools in a state where the free enterprise ideology greatly inhibits public sector expenditure. The contradiction between the boom rhetoric and reality of life of most people could lead in the future to some legitimisation problems for the Queensland Government. Political activity needs to be directed at increasing the awareness of this contradiction - "Who benefits from the Queensland Boom?" The reality that the Queensland Government, via the gerrymander, governs on behalf of international mining capital needs to be continually publicised.

This contradiction is very obvious in education. The Queensland Government has reduced educational expenditure with 23.58% of the total budget for 1981-82 going to education compared with 25.66% in 1975-76 budget (*Queensland Teachers' Journal*, March 18, 1982, p2). The Australian Teachers Federation 1980 National Survey indicated that Queensland had the worst student/teacher ratios in both primary and secondary schools in Australia. This situation is being exacerbated by the six hundred school children per month who are accompanying their parents to Queensland. Recent Schools Commission data indicates that Queensland has the second worst per pupil expenditure in the primary sector and easily the worst per pupil expenditure in the secondary sector. Queensland school children are clearly not benefiting from Queensland's boom - another obvious focus for a political campaign.

The remainder of this article will consider four current issues in Queensland education, these being: the class size dispute, changes to secondary school assessment, proposed amendments to the Education Act, and the continuation of "cultural censorship" in Queensland schools.



Class Size Dispute

The continued existence of many large classes in Queensland schools — more than 150,000 students are in classes larger than the Ahern Report recommendations (Teachers Union President, *Courier Mail*, February 24, 1982) — has been the focus of the major industrial action of the Queensland Teachers Union (QTU) in 1982. As early as May 5, 1973, the then Director-General of Education stated that by 1977 no individual class would exceed thirty (quoted in *Courier Mail*, February 24, 1982).

The Ahern Report stated that "class sizes of twenty-five in years 1, 2 and 3; thirty in years 4 to 10; and twenty-five in years 11 and 12 are reasonable targets at which to aim; and targets which should be implemented as quickly as resources permit" (para 4.13, "Literacy and Numeracy" Report). The Report also recommended the reduction of year 1, 2 and 3 class sizes to twenty-five "as a matter of urgency" (para 4.13, "Literacy and Numeracy" Report). These recommendations are the same as those contained in the policies of the Queensland Teachers' Union, the Labor Party, the Liberal Party, and the National Party. Basically the industrial dispute centred around the Government's unequivocal refusal to provide a specific timeline for the implementation of these recommended class sizes.

The industrial dispute escalated from individual schools where teachers and parents acted in concert to resist the transfer of teachers, to mass meetings of teachers throughout Queensland at which it was decided to hold ballots on whether or not to teach classes in excess of the Ahern class size recommendations. In March, about 2,500 teachers in fifty-five primary schools and eighteen secondary schools (only thirty-three schools were in the Brisbane area), either stayed away from school or in secondary schools refused to teach large classes. Parents were by and large very sympathetic and co-operated in a variety of ways with teachers.

The Queensland Government countered this action with direct threats towards parents and teachers and a media campaign. A glossy pamphlet on the issue was printed and distributed to parents via every school child. A large advertisement in the *Courier Mail* outlined the government's position in an open letter to teachers and parents. It concluded "The government will continue to work towards the Ahern class sizes, but it will be done in a sensible, and responsible way, not in an atmosphere of tension and orchestrated outcry". The extent of parental and public support belied this "emotive and orchestrated outcry" statement.

What is the political significance of the dispute and how effective was the QTU and the Queensland Council of Parents and Citizens Association (QCACA) campaign? To a certain extent the campaign has been successful and will probably result in some increased education funding in the forthcoming State Budget to employ more teachers. This partial success can be traced to two interrelated factors: firstly, the fact that parents and teachers were involved at both grass roots and organisational levels, and secondly, that parent and teacher participation came from both urban and rural areas. These factors distinguish this dispute from the earlier unsuccessful opposition to the banning of MACOS.

Let us turn to the first factor. As outlined earlier, the dispute began at the school level initiated by teachers and parents. Throughout the dispute the President of the QCPCA, at the time Heather Beckmann, spoke at teachers' meetings and actively participated in the press in support of the teachers



and in opposition to the Government's handling of the matter. Threats to charge parents keeping their children away from school in support of the teachers only served to strengthen the resolve of the QCPCA. In nearly all the schools where industrial action occurred local P&Cs voted to support the teachers; parents indicated their support by keeping their children home on the strike days or caring for children who did attend school. There seems to be a very important lesson here that combined teacher and parent pressure is more effective than either alone.

The actual industrial dispute had its gestation in rural schools in National Party electorates. Paradoxically it was educationally conservative opposition to composite classes which pushed the country parents to actively support the teachers. These parents saw through the Department's and Minister's euphemistic rhetoric that composite classes were no hinderance to modern pedagogical practice, but indeed a boon to them. Given its infamous gerrymander, the political power base of the Bjelke-Petersen Government lies in rural areas. Brisbane is a politically insignificant "liberal oasis" in the context of Queensland politics. Evidence of rural support for teachers during the class size dispute lends some credence to the suggestion that the Government will move some way towards reducing class sizes through increased educational expenditure in the forthcoming budget.

Bjelke-Petersen's boom rhetoric was an indirect cause of the class size dispute in that the resulting net migration into Queensland has exacerbated the class size situation. The paradox of the class size dispute is that the Government's immediate inaction probably has made more people aware of the apparent contradiction between Queensland's boom and the failure of most Queenslanders, including school children, to benefit from it. In this instance the state may have to utilise some of the funds usually used to provide incentives to capital to employ more teachers so as to "engineer consent"

(Hall, 1981:13), particularly given the rural support for the teachers. The ultimate paradox may be that Queensland education receives an increase in funding, and teachers an improvement in work conditions, at a time when reduced educational expenditure has become the norm.

Changes To Secondary School Assessment

Schoolbased norm-referenced assessment has been used in Queensland secondary schools since 1971, when the Board of Secondary School Studies was established to formulate syllabuses, approve school subjects, oversee assessment, and issue Junior and Senior Certificates, in line with the 1969 Radford Report recommendations. This shifted control over secondary schooling from the University to the Department of Education through the Board. Teachers and schools now potentially had considerable autonomy concerning curricula, pedagogy and assessment (see Freeland, 1979). It seems evident that at a time when the state has attempted to institute tighter controls over schooling, including curricula, that schoolbased assessment would come under close government scrutiny.

In his election campaign speech in 1977 Bjelke-Petersen promised a full review of the Radford scheme. The Board of Secondary School Studies had virtually pre-empted this election promise by appointing Professor Scott in February 1976 to review schoolbased assessment. In April 1978 this "Review of School Based Assessment" (ROSBA) was published. Basically the Report recommended the retention of school-based assessment, but also recommended that the norm-referenced mode be replaced by criterion-referenced testing so as to meet more efficiently the product accountability demands which had been placed upon the schools in the changed economic and cultural context (See Preface to ROSBA). The first interim Ahern Report subsequently endorsed the ROSBA recommendations in November 1978 and the process of implementation is now under way.

The ROSBA Report is clearly a "protective" and "defensive"

document which seeks "to defend the autonomy and prerogative of professionals" (Apple, 1982) at a time when such autonomy is under considerable threat. Many amongst the "educational cognescenti" felt that there would be a return to public examinations which seem to ensure tighter control over classroom practices, but this was not to be the case. The Department strongly supported the ROSBA recommendations to the Ahern inquiry; to retain schoolbased assessment meant, in a sense, that they – the Departmental professionals – retained control over curricula. To this extent the ROSBA Report is progressive in its recommendations. Teachers retain the autonomy they had won during the educational halcyon days of the late sixties/early seventies. More importantly, a competitive form of assessment has been replaced by a less competitive one; no "normal curve" will be imposed on the distribution of results across the state. Potentially schools may communicate more clearly and directly with their communities about what they are attempting to achieve.

However, the ROSBA Report also can be seen as a further manifestation of the "technisation" and "scientisation" of schooling (Habermans, 1971). The Report's recommendations are incorporated quite clearly within the discourse of efficiency and accountability, which links very specifically to the new economic climate of the late seventies/early eighties, with government's seeking tighter ideological and fiscal controls over reduced funding to schools.

Pusey (1981) has suggested that into the eighties the state will achieve greater control over schooling by the increased "technical regulation of educational practice" (1981:10). Criterion-referenced testing, through its requirement for clearly stated measurable aims and supporting modes of assessment, attempts to make schooling "more programmable, more structurible, more measurable, more predictable, and hence more controllable" (Pusey, 1981:11). These developments in school assessment in Queensland are in line with two trends prevalent throughout Australian education: "The downgrading of teaching to a technical activity, and the equation of learning with the production of strictly-measurable performance objectives" (Ryan, 1982:29).

To date the only QUT opposition to ROSBA has involved teachers in the ROSBA pilot schools refusing to participate further without being granted extra time and more staff to assist in the process (*Queensland Teachers Journal*, May 1981, p 20). While these are appropriate demands, the QUT has offered no educational or ideological objections to ROSBA.

Education Act Amendment Bill

Since the late seventies the Queensland Government has reasserted tighter control over schooling, specifically defining what could not be taught in schools. The Government is now seeking to formalise through legislative change this increased Governmental/Ministerial control. Thus the "hidden agenda" of the Ahern Report – increasing Ministerial control over curricula – is now to be implemented. This is one of the few Ahern recommendations to manifest itself in legislative change, a point which the QUT made in its opposition to the legislation.

The Education Act Amendment Bill was deferred in the final reading stage from the November, 1981 sitting of Parliament and subsequently from the March sitting. It will be introduced again in the August session and almost certainly become law.

Deferral resulted because of some opposition to the Bill from the more "liberal" of the Liberal parliamentarians, and



because of opposition from the fundamentalist far right about the registration of non-state schools provision of the Act. Such required registration is a witness to the hand of education bureaucracy in the Bill's formulation. There was also considerable opposition to the proposed Bill from both the State and independent teachers' unions and from both Parents and Citizens Associations. These groups were concerned that no consultation had occurred about the proposed changes prior to the Bill's first reading. More particularly, they were disturbed by the increased power of the Minister inherent in the amendments.

It seems that the Queensland Government is no longer happy with the ideological security of the "politics of non-decision making" vis a vis school curricula. Following the abolition of all public examinations in Queensland in 1971 after the recommendation of the 1969 Radford Report, control over secondary school curricula and assessment has resided with the Board of Secondary School Studies, which appeared to have some legal autonomy from the Minister in carrying out these functions (see *Queensland Teachers' Journal*, January 27, 1982, p7). This autonomy, apparent or real, will be emasculated with the new legislation, as will the autonomy of the Board of Teacher Education.

With the amendments, teachers' union representation on both Boards will be selected from a panel of names which each union will have to submit to the Minister for approval. The unions have voiced strong opposition to this change. The sole parents' representative on both Boards will be appointed via a similar procedure; both P&C Associations have voiced their disapproval.

Despite this opposition it seems that the Education Act Amendment Bill will be enacted in the very near future. The QTU has threatened teacher non-cooperation with the new Board of Secondary School Studies and its district and subject review panels, even to the possibility of not providing school certificates (*Daily Sun*, August 3). The independent teachers' union (QATIS) has indicated that it will not provide the Minister with a list of names for Board membership, but rather will provide the required number and boycott the Boards if these names are rejected (*Courier Mail*, July 20). The Education Act Amendment Bill is poised to become the new "cause celebre" in Queensland education. However, at this moment it does seem as if the Government will gain the clearly defined legal power to directly control school curricula in the very near future.

Continuation Of Cultural Censorship In Queensland Schools

Ideological control over what goes on in schools (Freeland, 1979; Apple, 1982) has been particularly evident in Queensland in the recent past with the MACOS and SEMP disputes. Since then cultural censorship has continued in less publicised, and sometimes more subtle ways.

The power of progressive administrators was central to the liberalising of Queensland schooling throughout the early seventies. However, these administrators had their fingers burnt with the MACOS and SEMP disputes. A new climate of self censorship and caution now seems to prevail within the Department. For example, in 1981 the Acting Director General strongly cautioned secondary school principals against purchasing the CDC's "SENSE" (Studies to Encourage Non-Sexist Education) materials. In the light of the second interim Ahern Report, he felt much of the material was inappropriate

for use in Queensland schools. Thus the Ahern Report was used in an ideological way to justify censorship.

Departmental regulations are being used to enforce censorship. Regional directors are supposed to approve any excursions which will take students out of schools for extended periods of the day. There have been cases where approval has been refused to attend certain films, in one recent instance *The Man From Snowy River*!

Specific Departmental regulations on visiting entertainers in schools were outlined in the May, 1981, issue of the *Education Office Gazette* and the June issues stated: "Where a charge is levied on the students attending a performance in a state school during school time, it is incumbent on the principal to ensure that the artist, or group of artists, has Departmental approval and is coordinated by the Queensland Arts Council. Approved groups are issued with a small certificate of authorisation signed by the Director-General of Education and the Administrator of the Queensland Arts Council" (p115). The Queensland Government withdrew its Queensland Arts Council grant to the satirical and politically radical "Popular Theatre Troupe" which had worked in many schools in the Brisbane area. The Departmental regulation effectively bans this group from working in schools.

Censorship continues in English teaching, particularly in some rural schools where rightwing groups pressure principals, regional directors and often the Minister over set texts. In one recent incident the Minister directed that *One Day In The Life Of Ivan Denisovich* and *A Patch Of Blue* be removed from the reading list in a country high school. However, English teachers still probably enjoy greater freedom than most of their colleagues, but this freedom has to be fought for and defended (Lingard and MacLennan, 1982). It is disappointing that collective opposition through professional associations such as the English Teachers Association or the QTU has not been forthcoming.

Rightwing pressure upon the Science Advisory Committee of the Board of Secondary School Studies has seen equal time being granted to creationist theories alongside evolution under the core topic "Origins of Life" (Maher, 1982).

Only a few of many possible examples have been outlined. These are sufficient to indicate the new climate in which progressive teachers have to defend their practice. Such successful defence will only come through strong collective opposition.

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After DOGS, COWS

At Rooty Hill in Sydney's western suburbs this August, a public meeting of over 450 people called upon federal and state governments to stop funding private schools. The gathering, of mainly parents and also teachers, had declared its support for public education, and protested over funding cutbacks which particularly affect working class schools in the area.

The group which organised this meeting, COWS (Combined Outer Western Schools), intends to continue campaigning in support and defence of public schools in the West. Interested teachers, parents, and other concerned citizens could contact Scott Poynting, 569 8987 or Bronwyn Mehan, 763 1228.

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Hobart Left Teachers Group

A group of leftist teachers has been meeting regularly in Hobart about once a month since first term this year. Aims are:

- to work to make the Tasmanian Teachers' Federation (TTF) an active and responsive force;
- to encourage the development of political awareness among teachers;
- to develop a marxist analysis of the existing political, economic and social situation and relate this analysis to education in Tasmania and to the teachers.

The group can be contacted through the Left Bookshop, 290 Murray Street, Hobart; or via Penny Sara, 48 Church Street, North Hobart.

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Class Mates

London — Tutors at Cambridge University, where Prince Edward will study history next year, are vetting potential students to see if they will fit in with the Prince.

University authorities hope to weed out any political troublemakers.

"We don't want any rough diamonds here while the Prince is at Cambridge", said a university spokesperson.

"Working class teenagers" were considered rough diamonds, he said.

The Australian

September 29, 1982

Perhaps they'll only accept those with "C" and "D" matriculation grades, like His Highness himself achieved, to spare him further embarrassment?



End To Beauty Competitions In Schools

The latest counter-sexist memo from NSW Director-General of Education, Doug Swan, urges all schools to abandon beauty competitions and similar activities as being demeaning to girls and detracting from their motivation to learn by encouraging an over-dependence on their physical appearance for success in life. We encourage readers to make sure that students in their schools are informed as to the reasons behind this memo and that it is not just derided by a small group of sarcastic and cynical teachers.

RED NOTES.

Dole Studies

London, August — the Open University is currently advertising for a Lecturer in Unemployment Education.

This is obviously just a tiny beginning. Soon, all the universities will have enormous faculties of Unemployment Education to replace all those redundant departments that used to teach Employment Education.

Surely, we can look forward to lucrative salaries being offered for the Thatcher Chair of Advanced Unemployment Education at Oxford, or the post of Geoffrey Howe Professor of Monetarist Unemployment Education at the London School of Economics.

from a letter to
The Guardian by
Roger Dunkley, 15/8/82

Teachers' Anti Nuke Groups

The Western Australian School Teachers Union (SSTU) has decided to form a nuclear disarmament branch, similar to those of doctors and nurses.

School teachers, as much as any other professional group, have a role to play in warning of the dangers of nuclear warfare, said SSTU President John Negus.

The West Australian Education Minister, Mr Clarke, claimed the union had become associated with leftwing peace groups. Mr Negus said that "Peace studies are an integral part of the social studies program in our schools, and I am sure that every thinking parent wishes that to continue."

A Melbourne based group calling itself "Teachers For Nuclear Disarmament" held an evening attended by over one hundred recently. They are working on dissemination of materials.

The contact person is Judy Barclay, PO Box 31, Carlton South 3053.

□ □ □

Career Education Kit On Girls

The Newcastle Community Taskforce for Youth Employment is being funded by the Apprenticeship Program for Girls to develop a resource kit for use by careers advisers in secondary schools. The kit is to be piloted in Hunter Valley with possible wider distribution in the state now in the pipeline.

The kit's objective is to interest girls in a broader range of occupations by providing practical school and classroom strategies designed to develop the confidence of girls in attempting non-traditional work, as well as giving the usual information about jobs and labour market trends. It will also include guidelines for organising non-traditional work experience, for the use of role models and the involvement of parents in career education.

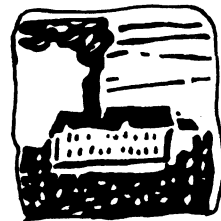
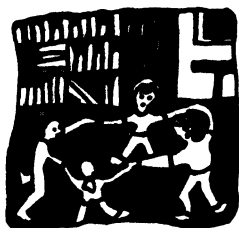
The kit is being developed by Monika Allan and will be ready by the end of this year. A copy will be held by the Non-Sexist Resources Centre (phone 923 9284). Further information can be obtained from Monika, on [02] 665 7996; or Cathy Sharpe, EEO Officer, Newcastle Tech, on [049] 610 461.

From *Women In Education*
Newsletter
Inner City Education Centre

In our editorial, we argued for the construction of a socialist conception of public schooling. There is a similar need in England, and in his account of how radical teachers might respond to conservative attacks, Geoff Whitty echoes and extends our arguments. Can we simply attribute all our problems to the economic crisis? Whitty thinks not, and suggests that we have failed politically and ideologically to develop successful oppositional strategies.

Radical Teachers and Political Forces.

Geoff Whitty



There can be little doubt that various policy initiatives in the field of curricula and examinations over the past few years have sought to limit the freedom of teachers over their own work situations and close down much of the space in which radical innovations were able to exist (if not flourish) in the 1960s and early 1970s. The William Tyndale affair, the attack on progressive methods, the Great Debate, the various official circulars and documents on the school curriculum, the squeeze on Mode 3 examinations and the successive revisions of the 16+ proposals can easily be seen as part of a single and inexorable trend. Faced with a moral panic orchestrated by Fleet Street, in which unbridled teachers were represented as selling the country short or even fostering revolution in the classroom, it is easy to understand why radical teachers have become rather muted and defensive about what they are doing and what they stand for. It is equally easy to understand, particularly in view of some of the pronouncements about education made by leading industrialists in recent years, why radical teachers might find attractive the sort of sociological theories that represent contemporary education policies as part of a monolithic and largely successful attempt to functionalise the state for capitalism in a period of accumulation crisis. Such theories almost certainly make a lot of sense to teachers who are experiencing an attack on their autonomy and a closing down of the space in which they have been used to operating.

There is no doubt that theories of this nature take us far beyond the naiveties of the "new sociology of education" that accompanied the period of radical innovation in the early 1970s. So much that has happened since then has pointed to the limitations of individualistic innovations in curricula and pedagogy as a strategy for radical educational and social

change. The conclusion drawn by the contemporary theories is that, even if space was utilised to some effect in the earlier period, the reigning in of the limits of teacher autonomy since the mid 1970s, seems to present clear evidence of capital's capacity to bring education back into line when it really matters. Yet, while analyses like this correctly identify important influences that underlie contemporary state policies in and around education, they also entail certain dangers. They tend to focus upon one set of influences to the exclusion of others and suggest that, by and large, the needs of capital feed through to and have effects in the educational arena in relatively straightforward and unproblematic ways. In doing this, they are highly susceptible to the charge once made by Geoffrey Nowell-Smith about such theories, that they are in danger of "falling back on the usual banalities of British leftism of the 'Well-it's-all-capitalism-isn't-it? variety' ". While they recognise that the imperatives of capital accumulation can only be met with the help of political and ideological strategies, they nearly always seem to retreat from a proper recognition of the contradictions that this can create and the possibilities that it presents for the left. At their worst, such analyses can contribute to a sense of defeatism on the left, or else serve to justify abstention from all but economic modes of intervention or those political and ideological strategies that are directly linked to them.

In my view, this position pays insufficient attention to the complexity of recent developments in and around education and to the complexity of the response that is required from the left. It is too easy to conclude from such analyses that the closing down of the more radical approaches to curriculum and pedagogy in a period of economic crisis demonstrates how misguided radical teachers were to see this as a viable or important terrain of struggle. Rather, it may have been the largely individualistic and uncoordinated nature of such radical

innovations that was at fault and, more particularly, the political failure of the organised left to take curriculum issues seriously until it was too late. The fact that many left commentators find it easier to critique developments in theoretical

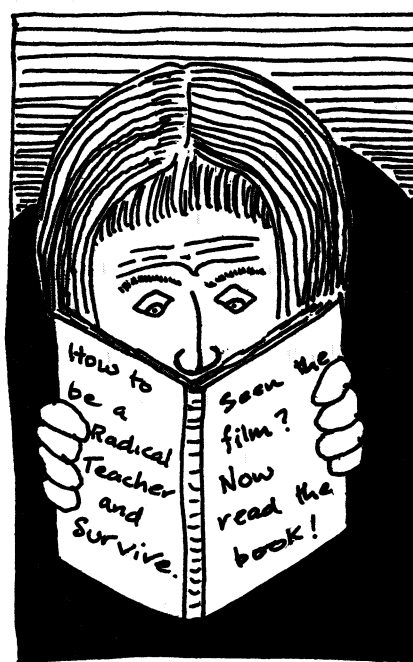
It is vital to move beyond those theories which merely explain to us why we are experiencing the policies that confront us in education today to a more active exploration of the sorts of initiatives that might effectively challenge them.

terms than to contribute to more positive strategies of contestation in the curriculum field may itself merely be an indication of the paucity of coherent debate about the content and control of the curriculum on the left and in the labour movement. During the postwar social democratic consensus, most of the Labour Party seemed content to struggle for the extension of state educational provision, while leaving the decisions about the content of the curriculum to their partners in the public education alliance, the teaching profession. Thus the social democratic expectation that the state and its professional servants would provide for the needs of the working class helped to stifle the meaningful discussion of the nature of the curriculum in the Labour Party and the trade unions. Meanwhile, sections of the revolutionary left have also stifled such discussion by their simplistic and uni-dimensional analyses of the state and their tendency to represent struggle as essentially economic rather than ideological in nature. The recent attacks on teacher control over curricula and examinations have put under strain the tacit understandings that existed between the teaching profession and the labour movement, but this need not necessarily have been an entirely reactionary development. It has effectively become that partly because the left and the labour movement has had no clear contribution to make to the debate about what is to supersede the ideology of teacher control and has thus left the field clear to the various reactionary alternatives that now seem to be on offer. As much as anything, the lesson of the past decade is that the left needs to rebuild a tradition of distinctively socialist discourse about the curriculum and organise around it in counter-hegemonic struggles.

In this context, recent policy initiatives in education and their developing outcomes would repay more careful study on the part of the left than that revealed in the sorts of analyses that reduce them to a more or less successful functionalisation of the state on behalf of capital*. Not only would such study reveal that these initiatives and their outcomes have been rather less straightforward than such analyses suggest, it would also reveal a succession of lost opportunities for the left. Thus the sort of settlement that looks like emerging on the ground is by no means that foreshadowed in the demands of Sir Arnold Weinstock and James Callaghan back in 1976 that the school curriculum should be more closely geared to the needs of corporate industry. Rather, it looks like being but one more

uneasy compromise in what Raymond Williams has characterised as the ongoing negotiations between the old humanists, the industrial trainers and the public educators – and one in which the old humanist interest is much more clearly visible than might have been expected. Indeed, if Harold Wilson did once say that grammar schools would only be abolished over his dead body, in curricular terms he has largely had his way. At least for those pupils who take public examinations, the squeezing of progressive and radical innovations has by no means produced alternatives that are clearly geared to the needs of industry but rather, in some respects, a reversion to some of the styles of work that were being dismissed as irrelevant to contemporary needs during the Great Debate. If we look at what is happening in the field of 16+ assessment, we find a renewed emphasis on many of the things that Sir Arnold Weinstock et al were complaining about, that is a return to conventional notions of a high status curriculum embodying literate, abstract, differentiated and uncommon-sense knowledge.

One of the reasons for this somewhat unexpected outcome is that the old humanist lobby, as represented by the universities and their examining boards, has been able to organise around a reasonably coherent curriculum philosophy, gain the support of a powerful political constituency, and take advantage of some crucial contradictions and ambiguities within the whole curriculum debate. In particular, it has been able to take advantage of a tensions between demands for a return to former "standards" in education and the demand for greater relevance in the school curriculum. While paying a certain amount of lip service to the latter demand, it has essentially reasserted the strength of an old style academic curriculum and even extended it beyond the minority of pupils who traditionally took O levels. Meanwhile, another part of the emergent compromise seems to be that the industrial trainers will extend their influence over the curriculum of those who will not take the new 16+ exams. On the other hand, as in the fight for comprehensive education, the public



educators have concentrated on calling for a common organisational pattern for school examinations and, in conjunction with the demise of the ideology of professional control, this has meant that questions of the content and control of the system are effectively being decided by the other parties to the compromise. Increasingly, however, the conventional position of the public education alliance no longer looks tenable. Yet in this situation, rather than developing a viable socialist alternative, some sections of the left and the labour movement have all but thrown in their lot with the industrial trainers, whilst others have hidden behind the old humanist conception of a liberal education as the best defence against corporate encroachments upon the educational system.

It is, of course, just about possible to regard either of these positions as likely to provide a context within which some elements of the radical innovations of the 1960s and 1970s might survive. Thus the traditions of an academic form of education can be seen as providing space within which critical scholarship can be pursued. On the other hand, the attempt to pull the curriculum into line with the demands of industry at least brings the real world into the classroom and may serve to remove the mystifications engendered by a liberal education and expose to critical scrutiny the harsh realities of our capitalist society. Yet, it seems highly unlikely that the left will be able to colonise or influence either of these unsatisfactory alternatives unless it has a clearer idea of a more acceptable alternative of its own. This might, for instance, involve something akin to what the 19th century radicals described by Richard Johnson dubbed "really useful knowledge" and whose radical potential lay in a particular blend of the meaningful and the critical. Had the contemporary left developed and organised around an equivalent concept, the settlement emerging from the recent debates might well have been preferable to that with which we now seem to be faced. It would not, of course, have produced a socialist curriculum inside the educational system of a capitalist society, but it might have produced a different compromise from the one with which we are now confronted and it almost certainly would have provided a better basis for future struggles. Indeed, given the divisions amongst the other parties to the settlement around the concepts of academic and vocational education, rigour and relevance, theory and practice, the disposition of political and ideological forces may not have been as unfavourable to such a development as at first sight appears. In a sense, the left has been a victim of its own theory and has tended to underestimate the possibilities for, and indeed the significance of, oppositional ideological practice within the curriculum field. It is vital to move beyond those theories which merely explain to us why we are experiencing the policies that confront us in education today to a more active exploration of the sorts of initiatives that might effectively challenge them. The more we recognise that prevailing developments are partly the product of the political and ideological failings of the left rather than an inevitable outcome of economic crisis, the more chance we have of developing viable political and ideological strategies to contest them.

One of the first tasks is, of course, to consider what "really useful knowledge" might mean for late twentieth century radicals, for it certainly cannot merely be that of an earlier period. Most importantly, it needs to be refined and developed

within the wider labour movement. Yet, to imply that it cannot merely be predefined by radical teachers, whether individually or collectively, is not to suggest that they would not have an important role to play in the development of curriculum thinking within that movement. It is important to stress, in view of Entwistle's defence of a traditional academic curriculum against his own caricature of what this sort of thinking might lead to, that a genuinely radical alternative to anything currently proposed is hardly likely to consist of a mere celebration of working class culture as it is, along with the racism and sexism chronicled by Paul Willis and others. Like that of the earlier period, "really useful knowledge" in the contemporary context would almost certainly be "knowledge concerning our conditions in life . . . [and] how to get out of our present troubles". As Uldis Ozolins (one of a group of Australians who have given more thought to such questions than most of the British left) puts it, a curriculum that is in the interests of the working class is not:

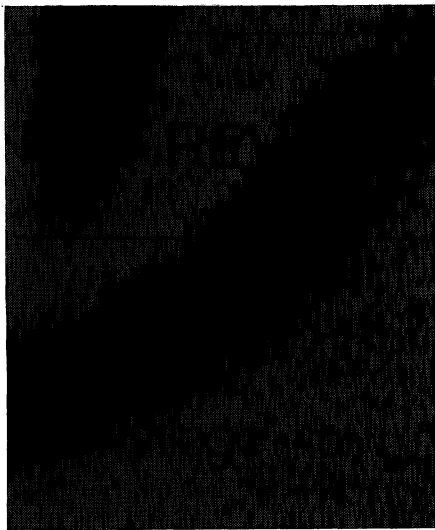
" . . . just a study of working class culture and working class life . . . [but rather it] must be study of the relations of the working class to the rest of society: the forces by which this relationship is maintained and the ways in which this relationship can be investigated, questioned and eventually transformed."

In some ways, such ideas are not too far removed from those underlying the work of individual radical social studies teachers in the early 1970s. Certainly there is much to be learnt from the modes of pedagogy developed by those teachers to combine the meaningful with the critical by relating to their pupils' experiences of everyday life while moving beyond the limited penetrations already present within working class culture towards potentially transformative perspectives on our existing society.

However, such ideas need now to be carried far beyond the limited space that is left in our classrooms and into public debates about what constitutes a valid curriculum for the late twentieth century. Initially they need to be considered within the political constituency in whose interests they claim to operate. The left and the labour movement might then be in a better position to combine the political and ideological resources necessary to take advantage of the contradictions of the current conjuncture to fight for a more acceptable compromise in the curriculum field than that which is now emerging. It may even be that renewed conflict between the old humanists and the industrial trainers, fuelled by the continuing prevarications of Sir Keith Joseph about where precisely he stands, will provide the left and the labour movement with an opportunity to remedy its past failures in this field sooner than we might think.

* This part of the article draws upon a paper entitled "State Policy and School Examinations, 1976-82" which will appear in *Contemporary Education Policy* edited by J Ahier and M Flude, published by Croom Helm in Autumn 1982. Other relevant reading includes M Sarup, *Education, State and Crisis* (Routledge and Kegan Paul, 1982); J Clarke et al, *Working Class Culture* (Hutchinson 1979); *Melbourne Working Papers 1979* (University of Melbourne 1979); CCCS Education Group, *Unpopular Education* (Hutchinson 1981); H Entwistle, *Antonio Gramsci* (Routledge and Kegan Paul, 1979); D Gleeson and G Whitty, *Developments in Social Studies Teaching* (Open Books 1976).

Geoff Whitty runs the MP/MPhil program in Urban Education at King's College, London.



***The Early Experiences Of Students
On Australian University Campuses
by Clive Williams with Tom Pepe,
University of Sydney, March 1982.***

This recent study by Clive Williams will disturb all but the most dedicated elitists with its revelation of the powers of privilege in education.

Williams is Sydney University's student counsellor and in 1980 he surveyed 6,000 first year university students on fifteen of the eighteen Australian campuses.

He shows that while in 1979, sixty-five per cent of year 12 students were enrolled in government schools, only fifty-nine per cent of the following year's university entrants came from the sector which educates over three quarters of Australian children.

At the same time, the share held by the non-Catholic private schools rose from fourteen per cent, in year 12 to twenty-two per cent at university entrance. Catholic private schools slipped slightly from twenty-one per cent to twenty per cent.

More significantly, the composition of the universities which produce the social leaders of the future — Melbourne (the "most advantaged" according to Williams), Sydney, Monash, Queensland, Western Australia, ANU, etc — is more influenced by private schools than are universities as a whole.

For example, 38.4 per cent of Melbourne male students and 33.2 per cent of Monash male students came from private schools. The products of the non-Catholic elite schools tend to be concentrated in the most prestigious and wealth generating professions — Medicine and Law.

Almost Half Medicine Students From Private Schools

Nationally, 46.4 per cent of Medicine students came from private schools — 53.5 per cent at Monash, 52.6 per cent at Melbourne, 52.0 per cent at Western Australia, 50.0 per cent at Tasmania, 48.4 per cent at Adelaide.

The most "privatised" universities were Sydney, NSW, Macquarie, Melbourne, Monash, Queensland, Adelaide, Western Australia, Tasmania and ANU (male students only).

Williams also shows that these universities tend to have the highest school achievers, the most students whose parents were university educated and the students who receive the most financial help from their parents — and the least dependent on TEAS and part-time jobs.

He reveals a depressing self-perpetuating cycle of material and cultural privilege, whereby the upper social layers reproduce their dominance of society each generation with the endorsement of the education system.

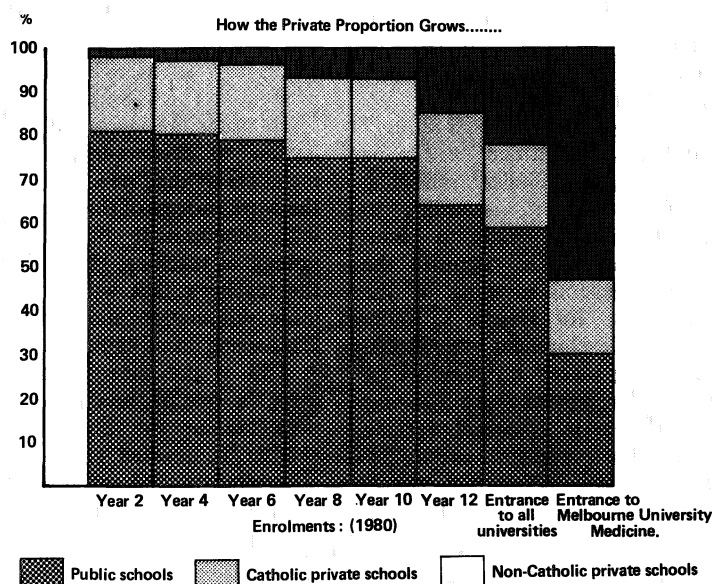
It is hard to consider the universities really "public" institutions when these non-Catholic private schools, especially exclusive and wealthy Level 1 schools, play such a weighty role from year 10 on and in university student selection (refer to the accompanying graphs).

Are government schools to blame? Are our teachers poor educators? Are the students of government schools intellectually or genetically incapable? Of course not. The power of privilege in Australian education is guaranteed by an exam and selection system which favours the elite, bolstered by the entry of many government school trained high achievers into the private sector in years 11 and 12 and fostered by generous government grants. The Level 1 private schools will receive almost \$100 million in Commonwealth and state grants this year.

And the non-privileged get no second chances. Williams shows that less than two per cent (!) of new university students in 1980 came in through further education non-HSC modes of entry such as mature age of "non-academic selection". Yet these entrants often do very well once they are admitted.

Williams' data should not be ignored by teachers and would be education reformers. He has shown the necessity of the ATF Curriculum policy approach to assessment — the need for an overhaul of class biased structures of selection/rejection in schooling — and the need for a fundamental change in both the financing of public schools and the provision of tertiary student support, in order to open up higher education to the less privileged.

Simon Marginson



Source: Australian Bureau of Statistics 'Schools 1980', and Williams.C
'The Early Experience of Students On Australian Campuses'.

Class Struggle in the Classroom

Teachers And Classes. A Marxist Analysis, by Kevin Harris. Routledge and Kegan Paul, London, 1982. Price approximately \$12.

Kevin Harris begins his recent book with a brief autobiography which traces his own "upward mobility" from working class pupil, through the teaching profession, to university academic. This is set firmly in the context of a thorough dispelling of the individualist myth he later dubs "anyone can therefore everyone can" (p 17). This point will be brought home forcefully to those of his readers who have taken the not uncommon "upward" path out of working class origins through a teaching career. Implicit throughout the book is a warning to all progressive teachers who face and sometimes succumb to the pernicious temptation to see the success of their "top" students as the goal of successful teaching (or at least a hedge against soul destruction). For with the "anyone can therefore everyone can" fallacy in focus, it becomes clear that teachers with this aim are doomed to fail — to fail with the majority of their charges while tallying the successes of the few.

This is not an exercise in teacher-bashing, however: such "teacher-failure" is consistently identified as being inherent in the capitalist schooling system. Also inherent, according to Harris, is the related failure to "Educate". The capital "E" signifies the older, more general meaning of the word, referring, for Harris, to more "full personal development with special emphasis being placed on cognitive or intellectual development" (p 6). Our schools succeed in socialising young people into the dominant culture by dint of the hidden curriculum: this is education with a small "e". They signally fail however, to provide the real Education which liberal ideologists cite as their *raison d'être*.

Harris's argument that teachers must so "fail" under monopoly capital is not, however, entirely convincing owing to a perplexing shift which seems to occur in

the meaning of the term "educate". The definition cited above and used in most instances throughout the book is not really the same as the one implicitly used in the argument, ie that to Educate all students is impossible because of the need to reproduce the collective labourer. The "Educated" are the functionaries of capital, though it is not made explicit why these may be considered "Educated" in the earlier sense (pp 64, 69, *passim*). Important however, is the observation that the causes for this perceived failure to truly educate are rarely traced by teachers beyond practical immediate factors, the day-to-day details with which Harris is obviously familiar. The often levelled criticism of "academics being out of touch with the realities of the classroom situation" (p 12) should not be aimed at this author.

The analysis of teachers' class situation, to which the title refers, is made within a broadly Althusserian framework. Chapters 3, 4 and 5 are on the economic, political and ideological identification of teachers respectively. All Marxist theoretical concepts used are introduced clearly and concisely, and contrasted with seemingly similar terms from orthodox accounts.

Harris argues that teachers under monopoly capital perform the global function of the collective labourer in transmitting knowledge and skills, while performing the global function of capital through acting as agents of control and by inculcating in their pupils the prevailing ideological features, "norms, habits, values and attitudes" of this mode of production (pp 128-9).

He notes the increasing "proletarianisation" of teachers in common with all members of the "new middle class". As the work process of the teachers changes, with concomitant changes in the technology of teaching, Harris predicts that the teacher's task will tend to involve more domination and surveillance and less passing on of knowledge.

This is not sheer economism however; the role of the class struggle is not neglected in the book. The second chapter is devoted to classes and the class struggle, and the notion is clearly incorporated in the "Revolutionary Strategy for Teachers" in the final chapter.

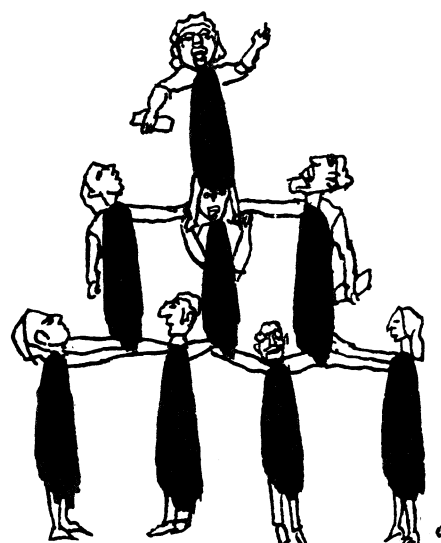
One criticism which perhaps ought to be made of the book is that discussion of this strategy for practice is indeed reserved for its final pages, more or less "tacked on"; and does not arise directly

from the analysis made in the main body of the work. The actual advice given there is not to be faulted, though more detail would have been helpful to the practising left teacher. Harris's book is not alone in this respect: the problem seems to have pervaded Marxist works on education since Bowles and Gintis and is itself indicative of some important difficulties of praxis still confronting socialist educators.

Though much of the book remains largely within Bowles and Gintis's problematic, Harris avoids the pessimism which many teachers found in their work. His more dialectical approach seeks out the contradictions in the system: he notes that "the founding fathers were right: schooling is a two-edged sword". He is thus able to give some very practical advice to radical teachers on how to "keep cutting away with the 'wrong' side of the sword they handed you" (p 146).

Two main aims for the book are outlined by Harris in his Preface: "to offer an introduction . . . to certain aspects of the Marxist research program", but also to provide a "sustained analysis of the role and function of teachers under contemporary corporate capitalism". In his mostly very readable book, written with understanding for, yet radical criticism of the teachers' situation he indeed accomplishes both.

Scott Poynting



ABOUT RED

RADICAL EDUCATION DOSSIER is produced and published three times a year by Radical Education Publications.

RADICAL EDUCATION DOSSIER examines the conflicts within schooling and education. It identifies the opposing interests involved in the struggle and works to develop strategies and tactics for change.

Our long term aim is to work towards further development of a socialist theory of education. Our immediate aim is to analyse the current process of education and to examine and explore the role of education in society.

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Send contributions to: Editorial Collective,
Radical Education Dossier,
PO Box 197,
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53rd ANZAAS CONGRESS
Perth, May 26-20, 1983

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Red 18 has been compiled and produced by Bernadette Chad, Maxine Cohen, Noeline Hall, Fay Grear, Ken Johnston, Scott Rynning Linley Samuel and Terri Saddon -

We apologize for its lateness, we seemed to encounter obstacles everywhere and in the end most of us felt a little like the person below. Happy holidays.



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