

SUNDAY TELEGRAPH AUGUST 3, 1963



"Revolution"—a show which the 140 children in the cast worked out for themselves under the direction of Jane Howell—was such a success at its one-night stand in the Royal Court last Sunday that many of the children wanted to do it again. It will, therefore,

play in repertoire with the Round House company's own "Romeo and Juliet." Both companies will be experimenting with the shape of the stage and will change it with every production.
Photograph: Morris Newcombe.

ISLAND MUSIC
TWO SHILLINGS OR THIRTY CENTS

The rights of the young

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Photo by Morris Newcombe of *Revolution*, improvised at the Royal Court Theatre on July 27 by 140 London boys and girls.

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Dear Friends,

I have devoted my life to the furtherance of freedom in education. If anyone had burst into any of the libertarian establishments in which I have striven to express that ideal, and had daubed on the walls "Discipline: Punishment", I should have considered them mindless hooligans, and the effect upon me would have been to confirm my prejudice against discipline and punishment.

Can anyone tell me what in the name of freedom is gained by bursting into Dulwich College and daubing on its walls "Anarchy"? My own opinion is that it does incalculable harm to our cause, and I should be glad to see a reasoned defence of such action. I suggest that those who talk about freedom should consult those of us who have tried to practise it before they indulge in this kind of hooliganism.

Yours sincerely,

W. DAVID WILLS

The writing on the wall

SCHOOLS ARE A FREQUENT TARGET for vandalism, and the form it usually takes is monotonously predictable. Apart from overturning cupboards and tables, scattering books and papers around, the despoilers of the school write obscenities on the walls and blackboard, and someone shits on the teacher's desk. In Jean Vigo's famous film of a school revolt *Zero de Conduite* the persecuted boy Tabard turns on his hated teacher in a desperate gesture of defiance and bursts out, "*Monsieur le professeur, je vous dis merde!*" You do not need to be a social psychologist to interpret the meaning of "meaningless" acts of vandalism, though it is interesting to learn from our contributor Stan Cohen (who is Lecturer in the Sociology of Deviance at Durham University) that school vandalism "in fact indicates that there *is* something wrong with the school that is damaged. The highest rates of school vandalism tends to occur in schools with obsolete facilities and equipment, low staff morale and high dissatisfaction and boredom among the pupils."

But at Dulwich College the word was not *Shit*, it was *Anarchy*, a word of a different complexion and connotation, a word which encapsulates a whole range of ideas—which is why, amongst other things it is the title of this journal—and stands, amongst other things for a diametrically opposite approach to education and social privilege from that of Dulwich College, taking that school as the epitome of the English public school system.

The South London Schools Action Union marched to Dulwich College on June 21st on the school's Open Day, which turned out to be Founder's Day, but they found that the place was certainly not open to them. They were met by the police and were carried out or thrown out, but not before they had left some mark on the school, including the writing on the wall.

One participant's account of the encounter says: "It was not all inane chaos. Real communication developed between 40 to 50 Dulwich students and the SAU militants. Subjects ranged over uniform—all these 12-year-olds had been forced into black suits, striped tie and a blue carnation for the Founder's Day ritual—the purpose of GCE exams, the nature of authority and repression of the individual, co-education. Did they ever think about the millions in this country who *didn't* lead their kind of life? (According to one student there, only 15% of the boys come from a working-class background.) There was no hostility but little optimism either. 'Well, if a teacher hits you, of course you don't hit back'. Neither would a 12-year-old get his own back on a 13-year-old. Authority simply through age is installed into kids until they equate age-authority-intelligence. One very sympathetic boy just couldn't understand why we—several years older than himself—had approached him as an equal. He was opposed to uniform, he was dissatisfied with exams and the values of the college bureaucracy; but as an individual he saw he was powerless. The isolation of the militants inside the college has enabled the authorities to ban a subversive magazine that was started last year; similarly, SAU members there have been 'disciplined'. Because of this they see the need for a very cohesive organisation inside the college to combat repression from above."

Under these circumstances we should perhaps see those who were on the premises long enough to leave their sign on the wall not so much as hooligans but as guerillas, as partisans come down from the hills to leave their message and retire. Not yet strong enough to hold the position, but confident that someone will get the message and continue an underground war within: confident too that the word will tell the holders of power that they will not always have it their own way. I am sure that this is how they regard themselves. The

Their paper, *Vanguard*, has been banned in many schools and elaborate precautions are taken to conceal the identity of the authors. Contact with sympathetic staff—something the movement is desperately keen to encourage—is, it seems, a risky venture for both sides: one master in East London was recently sacked for trying to start a cell.

"This cloak and dagger farce is forcing the SAU into using extremist tactics," Michael Lane (Dave to his friends) said. He wanted to emphasize the reasonableness of their demands, to win sympathy from the public. He believed that an industrial trade union rather than the NUS was the right model.

"If every factory manager made every employee attend morning service, wear a cap and be beaten for trivial things there would soon be a general strike," he said.

—*The Times Educational Supplement* (25.7.69)

governors of Dulwich naturally sees them as gorillas rather than guerillas, just as Mr. Wills sees them as hooligans.

What is the SAU after? It demands an end to corporal punishments, to school uniforms, to the prefect system and to examinations in their present form.

It proposes the formation of School Councils consisting of staff and pupils of all age groups. These councils, it suggests, would supervise discipline, academic standards, programming of homework, and internal school organisation. The Manifesto of the South London Group declares that these councils "would break down the barriers between teachers and pupils" and that once they were set up "most of the present symbols of authority (such as the cane) would disappear as a matter of course".

Allegations of harsh punishments in some South London schools are being made by pupils who are helping compile a dossier of teachers and the penalties they are meting out.

Organisers of the move claim that cases brought to light are "only the tip of the iceberg".

Signed statements from pupils are being kept by the revolutionary South London Schools Action Union, which has as members a number of young militant teachers and sixth formers from schools south of the Thames.

They are aiming to spotlight what they call "atrocities" in South London schools. The union says of one well-known school, "According to reports we have received, these incidents are quite numerous."

Alleged incidents it cites include:

1.—Two boys were made to sit on the floor for talking, then Mr. X is said to have struck them on the head with a board rubber and pulled their hair.

2.—Mr. Y hit a boy about the head and struck him again when he moved off a mark the teacher had made on the floor.

3.—An alleged campaign by school authorities to remove a boy whose clothes were "revolutionary".

4.—Forty pupils threatened with dismissal after a boycott of a compulsory discussion group.

Other punishments listed by the union are extra lessons, detaining classes after lessons, and a swimming ban on pupils with hair considered too long.

The group alleges in the case of one school that nine masters have "physically assaulted" students—mainly those aged between nine and 13. Of the pupils' claims, a union spokesman said: "We would be prepared to produce these statements in a court of law."

Commenting on the difference between corporal punishment and their claims of brutality, a member of the union said: "Pulling someone up off the floor by his hair is hardly corporal punishment."

They will continue to publish "case histories" as they receive them, he added.

"We have members in a number of schools across South London and they know we are compiling a dossier on victimisation. We are attempting to establish that this kind of thing does go on and is quite prevalent.

"It seems there is a pattern emerging that most brutality takes place in the first, second and third forms in secondary schools."

—*Evening Standard* (24.7.69)

We know that David Wills supports every one of these aims, and put most of them into practice years ago. He is one of the pioneers of the elimination of punishment and a lifelong advocate of "shared responsibility". The sentence "Authority is shared between children and staff, not delegated as in the prefect system, and Mr. . . . manages to include all staff, domestic, teaching, and out-of-school educators, without social distinction", does not come from a description of a utopian school by a member of SAU, nor is it a Maoist proposal for the LSE. It is a description of what Mr. Wills actually did. (See ANARCHY 15.)

And you don't have to be a pioneer like Wills or a schoolboy militant like the members of SAU to advocate these things. Sir Alec Clegg, Chief Education Officer for the West Riding of Yorkshire, declared at the North of England Education Conference at Liverpool on January 3rd, 1968, that we should:

Discourage prizes and mark lists.

Encourage work for work's sake.

Encourage schools to break "every humiliating regulation" in order to establish a properly integrated school.

Urge in secondary schools the informality found in the best junior schools.

A headmaster, Mr. Roland Collins, lined up twenty boys before the A-level exams began at Harold Malley Grammar School, Solihull, Warwickshire.

Razors were laid out. Then Mr. Collins ordered four boys to shave off sideboards and moustaches.

Two 18-year-olds, David Livingstone and Stephen Hill, refused. They were barred from taking the exams.

—*Daily Mirror* (5.7.69)

At one o'clock last Friday a small, but not insignificant demonstration took place at the gates of St. Clement Danes school in Shepherd's Bush, London. Thirteen young people walked, somewhat apprehensively, up to the school and started to distribute a bundle of leaflets. They were welcomed by an inquisitive crowd of small boys who willingly offered to distribute the small pieces of yellow and white paper. Solidarity, however, broke down when the headmaster, Dr. Badcock (who was alleged recently to have told a sixth-former taking his A-levels to "cut his hair or have his paper torn up") appeared in person. To shrill cries of "Here comes old - - -" the school yard emptied as if by magic, leaving the 13 members of the Schools Action Union to deposit their letter of protest and retreat.

Dr. Badcock felt no obligation to read it.

—*Sunday Times* (20.7.69)

Persecution of long-haired boys continues. On June 10 Andy Anderson appeared before Dartford magistrates on the charge that he "did fail to cause" his son to attend regularly at the Dartford West Secondary Boys School. Again it was a case of hair. Why, oh why is so much made of this issue? What can it possibly matter how long or short a person's hair is? A sort of insanity seems to be infecting the entire Western World!

In the particular case under discussion the boy was only eleven, and his hair was not in fact very long by modern standards. But he was subjected to such vicious persecution that it was impossible for him to remain at this school, and for some reason it was impossible to arrange for him to attend another. Hence the prosecution.

—*Freedom* (12.7.69)

Eliminate "O" level and replace it with an internal examination, externally assessed.

Replace prefects by school councils.

Abolish beating.

Encourage teaching that applied the principle of "finding out is better than being told".

Sir Alec, who was a member of the committee which produced the Newsom Report, said that if the "change of heart" called for in that report was not brought about, Britain would face social difficulties over the next half century that would make those of the past 50 years look trivial.

He can say that again!

But it is one thing for David Wills to put these ideas to work outside the official education system, and it is one thing for Sir Alec Clegg to advocate them at a conference, and quite another for an organisation of pupils, student and teachers to demand them. The members of the SAU, and the organisations which it federates—the Free Schools Campaign, the North London Secondary Schools Union, the Manchester Secondary Schools Union, etc.—have been faced by threats, suspensions, expulsions, and every kind of intimidation. Amusing, no doubt, if you are safely out of school, but pretty serious for the young. And if you think this is an exaggeration, read the newspapers. The *Observer* reported on December 1st, 1968, that "the reaction of headmasters, accustomed to ruling their kingdoms with

A student teacher has been dismissed because of his work for an underground magazine dedicated to the cause of "pupil power".

David Gibson, 19, formerly a pupil at Leeds Grammar School, was dismissed from his temporary post at a primary school in the city.

The magazine for which he did some work is called HOD—short for "Handful Of Dust". It has been criticized by head teachers, education officials and parents.

Mr. John Taylor, chief education officer for Leeds, said: "When this young man was not prepared to give up these activities with HOD, he was given a month's notice. He was asked not to go back to the school and paid up to the end of June."

—*The Times Educational Supplement* (13.6.69)

A leaflet called *Batnews* caused "unbearable tension" at a grammar school, a headmaster said yesterday.

It criticised the head, Mr. Christopher Lipscombe, and ran to 150 copies in three issues before police stopped publication.

Mr. George Carman, defending three former pupils of the school—one a man of 48—said *Batnews* was something of a juvenile version of *Private Eye*, the satirical magazine.

He went on: "It certainly must be unprecedented for boys at any school to appear before a court for saying or publishing things satirical of a headmaster."

There was no incitement to violence in *Batnews*, said Mr. Carman. Its message was: "Is Mr. Lipscombe a good headmaster or a bad one? Are his policies good or bad?"

The three ex-pupils denied circulating leaflets containing offensive words and calculated to cause a breach of the peace.

—*Daily Mirror* (1.7.69)

unquestioned authority, has been faintly hysterical". *The Times Educational Supplement* for July 25th, 1969, has a headline: "The deskbound revolutionaries hidden in schools have provoked many headmasters to near hysteria" and in the article beneath it, Michael Binyon writes of the "hysterical denunciation" which the SAU has drawn from headmasters.

The SAU members are struggling to establish throughout the ordinary run of schools, the ideas which for years have been taken for granted among progressive educators. They deserve, and need, all the support that the progressive movement can give them.

The difference between student destroyers and student regenerators does not lie in their diagnosis of the existing society, characterized by the "drab, exploited, meaningless lives of so many people". There is ample agreement on what is wrong. The difference lies in the remedy sought. Destruction is the course of those who adopt formulas prepared by other men. Particularized investigation of the possibilities of rebuilding is the choice of men with imagination.

—*Manas* (USA) commenting on ANARCHY 97

Education : an immodest proposal . . .

JANE KINGSHILL
AND
BRIAN RICHARDSON

IN ANARCHY 53 published in July 1965, Colin Ward made a modest (but consciously outrageous) proposal for the repeal of the Education Act. Since then the movement for change in our schools has grown much stronger. New primary schools are being built entirely differently from the ones we adults attended, with freely-planned internal spaces to suit informal group working, and the new methods, having been publicised on television, are discussed in millions of homes. Edward Blishen has edited a collection of children's essays *The School that I'd Like*, published by Penguin, that constitutes a passionate and sustained attack upon our present educational order. Michael Duane's radical but short-lived regime at Risinghill has become widely known and discussed through the publication of Leila Berg's Penguin book.

And, of course, student unrest is spreading from the colleges to the schools, and the Free Schools Campaign has got under way. Now, if not repeal, at least a new Education Act is being talked about, current ideas are being evaluated and new thinking sought after. It is an important moment for anarchists to develop and communicate their view of the educational scene.

It is generally observed by discerning adults as well as by children themselves that, as things are at present, children have no rights. It is also observed that our education system falls far short of what it should be. Perhaps this is not just coincidence; the school's educational shortcomings may be linked to the current inadequate notion Society has of children's civil liberties. If human rights are in some measure denied

to children it is because we do not yet regard them as full human beings and our adult code of civil liberties is not felt to apply to, as it were, imperfect adults in a state of transition.

Children are frail, vulnerable, inexperienced and immature in varying degrees. So are we all. And it is of the essence of human rights to depend, not upon these variables, but upon the one and only constant: humanity itself. If intrinsic human rights exist, as such, they exist for all human beings alike; what would be an infringement of civil liberties for adults infringes the liberties of children no less.

An essential part of the present education system is compulsory attendance at school between the ages of five and fifteen (or its very definitely hedged-about equivalent). No conscientious objection is allowed, no pay is awarded in consideration for work done, submission to the authority of the school hierarchy is demanded and disobedience as well as absenteeism is punished. No amount of apologies: that education is a privilege, that teachers are enlightened and that the child's welfare is foremost in everyone's mind disguises the true nature of this situation; in a word, it is slavery.

The child is born a "free" citizen, so he is told, lives in a "free" country where he is part of the "free" world. At the age of five he learns otherwise. He becomes subject to a state decree which fundamentally affects his daily life and his whole future and which is inescapable, even unchallengeable. This is, in effect, and perhaps is intended to be, a traumatic experience conditioning the person to the concept of obedience on which the authoritarian state system depends.

Compulsory attendance at school also places the teachers in a difficult position and forces them into an authoritarian role. Because dissent cannot be expressed by withdrawal from the educational institution, it has either to be repressed or expressed as rebellion. Rebellion has to be ruthlessly crushed for the sake of the continuing operation of the establishment. It is more convenient if the pupils can be forced to submit to authority, and thus powers of coercion have to be assumed leading to a system of punishment sufficiently severe to generate mental and bodily fear in the intending dissenter. Small wonder that teachers are reluctant to give up the right to use corporal punishment as a "last resort". The entire relationship between pupil and teacher is soured by the fact of compulsion and this is a handicap that few teachers have the power to overcome. Not only a child's civil liberties therefore but the whole quality of education is at stake.

Compulsory attendance became part of our school system at a time when our assumptions about the nature of children, our view of human rights and the needs of our society differed radically from those of today. Now that we are beginning to recognise a child's claim to full human dignity and moving towards the educational enfranchisement this view entails, it should be possible to re-examine the social function of compulsory schooling and find out how essential we feel it to be.

If education is primarily seen as a means to some utilitarian end:

the plant installed to manufacture suitable components for an all-demanding technological society, compulsion is obviously as desirable as it was in the days when our industrial and imperial status called for a constant supply of literate and semi-literate recruits. Those were also the days when young children represented a source of unskilled labour. What the economy approved for reasons of its own (increasing industrial sophistication exacting some degree of literacy), reformers demanded in order to save from ignorance and exploitation the helpless children of the poor.

Economic requirements have nothing to do with the rights of children. But the concern which inspired Victorian philanthropists is still at the back of all our minds as the justification not only for retaining but for increasing compulsory school attendance today. Reforms of one age have a trick of turning if not into abuses at least into stumbling blocks for later generations, however. Perhaps our inherited approval of enforced education is as old-fashioned now as is the progressive penal system of the nineteenth century.

With regard to primary schools at any rate this is certainly so. Children from five to twelve years old cannot be employed as labourers any longer nor have they any built-in resistance to school as such. Babies spend all their spare time learning, so do little children whose play is education. And now that primary schools are being adapted to their pupils instead of the other way round and turning into places enjoyable to learn in, there is really no valid argument for enforced attendance. All young children are so naturally curious and gregarious that they cannot easily be kept from school except by extreme social handicaps such as suffered by Gypsies and for which the remedy lies elsewhere.

At adolescence the pattern changes. A child's energies are no longer turned outwards; preoccupied with growing-up, many children do not focus on the acquisition of general knowledge or particular skills unless these relate closely to what they feel to be their real concerns. Though the early ability to memorise facts may persist it is, in other ways, a bad time of life to go to school for many people. The diversity of response at this age suggests that a wide choice of educational possibilities should be available beginning with the choice of whether to go on with formal education at all.

What is the alternative? Fears of juvenile unemployment and delinquency are not unreasonable seeing how wasteful and destructive adolescents can be in their spare time. But these children only exhibit the symptoms of an uneducated, uninterested society; if they are freed from the compulsory work which often fails to engage their attention or respect and so becomes enforced idleness of a demoralising sort; if education is freed from the straitjacket of compulsory attendance and the present examination system, the symptoms may diminish not increase. Long-term idleness is not a natural way of life except for a few

dedicated characters who would pursue it anyway. The majority of children badly want occupation of a constructive sort, their destructiveness is a protest against what they feel to be an irrelevant, uncaring environment which they are powerless to effect.

Until the 19th century most adolescents were treated as adults. Nowadays many in the same age-groups, maturing even sooner, we are told, want to be done with school and to try grown-up life, assume responsibility, earn money, be treated as equals in an adult world. On the other hand it is common for fully grown men and women who have had their quota of education to feel cheated of it still. In a recent report on Glasgow gangs the only way out of the vicious circle of futility and violence (not poverty) suggested by one or two of the grown-up members was to have had a better education. "But it's too late now," they said. Secondary schooling is something that should be freely available at all times of life, is the natural conclusion if one views education as a process of individual growth, discovery and enrichment; a liberty to be enjoyed rather than a law to be obeyed. If these two concepts, voluntary and long term (or rather spread-out) schooling are put together, they can be seen as two sides of a single workable solution. Fully supported secondary education could be made obtainable by means of a voucher system, a series perhaps of twelve monthly voucher forms automatically acquired at adolescence, and valid throughout life. Further vocational training could then be awarded with grants as it is now. After an interval of unskilled or apprentice work, restricted of course by protective legislation (which would benefit a number of secondary school children who work far too long hours at present), very many people would not only appreciate school more but be better equipped to profit by it. A probable loss in facility would be more than balanced by enthusiasm and experience of life. Single sex education, school uniform, compulsory religious instruction and corporal punishment are questions which would solve themselves in this situation by vanishing; discipline becomes a matter for real self-government in a voluntary school community. One envisages a state of affairs in which pupils and teachers could form a corporate and sometimes interchangeable body and where school itself could be a real social centre.

The spectre of the eager child prevented from staying at school by his parents or by economic necessity does recur but even this situation becomes less acute than before if the assurance of further education is borne in mind. How to discover a child's genuine choice in the first place, how to safeguard his earnings while he works, how to arrive at a suitable financial allowance during school days, and what to do about students with children of their own, are all problems which need solving. If leisure becomes more general however, with the introduction of a four- or even three-day week, one can see how practicable as well as how valuable spread-out schooling could be.

It may be objected that voluntary education would suit academically inclined people who would be keen to take up their school entitlement

early and follow on with courses qualifying them for "successful" adult life, but that children with duller intellects would withdraw from school earlier as they saw no prospect of success, and would not even get the smattering of literacy they acquire now from enforced attendance up to fifteen. Better, it may be said, to improve methods of teaching to rescue these children from their present boredom and sense of failure.

And here we are confronted again by the original obstacle to educational progress as we see it. A system of education, however well meant, that seriously infringes the civil liberties of children from the age of five to fifteen, that narrows the scope of teachers, and that resembles slavery, does not admit of adequate improvement. To find a ready-made educational pattern which offers real hope for the misfits and throw-outs, the despised and rejected of our current system and therefore of society, we have to step once more outside the compulsory framework.

In Further Education, students who have shown no previous academic ability can succeed in the courses they have chosen. To begin with they are starting fresh at something different and their aptitude for the new skills is still an exciting mystery. The students have chosen to go on the course and are ready to give it a good try. They have the feeling, too, that at a College of Further Education they are part of a course which has been put on to suit demand, whereas at secondary school everyone knows that the system with the same syllabus would go on regardless of whether they were there or not. How better could the advantages of Further Education be transferred to secondary schools than by bringing in this vital ingredient of choice? The whole atmosphere would be transformed. The sharp difference between success and failure as exemplified by streaming would disappear. Students, instead of being collected together by birthdays or the alphabetic accident of their initials or divided by arbitrary intelligence tests would be grouped according to interest. The diversity of age and experience in such a class coupled with identity of interest would be stimulating and beneficial to group working. Instead of the curriculum being dominated by largely abstract examinations, students would occupy themselves with the more exploratory and creative projects that lie close to the true nature of education. When the student's vision of his future place in society became clear he would choose to equip himself appropriately and study for the necessary qualifying examinations, and those studies would be more effective because inner-directed and tuned to coincide with his personal needs.

But all this will be no good, the objection may still go, if the child chooses *not* to attend—puts off taking up his entitlement.

At worst children making this deliberate choice would have gained something in terms of self-respect. Their imaginations and intellects would not be damaged by enforced attention to what they see as dreary,

pointless tasks. Outside school, it is true, the work opportunities for such a person are likely to be pretty dreary too but may well not be so demoralising, and the voucher scheme would mean that the opportunity to return to school would always be there. When this time came there is every chance that it would be with renewed interest.

And if the entitlement were never taken up? Such cases would be rare, and certainly not significant for the well-being of society. With schools competing with one another to make themselves attractive to students, with an unlimited breadth of courses available and with financial support for the student appropriate to the needs of the equivalent person out of school, most people would be eager to take advantage of the educational facilities to the full. Look at the flood of demand for adult education that exists now.

And look once more at the dreary ranks of secondary school children who have opted out. Even the academically successful are often a poor advertisement for our present education system in terms of happiness, creativity, self-fulfilment.

It would seem that the violation of civil liberties represented by compulsory schooling is an inescapable issue in education today, from whichever standpoint one approaches it. One could go further and relate this problem to the central dilemma of our time. Now that the potential of human existence is so amazingly extended and so uniquely threatened, we all need educating first and foremost in the practice of freedom and the exercise of choice.

The 5th issue of *The Libertarian Teacher* is obtainable for 3s. post free from 36 Devonshire Road, Mill Hill, London, N.W.7.

There is a vicious circle, from school to college of education back to school, which goes on repeating a poor and unhelpful pattern of human relationships—the teacher afraid to relax, simply because he does not know how to do this without losing his authority; the child longing to break through, to find in this person who is so important to him more than the frosty player of a narrow role.

—EDWARD BLISHEN

The business and politics of education

DENNIS GOULD

THE SCHOOL THAT I'D LIKE (Penguin Education Special), 4s.

THE HORNSEY AFFAIR (Penguin Education Special), 6s.

TO ANYONE ACQUAINTED with creative methods of teaching, or to any anarchist, the ideas thrown out by school students in *The School That I'd Like* are not surprising. Indeed, to feel that suddenly the ideas and experiences of Tolstoy with his village school, of Homer Lane's Little Commonwealth, of Bertrand and Dora Russell's Beacon Hill School, of present day Kirkdale School in South London, or Todington School founded by Roy and Helen Frye and the Homer Lane Trust, have been revealed as essentially "child-oriented" (in that phrase of the professionals), is only to reveal the blindness of some teachers, and the conservative nature of any institution, state, ministry or county education committee.

But the excitement of this selection of thoughts and ideas on school is the maturity and individuality of the young writers.

The social structure of colleges of education, the attitude of staff towards students, the apathy and acceptance of the authoritarian basis by the students, the school atmosphere of compulsory continuous lectures, bulwarked by the step from school to college—which is no step at all—all this creates the dull, conformist and petty personality of the majority of teachers in their "probationary" year. The majority is not all, but the minority are a handful, and are pushed around if they have their own ideas and strong convictions.

For the college of education in no way resembles a place for intellectual discussion of wide-ranging subjects or even a place for thinking and questioning. Rather it is a factory for producing young teachers whose knowledge of the world is limited to school/college/school and their particular family environment. They are bound to have a very limited understanding and experience of jobs, people and ideas, with the exception of a few older students who have at least done other things.

I met five of the most independent students of one Midlands college of education, all of whom had been in difficulties with their course or their tutors and lecturers because of their independence. They were quite obviously students with their very own ideas, able to discuss and argue their views, and in doing so coming into conflict with staff members who were unable to accept, or who found ways to trivialize, any such personal but controversial views, let alone to *listen* to students as an organised body with rights and demands of adulthood.

Still less were these staff members able to comprehend the necessity for political societies within the college: political societies less concerned with party-politics (the vote-catchers and power-seekers) than with the politics of such philosophies as pacifism, socialism, anarchism, and concerned with the enlargement of students' ideas and with understanding that there are many answers, and even more questions to be asked of education. Although Penguin Books have issued A. S. Neill's *Summerhill* and Leila Berg's *Risinghill* (and are publishing this autumn Neill, a book of photographs of Neill's school with a commentary by Leila Berg), and have begun an education series, how many students read these books? And just as important, how many staff members of colleges of education, moulders of future teachers, read these books? And how many realise the fundamental philosophy behind such libertarian schools as Kirkdale or Kilquhanity?

It is a truism in colleges of education that the child, youth, or student must be the centre of the educational process. Yet sometimes in the past students have been made to feel like things that exist for the convenience of academics, or uninteresting by-products of research. The Hornsey revolt is a reminder that students, like employers, teachers or the community at large, have something to contribute even in the most sacred academic precincts. In a more enlightened world perhaps the Hornsey sitters would have been allowed to control their college and their education for a year as an experiment; at the end of it the rest of us would have been able to judge the quality of work, personality and suitability for employment in the twenty-first century that resulted.

—RICHARD BOURNE on Hornsey in the *Guardian*

The anarchism and pacifism which has inspired such schools is not coincidental, but a direct outcome of experiences and friendships within a society which is horrified when ideas are followed up by actions. It must be sobering to realise that just one man or woman with the vision of a person like A. S. Neill, with the example of just one small school, can create the climate which realises the need for universal libertarian education, as opposed to the military compulsion and discipline of the authoritarian school. For on analysis, most of ordinary schooling is centred around disciplining the class—keeping young people under control—rather than releasing their individual needs and natural inquisitiveness to learn. To learn by touching things, feeling things, holding and handling things. To learn by triggering-off the desire in people, young and old, to find out more about the person or idea touched upon. To learn by playing records and asking questions. To learn by methods which have become commonplace in primary schools—by work and play projects which last as long as the task itself, not reduced to quite arbitrary periods of half-an-hour, forty minutes or an hour or whatever the timetable predicted as the length of lesson. (Many of the boys and girls writing in *The School That I'd Like* underline these points.)

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Last year, just after the occupation of Hornsey College of Art by its students had begun, I was in London and after reading the press comments on a document issued by the occupiers, I decided to take a bus to Hornsey and get a copy. It was *Document no. II The Structure and Content of Art Education*, one of the central and most impressive of a long series of leaflets and manifestos; all of which contained practical ideas and dangerously alive suggestions which horrified authority (those lecturers who were not part of the occupation, that is) and which gave to take-over—originally planned to last for twenty-four hours, an impetus and maturity which enabled the Hornsey Commune to last some six weeks in an increasingly hostile *official*

I have discussed so far the impact of the Hornsey revolt on the established order. I suspect its impact on the Left will be just as great and just as necessary. With a few exceptions (Wilde, Morris) the British Left has shared the philistinism of society as a whole; indeed this is one reason why its urge to transcendence has been so feeble in the political sphere. If the promise of this book is fulfilled, then it will release the student movement from this dismal inheritance. It has also been supplied with a splendid example of the truth that reforms, if implemented by direct mass action, are far more subversive than the most "revolutionary" of abstract programmes.

—ROBIN BLACKBURN on Hornsey in *The Listener*

world. But an impetus which gave any student or any onlooker who had not completely lost his or her imagination, a feeling which was expressed in one of several very simply and very imaginative posters: DON'T LET THE BASTARDS GRIND YOU DOWN. Only a beginning, and a very well-worn army and factory phrase—a phrase of conscripted hands who have no say in what goes on, though what goes on intimately and continually affects those hands! And this, of course, is what the whole take-over and running of the Hornsey College of Art was all about.

However, just as the students and supporting staff kept the college open 24 hours-a-day during the occupation, they also carried out programmes of work on the physical presence of their very old and dismal building; they painted and decorated; they took down a typical, trivial screen of glass which separated staff from students in the canteen; they successfully ran the canteen with a zest and enthusiasm and efficiency and sensuality which had to be experienced to be believed. Some ran a disc-jockey service; others showed films in the late and early hours; while various magazines and pamphlets were freely given out at the main entrance.

Beyond these human activities were the never-ending open meetings thrashing out every conceivable problem from the organisation of courses to the function of the art college, in this democratic power-hugging official-ridden Obedient Society.

The Hornsey Affair covers the whole story with detail and insight, revealing the nature of our institutions of education, based as they are, on authority and power. It is the more impressive for being written by a group of students and staff, not simply one pen, one idea. The sections of the book begin with quotations from Proudhon, Wilhelm Reich, Victor Serge, Debray, McLuhan, Gransci, Saint-Just: ("Those who make a revolution by halves are only digging their own graves"), but beyond these thinkers and agitators are the students' own statements. Their very own manifestos. Their own experiences within their very own quiet and drab buildings transformed into loud and colourful rooms of a living commune. A community based on real interests and common purposes. In miniature an example of the growing conflict between official man and unofficial man. Between the institution and the institution's victims/students/patients/tenants/workers/prisoners. Between the administrators and the insolent, unmanageable, self-confident people who have outgrown administration.

Leaders of the Family Planning Association want to give contraceptives to schoolgirls.

But under the present law, doctors risk prosecution if they give girls under 16 the Pill or any other contraceptive.

They could be charged with "aiding and abetting" an illegal act—sexual intercourse under the age of consent.

Even if parents had given consent for contraceptives, the doctors would still risk prosecution. Technically, the parents, too, could be charged with aiding and abetting.

Before the association's national conference opened in London yesterday a family planning doctor said he had to carry out abortions on two 15-year-old girls in Liverpool.

"Within three months they were both back again," he said. It was mainly older women who wanted abortions in Liverpool, he said. Most young girls went to London "on the Harley Street circuit".

Lady Medawar, chairman of the association, also spoke about the problem before the conference began.

"We are faced with a problem about which we cannot do anything at the present," she said.

"We are not actively going out to give contraceptive advice to the under-16's.

"These people are coming to us and asking for it. These are the people who most need help."

Mr. Caspar Brook, the association's director, said: "Speaking for myself, I would welcome a test case in the courts on this."

The association had 1,200 doctors and it could not advise them to take the risk of prosecution. He would welcome any move which would clarify the law.

Although it is not officially admitted, some doctors at association clinics do give contraceptives to under-16's.

—*Daily Mail* (26.6.69)

Lowering the age of consent to legalise sexual intercourse with children under 16 is a measure which humanists may have to press for in a permissive society, Dr. David Kerr, Labour M.P. for Wandsworth, and chairman of the Parliamentary Humanist Group, said at the weekend.

Speaking as chairman of the 70th anniversary dinner of the Rationalist Press Association at the Commons, he reminded 100 guests that "the question of child sexual activity" had been raised in a press article. He said: "The question the humanist movement will have to face, as the world becomes more permissive, is whether there is anything inherently wrong or evil in having sexual relations with a child below the age of consent."

Afterwards Dr. Kerr said: "I was perfectly serious in raising this issue. What I had in mind—and of course I am a doctor—was that the pattern of sexual activity among young people is changing, perhaps more rapidly than we realise. I think that very few children of 14, 15 and 16 these days escape some form of sexual contact and often one finds that it is they who have taken the initiative.

"Is it fair that a boy who has intercourse with a girl under 16 should be prosecuted as a criminal and a seducer? I realise there may be powerful arguments for the present law, but I do think it is an issue which should be looked at. You will probably get letters pillorying me for even asking this question but I don't at all mind being a catalyst for discussion."

—*Guardian* (26.5.69)

A school without a head

ANTHONY WEAVER

IT IS ESSENTIAL FOR ANY SCHOOL COMMUNITY to state its purpose continually, and that its members should understand it. Otherwise the adults may imagine that they have assembled for the sake of their own personal relationships, or that they must live under one roof, or subsist in poverty, whereas the essence of a community is shared responsibility, and these other characteristics, though common, are incidental. That a school is run without a head is of far-reaching significance, but discussion of it may throw too great an emphasis on the role of adults in a school.

The educational aims have remained substantially the same, but that the methods of teaching and administration have varied constitutes our claim to be a genuinely progressive school. Briefly, we have set out to integrate intellectual and emotional development into a single pattern. This article, however, is concerned with administration, and excludes consideration of other aspects of the school.

For six years the school has been run by the staff as a joint enterprise. Those of us who took over in 1940 were partly reacting negatively to a regime that had become undesirable. We wished to see that there was no post from which it was difficult to remove a person who had become at variance with the aims of the school. We had seen an abuse of power, suspected that power always would corrupt an individual, and were glad of a chance to debunk any form of officialism.

To wield power jointly, we thought, would compel co-operation between us, not merely lip service to the ideal of mutual aid. How were we to get people really to understand each other's point of view,

ANTHONY WEAVER's paper was written in August 1946 for internal purposes and never published. It is here printed without a word altered. The school referred to is Burgess Hill started in 1936 as a progressive co-educational day school in Hampstead. In two years it had 120 pupils, and at the outbreak of the Second World War moved to Redhurst, Cranleigh, Surrey, as a co-educational boarding school. In 1944 a senior day school was started in Hampstead and a year later after the closing of the Cranleigh branch the total had grown to over 100. At the end of the period described by Anthony Weaver, Geoffrey Thorpe was appointed headmaster. Under his successor, James East, the school had to move from Hampstead to Boreham Wood, Herts, where it finally closed in 1962.

and themselves to recognise their own limitations by not pressing their opinion on matters over which they were not competent? A person should be respected, we thought, for the value of his opinions, not on account of a position of authority he held. To put a person in such a position over others suggested (1) that by argument alone he would be expected to fail to persuade them to his point of view, and (2) that those under him could not be entrusted with responsibility; whereas under a joint system all would be free, and indeed encouraged, to make their maximum contribution to the welfare of the school.

Adult co-operation implied a respect for personality which in practical affairs meant equality of status for men and women, teacher, domestic and office worker, and the same salary for all.

We remembered that Hitler had said "that the strength of a political party does not lie in the individual member possessing the greatest possible degree of intelligence and independence, but rather in the docility with which the members follow intelligent leadership", whereas Lenin's view was that "every cook should learn to rule the state".

The persuasive discipline we favoured for the children was in absolute contrast to a leadership principle, or government by an elite. Any necessity for a father figure for certain children was quite simply provided for by the existence of men on the staff.

We tried to take a "clinical" attitude to the behaviour not only of the children, but of ourselves towards the children, and towards each other. We attempted to recognise the emotional and temperamental background of our strongly held convictions, and to treat the behaviour of the children primarily as an expression of their emotional life. This called for patience and tolerance on the part of the staff and a genuine affection for the individual child—though it would be unconvincing to pretend that we always succeeded in maintaining this attitude.

If it is a mistake to accustom children to the idea of one person holding final authority, it is as much a part of their education that they should be given opportunities for coping with disorder. The perfectly efficient school does not do this. On the other hand they need to be given responsibility appropriate to their age and temperament—for instance, if *trained* in first aid, really to be left to deal with someone who comes in with blood pouring from a gash in his leg.

The school is owned by a limited company in which a selection of parents, staff and other interested outsiders (e.g. Lady Allen of Hurtwood, Dr. Herbert Read) are invited to take £1 qualification shares. The members of the company elect annually a minimum of four Directors, from those among themselves who are not members of the staff. When the school started the Directors appointed a headmaster. In 1940 it was agreed that the headmaster was no longer suited to run what had then become a boarding school in the country. At length the Directors accepted an offer from a group of five staff to take joint responsibility for the school, and this group became known as the full members.

Amongst themselves they always tried by prolonged discussion to reach unanimity of opinion. There was considerable respect for a

minority, and it frequently happened that a majority did not press its point of view. One of the full members was responsible for the accounts, another for arranging the timetable, another for interviewing prospective parents, etc. After a child was entered he or she was allotted a tutor—usually one of the full members—with whom the parent dealt over all matters except financial ones, and whose job it was to correlate the child's work and take care of his or her general welfare outside the classroom. The idea was that the parents should deal directly with the staff who had most to do with their particular child.

After two years of working together, by which time two of the original full members had left and several new ones had qualified, the staff functions were defined as follows (December 1942):

"Full members of the staff shall be jointly responsible to the Directors for the running of the school.

They shall propose to them the termly budget of income and expenditure. They shall be subject to a term's notice of leaving. They shall take turns in the chair at the staff meetings. They shall be re-elected each year by an unanimous vote of the full members. In the event of a minority of one opposed to an election, the decision shall be reconsidered at the end of the following term. If there is still a minority the election shall not be made.

New staff shall be appointed by a majority decision of the full members for a probationary period of a year. In particular cases, if it is thought desirable, the probationary period may be reduced. Probationers shall not vote unless asked to do so by the full members. They shall be subject to half a term's notice.

At the end of the probationary period a new staff shall either be admitted to full membership or retained as a specialist. A specialist shall be eligible for re-election as a full member at the end of another year."

Later on the following amendments were made:

1. That the chair at staff meetings is not taken only by full members.
2. That full members are automatically invited to take a £1 share in the company, and so to take part in the election of the Directors at the Annual General Meeting.
3. That although the full members are ultimately responsible, they consult the rest of the staff on all matters before arriving at a decision. (In practice at the staff meeting matters were voted on by all, unless the full members specially asked for a vote of full members only.)
4. That at staff meetings a full member might ask that any point should be referred to the next full members' meeting, instead of being decided on the spot."

There were no full members' minutes, for decisions were only made at staff meetings.

In the autumn of 1943 the School Advisory Council was formed, of which all staff and parents were automatically members. Its function was to advise the Directors on policy, and one reason for its formation was to provide an approach to the Directors for any staff or parent over the heads of the full members.

Very rarely did the full members give a person notice to leave. They did frequently examine a person's work, and so present the standards of efficiency required, or aims of the school, that the person concerned would him or herself decide to go. Any decision to give notice by either side would of course be brought up at the staff meeting.

The obvious benefits from the system of joint responsibility were that the children liked it, and the school showed remarkable vitality—to some people too much. We were described by the Board of Education's Inspectors in 1943 as "the school with the lid taken off". Incidentally their comment on the administrative system was that it was "unusual", but they did not object to it so long as it was "efficient", and by efficient the Ministry means "carrying out what you intend to do".

The writing of the prospectus took the form of a staff competition about every two years. As often, we endeavoured to overhaul the teaching syllabuses, and always found this an exhilarating task.

That the staff were directly engaged in running and building up the school gave them a devotion to their work which produced such feats as painting a staircase throughout one night, and living for years on a salary equivalent to that of an agricultural labourer. Besides this, difficult decisions taken jointly would tend to be seen through to their conclusion months later, whereas under another system they would be burked if not actually sabotaged.

The function of such a system of organisation should be to provide smooth internal working, and retention of power by those who work it. Of course we had to be aware that some people might support a system of joint responsibility for the reason that they had so little trust of anyone that they would neither delegate responsibility nor accept the opinion of another whether in a senior position or not.

In a large organisation there are more opportunities for lack of co-ordination if responsibility is in the hands of a group. Where planning is concerned it is easy enough to make a decision once the proper questions have been asked. Yet where there is not one person in authority there is no guarantee that everyone will look ahead and raise questions.

The greatest defect, in my opinion, in the internal working of the system as it has been, was that full members were self-appointing. However harmonious were the relationships between them, the group inevitably took on the characteristic of a clique in the eyes of the others.

Where many share an executive function, those who do not, feel some aspersion cast upon them, which they do not feel in the case of a small executive or an individual one. That there was a large number of full members became undesirable from this point of view. A better plan would have been for the staff either to have elected a small executive, or simply to have appointed certain individuals with absolute responsibility for specific functions—such as housekeeping, building plans, or charge of a particular group of children. In fact all executive responsibilities were departmentalised by individual full members, except tutoring which was given to some non-full members; and appointments and dismissals which were managed rather clumsily by the meeting.

Another possible defect of the system was the time spent at staff meetings, which were usually held weekly, preceded by a separate one of the full members. The chairman of the meeting was responsible for seeing that decisions of the week were carried out. A great deal depended on the ability of the chairman, and we never succeeded in devising a satisfactory procedure for reducing the number of small points which could be settled privately by those concerned. But, on the other hand, an inestimable benefit was the opportunity the meetings provided to learn how we varied in our personal approach to problems and to the children.

Although the Directors were legally liable for the school, and the staff as a group responsible to them, in practice when a Director retired the staff were asked to suggest a new one for nomination, and so long as the staff were united they formed a kind of trade union, and could bend the Directors to their will. One vexed question was over salaries which the Directors wanted to raise, but the staff kept down for the sake of low fees.

Until it was upon us we had not faced the question of the procedure to be adopted in the event of an irreconcilable split between the full members, which might arise out of personal jealousy, or a growing difference of educational aim, or a mixture of the two. The presence of a headmaster does not solve the question, as we had experienced to our cost, and for which reason we had abandoned the office in 1940. Presumably if differences cannot be overcome, after consultation with the parents, one party should leave. In our case the Directors have recently stepped in and changed the system by introducing a Principal with the customary powers.

We have seen that a joint enterprise depends for its success, more than other systems, upon there being a nucleus of people whose friendship and identity of practice, even more than their theory, has been tested by time. Given this, newcomers can be absorbed, and a proportion carried who do not fully share the aims. But where there is rapid expansion in total numbers, it is a mistake to imagine that the nucleus, which can only grow with time, has expanded too.

One lesson to be learned by others interested in our experiment is that it is not sufficient for the staff to co-operate in their work, but that they must also become the legal owners of their enterprise. Mere co-operation is no guarantee against futility, and that people may establish excellent relationships between themselves does not necessarily show that their pursuits are valuable.

Run a school next holiday!

PAT VAN TWEST

WHY A FREE SCHOOL?

THE MAIN POINT OF HAVING A SCHOOL for four days in the Easter holidays was to enable all those people interested in participating in a summer holiday school to get some idea of what are the drawbacks, needs and special efforts in a school of this type. Hotwells School, Bristol, had been chosen for a pilot scheme because, among other things, the head, John Rees, is sympathetic to the aims of a school that destroys the timetable and puts the children above all else. Peter Swann, a Training College lecturer and a prime mover in last year's Totterdown summer school, was involved in its organisation and also Ken Ross, a final year mature Training College student. I went to see Ken Ross two days before the school was due to begin. I was interested, having decided never to enter teaching again as it stood.

"There are groups that have got together to decide what they would like to do, otherwise there is very little actual organisation."

"How would you actually define your aims in having a school like this? Do you see it as an attempt to show that education needn't necessarily be conducted as it is at present?"

A long pause, then—

"I think what we are trying to do . . . who does the school belong to, anyway? Not the Education Authority, not the headmaster, not even to the government, but to the community. That's what we're attempting to explore: a school that is owned by the community."

WHAT IS A FREE SCHOOL?

I think I can best explain the basic principle behind a free school in this way: Most primary schools in Bristol are built with their classrooms round a central hall that is timetabled for use by various classes at different times of the day. Each classroom has one teacher and around 30-40 children. Transit between classrooms is rare, certainly not without permission. A free school, in effect, removes all children from the classrooms into the central hall, each classroom is then filled up with the necessary equipment for a certain

PAT VAN TWEST is a mother and a writer, and an ex-teacher, sickened by the present system and anxious to change it.

activity (painting, quiet reading and writing, woodwork, the possibilities are endless) and the children are told: you choose. This is where freedom comes in; the child is perfectly free to choose his own activity and, wherever he chooses, there will be skilled and sympathetic help if he needs it. Death to the timetable, ordered movement about? Of course, but life to powers of decision, sense of adventure and achievement and self-knowledge.

THE ACTUAL SCHOOL

The first day was cold, there was no heating and we mostly all wore coats. There was tremendous activity in the painting area, where the tape recorder went full blast and non-stop and most students smoked likewise. Children of all ages just painted and painted. Then there were huge paintings on expanses of paper stuck over the walls and a strange object took shape out of junk, students mostly adding to it as the day wore on. This was a noticeable thing throughout the whole four days, that EVERYONE became involved creatively in activity and were not merely supervisors. Without problems of discipline this is easy and discipline seems strangely unnecessary when children are not bored (truism). The only problem of discipline that I encountered, involved two boys of about 10 who were throwing clay all over the place. My traditional responses were at war with my understanding. They were obviously a bit bored, were feeling the freedom of the place and having fun. I thought of the mess involved in clearing the place up after they had finished, then said: "Stop chucking that about or get out". Well, they left that particular room, but that hadn't solved anything; they would merely cause trouble elsewhere. I felt disgruntled with my compromise. But in the afternoon those two were collared and asked if they fancied helping construct a "place" out of wood and cardboard. You bet they would! They not only hammered, organised and constructed but proceeded to decorate and co-operate.

The library was used for quiet games and writing and reading and at first was not used much. Towards the end of the period, there was always a little group there. Children dressed up in the dancing room and were often seen wandering about in their finery, lost in princessly fantasies. In the infants' hall, in a separate building, the music activities. Often sweet melody from there but, as likely as not, a raucous jangle of instruments as children had a go on all sorts of instruments from chime bars to trombones. In the main hall there were train sets, car sets, billiards and table tennis and there were always children here. A rope was fixed up to enable sliding along it on a loop. This was a great favourite, especially with the younger children. There were nearly always boys playing football in the lower field after the first day when the weather brightened. In fact, the weather was so good that most activity was

outdoor activity and outings to the Downs and Ashton were very popular.

On the last day everyone set to and painted the playground.

Children went home to lunch or brought their own. Around 60 helpers were involved, drawn mainly from sixth forms and Teachers Training Colleges in Bristol. Some mothers came to help, others came to look around.

The average number of children present was about seventy but these numbers fluctuated all the time. The children were mainly between 5 and 11 but some brought their younger brothers and sisters. Older children were there on sufferance of good behaviour. They caused no trouble but some of the sixth formers felt a bit out of depth with them. The children were free to come and go at any time and were not the school's responsibility, although they were covered for accidents on the premises. A child arriving at school was assumed either to have been sent by the parent or else allowed out to play and the parent didn't mind where. In both cases the parents had full responsibility. I am not sure if this was adequately communicated to all parents but is very important.

At the end of each day, all the helpers still in school met together for a brief meeting to discuss outlines of plans for the following day and small things that required attention. But I think the best ways in which thoughts and problems about the school were resolved were (i) in casual discussions that sprang to life in moments throughout the day and (ii) in the midst of daily experiences themselves that gave a clear picture as time went on, of what a school like this was all about. I often wondered if the students thought about a school like this, very much. On the whole, I think it was so obvious to them that the school had value and that was sufficient to them. They are luckily too young as yet to know that despairing insight working as a teacher in our present system can give. They were not, I think, like me, constantly reevaluating everything.

OFFICIAL REACTION

On Wednesday there was an air of gloom about the place. Scratches had been discovered on the boys' club billiard table and the leader, after having taken a look around the school, reported that a considerable amount of damage had been done. Mr. Rees had been phoned that morning at 8.30 by the Education Authority and asked if he knew about the damage. He envisaged all sorts of terrible things, like walls having been toppled. But on arrival at school found the place no different from how he had left it the previous morning. An official soon arrived, interviewed him and Peter Swann and Ken Ross and then examined the building for damage. He looked very sombre as he toured with tight-lipped Mr. Rees, who was feeling Authority's lack of trust in him deeply. "Supervise!" seemed to be

the sarcastic key word of command for that day. The point was, surely, that the more a school building is used, the more wear it will sustain. We felt indignant that the children came second to the building itself.

That afternoon when everyone but a few had gone out, I saw another man from the Education Office, on a friendly visit, although I did not realise it at the time. Always accustomed to being at war with Education officials, I was uneasy with this man's cordiality but warmed by his insistence on handshaking.

"What is the Education Office's attitude to this sort of thing?" I asked him.

"We look upon it with great interest and if it proves a success, we hope to be able to finance it. There should be money forthcoming from the government. . . ."

SOME THOUGHTS LOOKING AHEAD

What, then, did we discover? It became obvious that children did not need many of the things they were given in many schools—timetables, bells, punishments, incentives, coercion, that they responded to friendship with friendship, that boredom is really an alien thing of childhood, that learning can take place in informal conditions. I think it also became obvious that a lot more organisation would be necessary among the helpers themselves. Although it is important that the children are the prime movers in their own choices, I think it is very important that each room with its special sort of activity be kept *alive* even if, at the time, few children seem interested in doing anything in it. If a room is allowed to go dead, any child who pops hopefully in will very soon pop out. Every activity should be in as full swing as possible or at least ready for full swing whenever it should be wanted. A central noticeboard would be very useful to co-ordinate plans and announce various activities in the day; a better system for keeping check of all children taken on outings must be devised, and finding some willing team to deal with refreshments is very important. (I dealt with these for some of the time and found it a most frustrating business when I was primarily interested in the children.)

On the last day the team work was magnificent between everyone involved in clearing up and the school was spick and span but the school had held up the yearly spring-clean. The caretaker had only a few days after Easter in which to complete this. Obviously, in the future, more paid cleaners would become a necessity to aid efficiency and prevent frustrations.

In the long summer school it would perhaps be valuable to have a person, skilled in dealing with children in a certain activity, into the school occasionally to give voluntary and friendly advice and example to the students during the course of the day. This would be an excellent way for the inexperienced to learn. And discussion

groups and teach-ins that can feed back experience and ideas all the time would become an invaluable part of a school like this that depends so much on spontaneity and experience and not conditioning. Holiday schools depend upon people to run them who do not need to earn incomes. The feeling of unity and purpose when work is done for pleasure is magnificent, but many people simply cannot afford the time. Yet the problem arises that, if the Education Authorities finance these schools, who then would dictate the policy behind them? And as schools like this tend to be running against the general trend in education at present, what sort of friction would money-with-strings create? What room for experiment would remain? Large bureaucratic concerns have a tendency to seek guarantees and eliminate risks. Yet at the core of all life lies risk and a school run on the lines of Hotwells could scarce run without it.

And, in the long-term view, when schools in general become run like this, it is plain that more highly-specialised teaching areas will become necessary. No one for instance, was interested in exploring mathematics or history at Hotwells and they perhaps would have been silly to do so in such a short time because the children were far too stimulated by gayer, less intense things. But eventually children would settle and intensify their experiences over a whole range of experiences. I think we caught a glimpse of this even in four days.

In our present education system, which aims to pass degrees of failure on a great many children because only with that sense will you go willingly to work, as a penance, in a menial job, a school of this type cannot be considered as anything other than political. "How I wish I'd worked harder at school," a 15-year-old school-leaver confided to me this year. The monotony of his job had drowned all memory of the monotony of the school work he had been bidden to do. Of course he had failed; it had never had meaning. So he accepts his "punishment" with a shrug and assigns a special aura of regard to all those teachers who prophesied his failure. And it is this that is such splendid ammunition to the establishment teacher: "I saw Paul today and he said to me . . . so you'd better all get this homework on the puritan wars done or else you'll land up like him, serving behind a toy counter. . . ." There were things in him that needed developing and encouraging, and some self-respect and understanding, surely? Instead he had been taught to be a failure. It is this sense of failure that keeps the system going. Fathers prompt their sons to aim high: don't bother about being a man, just pass the bleeding exam.

Perhaps Hotwells is a beginning to a change of all that?

POSTSCRIPT

I took a 9-year-old boy to the school, whose usual school is

highly disciplined and regimented. At the end of four days I asked him if Hotwells had been any different from his own school. "Yes," he replied, "the playground's bigger!"

QUESTIONS

Did you rent the school building? No. Mr. Rees, the headmaster, is progressive and insistent, and with us all the way. He has had "evening school" run by mums in the school now for 2 years, and mothers run their own nursery school in the holidays. So the scheme for a Free School was not a bolt out of the blue for the Education Authorities, but an extension of activities already happening. The caretaker had to fit in her Easter spring-cleaning around us, and she was not pleased but we joined in with the cleaning considerably. So the Authority did not even have to pay overtime to the cleaning staff, nor hire extra help. (This, however, is something we feel ought to happen in the future.)

Was it a Training College Project? Certainly not. Training College students were involved, but so also were university students and 5th and 6th formers from school. Peter Swann, the prime mover of Bristol Free Schools, is an art lecturer at training college, but he is certainly not working in an official capacity.

What was Totterdown 1968? An offshoot from the Free University and the sit-in of that summer term. Students fed up with (1) the dreary syllabus-oriented education they were forced into, and (2) their lack of involvement in the community at large, decided to tackle both problems at once by opening a place in a deprived part of Bristol to (1) explore a "free" learning situation, and (2) contact a community by involvement in it. Around 150-200 children came every day although the hall was sparse and badly situated. This wasn't a school, but a hall donated by the Methodist Church for the summer. (The church members also organised meals for the helpers.) Unfortunately, community involvement didn't "happen". The community slumped back into its usual apathy when we left.

What about future projects? Hotwells is running a Free School for three weeks in the summer. Totterdown is having a Free School again but in a different hall: a disused working-men's club due for demolition (six weeks). Easton is an old working-class district now slowly being demolished where we are opening a new Free School. Many people live in tall blocks of flats (1,000 children in four blocks) and a major road is destined to go through the middle of them. There are no facilities whatever. We are also running a library scheme in conjunction with the local school in the local library. This will be held in a school which we have wrested from the Authorities for a grand two weeks only! This was achieved by Pam Nicholls who lived in Easton for years and was a pupil at this school. Her diplomacy has won over the caretakers (who remember her) and the

headmaster, and she also has liaison with the Trades Council, which has been a strong voice in Bristol lately. It has issued a pamphlet *What is Bristol doing for our children?* in which it makes recommendations for adventure playgrounds, schools open in holidays, etc. It has examined possible sites for adventure playground areas and embarrassed the Council into agreeing to some of them. (We are using a site behind Easton School for an adventure playground.) The Education Authority is making a grant to each free school of £15 per week this summer. Both Hotwells and Easton have been curtailed in duration simply by Education Authority veto. We wanted to run for five weeks.

Thoughts on 'participation'

BRIAN MORRIS

A FEW MONTHS AGO I heard a Cabinet Minister, Mrs. Judith Hart, address an audience of student-teachers on the subject of "participation", and what struck me most about her lecture, was that it exemplified the fact that democracy—as an ideal—has now largely been forgotten by politicians. The type of democracy the Minister had in mind was not "government of the people, by the people, for the people", but rather the existing electoral procedure rejuvenated. For what is obviously worrying contemporary politicians is not the undemocratic nature of the present system, but the fact that decisions from above are now being questioned by the populace, by students, by workers, even by the ordinary housewife when, to her surprise, she finds that the council is about to push a road through her back garden. What the rulers are anxiously seeking is not so much improved democratic procedures, but increased means of legitimizing their present powers and modes of decision.

The British process of government has long been seen (with some contentment) as a complex web of conflicting pressures—involving interest groups, politicians and bureaucrats—from which there emerges (God knows how) a social and economic programme reflecting the interests and wishes of the majority. Some, displaying what C. Wright Mills called "the sociological imagination" view the contemporary political scene with more exacting scrutiny, and have noted the tendency of this process to crystallise around an elite—a faceless, anonymous power grouping about whom the public knows little and controls even less. The picture of British society as one in which power is held and wielded by a select few and centralised into a system of "organised irresponsibility" may be regarded as overdrawn, but no one can fail to have been struck by its undemocratic nature, if by "democratic" we mean the process whereby every individual participates in the formulation of values

BRIAN MORRIS wrote his article before the *Skeffington Report* People and Planning (HMSO, 15s.) underlined the conclusions of his opening paragraph.

and procedures regulating the community in which he lives. (The sentiments, significantly, are those of John Dewey.) For most citizens there is no such participation, even at the most mundane level. Moreover, the widespread belief, perpetuated by most people in authority, that administrators go through a lengthy procedure of consultation before any social plan or policy is put into effect, is largely a myth. This myth is now being exploded daily by ordinary people, and it was salutary to hear Mrs. Hart admit as much, although she dodged the question as to whether administrators should take an active role in making known their plans before decisions are made. One was tempted to ask whether the ordinary citizen should, in fact, join administrators in MAKING the actual decisions, but perhaps this notion would have sounded too revolutionary!

An incisive query by a member of the audience, questioning whether the Labour Party itself could be considered "democratic", went largely unanswered. But then we could hardly expect a Minister of the Crown to admit that her party was a concrete example of the "iron law of oligarchy" whereby an organisation comes to be controlled by an elite power grouping that has largely freed itself from the dictates of rank and file members. The significance of her lecture for me lay, not so much in what was said, but in what was implied or evaded by the lecturer. It was implied, for instance, that informed opinion was given by the mass media, and that open discussion was encouraged by the government. But this just isn't true, and on issues of crucial importance to the lives of every one of us, the government policy is one of obfuscation. The entire sequence of decisions concerning nuclear power and the researches into germ and chemical warfare has been made without any public debate, and even the facts themselves—needed for such a debate—have been deliberately hidden from the people, or distorted or lied about by the government. Perhaps the most lucid comment on Nixon's visit to Britain was contained in a letter to the Guardian which mentioned the "undemocratic inanities of the ritual" and the fact that "these two dull grey men, with their determined smiles on the steps of Number 10, were about to discuss our destiny without any reference at all to us—the people. . . ."

Again, it was implied that decisions in our society are made by parliament. Yet surely one of the most significant facts of our time is that the House of Commons has become, in terms of decision-making, of secondary importance. As Ralf Dahrendorf writes, "The governments of Western societies are often mere switchboards of authority; decisions are made not by them but through them."

A final point overlooked by Mrs. Hart was the fact that even representative government (the minimal definition of democracy) has been jettisoned, for, in order to keep abreast with technological and social change, a large sector of "government" has fallen into the hands of bureaucrats, quasi-administrators and semi-autonomous agencies, who represent no one but themselves (or their class) and who are not, except through a long chain of political command, answerable to the people in any way.

The recent attacks on the trade union movement—by the press and the government, the notion advanced that a planned economy leads automatically to more individual freedom, and the fact that concepts like the "corporate state" are nowadays bandied about quite freely by politicians, should be warning lights not that we are on the move towards more "participation" but rather the reverse.

OBSERVATIONS ON ANARCHY 99 AND 100

BUREAUCRACY

I HAVE FREQUENTLY DISAGREED with or been irritated by articles in ANARCHY, but Nicolas Walter's review of the Cohn-Bendit book leaves me bewildered, or rather the last part of it does. My Oxford Dictionary tells me what I have always assumed to be so, that bureaucracy means Government from offices. It seems rather strange that a writer in ANARCHY should tell us that Government is inevitable in any group which is too large to meet in a room. "We need leaders—but they should be followed only as long as they lead in the right direction." What is the right direction and who decides it? If the individual followers decide for themselves, why do they need a leader? If they don't, who does and how do we know he's right? I find it impossible to sort my way through this Platonic maze. I would rather say what I have always said, "I don't need any leaders."

As for Cohn-Bendit introducing dogma—this from a man who says, "bureaucracy is inevitable". You can hardly be more dogmatic than that. In fact I found that one of the agreeable aspects of the Cohn-Bendit book was that it was refreshingly free from dogma. Fortunately I read it before reading the reviews. Whatever faults the book may have, it is a reasonably clear exposition (thank you, Gabriel) of the writers' opinions, which is in happy contrast to most of what is written about anarchy in England. I think the best advice that readers of ANARCHY could be given is to read the book and ignore the reviews.

Somerset

GEOFFREY BARFOOT

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INDIVIDUALISM

GABRIEL COHN-BENDIT'S statement (ANARCHY 99) that "individualists . . . refuse to form groups" is false. Individualists do form groups for temporary, specific purposes, as Cohn-Bendit could have discovered in Paris where the Foyer Individualiste meets regularly. What individualists do not do is to allow a group to become an end in itself, able to claim "loyalty" (i.e. obedience) from its members, or exercise any kind of authority over them. Nor do they wish to submerge themselves in any organised, pyramidal structure of councils, syndicates, or communes, topped with "co-ordinators" who, in practice, would soon turn out to be oligarchs.

However, since the hoary myth that individualists are anchorites still flourishes, I have little hope that my rectification will have much effect, particularly on persons who can believe that "in a society which seeks to crush the *individual*" salvation can be found

in "a deep feeling of *collective strength*". To hope that the individual can be liberated from the old collectivism by creating a new one is a tragi-farce of the first order. I am not surprised that such prophets of the new tribalism as the Cohn-Bendits still cling to Marx. Individualists, from their point of view, may be "rather out of date", but if their ideas constitute the future, they are welcome to it.

London

S. E. PARKER

* * *

PROPERTY

I AM DISTURBED by Nicolas Walter's frank assertion that Anarchists do not reject property. He states he is or rather he says Anarchists are against such property as can be used to exploit others. All property exploits others to some degree, so long as we have property we will have exploitation be it state property, private property, or any other conceivable kind of property. Let me make myself clearer, let us say one man has six eggs another man has none, the one man clinging to the belief that as he will be undoubtably in need of the six eggs, for he intends to eat them, claims those eggs as his property, assuming property to still exist. You see it seems to me that with the preservation of property you preserve the values of his and mine, them and theirs, with the strong possibilities of more wars and horrors arising from this. Indeed if all the benefits and produce of humanity were common to all then the man with six eggs would share his eggs with the other man, then he would have three eggs so that his fellow brother would not go hungry and even then the three eggs which each of them possess would not be the property of these two men for if other needy comrades are about they will be obliged to share what they have with one another in common as they would the sky, the air, the waters, all things. Let us do away with this talk of property it is ROBBERY, both the existence of private property and the state is the existence of exploitation, domination and oppression.

Birmingham

PAUL LESTER

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DARK SIDE

I HAVE JUST READ Nick Walter on the "dark side" of anarchism—which seems a rather sectarian way of referring to those with whom one disagrees—how about an issue of ANARCHY precisely on this? On, say, the protagonists of propaganda by deed, as well as Malatesta and the Italian terrorists, Spain, etc., up to the present time?

London

STUART CHRISTIE

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by

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