FORUM
Volume 54, Number 1, 2012
www.wwwords.co.uk/FORUM

Margaret Miles: the educational journey of a comprehensive school campaigner

LOTTIE HOARE

ABSTRACT As a former comprehensive school pupil herself, the author wanted to know more about the women who had pioneered comprehensive schools in England. Therefore, she chose the headmistress and comprehensive school campaigner Dame Margaret Miles (1911-1994) as the subject of a dissertation for her History of Education MA at the Institute of Education, University of London. This article attempts to rebuild the story of Margaret Miles' networks of influence from 1911-1955 and explains how she gathered ideas that she hoped to transplant into the comprehensive school system after 1955. The author then move on to examine how seeds of doubt about Miles' particular vision and comprehensive education in general were introduced to a nervous public in documentary film between 1955 and 1963.

My initial interest in Margaret Miles (1911-1994) and Mayfield comprehensive was sparked by a chance conversation in 2010 with an acquaintance, Joan Griffiths. Joan had taught at Mayfield in the late 1950s and early 1960s and had gone on to have a career at the BBC in schools' radio broadcasting. She compiled various publications, including the 1976 poetry book *Living Language* with Michael Rosen.

I had fragments of knowledge about Miles and Mayfield. I knew for instance that Mayfield, a girl's comprehensive, had been the first school in London to transform from grammar to comprehensive in 1955. I also recognised that Miles had had to grapple with contagious public anxiety about what was then seen as experimental comprehensive education. I knew little else. I was born in 1969 so I had no personal memories of the first few decades of comprehensive education in England. Joan Griffiths had direct experience of this era and had believed comprehensives were the future in the late 1950s. She had a handful of distinct memories about Miles – her preoccupation with the correct assembly of tents for instance – but her recollections were of a quite

distant character that rarely entered her classroom or the staffroom. Caroline Benn's obituary of Miles hinted that she spent too much time on committees so perhaps this goes some way to explain Joan's sense of Miles's absence. Joan's memories of the power struggles between pupils and teachers and anecdotes about choosing to teach Wolf Mankowitz's *A Kid for Two Farthings*, and reading Raymond Williams with the sixth form were more vivid in her mind that any lasting impression of Miles.

When Joan spoke of her memories of Mayfield I was conscious of how much her youthful perspective was hidden in the conversation. Speaking in 2010, Joan's faith in non-selective education was less clearly defined. She seemed slightly embarrassed by her part in the comprehensive tradition that had promoted educability of children regardless of social background or cognitive aptitude testing. There was something that struck me as unconvincing in the way she aligned herself with disillusionment in comprehensives. Was it because I had not lived and worked through the years that she was describing so that she was performing a rather cynical narrative for my generation? Did she expect me to see comprehensives as flawed and tarnished so she was framing her experiences in that way but keeping some inner belief private and remote for her contemporaries only? She was a school governor for an urban primary school at the time of our conversation and had shown a sustained interest in state education throughout her working life and retirement. I should also mention at this point that I was a comprehensive pupil myself in the 1980s – not in London but in Devon. It was not as if we were two former grammar school pupils pairing up to defend our experiences.

I felt some part of both Joan's story, and the larger story of Miles and Mayfield, was being concealed in a compromise between private and public voices. Some struggle between the voice of the teacher and the voice of the broadcaster, as well as a gap between the generations of the storyteller and her audience, was clouding over this opportunity to understand more about educational history. So I decided to research Miles and Mayfield in such a way that tracked down some of these mysteries.

If our initial conversations had evolved differently I might have made my research more of an oral history project – interviewing former pupils and teachers who had worked with Miles. However, as I was aware of how much was missing in the particular conversation I had with Joan I chose other routes for my research. I worked mainly with unpublished archival sources in an attempt to revisit the words and images of the past. I used Miles's papers held at Royal Holloway archives; Margaret Cole's papers concerning comprehensive education held at Nuffield College, Oxford; a copy of the Mayfield pupil magazine from 1963 [1]; Richard Cawston's *The Schools* BBC documentary (1962); amateur cine film footage recorded at Mayfield School between 1955 and 1963; British Library Sound Archive recordings of Margaret Miles and Naomi Mitchison in conversation (1981) and lastly, from the BBC Written Archives, Richard Cawston's files on the making of *The Schools*.[2]

Miles's Educational Experiences that Inspired a Later Interest in Comprehensive Education

Born in Liverpool in 1911, Miles lived in various parts of England – her father's employment as a Presbyterian minister dictating the family's location.[3] Awarded scholarships, she attended grammar schools but was sometimes excluded from trips and extra activities not financed by her scholarships.

I am particularly interested in the influence of Ipswich High School on Miles and its role in shaping her interest in comprehensive education for girls at a later date. *A Pageant of Education* is a 1928 play script written by staff and performed by staff and pupils in that year – when Miles was a 17-year-old pupil. It tells the history of education from Pestalozzi in the eighteenth century through to a final procession celebrating the professions now open to women in 1928. It is fiercely critical of exclusion in education and of excessive instruction rather than active participation. In one nineteenth-century scene, girls are not permitted to read Shakespeare but have to learn about the correct arrangement of a peacock in a serving dish presented to Shakespeare at the dining table. One character loses patience and remarks: 'I want to be a human being, a reasonable person who understands and can do things and talks sensibly to men'.[4]

A Pageant of Education is a reminder that Miles was educated by women, who were outspoken, concerned about social justice and not afraid of political discussion. The influence of Tawney's 1922 *Secondary Education For All* resonates throughout the play. Another quotation shows how ready Miles's teachers were to share their contemporary political influences with the pupils they taught:

> The old simile of the ladder is now quite obsolete. For the democratic citizen of 1928 a ladder is too narrow and too steep, we must have a highway along which all may pass who seek culture.[5]

Miles's own educational 'highway' had its fair share of obstacles. That she ever made it to Bedford College was due to the determination of Miss Romsford, her headmistress at Croydon High School. Miles had been gravely ill in the summer of 1930, with pneumonia and mastoid infections, and in a pre-NHS world her family were crippled by medical expenses. As Miles was not well enough in the October of 1930 to start her course, she risked losing her place at Bedford College and most crucially her Board of Education four years of funding. Her opportunity to afford a university education was based on her pledge to teach after graduating. Miss Romsford's letters on Miles's behalf ensured a compromise was reached and Miles started in November 1930.[6] She wanted to read sociology but was made to study history because sociology was not considered a suitable 'teaching' subject to qualify for Board of Education funding.[7]

Support from this headmistress was one of several examples where people in the right place at the right time championed Miles's education and career. The other important influence that shaped Miles's opportunities were scholarships granted because her father had been gassed during the First World War. It could be argued that Miles's determined and ongoing support for

comprehensive education was partly a way of ensuring future generations could be well educated without having the stigma of financial compensation for difficulties at home.

Geraldine Jebb (1886-1959), was principal of Bedford College in 1930 when Miles became a student at this women-only college. She was a cousin of Eglantyne Jebb, who had been a pioneer of international children's aid.[8] Geraldine Jebb brought Miles into contact with a generation of prosperous women who valued feminism and the search for world peace. She was an enthusiastic referee for Miles for the next twenty years. There was a strong sense of women passing ideas down through the generations.

To convey something of the ideas these women were sharing I will quote Virginia Woolf. Writing in 1938, Woolf played with the concept of the ideal, inexpensive further-education establishment for women in *Three Guineas*. Woolf was a friend and correspondent of Shena Simon who was to be promoting comprehensives a decade later.[9] Jane Martin observes, 'Shena and Virginia occupied a shared social space and were trying to colonize new social spaces'.[10] Woolf's description has much in common with the pioneering vision of comprehensive schools:

> … it must be an experimental college, an adventurous college. Let it be built on lines of its own … not of carved stone and stained glass, but of some cheap easily combustible material which does not hoard dust or perpetrate traditions. Do not have chapels ... Not the arts of dominating other people; not the arts of ruling, of killing, of acquiring land and capital ... It should teach the arts of human intercourse; the art of understanding other peoples lives and minds ... the aim of the new college ... should not be to segregate and specialise but to combine.[11]

Badminton School: curriculum reform and social connections

It might seem surprising that it was Miles's employment as a history teacher at the Independent School, Badminton, during World War Two, which inspired her to think about curriculum and purpose within a secondary school. In the long term it ensured that she used her elite connections for the benefit of the many not the few.

Miles did not apply for a post at Badminton. She was already committed to a working life where she might be able to have some contact with disadvantaged pupils and she was wary of earning her living in the world of independent schools. However, her network of friends from the League of Nations Union put forward her name for a Badminton post.[12]

I suggest that the headmistress of Badminton School, Beatrice May Baker (1876-1973), was to have a profound influence on Miles. She made her believe that her hankering after adventure, internationalism and new ways of living and working was something that could be interwoven with her teaching career

rather than run alongside it. Baker had worked at Cardiff Intermediary School for Girls, in the first decade of the twentieth century, with the suffragette Mary Collin. Through her Cardiff experience Baker had developed an interest in world affairs, freedom of expression and a questioning approach to learning. At Badminton, Baker established an independent school fashionable amongst both local respectable Bristol families and a certain cultural elite – members of the Trevelyan family, the publisher Victor Gollancz, the ceramicist Bernard Leech, and the artist Stanley Spencer all had children at the school. Anne Valery's autobiography sums up the close-knit interdependence amongst the parents – one pupil's father was a left-wing publisher and another pupil's father made the paper on which the books were printed.[13]

Miles came from a rather self-assured, inflexible girls' grammar school tradition so she particularly enjoyed experimenting with the timetable and studying subjects in prolonged blocks at Badminton. This school gave Miles a taste for curriculum reform and for nurturing girls' minds in realms that did not necessarily fit into academic forms of measurement. This was the first environment where Miles was expected to teach 'citizenship' and the 'progress of world civilisation'. These subjects had played no part in her previous grammar school timetables. These were also subjects in which the pupils would not sit examinations.

Christopher Watkins describes how Baker was seeking to infiltrate respectable society and influence the elites of tomorrow: 'Activism and political protest were presented as legitimate, even necessary forms of engagement with society and the state'.[14] Valery describes Miles's history lessons:

> Not for her the cosy stories of kings and queens, and a map of the Empire coloured pink. History became a dark legend of peasants massacred by barons, the iniquities of slave trade … [she] knew every indignity that had ever been meted out by the ruling class, and if words had been deeds our classroom would have been awash with blood … we thrilled to her attack on Asquith's treatment of the suffragettes, 'No taxation without representation' we chanted as we changed for lacrosse. We were particularly taken with our set book on the American trade union movement, You Guys Gotta Organize which was published by the Left Book Club and had a liver red cover.[15]

Miles's first connection with comprehensives probably came through her friendship with the writer and Badminton school parent Naomi Mitchison.[16] The London County Council had been discussing the possibility of introducing local authority multilateral schools in London since the mid 1930s and Mitchison's best friend, the prominent Fabian and wife of G.D.H. Cole, Margaret Cole, was involved with these discussions. In the later 1940s Margaret Cole was to become a vocal spokesperson for comprehensives. Although Miles returned to teaching in local education authority (LEA) schools in the mid 1940s, her friendship with Mitchison lasted for the rest of her life.

Miles's association with these powerful individuals was complex. There are interesting tensions between the Miles and the Mitchison/Cole perspectives on comprehensives, shaped partly by class, partly by the different relationships with tradition which unmarried and married women of this era faced, and partly influenced by the fact that Miles was the one with first-hand experience of being in a classroom. I was surprised when listening to Sound Archive conversations how the unmarried Miles defers to the matriarchal Mitchison.[17] Miles had spent much of her life working to create a more egalitarian society. Mitchison, buoyed up by castle-living and innumerable grandchildren, had pretty much done whatever she felt like when she felt like it. However, Miles realised the politically powerful connections that the Mitchison and Cole partnerships provided.

Until 1944 there was no provision for education after 14 other than through scholarship or fees. Academic merit, which showed itself in certain test conditions, or the ability to pay, were the only ways to remain in education. Miles was later to comment on other slow areas of progress, 'it was only in 1918 that the legislators made the age at which their sons began study at public schools the leaving age for the majority of the nation's children'.[18]

Cole's private correspondence shows a more complicated dependence on public schools. Writing to Mitchison in 1941, Margaret Cole confides:

> I am afraid the decision to send Humphrey to Winchester was mine as much as Douglas's. I've no love for or trust in 'modern' schools. I don't think you can get out of the system by side stepping, any more than you can get out of your fundamentally upper class position by eating an egg for supper and feeling proletarian about it.[19]

Miles's Vision of the Comprehensive

Miles oversaw the transformation of Putney County High School, a girls' grammar, to Mayfield a girls' comprehensive.[20] Miles would often use the term 'Commonwealth' as a metaphor for a comprehensive school.[21] If grammar school represented the later years of Empire, the Commonwealth was something evolving and yet far from revolutionary. Labelling a comprehensive as a Commonwealth allowed for a slow journey towards social justice. Delegation and trust must be in place so that the unseen, unrecorded moments within a comprehensive all worked towards a sense of responsibility for the same goal.

Looking back on her initial aims for Mayfield, Miles had a sense of celebration that the comprehensive school 'is not tied to the past and its function is not to perpetuate outworn education and social patterns'.[22] She once commented that if some practice at Mayfield was in place for a year 'we call it traditional'.[23] For Mayfield she sought from the outset three vital criteria: firstly, that limits were not placed on a pupil about what she might achieve; secondly, that the pupil selected the path they wanted to follow to avoid selection being made by some authority decreeing that she should follow

a particular course; and thirdly, undue value must not be placed on any branch of learning. Academic learning was respected and admired but not considered the only 'good'. All types of knowledge had value even if it was not a value that could be clearly measured. Merit must not be assessed on a status scale where some subjects were deemed superior.

There also needed to be a sense that there should be no upper limit anywhere. In a radio discussion, in 1954, Miles defended comprehensives on the grounds that pupils did not get an inflated sense of being 'king pins' if they were educated 'in a fair cross-section of community'.[24] In conversation with Mitchison years later, this belief that comprehensives would provide an environment where the different talents would swim to the top and be noticed is discussed with a curious tension. Miles believed this to be the case because of her belief in human educability and Mitchsion because of her belief in eugenics.[25]

While many were terrified of the scale of comprehensives, Miles remained unflappable. As Miles's thinking was in tune with internationalist ideas throughout her adult life she was unafraid of size. She was always concerned with connections and interactions between countries so she anticipated that a large comprehensive would model the behaviour of a peace-loving group of nations as part of its internal structure. She saw size as something that bestowed 'a certain dignity and impressiveness upon an institution'.[26] She observed a sense of pride that pupils felt in belonging to a big school. However, the use of space within the large institution mattered to her intensely.

The units into which a comprehensive was divided were crucial. Miles was not a fan of 'houses' because they encouraged competition and ultimately that would lead to war. Prefects also were 'out of tune with modern democratic thinking' and belonged to Arnold of Rugby's 'muscular Christianity'.

> Houses which have no physical place in which to be, and which consist solely of lists of names do not really provide to the individual members any sense of security or of belonging.[27]

Crowds in comprehensive schools seem to be a major topic of anxiety during Richard Cawston's BBC documentary, *The Schools* (1962). On camera, Miles defended Mayfield against charges of being impersonal: 'I might not know all the pupils but someone in the school knows each pupil very well'. Her comments are juxtaposed with teachers from other types of school voicing their doubts about how a school of 2000 pupils could practise character building. Miles saw a head as 'A chairman who knows there are other citizens who could fill her place as well and better as she can'. This view of authority does not sit comfortably with the fears of some of the teachers Cawston interviewed. One teacher suggests that in a smaller school a crowd of pupils will disperse when they see a teacher who knows them well, whereas a teacher confronted with a crowd of pupils she does not even know the names of will have to find a route through this oblivious gathering of young people. Cawston's documentary hints that comprehensives are outside the control of family life. I am reminded of

Margaret Cole's observation that some parents imagine their children in comprehensives as 'little forlorn scraps of jetsam in a vast sea'.[28]

Miles does not use the language of 'family' in any of her discussions of comprehensives, whether in interview or in published writing. She distances herself from domestic phrases. She believes that big schools can be 'stimulating, humane and truly educating places' [29] but does not feel the need to reassure people with the use of any family-orientated language or imagery. Occasionally, Miles's language echoes Mitchison's 1934 study of *Home and a Changing Civilsation.* Mitchison talks of the home of the future as an environment that needs 'no social ownership, no patriarchy'.[30]

Miles knew that 'Even more important than physical change, there had to be mental changes involving radical rethinking about who and what the schools were for'. In all her years involved with the comprehensive movement she never found as much widespread radical rethinking as she would have liked. In an article for the second issue of *FORUM* in 1959 she described her trip to Sweden for a conference on comprehensive education. It is to F. Berg, a former Swedish education minister, that she turns when she wants to quote the main principle underlying the comprehensive: 'differentiation is not the starting point but rather the outcome of development'.[31]

A curious dilemma for Miles came in the form of the extension to Mayfield, which catered for the increase in size. Award-winning architects Moya & Powell were chosen in the early 1950s, around the time that Miles was appointed as head of the grammar school. Moya & Powell had won awards for building the Churchill Gardens flats in Pimlico – part of the post-war reconstruction, providing modern homes in Westminster for 5000 residents. Here Moya & Powell built duplicate units in which families could live. At Mayfield, size drove the architects vision: they duplicated units rather than providing the variety that a school of 2000 pupils might actually need. The architects were interested in replication rather than variation and this created a new problem for comprehensive provision on this site.

Mayfield ended up with four pretty much identical gymnasiums. The experience of the next decade left Miles reflecting on how much better it would have been to have had a variety of sport and assembly spaces – a swimming pool for instance. Above all Miles wished that they had foreseen the need for rooms of different sizes, the need for variable partitions and the need to accommodate 100 pupils for certain activities and perhaps six at a time for others. She longed to get away from the idea that each classroom must accommodate 30 pupils. The cross-wall system on which the extension was built meant that walls between classrooms bore loads and could not be knocked down to make bigger teaching spaces.[32] The replication of units that dominated Mayfield's extension echoed family housing; it did not provide a radical vision of educational space.

Documentary Film: sowing seeds of doubt about comprehensives

My research also helped me to develop an interest in the way that the media received and represented comprehensive schools in the mid twentieth century. Pressures of space here mean that I cannot expand my arguments in detail but I want to touch on a few examples of documentary coverage that featured Miles and Mayfield during the early 1960s.

Cawston's *The Schools* documentary featured footage from Mayfield and head shots and monologues from Miles edited in fast sequence alongside other contemporary teachers from schools in the 4-18 age range (both independent and LEA). The overriding impression gleaned from this documentary is that Cawston is suspicious of the new era of the comprehensive because it is beyond the scale of family life and strikes no chords with his own Westminster School experiences and his previous experiences as a filmmaker observing male-dominated institutions.[33]

Cawston enjoyed choosing contributors who may not have been fully aware of the reverberations that would ensue from their comments. He chose Eva Ravenhill, whom he had met in the staff room of Holland Park comprehensive, as one supporter of comprehensives. She betrayed sentiments far from egalitarian – her voice accompanying shots of the new extensions to Mayfield and Holland Park comprehensives suggests the architecture is a positive influence on pupils who otherwise have 'meagre little lives'.[34]

Miles, on the other hand, is presented as the diginified and reflective comprehensive school headmistress but her observations that comprehensives can operate in a collaborative manner, with power delegated to many people who know the children well, seem rather detached from Cawston's choice of footage, which is relentlessly preoccupied by noisy crowds of children without an adult in sight. Hardly any footage of the comprehensive classroom is included apart from a Russian lesson, chosen, I suspect, to provoke a fear of communism in the viewer. Angus Wilson, reviewing the programme, comments that the comprehensive school is portrayed as an 'impersonal' place 'where sounds as if in swimming baths pervade corridors'.[35]

The Leeds Modern grammar school head, Frank Holland, gets Cawston's vote of confidence. We are told by Holland that ex-military men are needed in schools because they have lived a life outside the classroom and won't find small mistakes 'monstrous'. Here a genial grammar school head tells us that men who served in World War Two are needed to keep a perspective on school situations – hinting at a strong connection between masculinity and national strength. The male voice in this documentary often recognises the bigger picture and the female is presented either as preoccupied with self-pity and an absence of recognition in the case of Eva Ravenhill or as someone prone to theoretical lofty thoughts in the solitude of her office in the case of Miles.

I will refer briefly to one other ciné film, which I used in my research, a 1963 film made by the geography department at Mayfield and focusing on an educational cruise to Gibraltar, Casablanca and Vigo. It presents a public

relations exercise on how teachers can supervise and control large groups of respectable young women even when they travel away from their familiar territory. Endless shots of schoolgirls descending staircases dominate. They teeter up and down walkways as they dock in new places. Miles was adamant about the value of foreign travel but the viewer sees little of what the pupils saw. The cruise ship appears almost as a metaphor for the comprehensive, carrying the crowd into uncertain waters. Hockey matches are filmed on deck, a netball hoop is set up above the swimming pool – emblems of school security are transported into unfamiliar territory. Once more life inside the comprehensive classroom is absent from the various reels of cine film.[36]

In the case of this silent ciné film the school magazine restores a voice. The pupils on paper are full of tales of seasickness, being pursued to the docks by boys, and losing their teachers as they wander alone into carpet shops. The controlling gaze of ex-grammar school teacher behind the camera and the outspoken voice of the surprised teenager in the school magazine can be set against each other to provide contrasting observations about what mattered to whom on this excursion.

Conclusion

Margaret Miles's own vision of community was strongly shaped by her own single-sex education and by a working life in which she had a strong degree of autonomy. In her later role as headmistress of Mayfield she perceived herself as servant of the LEA and yet her vision of community remained political and concerned both with social morality and a need to improvise and face change bravely. She had a democratic concern for her immediate environment but also a need to look beyond the local educational experience.[37]

By the late 1960s Margaret Miles was publicly voicing doubts that girls' comprehensives were the answer, championing instead the co-educational comprehensive. As men were increasingly taking senior posts and headships in girls' schools – a change she found 'depressing' – she began to doubt the viability of single-sex schools.[38] In her last article for *FORUM* she expressed dismay that the site of Mayfield was to become a City Technology College.[39]

On a personal level, I came to have a stronger appreciation of my own comprehensive education through doing this research. I think I was previously guilty of a shadowy ambivalence about being a comprehensive pupil. This had probably been enhanced by supervisions as a Cambridge undergraduate where I was mocked for my poor punctuation and by employers who winced that I did not display the kind of decisive and self-assured confidence that they associated with my independently educated contemporaries. Researching Margaret Miles put all that behind me. On reflection I realised that comprehensive schooling had made me unafraid of diversity, comfortable in crowds, more receptive to thinking about multiple intelligences, and as a teacher more able to draw on my inner resources when faced with unpredictable situations.

Notes

[1] Joan Griffiths found this magazine while tidying up her front room.

[2] The documentary and ciné film footage I used was viewed at the BFI viewing services, London.

[3] Miles's mother, a schoolteacher before marriage, was forbidden from earning money from teaching by the marriage bar. Both her parents were graduates of the University of Aberystwyth.

[4] *A Pageant of Education*, written by the staff of Ipswich High School and performed by members of the staff and school on 31st May and 2nd June 1928. Published 1928 by Smiths in Ipswich, p. 30.

[5] *A Pageant of Education* (1928), p. 27.

[6] Miles started her university studies at Bedford College in November 1930.

[7] Margaret Miles, *And Gladly Teach* (Education Explorers, 1966), pp. 23-24.

[8] Eglantyne Jebb (1876-1928) was the author of the Declaration of the Rights of the Child, adopted by the League of Nations in 1924.

[9] See Shena Simon, *Three Schools or One ?* Frederick Muller, 1948.

[10] Jane Martin (2003) Sheena D. Simon and English Education Policy: inside/out?, *History of Education*, 32(5), 477-494.

[11] A page later she backtracks for fear that such an establishment would not bring women the qualifications they needed for appointments in public life. Virginia Woolf, *Three Guineas* (Hogarth, 1938), pp. 61-62.

[12] Royal Holloway Archive: Margaret Miles Folder. Letter from Margaret Miles to Geraldine Jebb 11 March, 1939.

[13] Anne Valery, *The Edge of a Smile* (Peter Owen, 1977), p.19.

[14] Christopher Watkins (2007) Inventing International Citizenship: Badminton School and the progressive tradition between the wars, *History of Education,* 36(3), 315-338. http://dx.doi.org/10.1080/00467600500419810

[15] In *The Edge of a Smile* Badminton is renamed Greenglades for fictional purposes and Miles goes under the pseudonym Miss Watson. The particular Left Book Club title that Valery quotes here is I believe a fictitious invention.

[16] Naomi Mitchison was also a friend of R.H. Tawney, Vera Brittain and Shena Simon.

[17] Friends (4) Dame Margaret Miles. NP4 900R – British Library Sound Archive. Margaret Miles and Naomi Mitchison in conversation, April 1981.

[18] Miles analysis in Ron Ringshall, Margaret Miles, Frank Kelsall, *The Urban School: buildings for education in London 1870-1980*, (Greater London Council in association with Architectural Press, 1983), p. 8.

[19] Papers of Margaret Cole, Nuffield College, Mic/16/24 (616) Letter from Margaret Cole to Naomi Mitchison, 1940.

[20] Mayfield was occupied as a comprehensive school in September 1955 but formally opened in July 1956.

[21] Margaret Miles, *And Gladly Teach* (1966), p. 74.

[22] Margaret Miles, *Comprehensive Schooling* (Longmans, 1968), p. 72.

[23] Feature on Margaret Miles, *Times Educational Supplement*, 16 November 1973.

[24] Paper of Margaret Cole, Nuffield College. Mic/D4/5/1-3. Transcript of a BBC Home Service radio broadcast 11 June 1954. 'Is the comprehensive school the answer?' Norman Fisher, Margaret Miles, Harry Rée, A.B. Clegg & W.L. Chinn.

[25] Mitchison was a lifelong supporter of eugenics and therefore believed that the human race should eliminate undesirable characteristics through selective breeding. Not long after meeting Miles, in 1941, she was busy recording in her diary how she could clearly see the faults in Eric Gill's thinking, while reading his autobiography, because she had 'a better IQ, the hell of an intellectual heredity. I can think past him'. Naomi Mitchison, *Among You Taking Notes: the wartime diary of Naomi Mitchison 1939-1945* (Gollancz, 1985), p. 179.

[26] Miles, *Comprehensive Schooling* (1968), p. 20.

[27] Miles, *Comprehensive Schooling* (1968), p. 24.

[28] Margaret Cole, *What is a Comprehensive School?* (London Labour Party Publications, 1953, p. 14).

[29] Margaret Miles, *Comprehensive Schooling* (1968), p. 72.

[30] Naomi Mitchison, *The Home and a Changing Civilisation* (Bodley Head, 1934).

[31] Margaret Miles (1959) Comprehensive Education in Sweden, *FORUM: for the discussion of new trends in education*, Spring Issue, 1(2), 71-72.

[32] Miles, *Comprehensive Schooling* (1968), p. 6.

[33] Cawston was well known for his documentary studies of pilots, doctors and the BBC. Before tackling the subject of schools he had rarely filmed institutions where women could outnumber men.

[34] See also BBC Written Archives, T32/1832/2. Letter from Ravenhill to Cawston, 26 April 1962 for further details of the letter Ravenhill wrote to Cawston. Ravenhill memorised selected parts of the letter and addressed the camera as if these were her spontaneous thoughts. Cawston had final say in the editing of the footage.

[35] BBC Written Archives. T32/1832/2 Press Section, article by Angus Wilson from *Queen*, 2 October 1962.

[36] A selection of cine films, from Mayfield geography department, 1955-1965 were preserved at the BFI Archive.

[37] There has not been space in this article to explain Miles's dedicated involvement in the Council for Education in World Citizenship.

[38] Royal Holloway Archive: RHBNC BC RF/140/2 Reminiscences of Margaret Miles. Typescript of interview conducted by Claire Daunton, February 12 1985.

[39] 100th Edition of *FORUM*, Autumn 1991, 34(1), p. 9.

Correspondence: lottie.hoare@btinternet.com