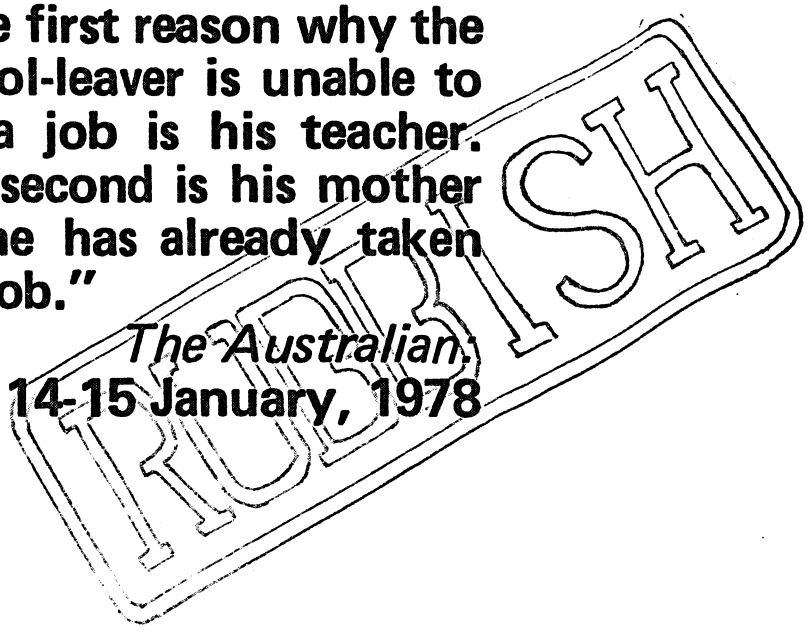
Noelene Mack

Radical Education Dossier 5

"The first reason why the school-leaver is unable to get a job is his teacher. The second is his mother — she has already taken the job."

The Australian
14-15 January, 1978



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RADICAL EDUCATION DOSSIER

5

Contents

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Down and Out Down Under

Unemployment is rising and there is no doubt that school leavers are the worst hit, with 16.3% of the work force between 15 and 19 unemployed, as against 3.7% unemployed of the work force aged 20 and over. Unemployment is an inevitable part of the world wide capitalist recession, and the Fraser government is making it worse in its attempt to aid the capitalist class by cutting back inflation and tailoring the economy to its interests. Education cutbacks have been part of the strategy of priming the capitalists' pump with money leached from public welfare spending.

Both inflation and unemployment are capitalist diseases which at present are reaching epidemic proportions, but since we are forbidden to blame the system itself, ruling class ideology demands that scapegoats be found, and the media and government committees are busy finding them. *The Australian*, for example, begins a recent article, with the words:

> 'The first reason why the school-leaver is unable to get a job is his teacher. The second is his mother – she has already taken the job.'

Government committees such as the Committee of Inquiry into Education and Training will no doubt obligingly follow the press in declaiming that not capitalism, but falling standards in education, is a major explanation for the fact that increasing numbers of people are without jobs.

In order to disguise the responsibility of the capitalist system for increasing unemployment, a myriad of myths must be created and maintained. We saw them in the '30s, and here they are back on stage again. The myth of the dole bludger attempts to direct aggression away from the capitalist and towards those who are unemployed. Women are blamed for taking jobs away from their husbands and children. Supposedly incompetent teachers are responsible for the fact that kids can't find work on leaving school, and radical teachers are blamed for undermining the work ethic. And so the institutions of capitalism attempt to divide the working class and obscure the real problems inherent in a system where profits and consumption must continually spiral if the system is to continue.

Whilst some myths are being propagated, others are being exposed by the continuing painful fact of unemployment. In times of recession, hard work and application are not the keys to success that ideology promises. In spite of the individual's industry and tenancity, he or she may not even get a job. Whilst many university graduates become clerks or sales workers, the secondary leavers swell the dole queues. As teacher unemployment grows and work conditions at schools deteriorate, it becomes harder and harder for teachers to maintain a view of themselves as a privileged professional elite, and they are forced to face the unpalatable truth that they are simply a section of the work force whose exploitation increases year by year. In spite of oversized classes and poor teaching conditions, teachers fortunate enough to have jobs, air their criticisms at the risk of losing these jobs.

Nothing is clearer in the present economic climate than that teachers as well as kids are finding themselves victims of government policies and capitalist ideology, designed to screw the workers and lengthen the dole queues. This issue of *Radical Education Dossier* exposes the myths and realities about unemployment and demonstrates that teachers need to unite their efforts with those of other unionists and with the unemployed in the struggle for the right to work and to expose the reactionary policies of the Fraser government.

Unemployment - Some Implications for Education

by Lindy Dent

The economic crisis is hitting education in two main ways. First and most obvious, there are the spending cutbacks – that is, a 10% increase in spending at a time of 13% inflation. Even the more conservative teachers are upset by the reallocation of funds, within that 10% figure, away from government schools and into the higher-grade private schools.[1]

But of more significance is the broad social impact. The effect on the education system can only be fully understood by looking at the crisis as a whole, and particularly at the crucial factor of unemployment. For the next ten years unemployment is likely to stay at levels which no-one under forty has ever seen before. All capitalist economies face the same problem: its effects are far-reaching and our institutions are under a lot of pressure to cope with the situation. Schools, colleges and universities are no exception.

The Scale of the Problem

The official unemployment figure for Australia now stands at about 7%. This leaves out married women whose husbands are working and vice versa, and youth who remain at school.

Breakdowns of these figures show that unemployment, especially youth unemployment, is at its highest in working-class areas and amongst already disadvantaged populations.[2] In Sydney this means a concentration in the Inner City and the Western Suburbs. The problem is also great in country areas.

'Unemployment is predominantly youthful'.[3] In Australia, about one third of the unemployed are under twenty-one. Half of the unemployed in working-class areas like the Western Suburbs or the Inner City are under twenty-one.

This is not a new phenomenon. The Study Group on Youth Affairs has found that 'labour force participation rates for both male and female youth dropped in the sixties,[4] while unemployment rates for this age group have risen at a higher percentage rate than for the rest of the population'.[5] Their Report points out that this is typical of developed countries. In Australia the unemployment rate among those under twenty-one has been at 20% or higher, and although persons under twenty represent only 12% of the total labour force, they comprise 36% of the unemployed. At the end of February 1976 the unemployment rate for this age group was more than four times the rate for the group aged twenty or over.[6]

The Impact on the Education System

High unemployment forces many pupils to stay in school longer.[7] The proportion of females aged 16 or more attending school has more than doubled between 1961 and 1971 and for males the increase was 76%.[8] An estimated 9400 persons returned to school in 1976 because they could not find a suitable full-time permanent job after leaving school in 1975.[9] The 1976-77 figures show the same trend.[10] This increased demand for secondary education has exerted tremendous pressure on tertiary institutions.[11] More students are continuing on to year twelve and these students are going to face relatively restricted entry to tertiary institutions.[12] Students are pushed to become 'better qualified' academically, which means fierce competition for reduced numbers of scholarships while there is greater restriction upon entry into many professions. At the same time, people who consider themselves well-qualified aren't getting the jobs they expected to get. Unemployment among graduates is becoming a very real problem.[13]

Partly as a result of these pressures, colleges of advanced education have begun to upgrade many of their courses from diploma[14] to degree standard and certain professions which have hitherto usually based training on practical experience are now seeking the status implied in selection and training by a college.[15] This phenomenon has been termed 'credentialism' by those who have observed the 'qualification mania' in Australia and other advanced capitalist countries.[16] It causes loss of prestige associated with the certificates and is self-perpetuating.[17] Often the opposite effect to the desired one is achieved, with some employers refusing to hire 'overqualified workers' for some jobs.[18]

Unwelcome Guests

Studies show that it is not only the academically successful students who are staying in school longer: the non-academic are staying too. This is especially noticeable in the lower classes of years eight, nine and ten; i.e. many pupils who have been relatively unsuccessful in school are now staying on because they just can't leave and get a job.

Thus we have the rather embarrassing situation where senior G.A. (General Activities) classes cannot be called 'G.A.'s' because we have no 'senior' G.A. classes. Once they get to fourth form they are supposedly no longer G.A. students.

These greater numbers of 'non-academic' students are troublesome for teachers. The great argument for knuckling under at school can no longer be used. There are no good jobs for these pupils to get when they leave school and most realise it.

Many admit that they are only staying on at school to have company. School is boring, but because they are no longer guaranteed a job it remains the preferred situation – though not through any 'educational incentive' to stay on.[19]

For the harassed teacher, this means that the class sizes in senior years aren't as reduced as they usually are, which makes teaching difficult. And the students don't have the motivation of working to get a good job, which makes 'teaching' almost impossible. Everyone concerned with education is being forced to ask what sort of education is suitable for these pupils; what is relevant to them?[20]

It is widely agreed that what is needed is at least basic skills on the part of these non-academic students; but after ten years or so of failure to learn these skills, and of all the frustrations inherent in that failure, this is a difficult goal to achieve.

A study on Sydney Youth suggested that the emphasis on intellectual training in schools suits only a minority of the teenage population.[21] George F Berkely, of the Interim Curri-

culum Development Council, noted in 1974 that students were dissatisfied with what schools were offering them.[22]

Teachers themselves are asking what they are supposed to be doing, especially with the bottom half of the school.

- Can we do anything more than babysit?
- Why aren't classes smaller, so we can do more?
- What about these unemployed teachers?
- Why aren't kids prepared to learn?
- Why can't they pass exams?
- Why are they so rude and aggressive?
- Why doesn't punishment make any difference?
- How can we make schooling more relevant?
- What are we going to do about those kids who can't even read or write?
- How are we going to cope with them until they're 15 or, horrors, 16?
- How can we keep pressing the top kids to do well without forgetting the others?

Questions like these become all the more urgent where there is unemployment and poverty, which are most acute in working-class schools. Conditions experienced by the families at home contribute to the social climate of the school: for example, tension in the home caused by lack of money; tension caused by longer working hours (created by excessive travelling time for those who are employed); tension caused by children being left to look after younger ones, particularly if there is sickness in the home; the stress involved in being forced to stay with a job, whether you like it or not; quarrels due to tension and lack of resources, drug abuse etc.[23]

So not only do kids lack motivation, but they are also aggressive, carrying on family fights with peers, especially in working-class areas where unemployment is highest; and for the teachers in the playground and in the classrooms there are more discipline problems and more doubts about what they are trying to achieve.

Doubts and Contradictions

The economic crisis in advanced capitalist countries is making people aware of the contradictions in the aims and functions of education. George Berkeley stated, 'Educators and the informed public in these countries (USA, Canada, UK and many European countries) are becoming increasingly aware that schools are, to a great extent, not fulfilling their function in society, whatever that function might be'.[24] The implications of this are that the aims of education as generally accepted are various and that there is doubt that any of them are being fulfilled. The economic crisis means further that even the most basic aims are being questioned and not fulfilled. As a result people are no longer sure about what those aims should be. Teachers are the focus of a lot of criticism.

What do they teach kids in school these days?

Why don't they put kids first, instead of industrial disputes?

All those holidays too.

If you've got discipline problems, you're a bad teacher.

Teachers are frustrated by the situation, but often cannot understand where the pressures are coming from. They need more time to analyse the problem, in conjunction with other members of the community. The usual staff meeting once a month or even once a week for forty minutes is not enough.

There is pressure from the Department of Education for schools to formulate a document called 'The Aims and Objectives' of the school. Teachers are willing to contribute to the exercise because they are aware that something is drastically wrong at the moment. Attention is focussed on the school and the teachers' own classroom practice as the 'root' of the problem. Solutions must therefore lie in changing some of the practices of the school. However, the limits of these changes are strictly controlled by hierarchies of power, limits on money, teachers, resources etc.

Aims and Objectives

Discussion usually results in the production of an 'aims and objectives' document. This could, theoretically, be the fruit of a process akin to industrial democracy. Unfortunately, not enough people besides teachers (parents, students etc.) are involved. The document looks reassuring, but the impression of clear direction and consensus is often illusory.

In preparing their documents, the staff normally divide to cover the following areas: physical and emotional development, environment, social development, and academic development. 'Innovation' is a key word in the preamble. The emphasis is probably on the individual child's needs. There will be some description of local conditions and the aims and objectives arising from these. This is where the contradictions start. Where the school has different values and behaviour patterns from the community around, it will be obvious from phrases like 'lack of respect for', 'waywardness', and so on. Schools often do not recognize that their values are different, and are not as a rule prepared to change their standards. Hence the problems: how are pupils going to 'identify' with the school if it has such obviously different values? How are parents to become involved with the school if it devalues their lives?

Academic development usually mentions notions such as literacy and numeracy skills, work experience, vocational guidance and training for special skills. In working-class schools the value of the traditional curriculum is being questioned. Preparation for employment is seen as a prime concern.

These concepts raise problems. How are students to be selected for vocational training or work experience schemes? How much freedom will the student have in choosing what sort of education she/he can take up? With the deskilling of jobs, specific job skill training in school may prove irrelevant. Can the education system change to cater for more flexibility in skills provided (by retraining schemes, etc.)? We shall return to the question of deskilling later.

Many schools, government inquiries and seminars are discussing the possibilities of work experience schemes for adding relevance to the curriculum.[25] But, apart from the issues of selection, lack of information and lack of real jobs, work experience schemes raise other questions. Will they contribute to the division of education for mental or manual work, if all students do not participate? Will they reinforce existing occupational choice patterns (e.g. jobs suitable for women, others for men)? Or will they just serve to get rid of troublesome students (G.A. and bottom level kids are often the first to be selected for work-experience schemes)?

The Education System and Social Control

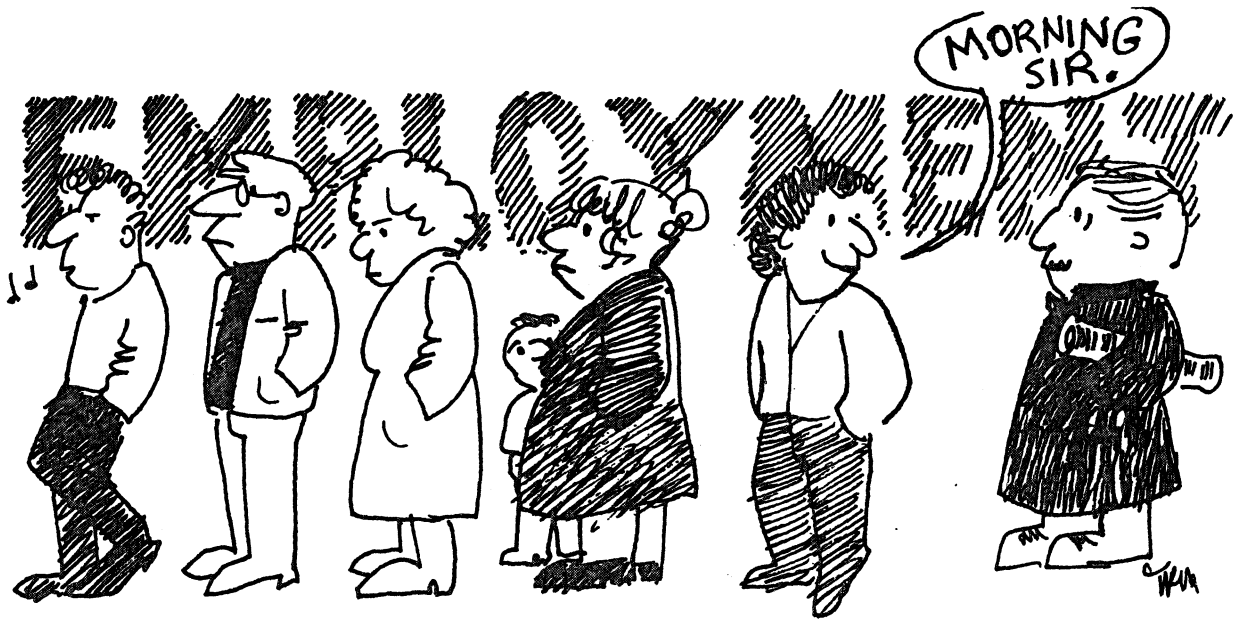
At a time of economic crisis and specifically great unemployment, the control functions of institutions become very important. Occasionally the fear which breeds as a result of large numbers of people being unoccupied and dissatisfied is expressed in the press. A writer in the *Economist*, speaking about the same trend in overseas countries, says about unemployed youth as a problem 'Much of the alarm stems simply from fear. Young men unemployed today seem very likely criminals and political bomb throwers tomorrow. Crime rates are highest for people in their late teens and early twenties, and highest of all for those unemployed minorities among the young (blacks, migrants).'[26] The article then goes on to mention governments' memories of student riots in the 60s.

Because of these sorts of fears, the aims and objectives stated at this time reveal the hidden curriculum of schools, especially in working-class areas where unemployment is greatest. The pressures in schools to keep control of large numbers of dissatisfied students put a strain on the liberal ideologies of the schools. Occasionally, schools respond by giving more freedom to the students (e.g. choice of subjects, less rigorous structuring of the curriculum), but more schools see the tightening of control as the solution. It is crucial to stop any bucking of the system no matter how bad your deal is. No risks can be taken despite the fact that some of the aims and objectives contain the remnants of lip-service to liberal ideology which contradicts these other order and control measures. For some teachers, authoritarian control increases unconsciously, without their wishing it. For others, the threat of losing control will be too great and the law enforcement measures will be deliberate.

Once the unemployed leave school, other institutions are ready to take over this social control function. In Australia and other developed countries, the large number of students in post-school institutions can be regarded as disguised unemployment.[27] TAFE, principally in NSW, now has full-time pre-employment courses, specifically aimed at unemployed youth. They were introduced in 1973, against initial TAFE opposition, to help with training workers for the building industry. They have since expanded to supplement the apprenticeship intake and take over a broad range of trades, and as a means of assisting young people who are unable to obtain employment.[28] The courses are meant to give students basic skills and knowledge, which will enable them to compete more favourably for employment or apprenticeships. TAFE recognizes that the planning for these courses is not adequate because of lack of reliable information 'concerning both the present labour force structure and future labour requirements'.[29] This cannot be assured without reliable information on the state of the labour market and labour force, and 'if young people are enrolled in courses from which there is little chance of finding related employment motivation problems are sure to arise'.[30] Thus TAFE is experiencing the same problems as the school and is under the same pressure to take on students who want higher qualifications which are at the same time being devalued by credential escalation.

Social Control Equals Hidden Curriculum

Some people believe that schooling should give people the skills necessary to operate in a particular job or range of jobs. Is this so? Is this a worthwhile objective? What happens to preparation for work in the face of the prospect of increased unemployment through increasing technological advances and automation? What about the deskilling of jobs, whereby workers will only have to operate a small unit in the whole scheme (as on a production line) and where they know little about the whole operation? Above all, there is the question of the impact of computer technology. At a seminar on 'Communications –



Technology and Control', L. Cooper, a representative of the Australian Telecommunications Employees Association, advised that the first stage of computerisation in Telecom Australia will reduce staffing in many telephone exchanges by 50% at least, and that the second stage will reduce the staffing by over 90%. These changes will have occurred by 1990 if extended computerisation goes ahead.[31] Telecom's own figures predict 600 fewer positions in exchange maintenance by 1985, despite a 60% to 70% growth in the network size over the same period. Cooper also points out that most of the workers employed will have no knowledge of the overall system since the computerisation will liken the work to a production line with only a small number of 'elite' technical officers who understand the whole operation.[32] Cooper argues that the Telecom example is indicative of trends whereby 'industry will not require the same quantity of educated workers in the sense that the majority of tasks will be reduced, simplified to the most basic of functions'.[33]

This sort of information needs to be available to teachers examining the aims and objectives of education. Discussions between people involved with education and in industries and trade unions, etc., should be used to understand the impact of the current crisis on education – especially in view of the contradictory bullshit coming through the media.

At the moment the fact that there is a lack of skilled tradespeople is being advertised in the press and promoted by enquiries into Technical education.[34] Courses to overcome this are being set up to attract young people, but this may not be the whole picture. The implication is that if a student takes part in one of these courses she/he will easily be able to get a highly paid job. But in fact the job ads call for 'experienced' skilled workers, not for young people. And apprenticeship subsidies do not ensure that kids will be kept on when the apprenticeship is completed.

Teachers would also find it useful to listen to what trade unions have to say about the setting up of schemes which ensure that there is a pool of un-unionized skilled or semi-skilled young workers who are gradually gaining work in low-paid or non-paying schemes and who are desperate for jobs including contract or piece work which does not involve any contact with unions at all. Unions may also have interesting views on the hazards of working in industries where materials or conditions can affect health. Such information is not generally available through work-experience schemes or from official bodies. Many teachers have not yet drawn some of the obvious conclusions from all this. For example, with the deskilling of jobs a less intellectual form of education is required. The danger here is that the social control function of schooling may become more apparent, with stricter division between training for mental or manual labour. The hidden curriculum may become more obviously the real curriculum, with training for such qualities as punctuality, tolerance of physical confinement, adherence to authority, and acceptance of punishment, or of tasks completely directed by others.

These features are already very much a part of our education system. If for more people, deskilling means less job satisfaction, lower morale, etc., these aspects of schooling must become more important.

The structure and content of schooling also contributes to this hidden curriculum through large groups, clear distinctions between pupils and teachers, competition for success and institutionalised failure, rewards given to individuals, grading, tracking, the arrangement of the hierarchy of knowledge so that uncertainties are only exposed at a high level of schooling when the pupil has already shown general acceptance of the rest of the curriculum, high degree of differentiation by age and sex, etc.

It is interesting to note that the redefinition of the aims and objectives of education is being encouraged largely at individual school level. In areas where unemployment and the problems of youth are greatest, i.e. already disadvantaged working-class areas, schools are not joining together to solve the problem. If this happened the situation might be seen as more desperate, leading to more unified demands for the structural changes and funds needed to change the situation. At present, without these funds and changes, the aims and objectives achieve little except a sigh of relief that we do still have our aims and objectives. They do not do much to change the situation and in fact may result in greater burdens on teachers who may feel more pressure to solve the problems on an individual level since the aims are formulated that way (for example, by working with an individual child in their own time, lunch hours, etc. in the hope of improving the child's literacy and numeracy skills). Once we realise that there are large numbers of students who need these skills, the struggle for more funds, smaller class sizes and more teachers on a large scale becomes more important than teachers giving one hour a week to one or two pupils. It may achieve a little for those children, but meanwhile others are still coming through ten years of schooling and not acquiring these skills.

Without these funds and structural changes the cry for literacy and numeracy skills may just mean a more authoritarian classroom and school structure is developed. The call for a closer link with industry and vocational training may mean a return to streaming. Without participation of more of the community, the aims and objectives are more likely to suit the needs of the school rather than the people the schools are intended to benefit.

Schools Commission

The Schools Commission discussion document on School and Work clearly points out the ways that a closer link between work and school may mean that working class children from disadvantaged groups may suffer from either streaming into general education (lower status) courses or vocational courses.[35] So far, little has been done to change the situation where entrance into the occupational hierarchy is largely dependent on socio-economic background. In selecting students to do these work-oriented or life-skill oriented courses, teachers would adopt the same pattern of selection and even if the pupils were allowed to choose, a great effort would have to be made to stop the teachers' expectations influencing the pupils' choice and to counteract the lower expectations of the parents and pupils from lower socio-economic backgrounds.[36]

The document also points out the unrealistic perspectives of those who feel that the curricula of the schools can be changed to suit these pupils. As long as success in life is determined by entrance to high occupational status positions, and this is largely determined by entry to tertiary education, and this in turn by success in school or at least staying in school, it is unlikely that the curriculum can develop very far away from these 'success requirements' set up by tertiary institutions.

The Schools Commission document notes that schools can do little or nothing to reduce youth unemployment; that overseas countries have begun to reject career education in schools as inadequate and causing a reversion to streaming practices; that the decisions made in school are largely based on educational information (e.g. to do with success in certain subjects) rather than career education; that in an era of rapid social change and confusion, what is needed is a higher level of education in general, not specific skills, which may be useless

in a couple of years time with the general trend towards de-skilling.[37]

The document falls into the realm of fantasy, however, when it talks of trying to persuade employers to take on younger or less schooled workers in preference to older or more schooled. The weight of structural unemployment would simply have been shifted onto other shoulders. Such an approach is unacceptable both because it fails to attack the underlying problem and because it tries to put the 'blame' back onto the unemployed. Equally unrealistic is the proposal that the young should be educated to accept a long-term role of reserve army. In a world where work is so much a part of the individual's self-concept, education for enforced leisure means stunting, not developing, human potential.

While the consideration of aims and objectives is a worthwhile task, without money, time or other resources (both physical and inellectual), they can do little to change the situation. The efforts of teachers must be directed towards bettering these conditions and educating pupils in ways which give them more understanding of the conditions and processes operating around them. They need to know how to make best use of the institutions of society, what their rights are, how to make decisions and act on them, as well as specific life-skills. The school must become more involved with the community and see the community's needs as more closely linked to their own, strive towards achieving them within the school, with other schools who share them, and most importantly, outside the schools.

Will you be staying on at school or going straight into redundancy?

Footnotes

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26 The Economist, *op. cit.*, p. 87. See also White D., *op. cit.*, p. 4.
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The Gospel According to the O.E.C.D.

by Keith Windschuttle

Since the labour market collapsed in mid-1974 there has been a constant stream of attempts to place the blame for youth unemployment everywhere except where it really lies. The Whitlam Labor government and the unions have both long been held responsible but the greatest amount of abuse has probably been heaped upon the young unemployed themselves. The campaign against fictitious 'dole bludgers' conducted by the press from 1974 onwards has persuaded, according to the opinion polls, about 48 per cent of Australians that unemployment exists not because there are no jobs but because the unemployed don't want to work.

This propensity to blame everybody and everything except our capitalist economic system is not confined to the gullible consumers of the mass media. The latest effort has been produced by the Organisation for Economic Co-operation and Development's Paris secretariat in a special report which attempts to place the responsibility for unemployment in Australia onto the education system. Schools do not do enough to prepare students for work, the OECD report says, and the solution to long-term youth unemployment lies in better vocational training in schools.

Within days of its release in November 1977, this report, titled *Australia: Transition from school to work or further study,* had been given considerable credibility. It was reported prominently in the mass media and employers publicly took up its themes. For instance, CSR general manager Gordon Jackson's paper to a NSW Government seminar on youth unemployment at Bankstown in November used the report to argue that among the main causes of unemployment were the rising expectations of young people and the unrealistic attitude to work which the education system had given them.

OECD comments on Australian economic or social life are always treated with great respect and may be quoted with considerable authority as the very last word on any subject found worthy of its attention. Yet it is worth considering how these reports are compiled and what purpose they are designed to serve. If we do this it becomes clear that they are, on the one hand, exceedingly thin in terms of their research base and, on the other, conspicuously ideological in their function.

The OECD was established in 1960 in Paris as a policy advisory, data collection and dissemination centre for western nations. Today its membership includes most of western and southern Europe, North America, Japan and Australia. In other words, it serves the richest and most developed capitalist nations and is ideologically bound to them. The last thing such an organisation would do is question the desirability of the capitalist system. If something goes wrong in its membership countries – and things have really gone wrong in the long recession we are now experiencing – the OECD can be relied upon to produce masses of tables and graphs and argue for a great variety of policy options, none of which attacks in any meaningful way the rights of private enterprise.

OECD researchers are also secondary source merchants. They rarely devise and conduct original research of their own. They rely upon statistics and surveys done by people in member countries. The Australian *Transition from school...* study was the result of a flying four-week visit to Australia in which a handful of local statistics, papers and articles were picked up. The OECD next interviewed, in Paris, a panel of four leading Australian institutional educationalists. They then threw the lot together in a 110-page report. It is the sort of job that a couple of experienced local journalists could handle in a fortnight but when the result appeared, recycled, in Australia it was treated as a wise and authoritative voice from abroad.

Nevertheless, because it is likely to be quoted ad nauseam in the near future, it is worth giving an outline of its content. Many young people leave school at the minimum age, and earlier in special circumstances, the report argues, because they have been discouraged by their experience of compulsory education. There appears to be little appreciation in Australia of the need for imaginative programs to induce them to undertake further education and training. These early school leavers are the ones most likely to be unemployed.

The report also argues against traditional notions that education should set its own goals which are not directly related to the job market. Education and training should be closely related to the job opportunities that are likely to be available for young people.

Further, the OECD report is concerned about 'credentialism', which is the raising of educational qualifications required by employers for particular jobs even though the content of these jobs has changed little. This is, it argues, both a waste of resources and the source of a great deal of personal unhappiness for people overqualified for the jobs they obtain and for those who have lesser, but sufficient qualifications for such jobs and who fail to get them.

Much of the Australian report was pre-empted by an earlier OECD publication of 1977 called *Entry of Young People into Working Life* which surveyed educational practices and work patterns in all member countries and arrived at a number of conclusions. It decided that there is a gap between the aspirations and expectations of the young and employment conditions of current production processes. There is also, it concluded, a discrepancy between the initial education and training and the actual qualifications required in the areas of 'knowledge, working habits, attitudes and the capacity to adapt.' Further, there is a divorce between the value system of the industrial society and the ideas of young people.

Now, of course, quite a deal of what these OECD reports have said is obviously true. But they have been put forward by their authors, and will certainly be used by Australian conservative politicians and employers, as explanations for the current levels of youth unemployment, which is an entirely different matter. Most of these observations could have been made at any

time in the periods of full employment in the 1950s and 1960s. To use them as causal factors of the unemployment we have experienced since mid-1974 is a fundamental mis-diagnosis.

Take the case of the high school dropouts. This has been a familiar pattern ever since compulsory education was introduced. Working-class youth have found the school system irrelevant to their real lives and futures. Most simply mark time at school while waiting until they are old enough to leave and get a job. The current period of unemployment has meant that many who have left before they gained formal qualifications have not found work because the young and inexperienced have been in the least demand on the labour market. But because dropping out long preceded the unemployment of mid-1974 it is silly to blame this phenomenon for the lack of demand for youth labour by employers. In fact, the current recession has witnessed a decline in the number of high school dropouts in Australia and several other western countries, as a number of the tables published by the OECD demonstrate. More students are staying longer at high school than ever before. The dropout rate has clearly not caused present levels of unemployment. In fact, the reverse is true. Unemployment has reduced the propensity for students to drop out.

The whole notion of blaming the education system for the failure of employers to offer sufficient jobs ought to be seen in the same light. Employers have always complained that the education system was not doing enough vocational training and that its products, particularly those from higher education, had aspirations that were 'too high' or 'unrealistic'. What this reflected, of course, was that the habits of scholarship and creativity that some students picked up from education were not wanted by employers. The civilised response to this would be to demand that capitalists change the relations and practices of their workplaces. This demand got a reasonable hearing in the midst of labour shortages of the early 1970s when proposals for worker participation and job enrichment were taken seriously, though rarely acted upon in Australia. Since mid-1974, however, the oversupply of labour has eased this pressure and employers are the ones who are now making the demands. The OECD's attack on the education system is a reflection of their regained confidence. The attempt to blame everyone but themselves for the present crisis and to demand that everyone else change has nothing to do with the reality of the situation. Nor would it do much to add to the number of jobs available if educators responded with more vocational training.

Similar inconsistencies can be seen in the OECD's argument on 'credentialism'. The authors are certainly correct when they claim that many people today are over-qualified or wrongly qualified for the jobs they hold. In the present recession, the competition for jobs has intensified. Young people are staying longer at school and are applying in greater numbers for higher education in order to have a better chance to compete for the declining number of jobs available. This expansion of education has reduced the numbers who would otherwise be in the workforce. Secondary and higher education are acting as disguised forms of unemployment. This is, as the OECD points out, a great waste of resources and the source of much personal unhappiness. However, the OECD's discovery of the phenomenon of 'credentialism' sits uneasily with its other claim that young people have aspirations and expectations that are too high and these are a further cause of unemployment. The existence of 'credentialism' ought to be taken as proof that young people *have* lowered their aspirations and that they are taking a realistic view of their employment prospects.

When those at the top of the educational hierarchy lower their sights and take jobs they once would have regarded as beneath them - for instance, arts and law graduates working as insurance clerks - this simply means there are less jobs available for those lower down the scale. People with the HSC are forced to consider jobs once regarded as appropriate only to those with the School Certificate. Employers find they can demand the School Certificate from applicants for the most menial tasks. None of this, however, ought to be taken as a reflection upon the education system. It is the direct result of the shrinking of the labour market.

The present position among graduates in Australia conflicts with one of the central demands of the OECD report for more directly relevant vocational training in the education system. In 1976 graduate unemployment reached 6.7 per cent but, as the accompanying table shows, the worst hit were the specialist fields. Graduates in generalist areas such as the humanities had significantly lower rates of unemployment. In 1977, however, the job position for graduates improved as they abandoned long-held plans for careers in specialist areas. Graduates began competing for, and getting, jobs that were once regarded as appropriate only to school leavers. In a recent edition of *Focus*, Dallas Kellet of Sydney University's careers guidance service attributed the improvement to the fact that graduates were increasingly prepared to regard themselves as 'generalists'.

> It is evident that employers are beginning to look more and more to the university-educated as a source of staff in areas not hitherto considered their province, for work which, whilst not demanding skills in specific disciplines, does need people with trained and well-organised minds ... There is a distinct expansion of interest in the 'generalist' graduate to fill niches in a growing range of occupations.

GRADUATE UNEMPLOYMENT 1976

Paramedical therapies	23.9%
Engineering	20.6%
Agricultural science	16.1%
Architecture	14.1%
Veterinary science	12.7%
Earth sciences	9.8%
Behavioural science	6.1%
Applied science and technology	6.0%
Law	5.1%
Humanities	4.8%
Economics	3.9%
Pharmacy	1.8%
Education	1.2%

(Source: Graduate Careers Council of Australia

The only area where the OECD's demand for more vocational training has some apparent plausibility is that of the skilled trades. A survey by the Department of Employment and Industrial Relations last year showed labour shortages existed in at least 18 skilled trades ranging from metal machinists and motor mechanics to toolmakers, furniture polishers and jewellery workers. From any sort of perspective, there is a clear argument here for the State to devote more resources to training young people who want these jobs. While acknowledging this, however, we ought to be clear about the reason for the shortages. They occur not because of any sudden failure in the education system but because, in the recession, employers have reduced their intake of apprentices as part of general cost-saving measures. The results of this reduction in the number of apprentices are now being felt. Natural losses of skilled tradesmen have continued (retirement, promotion to executive positions, self-employment etc) but there has been little replacement from the ranks of apprentices. The apprenticeship system of only training those who find employment in an industry, rather than allowing

free entry to trades education to all who want it, inevitably contracts in times of recession. Because of this and because of the great demand among young people for access to skilled trades, there is a strong case for a loosening of apprenticeship entry to trades and an expansion of the technical education system. This, however, has been recognised by the Technical and Further Education Commission since at least 1974 when it produced a major report on technical education. It was hardly something we needed the OECD to tell us. Two things should be stressed, though. The problem was caused not by educators but by the recruitment policies of private enterprise; and if the State is to intervene on behalf of young people needing jobs, it ought to direct its attention primarily at the technical education system.

One of the most disreputable of the claims made by the OECD is that there has been a change in the values of young people which puts them at variance with the values of modern industrial society. Such a shift in attitude would, of course, be welcomed by radicals as a sign that capitalist culture was losing its grip. But there is no good evidence that it has occurred, apart from a handful of dubiously-worded questionnaire surveys (which are usually designed so they produce the result the survey wants). In a review of all recent overseas and Australian literature on unemployment, Professor A.W. Clark of the Department of Sociology, La Trobe University, submitted to last year's Commonwealth inquiry into the unemployment benefit that the capitalist work ethic was as strong as ever. 'Studies reviewed indicate that the overwhelming majority of people subscribe to the work ethic . . . These attitudes seem as true for the unemployed as for the employed.'

The OECD proposition that the current unemployment is the result of changed attitudes among youth is implausible even in its own terms. In 1973 Australia and most western countries experienced a short boom which almost eliminated unemployment entirely. There were no claims at that time that young people had changed their attitude to work. But we are asked to believe that suddenly, in mid-1974, at precisely the same time as the economy collapsed, there was a sudden shift in the values of young people that made them work-shy and was the real cause of unemployment. The claim is absurd, but that does not mean that it is not widely held in the community. The habit of blaming the victims of the vagaries of the capitalist economy for the sufferings they endure is as old as the system itself and is an entrenched part of the work ethic.

The worth ethic of capitalist society is a pernicious one. In capitalism, work defines our status, our incomes, the scope of our lives. A person is defined by their occupation. Without an occupation, people feel themselves to have no place in society. They have no self-esteem, no identity. They lack the basic definition of the concept of humanity. Yet capitalism is a system that inevitably produces unemployment and inevitably generates feelings of worthlessness among those subject to it. Almost as inevitably, the mass media, politicians and bourgeois social researchers confirm in people the belief that because they are unemployed it is their own fault. Because of this, the appropriate response of educators should be clear. Rather than search among themselves for ways of making their system more vocational, as the OECD would have them do but which, as I have argued, would be largely a futile gesture in relieving unemployment, educators should use a different approach. They ought to be asking questions with their students about the nature of the employment and unemployment under capitalism, about why people accept the work ethic and how it can be combatted, about the morality of a system based on work which denies work to large numbers of its members. In this way; education may make a positive contribution to ending unemployment by helping develop the revolutionary ideas that are necessary if the capitalist system that has produced unemployment is to be swept away.

"It Makes You Feel Bad": Youth Unemployment

by I. Lennie

The Problem

Unemployment is worsening and the Fraser government's recent victory means the continuation of policies that will ensure no improvement in the forseeable future. Part of the Fraser strategy has been the calculation that, while everyone can experience inflation directly, unemployment is generally something that happens to someone else. A policy of reducing inflation while getting people used to an 'acceptable' level of unemployment is therefore more expedient. The cost of this policy, however, is a long term social disaster, the implications of which we are just beginning to discover.

For those about to leave school the situation is especially serious. Young people are four times as likely to be out of work as the rest of the population:

Unemployed Persons as Percent of the Labour Force

	Aged 15-19			Aged 20 and over		
	Males	Females	Total	Males	Females	Total
May '77	14.0	16.8	15.3	3.2	4.6	3.7
Aug. '77	14.6	18.3	16.3	3.3	4.5	3.7

(Source: Commonwealth Bureau of Statistics, August 1977)

Young people represent 36% of all unemployed, and in some areas like Blacktown, Liverpool, Balmain and Wollongong, at least 50%. For every job vacancy there are 24 registered young unemployed and in unskilled and semi-skilled areas over 100. Moreover, these figures understate the problem. They don't show school-leavers who have never registered, particularly girls still living at home, and they don't show the extent of under-employment – those scratching a living from part-time and casual jobs (viz. MacDonald's).

Although we have Fraser's policies to thank for the fact that Australia's youth unemployment problems is second only to Italy's among developed capitalist countries, the problem itself is endemic to all of them. As a recent International Labour Organization report states:

> 'In December 1975 over-all unemployment in the 24 O.E.C.D. countries was running at 17 millions, or 5.3 per cent of the total labour force. Seven million of the unemployed, i.e. 41%, were under 25 years of age, although people in this age group made up only 22% of the total active population. Young workers also accounted for 36% of the total increase in unemployment between 1973 and 1975. This trend has been worsening since.'
>
> (Youth Unemployment in Industrialised Market Economy Countries, Peter Melvyn, I.L.O., Geneva, 1977, p.1)

As in Australia, 'unemployment among girls and young women is also disproportionately high' (p.2).

The Causes

The problem is both cyclical and structural. The cyclical aspect means that, in the general downturn of the economic cycle that has hit all capitalist countries since the early 1970s, there are reasons why young people suffer worse than other groups. In times of limited recruitment and large scale lay-offs, employers prefer to hire experienced and established workers rather than young people.

> 'The problem for an employer is to pick and train workers so that they can generate the desired marginal product of the job in question with the least investment in training costs . . . (which) include the costs of inculcating norms of industrial discipline, good work habits, and the uncertainty costs associated with hiring workers whose training costs are more variable or unknown.'
>
> (Melvyn, I.L.O. Report, p.5)

In other words, people do not come out of school completely ready to fit into the work force. This has led to criticism of the school system and various schemes and have suggested to make school more work-oriented, which is to say that the training now done in the workplace at the employer's expense should now be done by the school as an incentive to firms to take on younger workers.

Young people also tend to be disproportionately unemployed because they are less protected than older workers – by unionization, seniority and redundancy legislation. They also tend to be in more 'marginal' jobs – that is, more peripheral to the production process, and, consequently, more dispensable.

If the problem was only cyclical there would be clearly cause enough for concern, but also a danger of accepting palliatives 'designed to remove unemployed people from the unemployed register and give them something with which to occupy themselves while waiting for the "inevitable" upturn'. (Youth Unemployment: Causes and Consequences, British Youth Council, 1977, p.5.) There is more to the situation than this, however. An economic recession, while it may be a human disaster, and an economic disaster for particular firms, actually has a positive function for capitalism as a whole in weeding out inefficient forms of production and in facilitating structural reorganization of the whole economy. In Australia we have seen a shift from the manufacturing to the mining sector as Australian capitalism is further integrated into the demands of Japanese and American markets. (Australia Up-Rooted, A.M. W.S.U., 1977.) These structural changes in the economy will mean an overall decline in the demand for manual labour and an increasing utilization of capital-intensive technologies in those manufacturing processes which remain competitive. The mining sector is already extremely capital-intensive, so its expansion will fail to take up the slack. Thus there is every indication that unskilled and untrained young workers not only cannot be employed now, but will never be employed, even in the event of a substantial economic recovery?

The Experience

For school leavers, unemployment is more than a temporary setback.

'To be unemployed is to be excluded and this inevitably

conditions how a person perceives the social structure and his or her position in it – at the bottom of the pile.'

(Youth Unemployment: Causes and Consequences, p.1.)

We live in a society where our self-image and self-esteem is very much bound up with our position in the work force, and this has physical as well as emotional consequences. At one end of the age scale this can be seen in the rapidity at which, on retirement, people contract illnesses of which they have never previously shown the slightest symptom. In a very real sense the old are simply unproductive machinery, and they know this, even if not consciously. The young unemployed, in the same sense, are simply machinery that is not needed, or is obsolete before it is ever used, and they know it. It is easy to dismiss this sort of language as metaphorical or exaggerated, because we are so often told that we are unique human beings with our own individual worth. Our real worth, however, is what we can yield in cash. Without this, the rest is simply words. It is difficult to comprehend this, however, without the experience of looking for work and never finding it. We can gain some notion through hearing what the unemployed have to say, and we are just beginning to be able to measure some of the consequences.

The typical pattern of experience on becoming unemployed has been extracted from recent research. There is an initial shock or disorientation, followed by active job-searching.

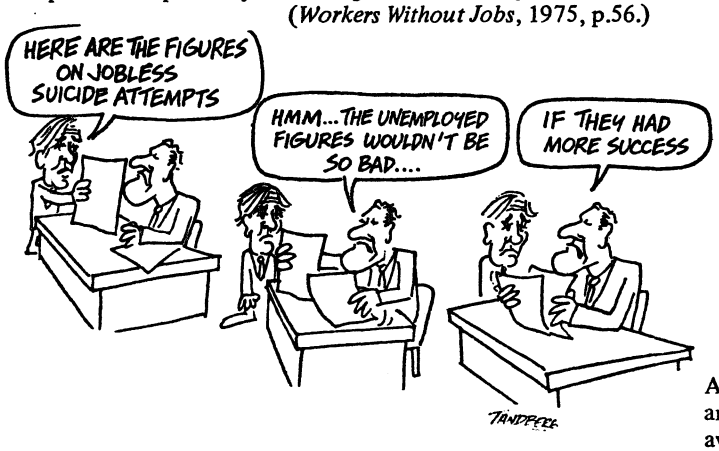
'The person is still optimistic and unresigned. As this situation continues, however, boredom, restlessness and pessimism are the keynotes, together with increased financial and social pressures. The person experiences the need to find something to occupy his time, but is limited by financial considerations – even odd jobs around the house cost money. The frustration association with this boredom, coupled with such things as stigma, social embarrassment and irritability lead to anxiety and depression, and so, to further withdrawal from social contact. A cycle is then set.'

(Unemployment: Costs and Casualties, ACOSS, 1977, p.5.)

As this situation is prolonged the victim becomes increasingly difficult to employ. Loss of self-esteem is further compounded by community attitudes about dole-bludgers. In ANOP polls from 1975-77 the consistent largest single answer to the cause of unemployment (48%) was that the unemployed 'don't want to work' (*Nation Review*, June 16-22, 1977, p.7). The following comments, by unemployed young people from a Brotherhood of St. Lawrence study in Melbourne, are fairly typical:

'People dislike you because you're unemployed and say that you're living off the government. It makes you feel really angry. It (unemployment) makes you feel a lesser class person. People call you a bludger and it makes you feel bad.'

(*Workers Without Jobs*, 1975, p.56.)



To a surprising extent the unemployed internalize community attitudes. Symptomatic of this is the case of a 17 year old Mt Druitt girl, seen by the present writer when social worker in a large public hospital. She had been living at home for two years after leaving school and had no hope of obtaining a job. But she had never registered for unemployment benefits because the people next door would call her a bludger. For all the real so-called 'bludgers', there are people like this who never appear in the unemployment statistics and are supported by families whose incomes are themselves marginal.

Another case, from the same hospital, suggests more sinister development from prolonged unemployment. An 18 year old girl, revived after an overdose, claimed that life was so bad the only reasonable thing to do was suicide, and expressed extreme hostility about being revived. The three friends she was living with expressed similar views and felt she had had the courage to do something they would like to do. A subsequent interview with this girl's 16 year old sister revealed that she had never had a job, and had been extremely depressed since her younger sister had found employment on leaving school. She felt then that she would never be employed.

Of course there is no simple linear connection between unemployment and suicide or any other social problem, but the groundwork is laid for this development. A recent survey of welfare agencies dealing with youth by the NSW Council of Social Service found the following problems most frequent among young people over six months unemployed:

Boredom, despair, loss of self-esteem	49
Lose interest, give up	23
More vulnerable, get into trouble	8
Same problems as earlier, but worse	8
Employers prejudiced	4
Become unemployable	2
Increased financial difficulties	2

(Youth Unemployment Study, 1977, p.3.)

Health Consequences

That the problems revealed by the NSW Council of Social Services' study have serious health and social consequences is borne out by recent overseas and local study. The most serious work so far, by M. Harvey Bremer of John Hopkins University, revealed the following:

'Taking data over the period 1940 to 1973, he assessed the amount of increase in each factor (indicator of stress) that correlated with a 1% increase in unemployment five years earlier. He estimated that, on average, this led to a 4.1 per cent increase in suicides: 3.4% more admissions to state mental hospitals; a 4% increase in state prison admissions and a 5.7% rise in murders; and a 1.9% increase in deaths from cirrhosis of the liver (due to alcoholism and from cardiovascular and renal disease (due to stress).'

'Brenner then estimated the indirect costs generated by a typical jump in unemployment: the 1.4% rise in 1970. On his calculations this led, over the next five years, to 1,540 extra suicides, 5,520 extra mental hospital admissions, 7,660 additional prison admissions, 1,740 extra murders and 52,570 extra deaths overall.'

(*New Society*, September 1, 1977, p.446.)

Locally, a recent study by the Victorian Mental Health Authority in Ballarat and Dandenong revealed the suicide rate among unemployed as twelve and seven times the national average respectively. The highest incidence was in the 15-30 age group. Another local study has recently shown a significant

correlation between economic downturn and incidence of ischaemic heart disease mortality. (Rex Bunn and Noel Drane, *New Doctor*, No. 5, July 1977.) A 1976 study by Dr. John Powles of Monash University suggests higher death rates in high unemployment areas of Melbourne. A South Australian Working Party Into Unemployment shows the following percentage increase for several classes of young offenders between June 1973 and 1976:

Age 14-18	Increase
Total offenders	58%
School attending offenders	(approx.) 40%
Workforce employed offenders	37%
Workforce unemployed offenders	238%

(Unemployment:Costs and Casualties.)

Not surprisingly drug addiction and alcoholism are also suspected as significantly unemployment-related. The following table, compiled from figures supplied by the NSW Bureau of Crime Statistics, shows an alarming increase in convictions for drug offences in areas of high unemployment:

	No.of Convictions, '76 (Sydney avg. =78.76/ statistical district)	Convictions /1000		
		73	74	76
Blacktown	195	0.10	0.62	1.49
Liverpool	239	0.13	0.50	1.79
Bankstown	161	0.18	0.43	1.25
Wollongong	239		0.73	1.44
Newcastle	196		0.58	1.96

It would be too much of a coincidence to suggest that these figures represent only a sudden increase in police activity in these areas. There is no age breakdown for the figures in this form, but as more than half the state drug convictions (57.5%) in 1967 were under 21 years of age we can safely assume that youth are over-represented in these areas too. Typically, young people out of work, unable to stand the tension of hanging around their parents' houses all day, drift into pubs and large shopping complexes where the availability of drugs like heroin provides a welcome escape from a depressing reality. At $30 a cap, however, this is not a habit that can be sustained on the dole, and the only out is to earn more caps by pushing, thus further extending the circle of addiction. In a sense these people have become employed again – a form of employment for which society then self righteously punishes them.

All the studies of the effects of unemployment can be criticized as only demonstrating correlations, and, of course, to show a correlation is not to show a cause. All the studies together, however, plus background information, start to point to a situation the dimensions of which we are just beginning to grasp – the social and physical consequences of a system that demands some part of the population is always surplus to its needs.

What Can Be Done?

It was originally intended, by way of conclusion, to look at some of the various schemes introduced in Europe and North America to mitigate these problems. However, the recent overwhelming endorsement of Fraser's policy of reducing inflation by cutting government spending, while ignoring unemployment, suggests that such a review would be merely academic. Any scheme that would seriously affect the problem would require government spending and intervention in the economy quite beyond the present government's commitments. Such schemes as do now exist, like the Special Youth Employment Training Program, though not to be completely discounted, simply tend to make a few select applicants more competitive for the few jobs available through government subsidy of their wages. Nevertheless, anyone wishing to examine overseas schemes should consult the I.L.O. report mentioned above.

Given that present policies will mean an increase in unemployment, especially for the young, in the forseeable future, what can be done by teachers and prospective and present unemployed? The following suggestions may be useful.

There is a sense in which criticism of the education system as inadequate preparation for work is justified, but this must not be used as an excuse for restructuring the whole system as a direct service to industry. It does mean facing the fact that many students won't get work immediately, and may never get work. Some effort should be made to prepare students for this. Analysis of the causes of unemployment could counter the dole-bludger myth, and some preparation for living on a minimal income might be useful. Perhaps those currently unemployed could usefully contribute thier experience in this regard. Preparation for unemployment, however, should not inculcate acceptance of the situation as natural or necessary. Some examination of societies (e.g. USSR, China, etc.) where unemployment is not a problem may be valuable here.

It is important, given the demoralizing effects of being on the dole, that unemployed school-leavers do not remain isolated. Students should be aware of organizations and campaigns that unite the unemployed around struggling for their rights – e.g. decent treatment by the Society Security Department, a decent dole level, etc. – and maintaining public awareness of the issue.

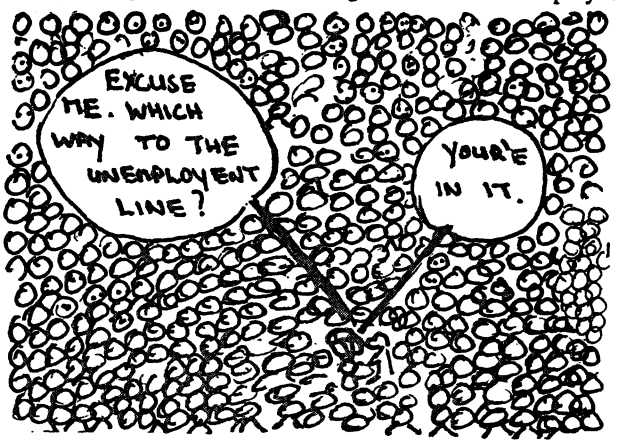
It is also important for the unemployed to maintain contact with other groups who can assist them, particularly the organized work force through the trade union movement. On their own people out of work have no power. Only through a concerted union campaign over the issue of the right to work can any effective action be expected, especially now that parliamentary opposition is so seriously weakened. Teachers should agitate for their own union to act around this issue.

The following Sydney organizations are worth contacting over this issue and can advice of further contacts:

Women's Employment Rights Campaign – 695 281

Right to Work Campaign – 233 6629 (meetings every second Monday at the Trades Hall)

Australian Council of Social Service – 274 066 (currently campaigning for a Bill of Rights for the unemployed).



The H.S.C. : Preparation For What ?

by John Davies

Introduction

Education is never a neutral preparation for life; rather it is the dominant means of reproducing the social relations of any society. Mass education, as we experience it, is enforced by law, it is predominantly state-controlled, and it is organised in such a way that a correspondence is established between the social relations of school and the broader social relations outside of school. This paper is concerned to illustrate how the very *content* presented and learnt in school contributes to developing an understanding of the world which secures and reproduces certain features of the social relations under capitalism.*

What Counts as Necessary Knowledge?

For success in school (and later in society) the answer is simple: that which is on the H.S.C. syllabus, or that which is required to pass the H.S.C. examination. In Victoria, the H.S.C., the curricula for which are largely determined by the V.U.S.E.B., along with Standing Committees,[1] has become the sole 'independent' test of school knowledge, and it has its parallel in all other states; it is also now widely used by almost all employers as a means of ranking their employees. And despite its vastly increased social power (or perhaps because of it) the H.S.C. is still tightly controlled by the universities who, by default, are able to determine what is to count as necessary knowledge for virtually the whole of the next generation.

It doesn't matter, of course, that 80% of the school population will not enter universities. The status of tertiary education – in the 1960s in determining who got the secure well paid jobs, and today in determining who gets any job – is so powerful that generations of parents and children have demanded (or accepted) a school curriculum that prepares them for the H.S.C. whether or not *their child* will get that far. And following the model set by the scientific and technical subjects which were thought to demand detailed sequential learning, sequential curricula have become the model for almost all H.S.C. subjects.

Thus we find the absurd position that largely holds true today. History, for example, begins in Form I with ancient Suma and Egypt for all, and reaches convict Australia by Form III, after which the 'less able' students leave school. Only in Form V and VI is there any possibility of learning formal modern history, and this is limited by the H.S.C. constraints described later. What is the result? A reproduction of class differences through educational sifting. Only the 'well educated' and generally the well paid will know anything of modern history, while for 80% of the next generation names like Woodrow Wilson and Ben Chifley, to say nothing of Marx and Sartre, will be as familiar as Hawthorn's ruckmen are in Parramatta Leagues Club. And not surprisingly, those disciplines which have attempted to break away from the sequential straightjacket have been de-legitimised as soft-options or non-vocational, such as social studies, which finally disappeared from the list of formal H.S.C. subjects in 1976.

A further characteristic of 'necessary H.S.C. knowledge' appears to be segregation. At one level subjects are kept apart from other subjects, almost as if there were a fear that, if put together, they might, like the critical mass of uranium in a bomb, produce new energy which could generate radical critiques: witness especially the success with which politics and economics have been kept apart. But in education, as in the productive process, the social relations involved – how we teach – are also segregated from the content – what we teach. Those gains which might be made in humanising the social relations of schooling must be made at the expense of covering the necessary curricula. The individual teacher is often faced with the dilemma of producing an exciting open-ended learning situation where human values are discussed, or simply reproducing the optimum course for examination success.

The successful teacher of Form VI knows by experience what questions will be asked and how students should answer them to succeed; while this form of measurable success is seen by the public as the sole criterion of the worth of particular teachers and schools. At this point the *instrumentalism* of this necessary knowledge becomes almost absolute, and while its content is forgotten before Christmas, the forms of knowledge – objective, deductive, empirico-scientific – tend to linger in the back of students' minds. The 'scientific method', the 'correct' literary interpretation, the rote-learning of facts has become the way in which one discovers things about the world, or the *use-value* of formal education.

Yet teachers, as students, have experienced an alienation from the content of knowledge that stems from its use as almost pure *exchange-value*; exchanged, in this case, for an entry into higher learning and upward mobility. The education system then requires these teachers to reproduce knowledge as an *exchange-value* in their students, a situation analogous to the factory-worker in its alienating consequences.[2]

All this spells a loss of state control over the *relations of production* of knowledge. It thus becomes even more important for this content to be rigidly prescribed. That content is our next concern.

The Victorian H.S.C. Curriculum

The 1977 list of subjects stands at 55 (53 in 1976). These break down into 6 distinct areas:

1	The English Languages	3 subjects
2	Foreign Languages	21 subjects
3	Natural Sciences	11 subjects
4	Histories	8 subjects
5	Fine Arts	5 subjects
6	Miscellaneous	7 subjects
	Total	55 subjects

* The paper examines the content set for the Victorian H.S.C., but the analysis is equally applicable to all states of Australia, as well as to the structure of schooling anywhere in the capitalist world.

The skills of communication, aesthetics and knowledge of the natural sciences are quite properly essential to the normal functioning of everyone in today's society – there is no quarrel here.

Beyond that we enter the area of interpretive skills by which we come to understand the world around us and our relations to its various structures. In a world where knowledge is doubling every 7 years it is just as essential that the next generation is schooled in these skills – what someone once called 'the science and art of knowing how the world is the way it is' – and at first sight the choice is wide. However, because Fine Arts are taught as 'a set body of knowledge' we must limit ourselves to English, one of the Histories, or the Miscellaneous group. Leaving English to last because it must be taken by all candidates we have:

The Histories

Of the 8 History subjects, 5 deal with eras that ended 177 years ago. Both Asian and Australian History is taken down to 27 years ago. The only 'modern' subject here is 'Themes in Australian History' under whose canopy students may choose to study the 1890 Maritime Strike (but not a recent strike), Radical and Working Class Politics (but only up to 1910!), or Australian Racism in Humphrey McQueen's *A New Brittania* (but only chapter 2).

The Miscellaneous Group

This rag-bag of seven subjects contains 'Accounting'; 'Biblical Studies'; 'Commercial and Legal Studies'; 'Economics'; 'Graphic Communications'; 'Politics'; and 'Home Economics – Human Development and Society'; this last added as a token to feminist critiques in 1976.

However, students have taken this rag-bag seriously and there has been a phenomenal growth in the numbers opting to sit the social studies (now renamed Politics) and Commercial and Legal exams. In the last year of complete data there was a rise from 67.4% of total entries to 81.6% of total entries. Of this group Biblical Studies and Graphics attracted less than 1000 candidates between them, while the commerce subjects consist of so much accepted knowledge that they cannot be truly called 'interpretive'; leaving Economics (4th most popular subject), and Politics (6th most popular subject), and 'Home Economics etc' to carry the banner for the interpretive subjects. Let us consider each of them.

1 Economics Syllabus 1976

The Economics syllabus has hardly changed since the 'Guide to the New Economics Course' was published in the V.U.S.E.B. supplement to Schools in 1974. The course is divided into a core worth 60% and electives, any two of which make up the remaining 40%.

The Core – consisting of 5 areas of study:

1 Introduction
Economic welfare, its meaning, measurement and decisions.

2 Resource Allocation and Economic Systems
The market mechanism, the Australian economic system and other economic systems.

3 The Level of Economic Activity
The concepts of expenditure, production, income, productive capacity, full employment, Gross Domestic Product, aggregate demand, money, budgets and government policies.

4 The Pursuit of Economic Welfare
Factors affecting welfare, indicators, growth, population growth, the distribution of income, redistribution policies of governments.

5 Australia and the World Economy
The balance of payments, international reserves, international transactions, internal and external transactions and the effects of major policy weapons (sic?).

The Electives – 1976

1 Australian Government policies in relation to price and employment objectives in the 1970s.
2 Federal/state/local government financial relations in Australia in the 1970s.
3 Immigration in Australia since 1920.
4 Poverty in Australia – policies for its alleviation.
5 The international money system since 1945. Recent developments.
6 Economics of developing economies.

The Changes – 1977

The major change in content has been the upgrading of 'government policies on prices and employment' from an elective (worth 20%) to a core subject placed at the end of area 3, where it will be compulsory but worth less marks. The wording is important, viz:

1967 Area 3 section (d) The operation of budgetary, monetary and other governmental policies with respect to the moderation of fluctuations in the level of economic activity.

1977 Area 3 section (d) The operation of budgetary, monetary and other governmental policies with respect to changes in the general level of economic activity, prices and employment – Reference should be made to Australia in the 1970s.

Clearly the question of prices and unemployment is now seen as core material. But more than this – no longer do governments *moderate* the fluctuations in the level of economic activity, but react to changes in the *general level* of economic activity. These changes are now *out there*, in the world as given, and are possibly now beyond governmental control? Again, the dropping of the verb 'moderates' indicates that perhaps the State is not as neutral as orthodox economics has traditionally argued? If the State is not neutral in the class war between labour and capital (see wording of Area 5 – 'the effects of the major policy *weapons*') whose side is it on, and who are such 'weapons' being directed against?

The only other change is the addition, in 1977, of Jugoslavia to the list of other economic systems worth studying, namely those of Russia and China. The question is: why now? Jugoslavia's worker councils have been operating since 1947 in various forms and were well documented in the 1960s. Perhaps orthodox economics was holding its breath for 30 years waiting to see whether the world's most successful experience in workers' control was viable? If this is so it may now be argued that this experiment has been a failure in terms of western economic aspirations since thousands of Jugoslavs have flooded into West Germany seeking better-paid jobs – at least until 1974, when they were 'sent home'. A more plausible reason stems from the increased interest in worker-participation in Australia. Studies have shown that increased participation is the administrative answer to a loss of belief in legitimate authority by the masses.[3] It has long been part of the hidden curricula of bourgeois economics to present capitalism as the legitimate exercise of authority stemming from eternal economic laws. The theme for this H.S.C. course studies 'the impact of economic activity upon human welfare' as if it was 'the impact of the Law of Gravity upon human welfare' – the implications of allowing the 'masses' to discover that Jugoslavia tore up the law book 30 years ago may ultimately lead some to question why human welfare is not placed first.

However, the orthodox need not set about an immediate rewrite. The core book list includes no new works on Jugoslavia; indeed only one new book has been added, and that is on Macro-economic Policy in Australia.

The changes in the Economics syllabus are minimal; – and what is eventually of more interest is that which has been left out of it.

2 Politics Syllabus – 1976

The Politics course was introduced in 1967 to replace Social Studies and remained unchanged in 1977. The six sections are:

1 *Political Participation*; voting, parties, interest groups, media and demonstrations.
2 *Problems in Australian Federalism*; theories and Federal State relations.
3 *The Government process*; representation, the executive and accountability.
4 *The Regional Context Asian-Pacific Region since 1945*; USA, China and Japan.
5 *Australia's External Relations since 1945*; Australian attitudes, threats and alliances.
6 *Australian Foreign Policy*; future trends.

Numbers 1 to 3 represent Politics in Australia and numbers 4 to 6 Foreign Policy, Asian-Pacific.

The previous Social Studies course had been very similar, with many paragraphs transposed into the present course. Over the years the major area of change was to be found in Section 4. In 1972 this Section was still called 'The Search for Security since 1945' listing Japan, China and Indonesia as perceived threats – though who perceived them as threats wasn't stated. Section 5 in those days called for a case study of Australian involvement in any two of Japan, China, the Maphilindo States or Indo-China. By 1974 Indo-China was dropped from the list.

The major changes in 1977 have occurred in the book-lists. Fifty-three books and periodicals have been dropped and replaced by thirty-eight new publications.

Without reporting the full analysis it seems obvious that Australian politics is party politics. Even at this level there are changes. As topics we find 'democracy', 'class' and 'catholics' moving out of favour, while the media and the constitution are moving in. The accent is on how the thing works rather than why. This instrumentalism can hardly be maintained with our foreign policy, and a radical break occurs here, with economic interests coming to the fore. Topics on the wane include Vietnam and defence, while candidates can count on Japan and China coming up. Two out-of-print books on the Australian-American alliance appear as obsolete as the policy.

But there is a deeper and more profound conclusion to such an analysis. There are very serious repercussions for all Australians, whether they take H.S.C. politics or not, in continuing to define politics in this way. We can define politics as the art of the possible, current history, or what you will; it is certainly not just voting behaviours and international agreements. Politics is about people in an economic milieu; it is about 'who does what to whom? and for what advantage?' To divorce politics from economics and then use the present political system – *with all its faults* – to justify the present economic system – *with all its faults* – is a *criminal* act, and just about the biggest educational confidence trick since Sir Cyril Burt.

This H.S.C. course is an inadequate description of our current political system. It might be an adequate description of the tip of an iceberg, but it is about as much use to the next generation as the iceberg was to the Titanic. To learn what exists beneath the surface we must have a wider perspective – a possibility that was there in the 1976 book list with Connell's *Child's Construction of Politics*, Playford and Kirsner's *Australian Capitalism*, and Barnet's *Intervention and Revolution*, all of which are *absent* from the 1977 list. If these are too far 'left' for the present establishment, could we settle for Machiavelli's *The Prince* or Clausewitz on war – something like looking at the iceberg from a submarine underneath it – but at least our youth would know it's there?

To treat both Politics and Economics in such an instrumental fashion does more than emasculate these disciplines; it rids them of their interpretive powers. Which of today's 55 H.S.C. subjects can be used as a grounding in social analysis, in current interpretations of our world and as a practical guide to survival? In academic terms there is a lacuna between Politics and Economics as wide as Lake Burley Griffin. Adam Smith and Ricardo would turn in their graves. Nevertheless, there is one small island that has appeared on this wide lake that offers us some hope.

3 Home Economics – Human Development and Society

The political economy of how Home Economics came, in 1975, to be included as a legitimate university-accredited H.S.C. subject would test the stamina of the reader too far. Its Standing Committee has guided this course through successive identity crises, from 'Cookery' to 'Domestic Science', to 'Home Economics', and then to its present title (the 'longest' H.S.C. subject). It has done a fine job.

The first two pages in the Handbook set out the aims and justifies the objectives in a rather vague way which includes, with many of the natural sciences, the hope that students will develop '(an) appreciation of the importance of informed and critical thinking'. *Unlike* the natural sciences this course attempts to implement that ideal. The 5 core units consist of physiology and nutrition; child rearing; the family cycle; the family (or alternative group) and the individual; values and decision-making; cultural influences, etc. Optional Units include the 'development and preservation of an effective environment', a study of the family under stress, and cultural and social changes as they effect the family and sex roles.

That may not sound very exciting. Yet within the formal language of prescription there bubbles a dynamic curiosity, an

orientation to change, and a refusal to accept the 'taken-for-granted-world', that is totally absent from other courses. For instance, there is the impudence – and I'm not being facetious – to talk about 'intellectual processes' in a course mainly designed for women. There is the daring to conceive that people might develop their environment to be safe, functional and aesthetic, rather than simply interacting with a given environment; which opens up the possibilities of seriously considering developing an aesthetically pleasing environment ourselves (as opposed to consuming the mass products of capitalism) and/or a safe environment free of pollution and radiation.

Optional Unit 2 spells out the possible causes for stress in families as economic, social and environmental; in contrast to the dominant ideological notion that stress has a psychological cause and is probably one's own fault.

Finally the course is not content with the study of formal units but includes a compulsory sociological field study; a practical investigation that forces sixth form students out of their cloistered classrooms and into contact with other people's reality.

Enlightening though it may be, however, this course could not really be said to be available to all. The V.U.S.E.B. has a clause that prevents students counting more than one subject that has been introduced in the last 3 years towards their university entrance. Thus students have to choose between, say, Home Economics' and the eight languages most recently introduced, and the reorganised Physical Science course. Four subjects are required for normal university entrance. English is compulsory, and many faculties require two particular subjects as a prerequisite. Thus the inclusion of Home Economics as a course of study means dropping Physical Science (which is not a prerequisite for anything), or any of the eight recent languages. Clearly no Latvian cook is going to get into Medicine by the back door.

The Home Economics course does, however, offer some hope that a deeper analysis of the social formation could be developed by aware teachers. But whether this will actually happen depends on a number of factors, a crucial one being the consciousness and experiences of those that teach it.

4 English Syllabus – 1976

The English exam is compulsory for every student; 25 372 taking the test in 1975. The stated function of the course is to develop students' ability to read, think and communicate in the English language; and while the accent on formal 'correct' English is always strong, it does vary. As with most other H.S.C. subjects the examiners' commitment to critical thought is vague and ambiguous. Note this enigmatic sentence in the course description:

> 'The student's ability to formulate, defend and illustrate his (sic) own point of view will reflect his work, both oral and written, during the year.'

Such a statement hardly tells the student what he (or she – 53% of the 1975 candidates were female) really wants to know, namely, 'Do I lose marks if I attack a book?' For books are the key to this exam, despite the essay and comprehension sections. The aims of the exam do not change from year to year – only the book lists, which are arranged in six or seven groups. Students are required to read eight books, four from one group and the rest from at least two other groups. Through this spread the aims of the course – 'to write more clearly, relevantly and creatively – and, in the process, to broaden and enrich his (?) awareness of the world' – are supposedly to be realised. But what sort of a world view is presented in the books set for study?

Leaving aside the matter of literary appreciation, there are clear ideological issues which are reinforced by the very selection of books which are presented to the student to 'broaden and enrich his awareness of the world'. Let us consider three such issues.

1 The bias against politics

The vast majority of recent choices involved the theme of the individual struggling against a complex and unintelligible society; the only real intermediate group being the ambivalent 'family'. Yet there are groups, classes, bureaucracies and parties in between that play a major part in how we see the world, and there *are* books written about them – though they may not be popular. Orwell's quartet (*An Age Like This, Down and Out...*, *Homage to Catalonia*, and *1984*) was included in 1976 but was dropped in 1977 since it attracted only 5.5% of candidates. This action contracted the book choice by 14%, and left the field devoted to the problems of the *individual* in a world composed of hostile others.

As a way of understanding the world this petit-bourgeois individualism is inadequate. As literature it seldom transcends its own class position and is left oscillating between the two fundamental capitalist classes. This ambivalence may well appeal to our 'taste' (itself a cultural product) but I would suggest there are other literary modes – the epic and tragic for example – that have not eradicated dignity and nobility from the lists of the essential human qualities.

2 The implications of arbitrary choice

Once the book lists are published, around October, they are subjected to intense literary criticism by teachers, academics, the authors of primers and even some students. The 'film of the book' is a guaranteed box-office success.

Yet the way they are chosen is primarily determined by two factors: the size of the book (cheap and small is beautiful), and a sort of adolescent popularity poll, which influences the committees' views on 'whether the kids could handle it?'

Thus the voluminous Solzenhitzyn dies out (only 1% chose him) while the fashionable existentialism of Camus (11%) reappears in 1978. The prevailing works are therefore 'topical', cheap, and short; and the student's awareness of the world is 'broadened and enriched' in much the same way as if the texts for science and geography were limited to *Popular Mechanics* and the *National Geographic*.

3 Culture and history

The culture presented in the set books is still that of a largely Anglo-Saxon world. Recent criticism of this xenophobia has led to flirtation with Russia (Solzhenitsyn, *The First Circle*, and Van der Post, *Journey into Russia* in 1976), and with Australian migrants (Rorabacher, *Stories of Migrants in Australia*, in 1977); but an amalgam of British, American and Australian culture still predominantes. There is no question that this white middle-class anglo-american culture is the dominant culture in Australia today, but does this justify omitting all other literary cultures, save for tokenism?

At the historical level we can note that all 70 titles from 1976 to 1978 have been written *under capitalism* with the exception of Sophocles. At this level of ideology it makes no difference that many of the authors are highly critical of capitalism in many ways; what still comes through is that capitalism *is* the given deep structure of our daily lives. In fact capitalism appears as the *only* structure, not as a particular historical mode. Now examiners consistently and correctly note that the best answers come from candidates who *argue a case*, but in

this context any critical arguments must necessarily take place on the grounds set by a capitalist world view. And yet there are alternatives available within the English tradition: Pope, Bunyan, Fielding, Defoe and Swift surely contribute to an understanding of previous social systems and their effect on the way people thought. Writers from the third world like Fanon, from the peasantry of Greece and Italy (*The School of Barbiana, Zorba the Greek*), and our own Frank Hardy or David Ireland would reflect the class relations that both form our world views and are the object of unconscious suppression by the other predominantly petit-bourgeois authors.

Knowledge as a Commodity

Admittedly the above critiques are speculative; it would take much longer to produce definitive evidence. Yet I claim that the *tendencies* are clearly away from the interpretive disciplines even if, as in the case of English, this is merely a mirror of a shift in wider social values. The V.U.S.E.B. cannot *escape responsibility* by pushing it onto 'society' since their previous choices of what is to count as essential knowledge have, to some extent, *formed* those wider social values. The structure of control over such knowledge hasn't altered.

Knowledge that is produced simply for *exchange-value* (for a qualification or economic security) rapidly assumes the structure of a commodity. The production of objects mainly or totally for exchange value was first analysed by Marx in *Capital*, a process which he described as 'commodity production'. He also recognised that one of the strengths of capitalism was its ability to constantly revolutionise the productive process, and with this continuing change, the social relations of production also change. As Bowles and Gintis have shown, there is a correspondence between the social relations of production and the social relations of schooling. Thus we would expect to find that changes in the processes of production due to the constraints of capitalism and its total control over the *technical choices* available (e.g. centralised nuclear power is chosen in preference to decentralised solar power) will be reflected in corresponding changes in the educational structure.

If we assume that the change from use-value production to commodity production (exchange-value) has, indeed, entered the educational arena, we should find at least three effects of commodity production being manifested in formal education, namely:

1 Alienation

Use-value knowledge derives its intrinsic interest from the students' decision to learn, itself based on a non-manipulated projection of where the student wants to go. Exchange-value knowledge is entirely instrumental, learned by the student because *someone else* has decided that it is necessary, and based on (usually economically) manipulated projections of what knowledge the next generation will need to maintain the social and economic system.

2 Needs Manipulation

The production of a scarce commodity creates its own needs, (art commodities are a good example; once legitimated they have a high exchange value and virtually no use-value). Once the production process makes the commodity in mass, the market requires manipulation by psychological advertising to persuade us that we need it. In education this results in the mass production of 'essential knowledge' (H.S.C. subjects) which are of little intrinsic value to most of us but which are deemed necessary to gain a worthwhile job. The educational market place is wide open to this form of manipulation by 'experts' because the structure of learning is such that the specialists, who alone know the social utility of their knowledge, are also the people who choose what will be legitimate knowledge.

3 Commodity Fetishism

Illich has shown how our compulsive search for qualifications feeds the education industry. Learning, once a co-operative relation between people, now becomes reified, acquiring a 'phantom objectivity' realised in competitive 'pieces of paper'. Yet unlike the production of objects, learning remains, in reality, a *process*; and this double mystification can be written: 'relation → distortion → thing → distorted relation'. The effect of this is to present us with a paradox that would delight the Hegelian mind. The only way to de-mystify this double-relation is through more learning – the answer to the problem of knowledge is more knowledge.

But, not just any old knowledge will do. We have to 'undo' this dialectical relation and it can only be unravelled with *dialectical knowledge* (notably absent from H.S.C. curricula).

Conclusion

To understand the world around us, regardless of the arbitrary position allotted to us on sex, class, cultural and ethnic criteria, we need certain skills and knowledge not currently found in the H.S.C. list. I have already mentioned the gap between Economics and Politics. The scientific irrelevance of the former and the self-limitations of the latter simply widen the gap that 'Home Economics' cannot hope to fill. There are obvious omissions, such as social studies or women's studies which could be hosted by the present disciplines of sociology and psychology.

But there are other more *practical* gaps that have no home discipline to date. Generations of students have left school with no knowledge of working conditions, trade union organization, meeting procedure, small group interactions, economic democracy, campaign organization, media presentation, effective speaking and a host of other activities that form the daily experience of active members of a community. Another area

of deficit opens up if we presume that the commercialised culture and mass media have not totally occupied people's leisure hours. Even if they have, the quite respectable Media Studies and Literary Criticism courses in universities are nowhere reflected in the H.S.C. More important, an analysis of the range and standards of cultural production from the 'high cultures' of classical art and music to the mass cultures of pop entertainment could show the next generation that there are vested interests at work in maintaining this range, yet areas of folk and ethnic cultures are ignored.

The knowledge produced and reinforced by the H.S.C. curricula is selective. What is selected is legitimated as 'essential knowledge'; but this in itself is 'knowledge' which perpetuates distortions which both disguise and serve class interests. It is knowledge based on, and growing out of, illusions.

Paradoxically, we have reached the stage where our only legitimate alternative seems to be to embrace and believe in illusions, thus remaining slaves of the modern priests and gurus (the V.U.S.E.B.), and slaves of the very superstitions that formal education was ostensibly created to combat.

Education, in a capitalist society, reinforces and promulgates illusions; and the H.S.C. curricula play a large part in this process. There is a way out, however; a way that has been clearly indicated by Marx. To abandon illusions about our conditions requires that we abandon the very conditions that require illusions for their maintenance and propagation.

Notes

1 The V.U.S.E.B. consists of 40 members: 21 are drawn from the 3 Victorian universities, 7 from the Victorian Education Department, 4 from independent schools, 3 from Roman Catholic schools, 2 from industry and 3 more are co-opted by the Board. This body makes decisions concerning new examination subjects and major changes in the existing list.

The actual curricula for each subject are worked out by the Standing Committees, each of 20 members, made up as follows: 6 from the universities, 6 secondary school teachers of whom 4 are nominated by the relevant subject associations, 5 experts from training colleges, the A.C.E.R. etc., while 3 represent the State, Roman Catholic and Independent school systems.

2 This is what Bowles and Gintis, Braverman and others have referred to as the 'proletarianisation' of the white-collar worker. It is thus not surprising to find that teachers have, over the last ten years, organized themselves into unions based on the industrial model of alienated labour, who now send delegates to the Victorian Trades Hall Council and even use the rhetoric of militant trade unions.

See Bowles and Gintis, *Schooling in Capitalist America*, Basic Books, 1976.

3 See Jurgan Habermas, *The Legitimation Crisis*, Beacon Press, N.Y. 1974 and Alvin Gouldner, *The Dialectic of Ideology and Technology*, Seabury Press, N.Y. 1976.

The Struggle Against Capitalist Education

by Peter Stevens

What I try to do in this article is to offer a general perspective within which to think about the daily problems of schooling and the longer-term movement of the education system. This perspective informs a background analysis on which I base a set of proposals for areas of action by radical teachers. The relationship of these proposals to the aims of the Radical Education Group will, I think, be obvious.

While some of the analysis will be quite familiar territory for many of you, I have tried to recast it in line with recent changes in my own thinking. A word or two of explanation about that. There has been a fairly strong current in recent Marxist writing on education under capitalism which tends to take capitalism as a working whole and examine how schooling functions to maintain this system. I've certainly written and spoken within this rather functionalist framework myself. Indeed, in many ways, it has been difficult to avoid in short discussions in contexts where a background in Marxist analysis cannot be assumed. But I'm convinced that such functionalist renderings are misleading and potentially counter-productive. For they can lead to a view of capitalism as monolithic and all-powerful – a 'how-can-you-hope-to-beat-it' response – which is demoralising for those who are trying to fight it and its effects.

A different prospect is revealed if class struggle is made the starting point of analysis instead of being considered *after* the functional role of the education system has been discussed. Such a perspective brings much more strongly to the fore the role of the state in education and throws a different light on the activities of teachers. I cannot present the whole of the changes that this implies – even if I were allowed the space – but here is a beginning.

The fundamental step is to recognise that the existence and nature of the schooling system is, like any other large-scale social institution, the outcome of class struggle. (Not only class struggle, but also, and increasingly, struggle between groups of different gender and sexuality – I shall however be concentrating on class struggle.) Schooling is the outcome of these struggles in two senses: historically, and structurally. Historically, in that the form that schooling presently takes is the result of past struggles between various groups, determining what changes have been made at various times. But also structurally, because the maintenance of the existing form is the effect of *present* causes; it is the outcome or resultant of existing structures and mechanisms involving these groups. These both deserve more attention, but here I shall deal only with the historical aspects.[1]

Origins of Capitalist Education

What I present here is a telescoped and very schematic picture, but one which, I hope, is indicative of the revised framework in which the history of education needs to be understood.[2]

Until the development of capitalism such education as there was, was reserved for the ruling classes and was principally in

the hands of private tutors and the church. What the labouring classes learnt, and this often involved very substantial skills, they learnt, as we would now say, on the job, working principally in family groups or apprenticeship arrangements. The growth of capitalism led to the separation of the labourers from their means of production. The peasants were forced off the land by enclosures etc. and became wage-labourers in capitalist factories where the means of production were owned by the capitalists. These were rapidly able to undermine artisanal production through the increased efficiency of socialised production, and the accelerated development of techniques and machines. The continuing development of capitalism precipitated both a considerable degradation of skills required for much productive work and the requirement for quite new skills associated with new processes. Training within the family became increasingly inadequate as parental skills were rendered obsolete. The reduction in skills undercut the apprenticeship system which was anyway too unwieldy to provide for the rapid redeployment of labour dictated by the competitive pursuit of profit by capitalists.

However, capitalism not only undermined the economic basis of family and artisanal production, it also threw workers in factories together in large numbers, ending the isolation inherent in rural life and small-scale production. At the same time that the workers' physical isolation was being broken down, the rising capitalist class was conducting a political and ideological struggle against the land-owning classes in power. This attack eroded previously well-entrenched justifications, mediated by religion, for the existing structure of society. The increased mobility enforced by the search for work steadily broke down the extended kinship structures of the workers, adding to the growing loss of traditional forms of control over the dominated classes in the society.

In this situation, workers sought new solutions to the age-old problems of security, independence and material welfare. Retreat to a supposed 'golden past' helped to inspire utopian settlements and ideas. The more hard-headed strove to save enough from wage-labour to set up in independent business themselves (few succeeded). Small minorities sought to end the wage-labour system so as to end their subjection to the capitalists. Most accepted wage-labour and tried only to improve their lot within the system. The demand of workers for education was frequently to enable them to get the better jobs within wage-labour, or for upward social mobility across class boundaries. Occasionally, however, it represented a recognition of their need for increased knowledge to guide their fight against the capitalists.

For once, workers' demands were met, though as usual, not in the form they sought, and mainly because they coincided to a large extent with the interests of the capitalist employers. These sought to provide, at public expense if possible, for the learning of elementary skills needed for new processes (initially reading, later the three R's). But most especially, they sought to control the growing unruliness of the proletariat they had created. The state, as the representative of the overall long-term interests of the capitalist class, introduced mass schooling. The institution was a blend of the teaching model of elite educational institutions and the factory model. This had the advantage of accustoming children to factory-type organisation before they began working there. Schooling was at first very poorly policed and easily evaded by individual capitalists more interested in screwing more work out of children. In many ways the instituting of schooling was a victory for the working class, but the form that it took was not, and capitalists soon began to recognise advantages to themselves in promoting it. For the form schooling took produced workers who on the whole were more orderly, passive and respectful than the unschooled.

Subsequently the institution has been steadily expanded, to take in almost all children (the exceptions are the most extremely disadvantaged groups, eg. aborigines), and extended in duration. This has occurred parallel to political changes involving the extension of voting rights and has at various times been justified on the grounds of providing an educated citizenry capable of using that right 'responsibly' (ie. not in pursuit of their own interests).

In the struggle over the nature and content of the institution, capitalist interests have, as elsewhere, been dominant over workers' interests. The satisfaction of capitalist interests has been constrained however by the fluctuating strength of the workers' struggle for education in *their* interests, and by contradictions, in the schooling process itself, and between capitalist interests and the capitalist ideology about schooling.

Schooling in the Service of Capitalism

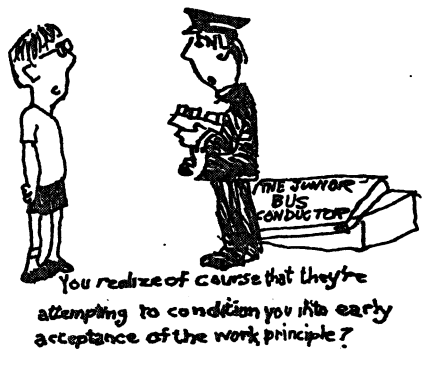
This dominance of capitalist interests is very clear, and can lead tothe sort of functionalist account that I remarked on earlier. Readers of RED are probably familiar with the general lines of what schools do that serve these interests and the mechanisms of how they do it and I shall only give a brief resume of the analysis.

What schools do for capitalism

Firstly, schooling has a role in the reproduction of labour power – the development of skills and knowledge needed for various jobs. To the job market in which the capitalist employer looks for workers, the schools deliver up a series of pre-sorted and stratified classes of people clearly intended, by the length and whatever special content there is to their schooling, for factory work, for clerical work, for laboratory work, for managerial work etc. at various levels. This is all done at public expense and saves capitalist employers the cost they would otherwise have to meet by doing it themselves.

At the same time the school reproduces the existing class structure of the society. The people it ejects from its different streams at different levels fit into a stratified structure of owners and non-owners of capital, of controllers and controlled. And schooling operates so that overwhelmingly the children of controllers become controllers themselves and the children of the controlled take their own parents' places. Material success in life (achieving high income and power), and success at school are both highly dependent on coming from a privileged background (highly schooled parents, high socio-economic situation, many books, room of one's own, etc.). Analyses of school and university graduates repeatedly show that those who succeed are, in large disproportion, those from such privileged backgrounds.

But there is another, and dominant function of the schools. Such teaching as there is of skills and knowledge that are job-relevant (and for most people much remains to be learnt on the job), is subordinated to this dominant function. This is the training of compliant workers and docile citizens who are adapted to the work situations imposed on them by the organisation of capitalist production, supportive or unquestioning of the social order based on it and accepting of their own position within it.



How they do it

Firstly, by transmitting various ideologies, ones incorporating capitalist interests, about society, people and knowledge. The most obvious part of this is the overt curriculum of the school, its teaching of particular theories of economics and accounts of history etc. It's also important to note that school provides a special context of authority and prestige for whatever *is* taught in it, and thus a devaluing of what is not.

Secondly, by the lessons that are taught, by the way the school is organised, what is put in and left out of the curriculum, the practical relations within which teaching and learning take place, etc. These practical relations of schooling correspond closely in major ways to those of the capitalist work-place.

1 The control of the learning process (both content and procedures), as of the labour process, is almost exclusively in the hands of others. This control is mediated through a hierarchy of stratified controllers with clear lines of authority (Department, principal, subject head, teacher).
2 Motivation and reward do not in general stem from any intrinsic satisfaction of the learning process or the knowledge achieved but rather, as in the labour process, are provided externally to that process (teacher approval and grades, rather than wages or promotion).
3 Work, although performed in a social situation, is carried out individually. Rewards (as with wages) are likewise distributed to individuals (as opposed to, say, groups).
4 Rewards in both are unequal, and distributed according to various unequally distributed factors such as natural and acquired skills and talents.
5 Competition, rather than co-operation, is the basic form of relation imposed on students (and workers) by their situation.
6 Rule conformity and 'good' behaviour (eg. punctuality, deferment of gratification etc.) are highly rewarded.

People subjected over a long period to the daily workings involved in these relations can be expected to be neatly adapted in terms of practical attitudes and habits to the modified version of them operating in the capitalist work-place.

Not only are workers thus adapted to capitalist work situations, but workers at all levels mostly accept the position in the social hierarchy allocated to them by the needs of capitalist production, and the living standards and life opportunities associated with it. Thus, in general, people do not have ambitions drastically different from their actual possibilities.

To understand this we need to recognise that the class-reproducing and other outcomes of schooling do not appear on the surface of its operations and that the inequalities involved do not appear to be a consequence of class origin. For example, within each individual classroom it appears instead that everyone gets an equal chance – all get the same teaching and the same facilities – so that success apparently depends on the natural intelligence and diligence of the individual. In the isolation of the classroom, where no reference is made to class, these factors appear to be independent of the students' origins and simply inherent properties of the individuals. The schools then appear only to sort people out on these bases, develop each person to the limits of their ability and channel them into work best suited to their 'natural' talents.

Given an acceptance of these appearances and others which appear to show that positions higher in the social hierarchy require greater amounts of school-rewarded talents, it is easier to understand the acceptance of unequal outcomes. It seems that those who hold higher positions *deserve* the privileges that go with them, so that both those who succeed and those who fail come to accept the advantages and disadvantages that come their way. After all, the unsuccessful 'had their chance' like everyone else and 'only have themselves to blame' for not having taken it, or for not having 'what it takes' to do well. (A side-effect of this is that later, as parents, everyone pushes their children to succeed at school.)

Contradictions

But it is important to emphasise the definite constraints on this servicing of capitalist interests formed by contradictions inherent in capitalist education. I shall do no more here than just to mention a few of the salient ones by way of example.

1 Part of the capitalist ideology about education is that it has to do with self-development and personal interests, so that there are ideological restrictions on the extent to which schools can simply be devoted to producing docile workers.
2 Increases in the length of schooling (useful for capitalism) lead to increased expectations about employment prospects which, given the essentially limited number of satisfying jobs under capitalism's sharply hierarchical job structure, are bound to be disappointed. This leads to increasing discontent, especially in times of economic recession (not useful for capitalism).
3 The extension of schooling to provide for the training of people for sophisticated technical tasks makes available to them skills of reasoning etc. that can then be applied to the critical analysis of capitalist society and the struggle to end it.

Notes on the Struggle

However, what I want to concentrate on is the other limitation on the servicing of capitalist interests by schooling, that is, the struggle of those opposed to these interests; more precisely, the struggle for working class interests in the provision of education, and, in particular, our own part in that as teachers.

The State and the Educational Struggle

The state in capitalist society maintains a relative independence from direct capitalist control, but nonetheless has as the basic determinant of its activities the *long-term* economic interests of the capitalist class *as a whole*. Thus it may act against the interests of subgroups of capitalists, eg by dropping sandmining on Fraser Island, or against the short-term economic interests of the class as a whole, eg by increasing taxes on profits. The education system, while likewise retaining some independence, is essentially controlled by the state. Certainly no widespread changes in the system which are seen to work against long-term interests of capital will be tolerated by the capitalist state for long. The state has many economic and coercive powers at its disposal to ensure that such challenges are still-born or rapidly defeated. These powers are only called into play when ideological and economic power within the education system itself is unable to contain or defeat such challenges – the appearance of autonomy for schools, and particularly universities, is an important illusion for capital to have maintained.

Such a recognition of the role of the state means that our struggle within the educational institutions must be subordinated (in the last instance) to the general political struggle for the overthrow of the capitalist state. Without the gaining of state power by the working class and its allies the education system will continue to be dominated by capitalist interests. This does not mean that the struggle over education is unnecessary or useless. For one thing, it is itself a *contribution* to the general struggle, because of the contribution of schooling to the reproduction of capitalist society. But there is also scope to establish, perhaps in a limited way and for short periods only, alternative practices of educational government and activity. These practices are needed to explore a provisional basis on which to build an education programme for the period of transition to socialism. Further, the struggle to achieve these practices, and the experience of them in operation, have important transformational effects on ourselves, still the products of capitalist society, preparing *us* for the transition. What this subordination to the general struggle does mean is a linking up of the educational struggle with the political struggle. This applies at a personal level (we all need to be active in other areas too), but more crucially at an organizational level. We all need to be working with groups of radicals in education and other areas and to have links with revolutionary parties.

Given the role of the state it is clear that any utopian ideas of fundamental school reform on a widespread basis under capitalism (as many 'free-school' advocates seem to have) must be abandoned. This also involves a recognition of the dead end constituted by simply addressing submissions to the capitalist state – it is not, even when it most appears to be, a neutral arbiter that may see the 'reasonableness' or 'justice' of our requests. Advances *can* be gained by demands on the state, but if they are seriously in favour of the long-term interests of the working class then they will only be wrung from the state as concessions made necessary by the force of the struggle. What we need to work for principally is to decrease the ability of the state to control what happens in educational institutions, and this means putting struggles for the gaining of power in them in command over the still necessary struggle for more money for education.

For the Working Class

The Australian working class is at present substantially excluded from any direct role in the struggle over education within the institutions. There are Parents' and Citizens' Associations, but these are very limited in power and even in influence and anyway are generally dominated by non-working-class people. Those in the working class have been taught by the schools to defer to those with 'greater knowledge' (longer schooling) and often exclude themselves from active participation in the P&C. There are also the 'ancillary' staff of schools (clerks, secretaries, lab. assistants etc.). These are few in number and have, as yet, very little opportunity to influence what goes on. Two other groups need to be considered. Firstly, the students themselves. The majority of children in schools come from working class families and will remain working class themselves. Despite the organization of the schooling system to subdue them, and the success with which capitalist ideology about schools has been foisted on them and their parents, there is obviously much potential for direct working class struggle through student action. But this has only occasionally been realized. That brings us to a final and more ambiguous group, ourselves as teachers.

Given the problems just indicated, it is clear that there is a need for teachers to take a leading role in the struggle for working class interests in the schools. But teachers, objectively, are an odd lot, and their relation to the working class unclear. If we accept that class is determined not be economic situation alone, but also by objective political and ideological factors, then the oddity can be rapidly illustrated. In their economic determination, teachers are employees (salaried rather than

wage-earning, but nonetheless employees), but with a complex relation to supervision functions for capital. Like factory hands, they do not supervise and control other workers, but, unlike them, teachers deal with humans as the objects of their labour; they have to supervise and control students. Politically they are agents of the state (most often directly, as state employees) whose assigned tasks are delimited in ways which are ultimately subordinated to capitalist interests. The ideological factors which operate are (at least) two-fold. The actual job – with its forms of independence and self-direction within the classroom, its status and salary level etc. – is closely related to that of the traditional petty-bourgeoisie, especially the professions. And this is very much in line with the views pumped out at teachers by administrators, educationists and politicians etc., who stress the *professional* responsibility of teachers to students, the community and the nation (all these with no class divisions mentioned). Thus teachers and, say, factory workers, have both similarities and major differences bearing on their class position.

More work clearly needs to be done on the objective class position of teachers, to determine whether or not it is accurate and useful to regard them as *part* of the working class, and to estimate their likely class alignment in a given situation. Many of us are convinced though, that teachers do at least have objective interests in common with those of the working class and that they have much to gain from allying with workers in the transition to socialism.

Radical Teachers' Contribution to the Struggle

Or: what we need to be doing in light of all this.[3]

A *We need to be continually educating other teachers into a recognition of their unity of interests with the working class.*

This especially means a fight against the 'professionalist' ideology that obscures this unity and serves to divide teachers and prevent them from taking militant action. It also involves supporting various struggles in tertiary institutions where teachers are given their initial 'training'.

B *We need to link up with groups of radicals in related areas of struggle.* Here I have in mind the work being done in the social welfare field by Inside Welfare, and in the health industry by the Health Worker Collective. We have much to gain by sharing experiences and ideas and working together on various issues.

C *We need most of all to develop organizational links with working class militants and their trade union and political organizations.*

- Such links have the advantage of promoting unified action with greater strength – the involvement of the maritime unions in the Warilla High School strike in NSW in 1975 should only be a beginning. We must also be ready for occasions on which our support is, in turn, sought by militant workers.
- Such links should involve considerable mutual education. We should keep before us the aim of *worker*-student-staff control of educational institutions. 'Worker' here means the working class as a whole, not simply those who are workers in the institutions. This requires educating more workers into a recognition of the role of capitalist education and the need for them to intervene in educational issues. The other side of this is the education of teachers in what is needed to serve the interests of the working class, especially those of its children, in the processes of schooling and the need to fight for these.

D *In our teaching we need to work for the interests of the working class on three fronts – ideological, political and economic.* Here are some central suggestions.

1 Ideological front

a) *Struggle for radical content.* We should wo[illegible] to provi[illegible] a positive view of the working class, its history and its struggl[illegible]s,

and the abilities of workers and their children. Typically these are systematically absent from teaching, or are presented prejudicially. No-one should think to present these abstractly or at an advanced level; they need to be integrated into the teaching of concrete materials of felt relevance to students.[4] But to be able to do this requires us:

- within the individual classroom, to use the latitude in existing syllabuses and to fight any restrictive programmes imposed at school level.
- to fight to have syllabuses and the curriculum appropriately changed to include more materials relevant to working class interests.
- to engage in collective development and sharing of curriculum materials for this teaching. At present there is very little that is widely known, and the task of preparing a completely new set of materials by oneself is daunting.

(This set of ideas is the sort of thing identified by right-wing forces as 'aiming to exploit politically every syllabus and the whole curriculum'.[5] If we ignore the overtones of 'exploit', we might well accept the description, but the usual right-wing hypocrisy shows in their failure to report the standard systematic political functioning of 'every syllabus and the whole curriculum' in the interests of the ruling classes. We do not need to import politics into the syllabus, only to change the politics already there.)

b) *Struggle for progressive educational practice.* Not 'progressive' in the traditional, highly individualist sense of Progressive Education; the aim is democratized and *collective* control and decision-making. No utopian visions, but every effort to move in the relevant direction – even collective decision on the limited choice of which set book to study can provide a start.[6]

2 Political front

Workers' children need to know about the need for and to actually experience organization and solidarity. They also need to develop practical skills needed for struggles. For us this means:

a) *Support for student struggles*

- help to advertise and sustain secondary students' organizations such as the Students' Democratic Union.
- support for progressive teacher union policy on students' rights, and for students' own charters of rights.
- fight for *effective* school councils, with serious powers.
- train students in typing and duplicating skills etc. (learn them yourself, too!).

Always remembering that the experience of these various struggles is often as important as the limited gains that may be won at the present time.

b) *Being a positive example*

- be an *open* trade unionist and social radical.
- struggle for greater staff power vis-a-vis school and Departmental administrators.
- fight against own sexism, racism, authoritarianism, individualism.

3 Economic front

Students have to be able to survive as workers under capitalism, so:

- *teach the basics well* (in as radical and motivating a context as possible).
- *do not delude them* about capitalist work requirements or the consequence of individual disobedience.
- *encourage contact with workers* in job situations. ('Work-experience' programmes could be made very valuable if students were under the supervision of the workers' shop stewards rather than the bosses' supervisors.)

E *Finally, but essentially, both for our own sakes and in order to be better able to carry on the struggle for all of the above, it is vital to defend and extend our own collective control over the instituions viz-a-vis the state, and this requires organization.*

This means centrally the teachers' unions, which are needed:

- to fight teacher unemployment (which is often selective with respect to radicals, and always means a higher workload and bigger classes than necessary).
- to fight transfer issues (troublemakers are removed from fruitful situations and sometimes systematically shunted around to precipitate resignations).
- to protect ourselves against victimization generally.
- to end arbitrary discipline procedures (public service gags and star chamber procedures, like those under NSW's section 37 regulations).
- to improve working conditions (reducing class sizes and period allocations and upgrading facilities enables all of us to function more effectively).

But there is also a need for a grouping that is both broader and narrower in scope. Broader, in that it doesn't just include teachers, but also students at various levels together with workers from outside education. This makes possible the practical development of teacher-student-worker co-operation at grass-roots level. And narrower, in that it involves only left-wing militants. It is thus less constrained by the present conservatism of the broader mass of teachers in developing action in pursuit of the sort of objectives I've outlined. This grouping is what RED G can become.

[Adapted from an address to the Seventh National Conference of Communist and Radical Teachers, Sydney, May 1977.]

Footnotes

1 For an account of some of the structural aspects, see the second part of my 'Marxist Critique of Schooling', available from the Education Subscription Service, 23 Smith St., Fitzroy, Vic. 3065.

2 Some beginnings on this have been made by the so-called 'revisionist' historians of education in the USA. See for example Greer, C. *The Great School Legend*, Viking, 1973. Katz, M. *School Reform Past and Present*, Little, Brown, 1971. Spring, J. *Education and the Rise of the Corporate State*, Beacon Press, 1972.

3 These programmatic proposals are related to and hopefully complement the discussion of classroom practice by Carol O'Donnel in RED 3.

4 It is only RSL hysteria which fantasizes the systematic teaching of communist doctrine in Australian schools. '*Capital* for year 7', anyone?

5 See 'At Last the 1953 Show' in RED 3, p.23.

6 See Carol O'Donnel's article for a more extensive discussion.

RED NEWS

The Williams Inquiry

With the Australian economy steadily deteriorating and cuts in education expenditure already being made, the Fraser government recently set up a Committee of Inquiry into Education & Training. Since the Committee was established in November 1976, unemployment has grown rapidly (especially among school leavers), as has public concern with the issue, at least among two significant groups: the unemployed themselves, and the left.

In the context of the present crisis of capitalism there are two strands to the logic behind the Inquiry: (i) it serves to distract attention from economic problems which face the Government on two levels – (a) the Government is let off the hook by reference to the Committee. The Inquiry was set up to demonstrate that a government was concerned and doing something about the unemployment and youth unemployment problem. It was a good PR job - ever since its establishment, Fraser and his ministers have been referring to it as one of their 'achievements', and it was used to counter the ALP's campaign around unemployment. (b) the economy is let off the hook by reference to the education system. A major focus in the Inquiry's terms of reference is 'the relationship between the educational system and the labour market'; youth unemployment is specifically referred to in this context. The Inquiry thus has an important ideological role: purely by virtue of its existence it constitutes a block to understanding of the nature of the crisis, and the bankruptcy of the Fraser government. (ii) The Inquiry coincides with, and works as an aspect of, the restructuring function of the present capitalist crisis. So long as capitalism survives them, crises serve to restructure and strengthen capital in the face of the working class, through accelerated concentration and centralisation, the imposition of harsher work discipline and new technology. Education, as *RED* has emphasised, plays an important part in maintaining capitalism and represents a field of struggle between the working class and the capitalist class.

A contradiction between the expenditure it entails and the ideological function it performs, underlies education. All expenditure on education comes out of surplus value – it has been ripped off from workers – but because education expenditure does not contribute directly to accumulation it is 'lost' to capital, and is unproductive. However because of its crucial ideological role, education is necessary for the reproduction of capitalist relations of production.

During crises, capital, politically represented by the state, attempts to cut down on the drain on surplus value and to assert tighter control over what remains to maintain vital functions. Education cuts, transfers of funds to ruling class from working class schools and migrant education, greater emphasis on cheaper technical education, are part of a ruling class offensive in education co-ordinated with a general social offensive. The educational offensive also entails greater emphasis on discipline and hierarchy in education. The Inquiry into Education and Training is one mechanism through which this kind of restructuring can take place.

An important question to be asked about this Inquiry, and others like it, is whether it can become a field of struggle through which the working class can make some gains. In view of the membership of the Committee, its structure and relationship with a conservative government, the answer is plainly 'no'. The Committee is made up of:

J. Hooke, Chairman of AWA
D. Zeidler, Chairman of ICI
P. Lloyd, ex-Chairman of Cadbury's
P. Griffin, Arbitration Commissioner
C. Dolan, right-wing Senior Vice-President of the ACTU
W. Neal, Chairman WA Post-Secondary Education Commission
M. Bone, ex-Director-General SA Department of Further Education
A. Fraser, Director of Queensland Institute of Technology
E. Guthrie, Staff Inspector NSW Department of Education
B. Williams, Vice-Chancellor Sydney University.

There are no students or practising teachers on the Committee. All of its members are directly involved in managing capitalism's economic or ideological apparatuses. Neither the educationists or people involved in industry on the Committee are likely to conclude that there is anything fundamentally wrong with the capitalist economic structure or education. However, the apparent 'balance' of the Committee (State, occupational and political), and the choice of Williams (who has a technocratic reputation, ie, party politically neutral, but prepared to 'get on with the job' by attacking Political Economy and Social Work staff and students at his own institution) makes it a more convincing tool. A Commitee of Inquiry or Commission, by virtue of its structure, is an effective means for diffusing discontent and struggle. Flak is drawn away from the government to the 'independent' body, routine and bureaucratic channels for discontent are established, posing the problem of how much energy should be directed into these as opposed to practical political organisation and action.

Inquiries do not often make recommendations which they know will be anathema to the government. This is particularly the case for the Inquiry into Education and Training whose members are all practical administrators and whose Chair'man' is a thorough pragmatist. Moreover, even if an Inquiry were to make radical recommendations, they would never be implemented by a Labor government, let alone Fraser's.

In view of the context, structure and membership of the Committee, it is likely to play its role dutifully in restructuring education. That is, in tidying up education – reinforcing hierarchy, redistributing and 'rationalising' expenditure – as a precondition for renewed capitalist accumulation, and in distracting attention away from the underlying inadequacies of capitalism.

Kampus Kapers

ACT 1; U.N.S.W.; THE DES AND LES SHOW
Scene 1; Des vs the students.

In *RED 4* (p.22), we reported on how Dip.Ed. students at UNSW won a long and complicated battle against Prof Des Drinkwater to determine their own form of assessment in Educational Psychology. In brief, the students won the right to submit two take-home essays as an alternative to sitting for Drinkwater's infamous multiple-choice exam, as a means of determining the final 50% of their assessment in Ed Psych. But even though this victory was won; and even though the acting Dean, Prof Willis, assured faculty and students that no student would be prejudiced with regard to the form of assessment chosen, and that distribution of 'essay' marks & 'exam' marks would be similar and comparable; did we really expect Drinkwater to take his defeat lightly?

Well, regardless of expectations, there was a violent backlash of reaction from Drinkwater, but one which rebounded rather nastily on him. This is how it happened.

At the School of Education staff meeting of 25/11/77, Drinkwater presented the staff with a list of 21 failures in Ed Psych: approximately 10% of the total student body. Since this proportion exceeded the school's guidelines, and since it was grossly out of step with the results in all other subjects, Drinkwater was asked for an explanation. He refused. The staff then carried by a 2:1 majority a motion that Drinkwater provide information as to whether his failures had elected the *essay* or the *exam*. Again he refused. He did, however, indicate that

'failed' students had not as yet been informed of their 'failures', even though the *official deadline* for informing students of failures had already been reached.

Many of the staff were aghast at these affairs, but the Head of School (and Chairman of Faculty), Prof Brown, let the matters pass and the results were duly processed for ratification by the Higher Degree Committee.

What Drinkwater (and possibly Brown) failed to account for, however, was the ability of the students to organise and mobilise, even though they were on holidays and widely scattered. A telephone-tree and a telegram-tree were set up, and information came flooding in, all of it damning. For instance: Of the students who did the *essay* alternative, not a single one gained a high distinction, a distinction, or a credit, although many of them had amassed more than 40/50 for the other half of their educational psychology assessment. Only one student gained a 'good pass', and she had already picked up 50/50 without the essays. The rest of the students (around 100 of them) received either a 'poor pass' or a fail, even though many of these also had over 40/50 to begin with, as well as impeccable academic records in all other subjects.

The students who did the *exam* alternative were well rewarded with an abundance of high distinctions, distinctions, and credits: one student received a high distinction (90), while having only 34/50 to begin with – indicating a super exam result. There were few in the 'pass' categories and the only 'failure' had work in other sections incomplete.

Marks had been ruthlessly slashed (for some students) for lateness (according to best educational practice?), even where essays were submitted *one hour* late, or with good reason. And yet the final marks were divulged by Drinkwater *four months* after the assessed work was completed (what happened to immediate reinforcement?); and the failures were advised of their need to do supplementary work many days after the official deadline.

So, what happened? Lecturer, Mike Matthews continued to champion the cause of justice and wrote a detailed letter to all members of Faculty, pointing out the above matters, as well as many others. 13 members of the staff of the School of Education appended a statement supporting Mike's cause. Mike took the matter personally into all the corridors of power, discussing it with senior university officials. Meanwhile, the students bombarded the Vice Chancellor, the Registrar, the Dean and Professor Brown with complaints; seeking to see their essays (which Drinkwater had not returned), and asking for re-marking. The Students' Union had legal counsel at the ready because of the late notification of the results.

Things really buzzed. Then they fizzled. The Higher Degree Committee meeting which was to consider the School of Education's exam results, 'in Prof Drinkwater's absence, but with his permission', upgraded all *essay* students' Ed Psych results by 10 points, and the relevant students were informed by telegram that they were no longer 'failures' and were no longer required to do supplementary work for Drinkwater. No discussion was held, and Drinkwater's face was 'saved' by the professors.

The victimisation had failed! Why? First, because one lecturer was game enough to fight against an obvious injustice which the Head of School was prepared to gloss over. (Don't expect one professor to take on another, even if morality and justice are at issue.) Second, because Drinkwater was foolish enough to transgress an official deadline himself. (Don't expect all professors to be that stupid.) And third, because Drinkwater completely underestimated the power of an organised student body: as the only person privy to the final results, and as to who did the exam or essay, he never dreamed that this information could be duplicated if the whole of the student body united to pool their individual results.

Drinkwater has been badly exposed. This could lead to worse reaction. We'll keep you informed.

Scene 2: Les vs Marx

Anyone casually comparing the 1977 and 1978 Calendars of the University of New South Wales might notice that the courses *Paulo Freire* and *Marxism and Education* (in the Dip.Ed. course), and *Marxism and the Study of Education* (in the M.Ed. course) have silently disappeared for 1978. This has been the ingenious doings of that champion of balanced rational debate, that upholder of democratic procedures, that advocate of rigorous academic standards, one Professor L.M. Brown, known to his friends(?) as Les, and respected by all as the person to finally purge our campuses from all traces and influences of that nasty person, Karl Marx.

How does he succeed where all others have failed? Easy. As Head of the School of Education he lets his philosophy staff decide which M.Ed. courses shall be offered in the following year. Then, as Chairman of the Faculty he presents the Higher Degree Committee with the list of courses. Only somehow, accidentally, one course gets lost between the two meetings, and it just happens to be the one on Marxism.

At the Dip.Ed. level, again he lets his staff decide which courses will be offered in the following year, and as Chairman of Faculty he presents these to the Higher Degree Committee. Only this year he admits to deliberately deleting *Paulo Freire* and *Marxism* because the lecturer who usually offers these courses is going on sabbatical leave. This, however, has never happened before when any other lecturer has gone on leave. Also, at least one other lecturer expressed willingness to take these courses for this year. Finally, courses which are 'on the books' need not be offered in any particular year, but once they have been struck off it takes at least a year, and incredible hassles, to get them back on. The three courses in question, then, could be gone forever.

Accidental? Hardly. Those lecturers in the School of Education who include Marxism in their teaching have been carpeted regularly and admonished by Les for not offering 'balanced views' (yet others can teach Piaget or R.S. Peters all year without having to put forward other points of view). Further, one of these lecturers has been denied his tenure; another has had his Ph.D held up until the Marxist analyses have been 'balanced'; and now a directive has been issued that these lecturers, along with others, have to submit their teaching plans to Les for official approval before they impose them on their students.

EPILOGUE: Des and Les United

There is a terrible misconception around that Les and Des are deadly enemies. Let us not forget, however, that it was Des who first tried to discredit certain lecturers as 'colourful revolutionaries' and who branded Freire as an 'esoteric South American philosopher of little relevance to neophyte teachers'. He has won at least one convert. When the arch-reactionaries on our campuses are called to stand up and be counted, you can be sure that Les and Des will be at the head, *arm in arm.*

ACT II: SYDNEY TEACHERS COLLEGE; LES II WIELDS THE AXE.

(The action takes place in misty, murky halls behind closed doors.)

There are few things more nauseating about capitalism than the way employers deceive, manipulate and harass employees. The slightest downturn in profits, the merest whisper of a strike can often provide sufficient excuse for massive sackings and retrenchments. This phenomenon has now appeared in the education industry, with its rising teacher unemployment and contracting opportunities for school leavers to enter the teaching profession. The sacking by Sydney Teachers College of five staff in the latter months of 1977 is a good example.

Late in 1976 the NSW Higher Education Board established a committee under Professor G.J. Butland to investigate the possibilities of 'rationalizing', that is amalgamating and reducing, the number of CAEs in the Inner Sydney area. This was not a public inquiry, but merely a report prepared by, and for, the HEB itself. By mid-1977 the Butland Report was submitted to the HEB and circulated among colleges concerned (See *RED 4*, p.23).

No college, however, reacted with the same myopic hysteria as Sydney. The college council decided not to grant any non tenured staff tenure (or permanency) in 1978. This was done, ostensibly, to bring staff numbers down to the projected, lower, Butland levels. At the end of June 1977, the Principal, Dr Les Kemp, directed all non-tenured staff to re-apply, in open competition, for their current jobs (with no guarantee that the applications would be successful). After applications closed, the college abruptly changed the rules: the secretary telegrammed all applicants telling them that the college would only offer one-year contracts at Level III salary for 1978. The impact of this move was quite devastating, particularly for non-tenured lecturers on the Level II scale, for whom it meant that such an offer was deliberately made in the knowledge that it could hardly be accepted. To accept would entail their resigning from permanent jobs with the NSW Department of Education, and in effect eroding industrial conditions at STC by agreeing to work for twelve months on a lower salary.

The injustice of such a policy made it apparent that more was at stake than Butland's bleatings over the proliferation of inner-city CAEs. To put it bluntly, tenure would go to those whose docility was assured. Moreover, the stand taken by the college council, principal and secretary denied non-tenured staff any say in their employment and working conditions. In fact, under the college by-laws, such staff are second-class citizens. They cannot even vote for the two staff representatives on the college council. Consequently, these representatives felt no particular obligation to rectify the injustice. One of them, who poses as the NSW Teachers Federation representative at STC, stated quite baldly that his function was to represent *tenured staff only*; clearly, the chance of successful militant union action was undermined by this.

September to November saw constant meetings, petitions, lobbying of MLAs and deputations. The Minister, Eric Bedford, intervened directly by telephoning the council chairperson, Judge A.J. Goran, during a council meeting. But to no avail. The college refused to modify its policy. On the industrial level there was a clear split between the militant Technical Teacher Education Division and their ostensible fellow unionists on the main campus. The latter were conned, under the hypothetical threat of Butland cutbacks, into betraying not only the TTE staff but also their own non-tenured colleagues. The college profited from this disunity to get rid of political undesirables.

Yet the staff did not go down entirely without a struggle. On Wednesday November 2 the TTE staff struck for twenty-four hours, to demonstrate their anger, frustration and hostility, on the main campus. The following evening four other staff banged loudly and repeatedly on the council door, demanding the right to be heard. Why did these rather startling events take place?

The main reason was that on October 27 the college sacked five non-tenured members of staff. As Dr Kemp put it, contracts would not be renewed (actually, no written contracts existed). Those axed had been with the college for varying lengths of time, between nine months and three years. Three were not on secondment from the NSW Department of Education, so dismissal for them meant the dole. Two had the opportunity to return to the Department.

Two explanations for the sackings can be dismissed. All five staff were well qualified academically, and successful as lecturers. One lecturer was strongly recommended for a position by two selection panels (three of the staff were interviewed twice in three days for the jobs they had been filling) – yet twenty-four hours later the three were sacked. Which suggests that the interviews were a charade.

The real reason for the sacking is that the five represented, individually and collectively, a political threat to the administrators of the college. However, they are not all of the same political view. Two were active in the ALP; others would be well to the left of that party. On the other hand, all of them had been active over issues of staff-student rights. All had been critical of educational policies followed by the incumbent pedagogues. The administration has one simple solution for such people – off with their heads! The dismissal of those people has dealt a severe blow to the chances of a radical critique of education ever emerging from the musty halls of Sydney Teachers College. And that, of course, is precisely why it was done.

Dear Collective

Dear Collective,

Without wishing to criticise any article in particular, I want to point out a specific danger I detect in the content of a number of the contributions to *RED 4*. That issue of *RED* clearly brings out the content and ideological role of cultural deprivation types of theory about the explanation of working class failure in the schools. But one response to this, apparent generally in the atmosphere of *RED 4*, is to *overvalue* working class culture, claiming that it is better than, or at least as good as and merely different from, the bourgeois culture peddled in schools. Or even that working class culture is the proper measure against which to judge 'middle class' culture.

This, it seems to me, fails to acknowledge the extent to which working class culture, perhaps particularly in Australia, has been colonised and created by the dominant bourgeois culture. Much of mass culture is a packaged commodity with no organic links with any working class tradition. It is produced by the bourgeoisie, is substantially tailored to their vision of the world and is consumed and absorbed by the working class. There are, nonetheless, among the residual elements of recognisably working class culture important things to be developed and built upon, eg practices of cooperation and solidarity.

The proper perspective in which to see this is, I think, from the standpoint of our current theory of socialism and the process of reaching it. This provides a basis from which to evaluate various aspects of working class and bourgeois culture in terms of what kind of culture will be needed for the transition. This can then be done without either accepting bourgeois culture as the 'obviously' valuable one (the view leading to cultural deprivation theories and rightly criticised in *RED 4*) or swinging over into an uncritical appraisal of current working class culture (the danger present in much of *RED 4*). Such a perspective will clearly reveal that all classes in bourgois society are 'culturally deprived' in important ways. And it rests this criticism overtly on a theory of socialism, rather than leaving it implicit.

Peter Stevens

RED REVIEWS

Pilgrims' Progress

Work, Technology and Education, edited by Walter Feinberg and Henry Rosemont. University of Illinois Press, 1975.

Nobody agonizes about schooling the way the Americans do - with passion, fervour and crusading zeal. From the Mayflower to the neutron bomb, the question of what to do about schools has been continually at the centre of the American consciousness. What Feinberg and Rosemont offer us in this collection is a series of essays designed to explore the intellectual foundations of American education. As they correctly remark in their introduction, compulsory schooling in the United States developed to meet the needs of corporate industrial technology. As such, the economic and productive aspects of schooling were emphasised and strongly endorsed. Early critics, like John Dewey and George Counts, saw technology as the new logos and conceived the task of schooling in liberal terms as individual functioning in a social context. The economic and material bases of that context were never radically questioned. More contemporary critics like John Holt and Jonathon Kozol have taken the optimistic and idealist view that problems in schools could be solved by adjustments in personnel and/or curricula. They argue that if racism is a problem then the answer is integration.

Contributions to this volume are of varied worth. The main, perhaps only, connecting theme between them is the rather commonsense notion that schools socialize the young. James Anderson's essay on the manipulation of black workers amply demonstrates the ways in which public education was employed early in this century to establish and maintain a subordinate industrial caste in the United States. Joel Spring offers a piece on the development of social character in the American high school. By focussing on sex education as a key aspect of this, Spring raises issues which illuminate problems in personal development common to many Western cultures. Rosemont and Feinberg examine progressive education, and assert that its alleged socialist stance was, in reality, quite consistent with welfare capitalism.

Probably the best essay in the book is that by Sam Bowles and Herb Gintis which discusses the contradictions in the liberal reformist position on education. From a radical and materialist standpoint they show how ideals like individual growth, social equality, and community are continually undermined by the dominance of a capitalist mode of production. Strategies for educators to combat this situation are more fully outlined in their book, *Schooling in Capitalist America* (see review in *RED 1*).

The remaining essays in *Work, Technology and Education* focus on technology. Kenneth Benne, Marx Wartofsky, Don Ihde and Noam Chomsky all consider technology and its impact on educational practice. Benne argues that technological benefits have not been distributed equitably, but in positing a concept of moral authority to guide its use, he provides an idealist solution to a materialist problem. Wartofsky, similarly seeks to draw together art and technology in a mutual relationship, while ignoring the political and economic functioning of both. Ihde denies that people have become alienated in their perceptions and experiences as a result of technological developments. A closer examination of ownership, control, and manipulation in this area might lead, however, to a far more sceptical conclusion. Noam Chomsky concludes this collection with a fine statement of the humanist conception of education. One does not have to share Chomsky's anarchist stance to gain considerable benefit from his attack on the alienation inherent in capitalist education.

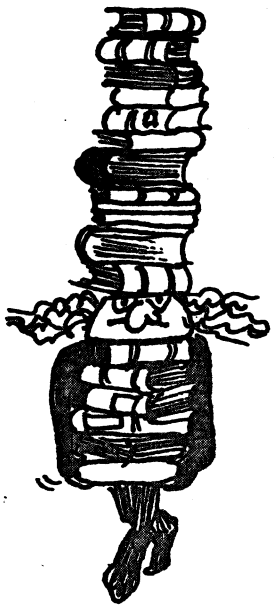
Although Feinberg and Rosemont subtitle their work 'dissenting essays in the intellectual foundations of American education', it is sometimes difficult to recognise what is being dissented from. Clearly the authors object to much about contemporary schooling in the U.S., yet the overall impact of this book does more to highlight the amorphous eclectic nature of such objections than it does to clearly state a coherent theoretical position. Unfortunately, the book also fails to provide practical advice in answer to the question what to do about schools, and only if it is read with a critical eye will it prove valuable in understanding many contemporary educational problems.

Bob Mackie

The Trouble With Work

Labor and Monopoly Capital, by Harry Braverman. Monthly Review Press, New York and London. 1974. $7.50.

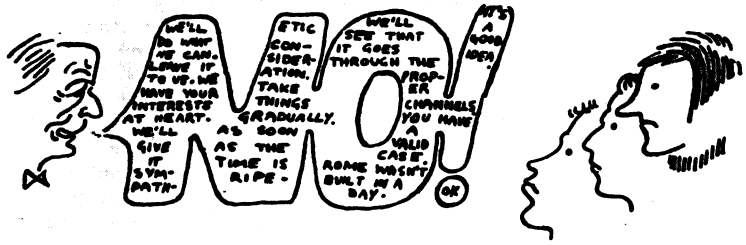
In his Foreword to this book, Paul Sweezy describes it as 'an attempt to inquire systematically into the consequences which the particular kinds of technological change characteristic of the monopoly capitalist period have had for the nature of work and the composition and differentiation of the working class' (pp.ix-x). Braverman himself refers to the



book in his Introduction in these terms: 'In this book, we will be concerned entirely with the development of the processes of production, and of labor processes in general, in *capitalist* society (p.14). The perspective which governs this analysis of the relationship between technology and society is very clearly based on Marx' work, especially Vol.1 of *Capital*. In a sense, this book can be considered an updating of *Capital*. Although, as both Sweezy and Braverman admit, it offers little that is new in terms of theoretical development, 'in terms of knowledge gained from the creative application of theory, there is an enormous amount that is new, and much of it in direct contradiction to what capitalist ideology has succeeded in establishing as the society's conventional wisdom' (p.xi). (It has the added advantage that it is extremely readable, and very humorous in parts.)

As implied in the first paragraph, this book is more descriptive than theoretical. Its main focus is a general survey of changes in technology that have taken place in the labour process, as capitalism has moved from its early stages into its present stage of monopoly capitalism. This survey, however, doesn't restrict itself to an analysis of strictly technological changes, but also notes shifts of emphasis from one industry to another, the displacement of workers through the death of certain industries, and their shifting to new industries such as the 'service' occupations.

Braverman's work thus confronts central theoretical issues such as the nature of the modern working class, its size (eg, is it very small in comparison with the 'new middle class'?), and its level of skill. In this sense, it offers a new slant to the current debate on class



analysis, by supplying well-documented summaries of empirical data. This is done, moreover, in a way which quite consciously opposes itself to the bourgeois conception of class, that sees it in terms of individual's consciousness of their status, etc (Introduction, pp.24-27).

Braverman also sets out to disprove two particular bourgeois myths about the working class:

1. that the traditional unskilled working class has shrunk to almost insignificant proportions through the development of mechanisation, and
2. the related notion that the vast majority of the workforce is increasingly skilled and adequately compensated by interesting work, better wages, higher status, etc – the 'new middle class'.

The first notion is mainly attacked in the chapter on *Clerical Workers*, where an interesting discussion centring on 'office work as manual labour' shows that increasingly clerical work loses its skills and correspondingly status, and that this very large sector of the workforce is increasingly 'proletarianized' (see particularly pp.353-5).

Arguments against the second notion are found throughout the book but are summed up in the last chapter, *A Final Note on Skill*. Braverman shows that much of the myth about the increasingly skilled workforce is based on the dubious categories of skill used in census statistics (pp.429).

Through the form of his historical survey, Braverman offers an excellent introduction to the work of the more important ideologies whose names have become associated with the changes in work processes under capitalism. This is found chiefly in Part I of the book, *Labor and Management*, where Braverman quotes extensively from the writings of Adam Smith, Charles Babbage and Frederick Taylor. Braverman writes that 'the separation of hand and brain is the most decisive single step in the division of labour taken by the capitalist mode of production' (p.126). The work of Taylor, the originator of 'scientific management', has been crucial in this respect, and I consider that Chapters 4 to 7 are of great importance to Marxists who may otherwise not have come across his ideas. Excerpts from Taylor's work show quite clearly how he saw the need, from the capitalist's point of view, for dividing the working class by dealing with them alone, individually (p.103), and further dividing them by race and ethnic origin (p.129) or sex (pp.130-131).

The rest of the book is divided into four more sections: *Science and Mechanization, Monopoly Capital, The Growing Working-Class Occupations*, and *The Working Class. Monopoly Capital* (Part III) is the weakest, mainly because it appears to take for granted a knowledge of Baran and Sweezy's work *Monopoly Capital*. It is absurdly compressed (a discussion of monopoly capital in 38 pages!), and is thus guilty of oversimplification. This is especially so in the chapter on *The Role of the State* (6 pages!) where the analysis is too mechanistic, and fails to take into account the role of class struggle in the development of the state's welfare and economic activities. The state's increasing intervention in education is here given two paragraphs. (However, a good analysis of schooling in connection with the skills of the workforce can be found in the last chapter, (p.436) where Braverman makes such points as the decreasing connection between mass education and occupational requirements, and the necessity for extended schooling in order to keep unemployment within reasonable bounds, pp.435-9.)

I offer no further criticism of the book for two reasons. First, an excellent collection of critical essays written around it is now available in book form (*Technology, the Labor Process, and the Working Class*, with a closing commentary by Braverman, Monthly Review Press, 1976. They originally appeared in the Summer 1976 issue of *Monthly Review* magazine.) Second, I think the strengths of the book far outweigh the omissions and misconceptions some are bound to find within it. It is, in fact, the first Marxist attempt (since Marx!) to come to grips with the question of the labour process that was so central to Marx's own writings.

As Braverman shows in his Introduction, the analytical work of Marxism in this century has 'focussed increasingly not upon the profound inner nature of capitalism and the workers' position within it, but upon its various conjunctural effects and crises. In particular, the critique of the mode of production gave way to the critique of capitalism as a mode of distribution' (p.11). This has had serious consequences for the development of socialist alternatives to capitalist forms of work and technology, as can be seen in the imitative practice of what Braverman calls the 'hybrid societies of the Soviet bloc'. It has consequently become more difficult to combat the typical bourgeois assumption that this form of organization of the labour process is 'necessary' and 'inevitable' for any advanced industrialized society.

Braverman's book is a timely revival of this essential task of the demystification of technology. It is also highly recommended as an additional weapon against bourgeois ideology because of its very simple but cogent analysis of the nature of capital through the 'problem' of the organization of work.

Romaine Scharen

'You mean schooling isn't neutral?'

Politics of Schooling, by B. Bessant and A. Spaull. Pitman Pacific Books, 1976. $6.95

So many books on education make the dangerous assumption that education and schooling are synonymous. Such an assumption is made possible mainly because of the idealist belief that what happens in schools is the result of putting the ideas of educationists into practice. Schooling is thus naively thought to be the product of a disinterested concern for the intellectual development of children, and the desire to produce a better world. This idealist myth, which is so convenient to the reproduction of capitalist institutions, is effectively attacked in Bessant and Spaull's excellent book, *Politics of Schooling*.

The book analyses Australian schooling from the first decade of the 20th century until the present day. It shows that the nature of Australian schooling during that time has been determined largely by power struggles of various groupings in Australian society, each attempting to make schools serve their

material and ideological interests. In showing the way power affects schooling, Bessant and Spaull clearly reveal the falseness of the assumption that education and schooling are usually the same thing. Education, the ideologues tell us, is objective; Australian schooling, the authors tell us, is a tool which various interest groups have sought to affect. Those with most power have had most success.

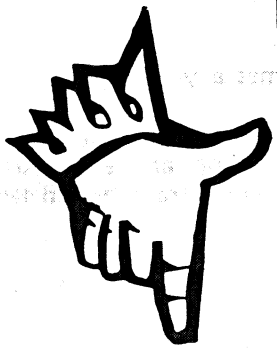
"As long as the politicians, the administrators, the principals, the professors and the teachers continue to defend and expand their empires and their powers, the crucial decisions will be in their hands. Contests will occur as they manoeuvre between themselves and as others contest for their powers. 'Education' becomes the politics of schooling." This is the essential message of the book. the authors attempt to show how the institutions of schooling are made to serve the interests of the state and the existing political system. They note that "the institutions of schooling not only exist to serve and preserve these systems, but, through their administrative structures, political systems exercise a direct and all-embracing control over these institutions ... The institutions of schooling are too important to be left to their own devices, for they are closely tied to the future of the state itself". The authors have clearly taken more than a leaf out of the Marxist book.

In illustrating their thesis the authors deal with many different aspects of Australian schooling. The first chapter is largely about how changing attitudes to war and the British Empire were reflected in the school curriculum. Whilst Nationalists were determined to ensure that schools served the interests of the state by inculcating loyalty and obedience, Labor interests were critical of school curricula and practices, such as the loyalty ceremony, because of their pro-imperial, pro-war and anti-working class propaganda. The next two chapters discuss the politics of providing schools and the relationship of the federal government and funding to state education department policies and practices. Perhaps one of the most interesting chapters discusses tertiary schooling, the influence it has on secondary curricula, its links with the business sector, and the tendency for technical colleges to become enmeshed in a struggle to transform themselves into mini-universities with increased status and prestige. The chapter on innovations demonstrates that political pragmatism has often been behind "educational" change. The Wyndham Scheme, for example, is viewed as a means of providing a curriculum that would continue to isolate an academic elite who would not be swamped by the opening up of secondary schools to all comers.

If there is a weakness in the book, it is the fact that one feels that the authors, finally, have been unable to see the wood for the trees. Though the teacher unions and the education departments are identified as the major combatants struggling to affect the nature of the schools, the authors are concerned with discussing the pressure put upon schooling by social groups rather than by social classes. Because Bessant and Spaull often do not locate such groups within the economic mode of production their analysis is at times fragmented and confusing. So many groups and so many events — but we are left wondering where many of the jig-saw pieces fit into the overall puzzle, or else we have to fit them in ourselves. The authors have set out to show that the nature of schooling is determined by conflict and power struggle; they hope their book "will eliminate any false illusions that 'education' decisions are frequently made in this country". They have done sterling service in exposing the realities of Australian schooling, and in helping to relegate to the dust heap the maunderings of many idealist educationists of the past. Since they have come so far, perhaps it is churlish to wish that they had made a final leap and located their "pressure groups" within a Marxist class analysis of Australian society. If they had done so their book would have been even more valuable.

Carol O'Donnel

RED Notes



Coming Attractions

The Radical Education Group is presently producing a series of resource kits that we hope radical teachers will borrow and use in schools. The kits contain material (videos, tapes, cartoons, poems, etc) with a left-wing viewpoint on a series of topics commonly dealt with in secondary schools: for example, environment, aborigines, pop music, sport, media, advertising, work, democratic rights, third world countries, the family. We are in the process of compiling these kits and can recommend the following list of resource centres to teachers who are looking for interesting material which presents a left-wing view. The places listed contain lots of films, reading matter, videos and games which have a left liberal or materialist view of society. If you look carefully, you'll find some good things to use, though some of them may need modification.

The question of sexism is not being tackled as a separate issue in the resource kits simply because we think the job is already being done by groups such as Women in Education. Feminists, of course, will already know about the Centre for Non-Sexist Resources, C/- Joint Council, Teachers' Education Centre, Exeter Road, Homebush West, 2140. The list we've compiled is of use mainly to people in NSW and we'd be grateful if people from other states would send us similar lists of resources. We'd also appreciate it if teachers could send copies of material or suggestions for things we could use in the resource kits.

Community Aid Abroad, 19 Berg Street, North Sydney. Contact Jan or Janet, 922-6060. Materials: (1) 16mm colour films on various aspects of third world countries. Hire charge $8.00 up to 24 minutes, $10.00 up to one hour, $20.00 over one hour. Half price for schools; (2) study kits: include photographs, background information, maps, games, etc, cost $2.50 plus postage; (3) information sheets on specific third world problems cost 8 cents each plus postage; (4) it is also possible to arrange guest speakers from CAA to attend your group to discuss world development; (5) other materials also available.

Economics and Commercial Teachers Association Teachers Centre, 35 Burwood Road, Belfield 2191. Phone 642-1632. Materials: (1) simulation games on areas such as strikes, market concentration, Stock Exchange lobbying, inflation and many more. These games follow a traditional economics/liberal perspective in content. However the structure of the games is useful and it simply requires that their content be modified toward socialist perspectives. The most expensive game is $1.50; (2) audio-cassettes on various areas in economics. They include ABC, BBC and British Open University tapes.

Ideas Centre (Freedom from Hunger Campaign), 69 Clarence Street, Sydney 2000. Phone 29 3228. This is a library, collecting materials on the third world. Their resources consist of written materials only, but are very well indexed. They have prepared some kits which are a collection fo articles on some issues relating to underdeveloped countries, for example the multinational corporations in the third world, employment, women, health and so on as related to the third world.

Amalgamated Metal Workers and Shipwrights Union, 136 Chalmers Street, Surry Hills, 2010. Contact: Bob Richardson, Education Officer. Phone: 698-9988. Materials: (1) videos on particular strikes (eg the General Strike 1926), worker control/ industrial democracy, work hazards such as those from asbestos and plastics, effects of mergers and company takeovers on workers, criticisms of capitalism; (2) audio-cassettes on causes of inflation, analysis of the Australian economy, MNC's. The procedure for obtaining these materials is to take your own video tape or cassette to the AMWSU and they will transfer the material onto it. For disadvantaged schools this service is free; for others there is a negotiable small charge. Catalogues are available.

Video Centres. Access Centres are located all over Australia, but there are central libraries which store most of the tapes. We approached the Paddington National Resources Centre, Paddington Town Hall, Oxford Street, Paddington (PO Box 261, Paddington, 2021). Phone: (02) 31-9025. This is a central library. A catalogue listing addresses of access centres and all tapes held in Australia is available from here for sixty cents, plus postage. Subject areas of tapes include aborigines, community action, education, environment, trade unions, women, world issues and others. The video centre will copy tapes. Either you supply your own or you can buy a tape from them. For copying ¾" to ½" tape cost is $10.00 per half hour; for copying ½" tape to ¾" tape cost is $5.00 per hour.

Friends of the Earth, 232 Castlereagh St, Sydney 2000. Materials: films, videos, slides, audio-cassettes and literature (including songs), mainly on uranium and energy, but also on the whaling and wood chip industries. Loans of films and videos require $10.00 deposit, loans of audio-cassettes require $2.00 deposit.

Trade Union Training Authority, 72 Cooper Street, Surry Hills. Phone: 212-5855. Video library and some 16mm films on areas such as migrants in the work force, industrial democracy, centralization within particular sectors of industry, wage disparities between blue and white collar, 'professional' and 'non-professional' labour, industrial pollution, uranium, strike documentaries, etc. Over sixty videos are available. A catalogue can be had for a small charge.

Filmmakers Co-op., St. Peters Lane, Darlinghurst, Sydney. Phone 31 3237. Lots of films and videos for hire, many of them with an explicit left line. Hiring charge may be expensive for some films but is negotiable in some cases.

Don't forget to send any resource material or information to Radical Education Dossier, PO Box 197, Glebe, Sydney, or phone Barbara, 660-4454.

Peter Wilson

About RED

RADICAL EDUCATION DOSSIER is produced and published three times a year by the Radical Education Group (RED G).

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.

The task is large and is open to all. We invite teachers at every level, students, parents and others interested in education to join the debate. Contributions should be concise, jargon-free and comprehensible to the non-specialist. **RADICAL EDUCATION DOSSIER** has a policy of using non-sexist language and requests that all contributors submit with this in mind.

Articles should not exceed 5000 words and those with a practical emphasis are especially sought. We also seek commentaries and information items up to 1000 words, as well as book reviews, letters, notices, contacts, news, photographs and cartoons. Please submit articles typed and double spaced.

Editorial responsibility is taken by the collective of each issue.

RADICAL EDUCATION DOSSIER 6 will be produced by a women's collective, and will appear in July 1978. CONTRIBUTE NOW.

Copy for RED 6 is needed by APRIL 1, 1978; Copy for RED 7 by July 17, 1978.

Send contributions to: Editorial Collective,
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