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**Conservative Education Policy:
THE HIDDEN AGENDA**

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Contents

Vol. 32 No. 3 Summer 1990

| | | |
|-------------------|---|----|
| Caroline Benn | The Public Price of Private Education and Privatization | 68 |
| Brian Simon | Thatcher's Third Tier, or Bribery and Corruption | 74 |
| Andy Green | Education and Training: A Study in Neglect | 78 |
| Matt Salusbury | Education for Enterprise: the Conservative Attack on Higher Education | 81 |
| David Tombs | Religious Education and Social Policy in the Education Reform Act | 83 |
| John Hopkin | Equal Opportunities in the 1990s: Reconstructing Equal Opportunities in Schools after the 1988 Education Act | 85 |
| Arvind Bhatt | Community Languages in the Curriculum | 88 |
| Michael Small | Developing a Whole-School Policy for Special Educational Needs: One School's Experience | 91 |
| Discussion | | 94 |
| Reviews | Working-Class Responses to the Schooling Process | 94 |
| | Appraisal | 95 |
| | Radical Venture | 95 |

The Next FORUM

In the September **Forum** Professor Harvey Goldstein and Richard Noss examine the notion of 'levels' in assessment of the National Curriculum, Mary Jane Drummond and Fred Sedgwick assess the SEAC's testing materials for the key primary stages and Keith Morrison explores some implications for teachers of the required assessment process. Nikki Siegen-Smith discusses the role of school governors and parents in encouraging schools to use these assessments as professional tools without labelling children. The National Curriculum Geography and History Reports will be closely analysed in three articles by Annabelle Dixon, Graham Rogers and Clyde Chitty.

There will also be articles on the 14-16 and post-16 curriculum, on the advantages of limiting the size of secondary schools, on developing pastoral teams and on the American experience of magnet schools.

Editorial

The Government's education policy is beset with disasters, and each new day brings a fresh crop of stories illustrating the supreme folly of drafting and forcing through legislation without adequate preparation and consultation. At the same time, there is something essentially ignoble and mean-spirited about almost every aspect of the 1988 Act. As Mary Warnock argued in her 1988 Ian Ramsey lecture in Oxford, the creation of a major educational reform is a good time to reconsider the moral principles that lie behind educational policy and to allow the principles to shine through, indicating what was wrong before and what will now be put right in the future. But no such uplifting debate accompanied the passing of the 1988 Act which seems devoid of any great moral purpose or conviction. All we have instead is a squalid obsession with competitive individualism and with the 'rights' of parents as consumers. As Professor Hargreaves has written: 'there is nothing to add to or enhance our view of schools as moral communities, educating the young for rational autonomy and social inter-dependence, along with academic achievement and preparation for working life.'

The beleaguered John MacGregor is best regarded as the Conservative Party's answer to Fred Mulley: like his hapless Labour predecessor, a man whom many see as singularly ill-equipped to shoulder the responsibilities of high office. Before moving into Elizabeth House, his chief claim to fame was that he always trooped loyally into the division lobby behind his leader to vote for the restoration of capital punishment for the perpetrators of terrorist murders — a pretty pathetic cause, even by Tory Party standards. As Education Secretary, he has found it impossible to make sense of the collection of ill-conceived measures bequeathed to him by the opportunistic Kenneth Baker. Bereft of any humanitarian vision of what a decent education system could look like, he seems determined to destroy what is left of the legacy of 1944.

On so many fronts, all that we find is muddle and confusion: belated attempts to mitigate some of the more harmful consequences of the 1988 Act. As I write, MacGregor has just announced to the Assistant Masters and Mistresses Association that seven-year-old pupils will not have to take national standard tests in six out of nine curriculum subjects. Labour education spokesperson Jack Straw has called this 'a major climbdown by the Government'. And the BBC's education correspondent has neatly summed up the situation on the Nine O'Clock News (9 April): 'the Government has staged a strategic retreat as it realised primary school timetables simply could not bear the strain of its reforms.'

And this is only the latest in a long line of policy

shifts. For example: it is clear that the Government has abandoned all hope that the National Curriculum will continue to mean anything significant by the time pupils get to Key Stage Four. Speaking at the Society of Education Officers' annual meeting at the end of January, the Education Secretary announced that after the age of fourteen, able pupils would be able to follow their own individual programmes; while vocational exam bodies would be left to organise qualifications for the 'bottom 40 per cent'. Little wonder that many headteachers fear a return to the days of 'GCE for the best and CSE for the rest'.

But all this pales into insignificance compared with the harm being done to the **structure** of the education system itself. Indeed, it might soon be an exaggeration to describe it as a **system**. As Stuart McClure has pointed out, what is being created is 'a network of separate, semi-autonomous institutions maintained by local authorities or the central government'.

In this number of **Forum**, Brian Simon describes the devious manoeuvres that have been necessary to make a reality of the CTC concept; and we have recently had the extraordinary decision by MacGregor to allow Beechen Cliff school in Avon to opt out of the state system, despite being urged to reconsider his decision by a High Court judge. In the judgement of Mr Justice Hutchison, there had been a failure 'to weigh properly the advantages of allowing the 800-pupil Beechen Cliff boys' school to opt out against Avon County Council's plans to reorganize all secondary education in the city of Bath'. MacGregor has simply ignored the judge's strictures; and cheap political advantage has been allowed to take precedence over the interests of children and parents.

Above all, it would be hard to exaggerate the harm that will be done to the children of London (particularly to those in the poorest areas) by the abolition of ILEA, a last-minute decision taken for political motives and forced upon Kenneth Baker by an unholy alliance of Norman Tebbit and Michael Heseltine as the 1988 Act was making its way through Parliament. And the new borough authorities are finding it very difficult to cope with the problems of LMS — with many heads, at the time of writing, still in the dark about the size of their budgets for the coming academic year.

All this seems to indicate that the Conservatives have now forfeited all right to be thought of as a civilised party, fit to hold the reins of government. As the then Employment Secretary Norman Tebbit told the startled education correspondent of the **Financial Times** one day in October 1982 in a different context (referring to the arrival of Keith Joseph at the DES and David Young at the MSC): 'now that we're in charge, I think you will soon find the Vandals stabling their horses in the temples'. We can't say we weren't warned!

The Public Price of Private Education and Privatization

Caroline Benn

In this major article, making use of the most recent available statistics, Caroline Benn, longstanding campaigner for comprehensive education, reveals the cost to the taxpayer of providing separate and supposedly superior educational opportunities for a privileged minority of pupils and puts forward a new solution to the problem of the private sector. This is an edited version of a larger pamphlet to be published in the near future. All enquiries to RICE, Box 1914, London W11 3QH.

Introduction

Most independent schools depend on financial support from the taxpayer. Twenty years ago it was estimated that on average 20 per cent of their expenditure came from those who did not enjoy their benefits.¹ As was said at the time, 'an elite 5 per cent are riding comfortably on the backs of the other 95 per cent'.² Today it is an elite 7 per cent and the subsidies have escalated in cost and proliferated in kind.

Advocates of public education differ in their opinions about private schooling. Some would ignore it and count on good state schools to reduce any ill effects. Others want to see it abolished, although they can rarely say what should happen to the schools themselves. Meanwhile, integration remains a middle option favoured by many, including the majority on the Public Schools Commission set up in the 1960s to deal with the issue.³ This solution always failed to persuade public education's supporters because proposals usually came down to what suited the private sector, allowing it to poach talent from the state — with debatable benefit for the talent and none for the community's own schools in a system going comprehensive. Labour governments in the 1970s were unable to proceed with this approach; while the Conservatives reverted to their own 'integration' scheme in the 1980s with Assisted Places. By then, enough comprehensive schools had been established for there to be great public hostility from parents, teachers and communities to a renewal of place-buying. Possibly as a result, there are often vacancies in this scheme.⁴

Recently another approach has been argued: let private schools pay for themselves entirely. This would involve subjecting them to the same 'harsh realities of the market' that their main political supporters require of so many other institutions and enterprises. Ending charity status (and its financial subsidy) for schools which are clearly not 'charities' in the commonly-accepted meaning of the term is the form this has taken politically. Labour promised such action in two of its manifestos in the 1970s, but failed to act when elected. The problem is not so much that charities are complex legally (nothing is too complex to change, as education legislation in the 1980s made quite clear) but that 'charity' concessions are only one of a long list of subsidies, and by no means the largest. Tackling 'charity' alone could be pointless. All subsidies need to be examined, since the same questions apply to

most: why are so many advantaged educational institutions and parents getting such vast amounts of money from the public purse? Why is so much of this expenditure not directly accountable to democratically elected authorities?

The Tradition of Extra Support for an Elite

Certain direct subsidies can be costed; and indirect subsidies, including tax losses from charity status, have often been estimated in the past: by the Campaign for Comprehensive Education (CCE) in the 1970s⁵ and by several others since,⁶ including Professor Richard Pring now of Oxford University.⁷ Grand totals differ according to the items that are included in each list. Some confined themselves to place-buying and charity tax losses; but others included such items as state expenditure on the training of teachers who subsequently teach in private schools. In 1983 a minimum list produced a minimum yearly subsidy bill of £200,000,000;⁸ a maximum list from 1980 (but still not the full possible total) a national yearly bill of £654,000,000.⁹ This latter sum in a situation which has not changed materially comes today to £1.3 bn a year.¹⁰ But it still isn't the bottom line. As we see later, new forms of expenditure — from policies started in the 1980s — need to be added.

Meanwhile, looking more closely at the traditional expenditure, and starting with public money used to buy places in private schools for specially selected pupils, some would say the situation here has changed now that direct grant schools are gone and local authority 'buying' of places has decreased. True in both cases, but with other schemes taking their place and LEA buying still continuing, numbers have not gone down in the last decade, but up: from 22,000 to 38,000 in respect of places bought in private day schools by central government and in private day and boarding schools by local education authorities (excluding all special schools). Of these, the Assisted Places Scheme will soon be subsidizing some 34,000 pupils in 279 private schools in England and Wales — an average of 113 per school;¹¹ while in Scotland, it is 41 schools with an average of 65 in each.¹² The cost was already £50m a year in 1988/89, now set to increase with the addition of 52 new assisted schools in 1989/90.

On top of this, expenditure for private school places paid for by local authorities also continues¹³ and, excluding special schools, still involves over 4,700

pupils from 63 per cent of the local education authorities in England and Wales¹⁴ and a cost of £19,520,000 a year.¹³ Most buyers are Conservative-controlled authorities although some are Labour (two years ago the ILEA bought 78 places). Biggest spenders today are Trafford (buying 1491 places), Cheshire (916), Wirral (613) and Lincolnshire (610). Cheshire and Trafford were also buying heavily in the late 1970s.¹⁵

The schools subsidized are usually well-endowed private schools, almost all with an overall client population that is predominately white, middle class and well-to-do. Subsidies may have been ear-marked initially for the 'poor', but over time go most often to the affluent middle class — as free places did in the old direct grant schools, where, by the late 1960s, such pupils differed little in social and economic background from full-fee-paying public school entrants.¹⁶ Research shows that the Assisted Places scheme is moving in this direction too.¹⁷ Entrants usually have to pass '11 plus' tests as well — so that subsidized place-buying also keeps selection going. Indeed, it became apparent as long ago as 1977 that 'buying' places was no longer for the reason traditionally given — to save money — but was kept up (largely by Conservative authorities) to keep 'grammar' selection alive — as more and more areas chose to go comprehensive, often including their own.

In the 1980s private place-buying has been justified by arguments of 'choice' and 'freedom' (though 97 per cent of parents are not 'free' to choose it), and the old justification that it 'saves the taxpayer's money' largely abandoned. In a situation of falling rolls where there are many unused places in state schools, the reverse is now true: buying privately means wasting state places already provided, costing taxpayers double. Or more, for figures from heavy-buying authorities in the 1970s (before a Conservative Government stopped requiring LEAs to notify such expenditure in returns) showed that private buying can cost more per pupil than providing a state place — for example, £475 as against £348 in one heavy-buying authority, where the report to the Education Committee which gave the information, added disarmingly that every private place 'not taken up would result in a direct saving to the authority of around £300'.¹⁸ The saving today would be double that figure. In view of such evidence, on several occasions local parent groups, including those from CASE, have taken this matter to the District Auditor, who has always declined to act.¹⁹

Special and Voluntary Schools

Buying places for pupils with special needs — even though many of these special schools are private — is not classed in this analysis as a traditional subsidy for private education, though others believe it should be. However, there is some expenditure under this heading that could be assumed to belong here: some 6,500 pupils a year classified as needing special education but placed not in special schools but ordinary private schools.²⁰ These are often pupils with loosely-defined behaviour difficulties, and, possibly today, pupils with problems like 'dyslexia'.

The other category of schools not included here — in this case one third of all state schools — are voluntary schools. Taxpayers pay 100 per cent of the running costs of these schools, most of which are religious, the majority Church of England. The majority operate much like state county schools in relation to their local communities, and others are becoming increasingly open to local parents, regardless of their religion. Some few, however, are moving the other way and operating more like selective, private schools. Because of this academic and social selectivity (including a substratum of inadvertent racial discrimination in a few cases) certain areas have had difficulty in relations between voluntary and county schools as regards comprehensive education development.²¹ Thus, although some privatization arguments in this analysis would apply to certain voluntary aided schools, to do justice to the religious dimension is not possible in a short article.

Boarding

So far we have been looking at day-place buying, or boarding bought by local authorities. When it comes to central government's public payments for private boarding, we meet a very narrow interpretation of need. One group of those getting subsidies are high-ranking civil servants.²² The schools where the taxpayers pay the bill (literally, since funding comes when the schools present the parents' bill to the Treasury) are almost all selective, and many are well-endowed 'public' schools. Indeed, the nearly 300 schools listed as subsidized by payment of diplomats' fees alone, include almost all major 'public' schools in Britain.²³ The public cost of paying these top civil servants' school fees now comes to over £9m a year.²⁴

Another large subsidy goes to military personnel for the schooling of some 14,132 pupils a year²⁵ many in private schools, despite the fact that most military families live where there are state secondary schools (or specially provided education) near enough for the majority of the other military children in the area to attend. The total cost of these allowances is now nearly £107m a year.²⁵

The military also run several other schemes that subsidize private education. One is the Army Scholarship scheme, which costs £92,000 a year and is currently paid to what the Ministry of Defence calls '96 scholars including 9 females'.²⁶ Not only are the schools used primarily private,²⁷ but the scheme perpetuates academic selection, since 7 GCSE passes at grades A-C are now required at the post-16 stage.²⁸ All the armed services have schemes of this kind.

Then there are the payments for holiday fares three times a year for many of these civil and military families. Extracting this information has always been difficult because official criteria (and answers) change from year to year. This is why estimated total costs differ so widely. On occasion, Parliamentary answers have been wrong (the real — and higher — sums only revealed later by private letter).²⁹ Answers presently available show that current fares subsidies to families of top civil servants are running at just over £2m a year.³⁰ Fares for military pupils are even harder to get³¹ but past information shows that over 15,000 separate

passages are paid for each year at a cost that, if sustained today, would come to over £2m as well.³²

There are two other features of these subsidies to note. One is that among the military (all facing the same schooling needs), officers are well favoured over other ranks. One past report showed that 22 per cent of officers got allowances compared to only 1.6 per cent of 'other ranks'. Today 61 per cent of the funding goes to officers³³ — who are only 15 per cent of military personnel. Officers also get a higher average yearly allowance per child.³³ The second noteworthy feature of this tradition is that boarding fees are paid whether the civil or military personnel in question are serving overseas or living at home in Britain — and, in the case of diplomats, regardless of how well paid the recipient is. For example: where the average salary of an ambassador is about £60,000 a year (and all grades have generous living expenses), the average publicly-funded subsidy for each child is now nearly £8000 a year.³⁴

All these fares and fees are paid — it is traditionally argued — because parents 'travel' at some time during their careers. But many other parents travel (including travellers, business people and workers attached to overseas companies). So why only these pupils with enormous subsidies, where there is no social or educational justification that cannot also be applied to others — most of whom either pay for their own private schooling or use state education? There should also be alternatives examined — like allowances for staying with UK relatives while children attend state schools. This last was raised at a conference on boarding education in 1980, when DES observers present suggested such matters were already in hand through a standing committee inside the DES.³⁵ Little has been heard since.

New Forms of Privatization

In the 1980s, as old subsidies continued and new ones appeared, a new element was added. Making a profit at the expense of the community became sanctioned policy rather than a casual event. It was enforced through a twin-pronged policy of legislation and cuts in educational expenditure. Both had indirect as well as direct effects on education, among them the sales of maintained schools and colleges to new private owners — in almost every case against the community's wishes. Sums paid were usually nowhere near the real market value. The new private owners — in many cases using them to run private schools and colleges — not only get a bargain at community expense; they take over assets which the community as a whole has paid for and developed. Other LEA sales — like land or playing fields — are made to developers to raise needed funds to offset educational spending cuts; and still others occur where LEAs are forced to make arrangements with private developers to run profit-making schemes (like a sports complex) in a community school or college.

The legislative prong of this policy has been well documented in the enforced privatization of services like the government's selling off of the nation's network of Skill Centres to private owners in the middle 1980s, and the enforced privatization of meals provision or

cleaning in educational institutions. This subsidy to private business interests allows profits to be made by providing a service often far inferior to the one previously provided by direct or staff labour.³⁶

Subsidies to Private Providers in Vocational Education and Training

Since the late 1970s expenditure on schemes of vocational education and training — for both youths and adults — has rocketed. By the mid-1980s the MSC's budget was £2,500m a year, much going to pay the 'allowances' of trainees, many of whom were sent to private employers who were thereby subsidized by having trainees doing their work for nothing — in some cases, eg Trust House Forte, involving over 3,000 trainees a year. There is a spin-off from this educational expenditure for other businesses as well, one group benefiting being private advertising agencies — paid large sums to 'market' schemes like YTS or ET on television and in the press. After 1980 this public expenditure rose steadily in attempts to overcome resistance to these schemes, demonstrated in low take-up and high drop-out rates. In one year in the mid-80s over £25m went to private advertising agencies for YTS advertising alone.³⁷

Subsidies for Private Training agencies

The subsidies in vocational education which most nearly parallel those in private schooling are where money is given directly to private training agencies to oversee or provide education and training to young people. By the mid 1980s, some 30 per cent of YTS trainees were the responsibility of private training agencies (some admitting to being profit-making bodies) and some 20 per cent of trainees were in private colleges.³⁸

Some private agencies are excellent, but many are clearly inadequate and local colleges do a much better job. A great deal of evidence has been collected to show that many young people have been severely disadvantaged by the poor quality provision, administrative failures, and breaches of the law not least those involving safety — associated with private training agencies.³⁹ The major issue here is whether such large public sums should be paid out with so little accountability required in terms of quality control, and with no provision for fines or redress when the terms of contracts are not fulfilled — for example, when a training agency goes bankrupt and student-trainees are ejected from the FE college courses.

This accountability problem will get worse rather than better with the new Training and Education Councils (TECs) now taking over from the MSC/ Training Agency, where local employers are being given increasingly large sums to organize vocational education and training for young people after 16 — again, money diverted from the public education service. While it is still too early to know how effective the work of TECs will be even in their own terms, it is already clear that public accountability will be even less than under the MSC, which after all, had Area Boards. In the new schemes both unions and local education authorities are being by-passed officially — and will have to jockey unofficially for any say about

arrangements crucial to the development of the public education service. In fact, matters are being organized entirely as the CBI recently urged: employers to be the 'regulators' of vocational education and training while 'government should fund the learning costs'.⁴⁰ No word about employers also legally required to fund, nor about democratically elected authorities doing any regulating or overseeing or protecting of the public interest or trainees' rights. In fact 'never before has government been willing to hand executive responsibility ... and authority ... to employers' in education in this area, for 'never before has government afforded employers at government expense the financial wherewithall'. These are not the words of a harsh critic, but of Norman Fowler praising the TEC takeover in 1989.⁴¹

In this field where public spending runs into billions rather than mere millions, it is clear we have moved from a policy of public money making up a significant percentage of private education's income, to one where a significant percentage of the whole national budget for education and training after 16 is being channelled into the hands of private educators, trainers and employers, who if anything, will be even less accountable to the public education service than the headmaster of any HMC school.

The grant-maintained schools set up by the 1988 Education Act are another case of the community's own assets being 'sold' by legislative fiat to a new 'ownership' by a self-perpetuating body upon whom the community has no claim. In turn these schools have no more responsibilities in relation to the local community of schools than have traditional private schools. Although they will not be fee-paying (at least not yet), and '11-plus tests' cannot be introduced until schools have been established for five years, it is clear that they will operate selectively, as they already have powers to select socially and academically. It is also clear that despite promises that their funding will be on a par with state schools, they are to be better funded by central government: in the current year their capital grants are 42 per cent higher. In some areas even better — for example, in Thameside, GMS schools are reported to be getting £823 a pupil compared to £33 a head for all local state schools.⁴²

When we come to City Technology Colleges, we are dealing with new private schools being established where there is no need for a new school, thus often ensuring that existing state schools will have to close. The former Secretary of State, having made it clear that 'these are independent schools',⁴³ promised that industry would finance their initial capital costs. But as CTCs' unpopularity has been demonstrated — and their ill-effects on local schools calculated — private industry has backed off.

Because of this resistance there has had to be the additional spending on 'heavy marketing', where sixteen DES civil servants have been taken away from their desks to administer the City Technology Trust set up inside the DES to push industries into increasing the numbers of these new schools. The few private companies that have invested in CTCs get magnificent tax concessions: by 1989 tax relief for them amounted to £7,300,000⁴⁴ — again money that would otherwise be available for public spending on state schools.

Even so not enough private money came forward to fund CTCs — to date less than 20 per cent of the capital expenditure required; in future, it will be even less. This means that those misguidedly set in motion have to be paid for by the public. The first three CTCs cost an average of £4,300,000 each;⁴⁴ and the unequal situation in relation to state schools is well illustrated in Nottingham for 1988/89, where the taxpayer contributed £7,600,000 towards the setting up of a single CTC, while money made available for the capital needs of all the other schools in Nottinghamshire worked out at a pitiful average of only £5,000 per school.

The CTC requirements for public money between 1989 and 1992 come to £106 m.⁴⁵ But capital outlay is not the main expenditure — a fact forgotten in relation to these schools. The real burden is the running costs, and from the start the running costs for both CTCs and grant-maintained schools were to be 100 per cent from the public purse: on average £2 m a year per school. Very probably by the end of the decade this means an additional £240 m a year, making the absolute end of the line in the trail of state funding for the privilege of being private. It begins with public payment of private fees for the favoured few, and ends with public payment for favoured institutions able to run themselves entirely on their own terms and without regard to local needs. Most astonishingly of all, it is a private sector to which, in future, private funding will be making almost no contribution whatsoever.

Meanwhile, in the public sector, the majority are being asked to make increasingly large contributions to their own supposedly free education service — as a result of expenditure cutting. By the middle of the 1980s the National Confederation of Parent Teacher Associations estimated that £40 m a year was being required of parents for what most parents and staff regard as essentials: books and equipment and lessons.⁴⁶ HMIs have noted, however, that such funding is not evenly distributed. Schools in the richer Shire counties inevitably get more parental money than do those in the inner cities.⁴⁷ As time goes on, this imbalance will worsen, adding to those disparities already listed.

Further Subsidies

Lengthy as it might seem, this list of public subsidies for private education is not yet complete. In some cases only one example is given from a category that would have many more. For example, for some state-funded pupils attending private education there are book, uniform and equipment grants. Some place-buying takes place in privately-run schools that are in a category of one: like the Royal Ballet School or The Menuhin Music School. Some subsidies relate to the EEC — for example to the private schools being subsidized by all EEC taxpayers. These are called European Schools and Britain already has one — sited near Oxford. Its arrangements came to light when the EEC was looking into the financial mismanagement of these Schools together with their high costs.⁴⁸ Half the fee-payers turned out not to be EEC personnel's children — the group for whom such schools are intended. Some were ordinary private fee-payers and

others children of NATO personnel — not, so far as anyone knows, eligible for subsidy from British taxpayers. Local children have no right of access. Recently the House of Lords passed an order aptly titled ‘European Communities — Privileges of the European School’⁴⁹ which obligingly lists the privileges concerned: ‘exemption from taxes on income and capital gains; relief from VAT; exemption from import duties, and for teachers, exemption from social security legislation, “first arrival” customs privileges, exemption from income tax of earnings ...’. Some noble lords had the grace to say they wished such expenditure was available for ordinary state schools, and one added that European Schools seem to ‘give privileges to a small elite. similar to the kind ... which were given, and might still be given, in eastern bloc countries to the Communist apparachiks who have run those countries’.

Conclusion: A Policy for the Future

What is clear from this review is that the old boundary between what is private and what is public is ominously blurred. A new policy is required to redraw it. But on what terms?

One approach — as already mentioned — it is to put all private schools on one side of a new legal line and require them to pay their full economic costs — as well as full charges for the wide range of services provided by state or local government. Some would want to add new arrangements — like limiting state contributions to the higher education fees for pupils educated privately. Most want to see that all employers are legally required to pay towards the costs of training.

Such a policy would be based on the positive objective of making sure public money supported the public education service, ending abuses of subsidies that created or maintained financial or social privilege for a minority at the expense of the majority. Where state payment for private facilities does take place, the objective would be to make sure contracts with the state are honoured. But most important, all public expenditure on education and training would be publicly reported and accounted for directly to democratically-elected bodies.

It is not an issue of the right of private schools to exist. Under such a policy the freedom to run and attend a private school would remain. If private schools are concerned about those who cannot afford their fees, they are free to set up their own bursaries out of their own funds or profits, or encourage private industry to do so out of theirs. Without automatic tax relief to anyone, as charity laws would be reformed. Some now suggest that the state should repossess the whole charity industry and require it to revert to its original purpose of helping the poor.⁵⁰ Others, that abolishing the whole concept of ‘charity’ status and replacing it by charitable grants (as tax relief for industrial investment was abolished in the 1960s and replaced by investment grants) might well be a wider answer. But whatever the mechanics and however violent a reaction some might fear, it is important to bear in mind that subsidies do not enjoy universal support, and some are detested.

Drawing a new line

But isn’t such a policy unnecessarily negative and

pessimistic? Are we so certain no private schools would welcome a new form of co-operation with the state rather than total separation? Or that a radical new form could not be devised that would be of benefit to the state schools rather than a re-run of tired old ‘integration’ proposals which only undermine them? Are we so sure that what the private sector has to offer isn’t needed? Or that private schools might not benefit more than just financially?

Already mentioned were facilities for pupils with special behavioural and educational needs — a whole range of which some ordinary private schools could help to meet. There is also boarding need, which one experienced comprehensive headteacher once estimated applied to 2 per cent of his intake.⁵¹ Since public boarding has been run down by government spending cuts,⁵² the only way to meet this need is in private education. Religious needs — particularly in the case of non-Christian religions — might be met by arrangements for state pupils to attend private schools for certain periods for religious instruction (rather than by the cumbersome and controversial device of creating new state religious schools.) In other instances, what might be needed is access to private education’s facilities or equipment — since it was estimated in the mid-80s that ‘independent schools spent £245 per pupil while the state spent well under £50’. Much of the money that built the superior private facilities was ‘charity’ money, and some might argue that the majority have a moral claim to share it.

Many private schools share this view too and would say they are willing to agree to co-operation (in return for which they would retain their charity status and use of services). But most would want ‘assisted’ schemes or conditions like the right to select pupils who come to them — often by 11-plus testing. Yet it is precisely because of these traditional mechanisms that — inadvertently — the bulk of those subsidized in private education have been those already culturally well-endowed as well as white and middle class (and largely male) — a profile no new form of co-operation could accept. Nor could it accept the limited form it has taken in the past: the wholesale transfer from public to private sector for life. If new schemes perpetuated these old mechanisms, most state schools would reject them. But would they refuse if it could be demonstrated that a new scheme did not result in the loss of any of their own pupils, but could positively assist public education, particularly where it has its own severe shortages? And that the form of co-operation is one that they themselves could determine?

An Alternative

No new system of co-operation would work unless the changes were radical, and the first task would be to enshrine a major new principle in law: that all the community’s money should go to support the community’s own public education service. If, after that principle is established, private schools or agencies want to get state support — by grant or by retaining charity status — and can advance a compelling case, new rules and criteria should be set out for obtaining it.

These should be set in a wider reform that consolidates comprehensive education from 5 to 16,

extends it after 16, and integrates education with training. Within it everyone would have equal rights and choices, regardless of their attainment or destination (or race or gender or income) and everyone's education and training would be overseen by the public education service.

Private and state schools and colleges which wanted to co-operate in a renewed public system would be able to do so only where proposals for such co-operation satisfied a number of essential conditions. Among them would be showing clearly how such arrangements would benefit the whole community, and, secondly, that they were compatible with the comprehensive principle. The latter requirement would be met by legislation ending selection not just in the public education service but in any arrangements where public money is spent; and the former by a recommendation made in 1976 in the Report of the Goodman Committee on charity law reform: namely, that in order to retain charity funding, private schools and colleges would have to 'cater for a range of clear educational needs throughout the whole community'.⁵³ The key words are 'cater', 'range' and 'whole community'; for these pave the way for a radically new way of associating private education with state schooling, which could encompass a whole variety of arrangements supplementary or complementary to the comprehensive schools' own education, and entered into in order to augment or enhance it.

Because of the diversity of individual schools — both private and state — no single scheme could be devised by government to suit all situations. Government's job should be limited to providing the guidelines for developing and approving new arrangements. Suggestions for schemes should come from schools themselves or from local authorities — or indeed from anyone in the community — with something like a Community Education Sub-Committee in each Authority considering them for initial approval (and regularly reviewing their operation, since eventually any scheme should ensure that all pupils in participating schools had benefits at some time during their school careers).

Some arrangements might involve only one school from each sector; another, state schools using a range of private schools for different purposes. Proposals would depend upon the needs schools from both sectors perceive they have and what the private sector is willing to offer in exchange for retaining its considerable financial advantages. Schemes might be related to exam courses, specific subjects, or general cultural activities. Some might relate simply to the use of facilities like playing fields or science labs. Although a few arrangements might involve pupils' transfer from state to private education for a term, or, occasionally a year, most would involve groups for a day a week or a week a term. Some private schools might develop courses available in holidays or at half term for state schools situated where there are few local private schools.

No-one can say what patterns would develop, nor how they might change as a result of experience. That is the whole point: arrangements would develop according to schools' needs and evolve out of local (or regional) bargaining. Schools would have to 'market' their proposals carefully; and to avoid exploitation or regression to poaching, comprehensive schools would

have to be prepared to be tough negotiators, as well as convinced that the facilities, expertise, accommodation or ethos a particular private school could offer their own pupils were things which would benefit them, and *that could be provided in no other way*. Where the arrangements were for boarding — even on a short-term basis — they would have to be sure the private school would be able to meet the needs of the students likely to be suggested, including many with social problems at home. It is matters of this latter kind that are likely to prove the most difficult. A straight exchange between schools from each sector each using each other's computer room and drama facilities is much easier to imagine.

An important principle would be that pupils taking part at any one time would be chosen by their own schools. Another is that any scheme would have to have the agreement of all local comprehensive schools likely to be effected by any arrangements, whether they participated or not. The new accountability required would also entail some new form of relationship between the governing bodies of private schools and the education authorities, including a percentage of places reserved for LEA appointments. Any private school that did not wish to 'opt in' to the new arrangements would stay outside — but pay its own way and its own charges. It would be the schools' own choices that would redraw the line.

Whether mutually beneficial arrangements between public and private sectors on a new basis ever come to pass is not predictable at this stage. But one thing is clear: no new government, Labour or any other, should be allowed to leave things as they are.

*The references to this article
are on page 93*

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Thatcher's Third Tier, or Bribery and Corruption

Brian Simon

Forum has taken a keen interest in the establishment of City Technology Colleges and Grant Maintained Schools. In this detailed account of the setting up of this new tier of schools, Brian Simon argues that the Government's true objective is the dismantling of the state system of education under local democratic control.

The main purposes of the 1988 Education Act were made abundantly clear at the start. First, to break the power of the local authorities which traditionally had been directly responsible for running their own 'system' of education, and second, to erect (or reinforce) an hierarchical system of schooling both subject to market forces and more directly under central state control. The contradiction inherent within this latter objective is well encapsulated in Thatcher's definition of the proposed new sub-system as comprising 'state independent schools'.

This article is concerned with the deliberate creation of a new system of schools between the independent ('public' and private) schools for the better off, and the remnants of popular schools for the masses left with the local authorities. This new 'system', independent of the local authorities, state financed, but partially subject to market forces, is designed (according to Ministerial pronouncements) to increase choices available to parents and (in the case of CTCs) to institutionalise new approaches to the curriculum. 'You are going to have *three* systems', Thatcher told **The Independent** already well before the original Bill was published. 'First there will be those who wish to stay with the local authority', then 'you are going to have direct grant schools' (funded directly by the state, B.S.), 'and then you are going to have a private sector with assisted places'. 'That', she said, 'is variety'. It would give 'a wider choice of public provision' for people 'who are not satisfied'.¹

The means by which this new, third system is to be created is both through the establishment of City Technology Colleges and, through the opting out sections of the Act, the establishment of the so-called grant maintained schools (GMS). Both types of school are to be directly funded by the state through the DES (even if CTCs derive some of their initial capital funds from industry). Both will be overseen (though how is not yet clear) by the central authority. Both are to be, in a constitutional, managerial and financial sense, entirely independent of the local authority in whose area they are situated. By these means, new systems of schools are to be brought into being under the ultimate control of the central, rather than the local authority. The objective of equal provision of a public good (education) under local democratic control is hereby rejected.

To master-mind, and enhance, the thrust from the centre to establish this new sub-system, new power foci

have been created; and indeed the speed with which this has been done is notable. First (though not necessarily chronologically) the City Technology Colleges Trust was established, privately funded, having as its main purpose the furthering of the (faltering) cause of the City Technology Colleges. In addition a specific unit has been established at the DES, employing 16 officials at a cost of £300,000 a year, to provide advice and services normally the responsibility of the local authority. The Trust's chairman is Cyril Taylor, knighted recently 'for services to education'. Its Chief Executive is Susan Frey. Since its foundation it has energetically pursued its objective, with what results we will assess later.

Second, the Grant Maintained Schools Trust was also brought into being, in this case actually before the 1988 Act received Royal Assent. It was ready and running immediately after, and circulated all governing bodies and school heads already in August 1988 with a glossy brochure inviting schools to opt out. Its dual function then was (i) to 'assist' schools to opt out (for this function the Trust was privately funded — by industry), and (ii) to service schools which had opted out (for this, they needed government funds). A year later, in October 1989, this organisation split into two, the objective being to qualify for charitable status specifically to assist the second of these functions. There are now, therefore, two separate organisations (although they share the same office). The first, Choice in Education Ltd., the director of which is Andrew Turner, now undertakes the propaganda function involving persuasion. The other, the GMS trust, which now has an application in for charitable status, derives its resources both from industry and from the DES, which has made substantial grants towards its work.²

All four organisations have official blessing — or (as with the CTC unit) are part of the DES and responsible to its Ministers. Their activities are by now a familiar aspect of the current educational scene. They are a clear sign, to the world of education and beyond, as to where the government's main interest lie — at least as far as the school system is concerned. Their presence and activity clearly underline the main thrust of government policy: the lack of any kind of vibrant concern with the great majority of the nation's schools, distaste for the local authorities within whose system these exist, faith in the new 'beacons of excellence'. Ministerial pronouncements consistently emphasise the success and pioneering achievements of these two sets

of schools, even if the first of these have only recently come into being.

City Technology Colleges

We may first assess the situation relating to this initiative. It is well known that industry in general has been distinctly unenthusiastic, preferring to siphon what money they are prepared to give in support of schools to quite other projects (such as the various compacts now being developed). The result has been that the bulk of the finance needed to get CTCs off the ground has been contributed by the tax-payer, through the Treasury. Then, because the initial expenses of creating new schools were greatly under-estimated (MacGregor has put the blame on his civil servants), costs rapidly escalated, so that the Treasury (apparently) called a halt. The target is now defined as limited to completion of the plan for 20 such 'Colleges' first announced by Kenneth Baker to the Conservative party conference in October 1986. Such, at least officially, appears to be the objective, but matters are more complex than that, as we shall see.

The cost to the Exchequer for these 20 schools is put at £135 million for the three years 1990-91 to 1992-93 (in the January public expenditure White Paper). To this should be added the sum already spent of £35 million, making a total of £170 million. For this the tax-payer will get 20 schools of about 1,000 pupils each. Plans, as I write, are uncertain. The CTC trust claims three schools now open (Solihull in 1988, Nottingham and Middlesbrough in 1989), five to open this year (1990) at Bradford, Gateshead, Dartford, Norwood (London), and Croydon (the BRIT 'Fame' school — but this date is now reported as abandoned in this case); six in 1991 at London (Surrey docks), Corby, Lewisham (London), East Brighton, Telford and in Glasgow (the 'Scottish Technology Academy'). This gives a total of 14 — a shortfall of six. In November 1989 Angela Rumbold, however, announced that, in addition to the existing three such schools, eight now had firm opening dates this year and next — a total of eleven, adding that five companies or individuals were prepared for major participation.³ If all these latter emerge successfully as colleges, the total reaches 16: a shortfall of four. The target of 20 seems not, as yet, to have been effectively secured, although, as I write, another CTC appears to have been 'parachuted in' at Wandsworth. To date, contributions from industry are claimed to have reached some £45 million. However Mrs Rumbold has announced that the next seven CTCs will receive 80 per cent of their cash from the tax-payer, 20 per cent from industry.

The procedures used by the CTC trust to establish colleges have created consternation throughout the country. These activities are, perhaps, best likened to those of the Barbary pirates in the Mediterranean in the late 18th century. Consultation with local authorities seems non-existent; instead sudden announcements are made when a scheme, secretly negotiated, reaches fruition, usually leading to immediate and strong protests in the areas involved, which now find themselves caught up in this power play.

This, for instance, was the case at Telford, where the Shropshire LEA, which first heard of the proposition

through the media, had carried through a sixth form reorganisation plan precisely in the area chosen — a CTC, it was reported, could have 'a devastating effect' on the secondary schools in Telford, as well as those at Shrewsbury and Bridgnorth.⁴ The Steiner school proposed near Brighton (a 'cloak and dagger plan') is reported as having generated 'intense ill-will among almost every local interest you could think of' — the initiative was regarded as politically motivated.⁵ A proposal for a college at Walsall has met with the local council's 'fundamental objection' to any such attempt due to falling rolls and other factors; such an initiative, it was claimed, would certainly lead to the closure of a local school.⁶ And anger boiled over at Wandsworth, as is well known, when the establishment of two CTCs was suddenly announced, together with other already controversial initiatives (magnet schools). This reached a high point at the end of January this year when the heads of all the secondary schools in Wandsworth signed a letter to the press protesting about these procedures. This was followed by a vote of no confidence in their Chief Education Officer by all the head-teachers in the borough — an unprecedented event.⁷ The 'Fame' school at Croydon, whose future seems highly uncertain (if it has one at all), has also been the target of well organised local protests, thereby losing the support of many of its initial (and well-known) patrons.⁸ Some of the developments have been unsavoury — perhaps particularly the ADT (a security and car auction business) initiative first at Barnet, then at Wandsworth, where the sponsors switched direction in search of 'a fast bang for its bucks' as one of them put it. Here also the political advantages to be gained appeared clearly as a major factor in the sponsor's plans.⁹ It is this kind of thing that has brought the charge of corruption against this whole initiative.

In spite of this, the Trust is pushing on regardless. Political reputations depend on success, as has been made abundantly clear from the start. There is a steely determination to carry the plan through whatever the difficulties — to sweep local opposition aside. Strong passions are aroused — and not surprisingly. The January expenditure White Paper made it abundantly clear that, over the next three years, a substantial cut is to be made in educational expenditure; though some extra money is to be provided for higher education, the schools generally are to suffer yet further stringency. But with one exception. Large sums, as we have seen, are to be made available for City Technology Colleges.¹⁰

In these circumstances it is not surprising that those concerned directly with maintaining a viable school system are becoming increasingly critical. This was very clearly expressed by Andrew Collier, Lancashire's CEO and this year's President of the Society of Education Officers (SEO). In his Presidential address to the Society towards the end of January, Collier described CTCs as 'a criminal waste of money'. 'Let us waste no more of our energies on 20 experimental schools', he said, 'when there is so much to be done with more than 27,000 maintained schools, which really do have a major effect on the future generation'.¹¹ MacGregor, who spoke later to the same Conference, responded emotionally to this critique which, in some ways, was unprecedented.

Collier was giving expression to what was becoming a generally held view among those responsible for local systems. A few weeks earlier, Tim Brighouse, until recently CEO for Oxfordshire, characterised CTCs as 'unfair', not needed and a waste of money (at the annual North of England conference). Jack Straw, who from the start has opposed this initiative, also at this time characterised CTCs as 'a criminal waste of money', adding 'but a deeply corrupt one as well'. Angela Rumbold, on the other hand, claimed that the 'CTC programme' was 'making excellent progress'.¹²

The intention ultimately to extend the programme well beyond the original twenty colleges had been made clear officially even before the last election. Robert Dunn, then junior minister, had stated that the aim was not 20, but 220, perhaps 420 such colleges. Cost limitations are now proving a difficulty. But early in the New Year new possibilities were pursued by Cyril Taylor of the CTC Trust. Already last October **The Independent** reported that Taylor had spoken about 'hundreds' of CTCs, but these would be 'funded by LEAs'. In December **The Guardian** reported a nationwide city college plan was likely, suggesting that plans to establish at least one in each of the 104 LEAs was expected soon to be announced. The plan was to persuade authorities to convert existing schools to CTCs. 'We are optimistic', said Cyril Taylor, 'that for modest sums the programme can be considerably expanded'. The cost of conversion would be as little as £1 million per school.¹³ This plan implies taking existing schools out of local control and handing them over to industry since the sponsors determine governing bodies.

A plan of this sort took concrete form with the proposal to convert an existing voluntary-aided comprehensive school in Wandsworth to a CTC (Battersea Park). ADT pledged the required 15 per cent of the cost. Here was a new possible road ahead. Sir Cyril Taylor was reported as 'jubilant'. He had argued for two years that the voluntary-aided route 'would open the flood gates for CTCs', since the schools were already up and running and costs to industry were minimal. 'Better 16 voluntary-aided than one orthodox college'. This would give CTCs 'the breakthrough the Trust needs into the local authority system'.¹⁴ Talks were now reported relating to the creation of 11 more CTCs with Kent, other local authorities and church authorities.¹⁵ Apparently this conversion is legally acceptable, even though the vast majority of voluntary-aided schools are church schools (the category was specifically established to meet their needs). Such a break-through, of course, would require local authority and usually church support and co-operation. But what appears to be intended is to bring about, through exploitation of the voluntary-aided category, a major educational change. The possibility of some degree of success here — given support of such initiatives by this Government — should not be underestimated.

Opting Out — Grant Maintained Schools

CTCs are one prong of the attack — the other, of course, is embodied in the opting out sections of the Act. What is the position here?

In September 1989 the 18 schools which had gained grant maintained status in the first year following the

passage of the Act began to operate as such. Two months later (early November 1989) a further ten had had their applications accepted, and by mid-January 1990 the total approved (including the original 18) had reached 32. Nine schools had had their applications rejected, but another 17 were, at this time, still awaiting decision by the Secretary of State.¹⁶ One factor already stood out very clearly. The bulk of the schools voting to opt out were schools subject to reorganisation proposals by local authorities seeking to rationalise provision, especially in the light of falling rolls.¹⁷ These were all schools threatened (if that is the right word) with amalgamation, closure, or some other change of status consequent upon reorganisation. Very few were opting out from a clear desire to go independent of the local authority.

It will be remembered that Kenneth Baker imposed what has been called a 'planning blight' on the consideration by the DES of local authority reorganisation proposals for five months immediately following the passage of the Act. This was specifically done to ensure that the new governing bodies (under the 1986 Act) might consider the alternative of applying for grant maintained status.¹⁸ By that means, in effect, the country's entire system was frozen for five months in the pursuit of the Government's objectives relating to local authority 'systems'. Since then, while the Audit Commission (and even government ministers) have continued to press the need for rationalisation on local authorities, the same over-riding factor (preservation of individual schools subject to reorganisation plans) has dominated the opting out scene. After a series of harsh experiences, authorities have to all intents and purposes ceased to submit (and plan) reorganisation schemes, since a single school so 'threatened' can disrupt plans covering an entire authority.

This has happened in several cases. For instance, in Tameside, Tony Webster, the CEO, protested to MacGregor early in November 1989, following such a decision, that the authority's plan to take 1,500 places out of use, so enabling the authority to concentrate its resources on the remaining schools, was totally negated by his decision to allow the school proposed for closure to become grant maintained. Not only was the authority unable to implement the plan, wrote the CEO, but the continued expense of surplus places in the authority's area was, by this action, guaranteed.¹⁹ At this moment also Gloucestershire protested that the decision of Downfields school in Stroud to apply to opt out would, if accepted, undermine the county's reorganisation plan for the area and squander public money.²⁰ In Bedfordshire it was claimed (by the Chair of the Education Committee — an old member, incidentally, of FORUM'S Editorial Board) that the permission given (by Baker) to allow Queensbury school in Dunstable to opt out had paralysed all rational planning. This school had been selected for closure to provide viability for two remaining upper schools, having the smallest intake and weakest staying on rate of the three. Closure would have saved £900,000 through the removal of 1,000 surplus places. Following this experience, the council decided not to put up any further closure plans for another four years, 'given that the Government can incite any such school with more than 300 pupils to go it alone'.²¹ In January this year

Derbyshire were also forced to abandon plans to get rid of 1,000 places when a former grammar school whose closure was central to the scheme, opted out.²²

By this time a real planning blight had once again descended on the system throughout the country. This extraordinary policy (is the Audit Commission calculating its actual cost?) appeared to be reinforced by MacGregor's decision to allow Beechen Cliff boys school in Bath to opt out. The authority's proposal was that this school be closed in phases from 1991 and turned into a sixth form college, the city's remaining schools switching from 11 to 18 to 11 to 16 schools. This proposal had been hammered out in a two years' long public consultation process and was widely supported. Macgregor, however, negated the entire scheme by his decision which, indeed, now threw Bath's reorganisation into chaos.²³

At last, at this stage, a local authority took the issue to a judicial review in the High Court and, as is well known, MacGregor's decision relating to Beechen Cliff was quashed by the judge, who ordered the minister to reconsider both proposals (the local authority plan and the opting out application). In his judgement, Mr. Justice Hutchison said that 'it could not have been the intention of Parliament, in drawing up the opting-out legislation, to allow education reorganisation schemes to be undermined, and effectively frustrated, by permitting schools facing closure under such proposals to acquire grant maintained status'.²⁴ But that is precisely what has been happening in different local authority areas up and down the country over the whole of the last 18 months and more.

It is too early to assess the significance, and outcome, of the Avon judgement, but at the very least it seems likely that what has been to date the main factor motivating schools to opt out may now have reduced force. Only the future can show*. But at this stage new factors have entered the scene. There is a good deal of evidence that disproportionate financial incentives are now being dangled before the schools in a further effort to promote opting out. This takes two forms.

First, the 18 schools which obtained grant maintained status last September have received their financial allocations for the year. The amount allotted exceeds their actual cost under LEA funding by an average of as much as 18 per cent. As part of their propaganda, Choice in Education Ltd. has produced a chart giving striking visual confirmation of this excess. The extra money these schools are to get represents their share of the local authority's central services, now allotted directly to the schools. Of course some of them may have to buy back some of these services out of this money. But probably not all. For instance local inspection or advisory services need not be bought back, since it is now (apparently) no one's job to monitor educational developments (or quality) in opted out schools. Nevertheless the GMS school's share of these services is still allotted to the schools.

Some would regard this as sharp practice. Others as simple bribery. However it is assessed there is now clearly a financial incentive, in terms of annual running

costs, favouring the decision to opt out. But this is by no means all — there is also the question of capital costs.

These were announced in January. They show extraordinary variations. Colyton Grammar school in Devon was allotted £826,000. St. James CE at Bolton £667,000. Bacup and Rawtenstall Grammar school in Lancashire gained £640,000. Audenshaw High school, Tameside, was allotted £592,400 — 'We're quids in, we all know we are', announced the head of the school triumphantly.²⁵ If these were the most favoured schools, the average capital allocation for all the GMS schools in fact amounted to £276,000 while the average for 25,000 schools in the country as a whole was £15,000.²⁶ Commenting on this allocation, **The Times Educational Supplement** said that 'the disproportionate capital sums lavished on GMS schools have been justified (by the DES, BS) on the grounds that these schools have been neglected', but when the Inspectorate finds (in its January report on the state of the schools) that two out of three secondary schools in the country as a whole are in an unsatisfactory condition 'it becomes apparent that opting out does indeed earn preferential treatment'.²⁷

Conclusion

Clearly a powerful thrust is now being made, by the Government and its agencies, to ensure success both for opting out, and for completion (or extension) of the CTC programme. No holds are barred in this battle. Financial incentives, honours, evasion of statutory duties (or 'bending the rules') — all these and more are being thrown into the ring. What is at stake is not only the future of local government as a whole — this is threatened in more ways than this; what is at stake is the entire objective of providing equally for all — the essential function of the local authority, as many emphasise today. There is now a determined effort, of which the tactics discussed in this article form only a part, to destroy the school system in the form that it actually exists, and to substitute a new situation (hardly a 'system') where market forces not only predominate, but, through this very predominance, gradually enhance inequality of provision as deliberate policy. Polarisation of schools locally, through open entry, the opt out option, and so on, is planned to reflect polarisation within society, recently graphically underlined.²⁸ To achieve this involves removing control over local systems from the local authority — this is the means to a greater prize. The ideological legitimisation for the new order is found in the doctrine of parental choice — and related to that, of parent power.

While recognising that parents must have greater say within the school system, their first concern, as parents, is to their own children, and then to the individual school these attend. So parents can be led to fight to remove schools from local control if they believe that, by this means, they will do better for their own children — the cost to others is not, by this mechanism, taken into account. But who, then suffers? And who looks after these? By setting their objectives to provide equally for all, this is the function of the local authority, democratically elected by the population as a whole.²⁹ That is why developments such as those discussed in

* Since this article went to press, MacGregor has reasserted his decision on Beechen Cliff, and Avon Council is again taking the matter to court.

this article must be seen for what they are: attempts to switch the whole thrust of the existing system in a quite new direction, towards ensuring unequal provision for those already advantaged within society as a whole.

Notes and References

1. Quoted in Brian Simon, **Bending the Rules**, p.16.
2. Information in this paragraph from Mr. Andrew Turner.
3. **Education**, 3 November 1989.
4. **Ibid.**, 14 July 1989.
5. Nicholas Bagnall, 'College of Advanced Controversy', **The Independent**, 9 November 1989.
6. **Education**, 24 November 1989.
7. **Ibid.**, 19 January 1990; 2 February 1990; 16 February 1990.
8. See **The Times**, 30 November 1989, and especially Simon Gawfield, 'Off-stage disarray threatens "Fame" school's debut', **Independent on Sunday**, 11 February 1990.
9. **Education**, 19 January 1990; 2 February 1990; **The Independent**, 29 January 1990.
10. **The Times Educational Supplement**, 2 February 1990; **The Independent**, 31 January 1990.
11. **Education**, 26 January 1990.
12. **The Times Educational Supplement**, 12 January 1990; **The Independent**, 31 January 1990; **Education**, 3 November 1989.
13. **The Independent**, 7 October 1989; **The Guardian**, 4 December 1989.
14. **The Times Educational Supplement**, 19 January 1990; 12 January 1990.
15. **Education**, 19 January 1990.
16. Information from Grant Maintained Schools Trust.
17. This applies to 23 of the first 33 applications, **The Times Educational Supplement**, 2 December 1988.
18. See Brian Simon, **op. cit.**, 3rd (revised) edition, November 1988, pp. 177-78.
19. **Education**, 10 November 1989.
20. **Ibid.**, 10 November 1989.
21. **The Times**, 2 October 1989, article by David Grugeon.
22. **The Times Educational Supplement**, 12 January 1990.
23. **Ibid.**, 12 January 1990.
24. **The Independent**, 24 February 1990.
25. **Education**, 2 February 1990 (capital allocations); **Independent**, 2 February 1990.
26. **The Times Educational Supplement**, 2 February 1990.
27. **Ibid.**, 9 February 1990.
28. A. H. Halsey, ed., **British Social Trends since 1900** (1988 edn.), pp. 26-33.
29. Andrew Collier put it like this, at the close of his address to the SEO: 'The overriding simple and clear objective is to fund excellent educational opportunities for *all* the nation's children'. Quoted in **Education**, 26 January 1990.

Education and Training: a study in Neglect

Andy Green

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A decade of frantic government activity has so far produced a stream of reactive, short-term measures: The Young Workers Scheme, YTS marks 1 and 2, Restart, Employment Training. It has been a story full of sound and fury but signifying little, finally, except perhaps the Government's desire to present a moving target to its opponents. Now, it appears, they're at it again with a further round of restructuring.

In December 1988, a new Department of Employment White Paper, **Employment for the 1990s**, confirmed the replacement of the Manpower Services Commission (MSC) by a new slimline Training Agency and announced the creation of around one hundred new Training Enterprise Councils (TEC). These would become the future mechanism for approving, monitoring and funding training schemes in local areas, in place of the old area manpower boards. The remaining Industrial Training Boards would lose their statutory functions, and the Training Agency would retain responsibility for TVEI and the funding of 25

per cent of non-advanced work-related further education (WRNAFE). The TECs would have two-thirds of their members drawn from local private sector employers and would put in bids to Government for the contracts to oversee local training provision. According to the White Paper, this 'will give the leadership of training systems to employers, where it belongs.'¹

The creation of the TECs is now well underway, but there are further changes to come. Towards the end of last year, the former employment minister, Norman Fowler revealed the Government's intention to cut £310 million from the training budget, and there have also been hints that YTS itself is being reviewed. Already the regulations for YTS have been altered so that the training schemes no longer have any statutory minimum length or components of off-the-job training, presumably to insure that employers have a free hand to deliver training as they wish. Voucher funding of the YTS scheme and of non-advanced further education is also under serious discussion. It's all rather predictable

and reminiscent of Caius Petronius' comments on the reorganization of Roman armies: 'We tend to meet any new situation by reorganizing ... and a wonderful method it can be for creating the illusion of progress, while producing confusion, inefficiency and demoralization.'

Politically expedient it may be for the Government to be seen to be doing something about this issue, but there are also more strategic reasons for the changes. Most obviously, it is about creating a market-led strategy in training as in education. However, the rethink also reflects changes in the labour market. A more buoyant labour market for declining numbers of school leavers, plus changing industrial needs have forced a shift of emphasis from surrogate job-creation schemes to quality training. Neither ET nor YTS has delivered this and YTS is beginning to look like an expensive obsolescence, paying firms to take on the trainees they are desperate to get in any case. On top of this, politicians and industrialists are aware that 1992 is looming and the future economic competition will put a high premium on the skills-rich work force.

The message is at last getting home that we are an under-educated and under-trained nation, having less than half West Germany's proportion of vocationally trained employees and producing annually less than a third of France's output of craft engineers.² Leading industries, based on information technology and 'flexible specialization', require more adaptable and autonomous workers with a broad range of skills and good general education. YTS trainees hardly look like the new model army of the so-called 'post-Fordist' economy and they certainly do not compare well with the products of Japanese and German training systems.

But how will the Government's measures improve the quality of training? Giving control over training to employers is to ignore their dismal historical record in the area for the sake of political dogma. Voucher funding can have few advantages for further education since colleges are already to be funded on a strict per capita basis, which rewards those institutions which attract the most students. The disadvantages of vouchers are well known. They encourage institutions to set their own fees which is liable to create great inequalities of provision (some students topping up their vouchers to pay for elite courses). Full cost fees would also price many courses out of the reach of many students, particularly expensive vocational ones like engineering which the Government is most keen to encourage.

The main problem remains the dismally low rates of participation in post-compulsory education and training and the consequently low levels of qualifications. The Government now acknowledges this and Norman Fowler recently suggested that we should aim to get almost all young people up to National Vocational Qualification level two (GCSE's or craft certificates) and half up to level 3 ('A' level or BTEC National). This target looks unimpressive beside the plans of the French Education Minister, Lionel Jospin, to get 80 per cent of French youth up to baccalaureat standard (our level 3) by the end of the century, but it is certainly ambitious for this country. But how is this great leap forward to be achieved? The Government has ruled out grants as a way of inducing school leavers to stay

on in education and training and there is nothing else in their proposals to encourage increasing participation. The emphasis on employment-based training may only encourage a return to the old pattern of early school-leaving and early entry into work and standards of training will be dependent on the calculations of employers based on their short-term requirements.

The Government's only other strategy for improving the quality of training is through the revision of vocational qualifications. This is now under the direction of the National Council for Vocational Qualifications (NCVQ) who currently have the unenviable task of cajoling the many independent certificating bodies to restructure their courses on modular lines. To get the NVQ kitemark, qualifications must now reflect agreed competencies at one of the five National Vocational Qualification levels. This means an end to 'courses' and qualifications dependent on specified periods of training. Qualifications will be based solely on 'competences' and 'understanding' which can be demonstrated either on-the-job or in an educational institution.

This process has generated considerable excitement in the world of education and training. Our present system of qualifications and courses is muddled and confusing and this rationalization promises to create greater coherence and more potential for progression for students wanting qualifications. Attractive though such a rationalization may seem, the chances of such reforms improving the quality of training may well be remote. The restructuring does not include traditional academic qualifications and so there is no prospect of improved integration between academic and technical areas. The emphasis on competences is likely to encourage training to become ever more narrow and job-specific which is the exact opposite of what is needed by advanced economies. This has worried many of those involved in BTEC work and has drawn the criticism of, amongst others, the National Institute of Economic and Social Research. The notion that skills demonstrated in the job can be accredited by employers has some attractions but, unless carefully monitored, this could lead to many problems. Employers do not necessarily have an interest in allowing their workers to gain more qualifications, which could lead to demands for increased pay or to the loss of workers to other employers, and they may be inclined to provide and accredit only such training as suits the specialized needs of their particular firm. The broader training offered by more traditional college courses could suffer in competition.

European alternatives

If current Government policies seem to offer little to improve the quality of training, what alternatives are there? We can learn something from Continental countries here, as in other areas of social policy. There are two different systems of vocational training operating in Europe, one employment-based and the other college-based. West Germany is the best example of the former, and has always provided the most attractive model to British Governments. Over sixty per cent of school leavers there train in the so-called Dual System. They are apprenticed to an employer

licensed to provide training, and spend around three years in on-the-job training. This is supplemented by one or two days per week at the Berufsschule (vocational college) where they continue with their general education and learn the more theoretical aspects of their vocation. Completion rates are very high and almost all come out with at least a craft level qualification, unlike with our YTS where less than a third attain a City and Guilds certificate at any level.³

The success of the system is said to rest on the strong German tradition of employer investment in training and on the institution of the Meister, the master 'craftsman', who is trained as an instructor and has responsibility for supervising trainees on the job. It is also important to note that this is no unregulated free-market system. Its effectiveness depends on the cooperation of government, employers, Trades Unions and local Chambers of Commerce and the respective roles of these are closely regulated by statute. On recent investigation of Berufsschulen in Hesse, I could see no hint of Thatcher's market mechanisms — instructors are civil servants with life tenure; there are no vouchers and institutions do not compete for market share.

The main advantage of this employer-led system is said to be that it insures that training is up to date and relevant to the needs of the industry. However, there are also some problems which even its West German advocates acknowledge. Firstly, when there is a recession employer recruitment drops and it becomes very difficult for trainees to get apprenticeships. Secondly, many of the smaller firms do not have the capacity to give trainees a broad range of experiences so the skills they acquire may be rather narrow. Thirdly, since employers recruit apprentices, access to training becomes subject to the usual class, race and gender inequalities of the labour market. Applied in the UK context, such a system could be disastrous for a number of additional reasons. Employers here generally lack the commitment to training of their German counterparts, they are often chronically incapable of assessing their own training needs, and they have no equivalent resource to the German Meister to ensure high quality of supervision on the job. YTS was a half-hearted attempt to copy the German System and look what happened to that.

More promising is the example of the college-based, state-led systems in operation in Japan, Sweden and France. In all these countries it is the full-time college course which provides 16-19 year olds with their basic vocational training and continuing general education. In Japan over 90 per cent of this age group stay on in full-time education. Around two thirds continue their general education in upper secondary schools. A third go to similar vocational establishments where they continue their general education and study a particular vocational area, learning the theory in the classroom and practical skills in the workshop or through work experience. In France there is a similar pattern with those deciding against the traditional lycee going instead to a lycee professionnel where they choose from a range of vocational courses with a common core of general education in French, maths and foreign languages.⁴

Sweden has a comprehensive system. Eighty per cent of school leavers go on to the Gymnasieskola where they can choose from some 23 different lines of study, each combining general education with a vocational area. In France the vocational qualifications have been brought into line with the academic qualifications so that you can now take a technical or professional baccalaureat which gives access to higher education like the traditional baccalaureat exam. In Sweden there is a modular course structure and a credit accumulation assessment system which encourages students to combine general and vocational subjects.

The benefits of such a system are considerable. Since courses do not depend on employer recruitment, training is not subject to the ups and downs of the economic cycle. The Japanese talk of training themselves out of a recession and the French managed to greatly increase their rates of training throughout the recessions of the 1970s. The integration of training and general education goes some way to breaking down the increasingly obsolete distinction between academic and technical training. Common core curricula and compound assessment, through grouped exams or credit accumulation, guarantee a broad range of skills, so that students should not come out innumerate, scientifically illiterate or with no knowledge of foreign languages, as is often the case here.

Such broad-based general and vocational education has the merit for the employer of producing recruits who are adaptable and quick to learn. It does not bother the Japanese employer that the young recruits have not learnt all the job-specific skills they will need. They can learn these at work having gained a good prior theoretical grounding. There is no reason why such courses should become out of touch with current industrial practices so long as they are regularly updated and so long as industry is involved in the bodies which draw up the curricula.

The way forward?

The best hope for reform here would be to develop an integrated and comprehensive system of post-compulsory education and training along Swedish lines, leaving the employers to provide the job-specific training thereafter. We already have a successful model of this embryo in some LEAs which have greatly improved their participation rates through the development of Tertiary Colleges. Unfortunately, none of the opposition parties is advocating this as a national solution. Even the proposals in the Labour Party's Policy Review document manage to confuse the issue by advocating a bit of everything.⁵ They suggest a new Youth Traineeship on the German model and then go on to say that this could last for anything from six months to four years and be based either at work or at college. This would be coordinated by a new national agency called Skills UK and by Enterprise Training Councils at the work place (sound familiar?). Finance would come from current YTS money and a training levy on employers set at 0.5 per cent of turnover. The reintroduction of the levy seems promising but the delivery system — part employer-led, part college-led — sounds like a recipe for continuing the present muddle. The Policy Review proposals are also notable

for their silence on Tertiary Colleges and on the question of grants for 16 — 19 year olds.

A better idea might be to create a combined Ministry of Education and Training and a new structure of comprehensive post-sixteen centres — call them tertiary colleges or what you will — which would become familiar local institutions providing a focus for all post-school education and training. They should offer a range of study lines based on a common core of general education plus vocational studies. Assessment should be by a readily understood system of credit accumulation leading to recognized national qualifications, where each would allow entry onto a higher stage. This would improve access and progression through the system. With allowances for full-time students in need of financial support, as in Sweden, and entitlements to paid day release for young

employees, it would most certainly improve participation rates. Such a reorganization might do more than create the illusion of progress. It might actually improve the quality of our training.

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Education for Enterprise: the Conservative Attack on Higher Education

Matt Salusbury

Currently a teacher of English as a foreign language, Matt Salusbury has based this article on research he carried out for his book **Thatcherism Goes To College** published by Canary Press in March 1989.

The past four years have seen a torrent of legislation and 'reforms' aimed at all sectors of education. This process continues, along with the recurring threat to higher education of more 'reforms' like student loans and voucher schemes. It is often hard to make sense of all these bewildering and apparently illogical goings-on. But there is a hidden agenda behind the Conservative Government's policies and their future direction.

The Conservatives have been able to sell the transformation of higher education on the necessity of making economies in this sector, and to help Britain shape-up with the trained management and technologists to compete in a fast-moving post-industrial world economy.

These arguments are not exclusive to the Tories. Harold Wilson's 1964-70 Labour Government targetted higher education funding towards technological subjects from the mid-1960s and looked to higher education to provide more 'keen executives'. Labour governments in the Seventies began to erode the 'Robbins principle' of higher education available for all, while expressing concern at an 'over-supply' of education.

It often seems that liberal and socialist academics have by and large 'bought' these 'economic' arguments. But it can be argued that the primary motivation behind higher education policy during the Thatcher years has been not economics but ideology.

The Thatcherite assault on higher education has been two-pronged. Firstly, the Tory ideologues seem intent on subjugating education to 'market forces', a process they have also tried with other areas of public life. Right-wing educationalists seek to transform education — from a public service to just another commodity to be bought and sold. The unbusiness like characteristics of higher education institutions, the relatively 'democratic' teaching methods and the 'liberal' academic traditions have all become targets as part of this assault.

The other objective of the current assault on education involves an obstacle in the way of the Thatcher revolution: that unique and unpredictable phenomenon known as students.

Conservative free-market philosophy

Looking first at the vision of 'education as market forces' that is such an integral part of Thatcherite ideology, a glaring inadequacy becomes apparent. This is the view that education can be reduced to a saleable product. If education is just another service industry, it is difficult to isolate what the 'product' is and also difficult to define the 'return on investment'.

The determination of the Conservative right-wing to make education fit their free-enterprise ideas can be traced to the early development of what has come to be called 'Thatcherism'. Thatcher was not regarded as

particularly right-wing until her experiences as Secretary of State for Education under Edward Heath. (For example: she suffered humiliating defeat at the hands of the students over her attempts to de-politicize student unions.) After the defeat of the Conservatives in 1974, some of them, wanting a more ideological direction, sought contacts among various right-wing groups outside the Conservative Party. 'Think-tanks' like the Freedom Association and the Institute for the Study of Conflict came to influence Conservatism in a marked way.

The Conservative Right's successes in education have been achieved both through bringing legislation into effect and in creating a climate favourable to far-Right ideas. There was a time when the primary function of higher education was seen as developing minds and producing well-rounded individuals. Now this expectation has almost gone, and it is almost universally believed that higher education is for training technologists and managers.

In such a climate, the more far-fetched ideas that the New Right dreamed up in the mid-Seventies begin to merge with Government policy. Student loans, 'opt-outs', 'centres of excellence' and 'performance indicators' for academic staff are becoming a reality. Voucher schemes for student support and the emasculating or closure of students' unions are favourite schemes of the Right which meet with great opposition but keep threatening to resurface. In the climate that has been created, the few who oppose these developments quickly find themselves on the defensive.

Examples of free-market ideas imposed on higher education include the Enterprise Plan, under which Departments in selected institutions are expected to generate net income from conferences to justify their existence. Colleges have eagerly filled the shortfall caused by massive cuts by courting commercial and industrial sponsorship, culminating in tailor-made courses for clients like Leicester University's £1½m course for British Airways managers.

The DES's 1983 Jarrett Report stated that education is no longer a right but a 'privilege' and its cost must be 'justified', that, moreover, education must be more 'receptive to the needs of commerce and industry'. Fortunately for the higher education sector, the enthusiasm of free-marketeers has invariably met with a cool response from the commercial and industrial interests they so eulogize.

The concept of City Technology Colleges (CTC's) and the Enterprise Plan were both founded on the idea that government funding of education would, by phases, give way to private funding. But the DES was soon resigned to paying for a considerable part of the CTC programme for the foreseeable future. And capitalism has shown little enthusiasm for investing in privatized universities, or for increasing student sponsorship. The leading banks have refused to participate in the student loan scheme, despite much cajoling from the Government. And the Confederation of British Industry takes every opportunity to impress on ministers that they continue to see education as a public service to be financed by the Government.

The attack on students

The assault on higher education is also aimed against the students. Students are an obvious (but exaggerated) obstruction to cuts and educational legislation. Again, campaigns against students are not the exclusive preserve of Conservatives, hatred of student 'layabouts' being a perennial favourite with all politicians. But the Conservatives have been particularly alarmed by the student role in the strike support movement; and students also come under attack because their lifestyle arouses panic in the authoritarian mind. Recent years have seen 'public order' conflicts centred on expressions of popular culture which are gradually becoming criminalized. Clashes around the Stonehenge festival, the Notting Hill Carnival, football matches and unlicensed acid house parties are examples.

Students are in strong communities; they live in gangs. They have time on their hands and few restrictions on dress and behaviour. Their lifestyles encourage (for some) experimentation with sex, drugs and politics. As they are financially squeezed, students are coming into increasing contact with the unemployed or marginalized youth of the inner cities. All this makes the existence of the student body threatening to the state.

Colleges and universities have traditionally provided venues for meetings addressed by politicians. For reasons connected with academic status, these meetings have few security restrictions. Mass arrests are avoided at these meetings which enjoy a special aura of 'academic freedom'. Such occasions are also some of the rare genuinely public meetings still allowed and a focus for popular discontent.

Meetings with visiting speakers at colleges have provided an opportunity to discredit students by portraying them as violent and unreasonable on occasions when proceedings were disrupted. Incidents were 'hyped' to create the myth of an intolerant 'Fascist Left' at a time when students badly needed a good image for their lobbying campaign against education cuts.

The strategy of the Right was to invite deliberately controversial speakers — the vocally pro-Pretoria John Carlisle MP, Enoch Powell, Ray Honeyford, Harvey Proctor, etc. — to colleges. Incidents usually followed — John Carlisle suffered a broken finger at Bradford University, Home Secretary David Waddington was spat at in the face at Manchester University, and so on. Sometimes more peaceful obstruction caused visiting Tories to cancel saying they had been 'prevented from speaking'.

This culminated in the Education Act 1986, which laid down punishments for students unions that refused to host 'visiting speakers' meetings, however unpopular. The conditions for public meetings became so draconian that colleges almost ceased as venues for them.

This destabilization was carried out not by Conservative Central Office but by the extreme-right Federation of Conservative Students, usually responsible for inviting the speakers. They were free-marketers with contacts with American far-right organizations and emigre 'anti-boshevik' groups, and

they espoused a 'global ideological offensive' against Socialism and the Welfare State.

Just before the 1987 election they were wound up by Conservative Party Chairman Norman Tebbit as being too unpalatable, but their 'cadres' re-emerged to take over the Young Conservatives, while the more media-friendly Conservative Collegiate Forum continues its campaign to de-politicize the student unions through restrictive legislation.

Most of the present Conservative cabinet cut their teeth in the Federation of Conservative Students. Conservative students continue to develop in an extreme right-wing direction and are firm supporters of Thatcherite ideology. For all these reasons, the attitude of the Conservatives to higher education is unlikely to be a pragmatic one. Their higher education policy is likely to continue on the basis of their ideological fantasies.

Religious Education and Social Policy in the Education Reform Act

David Tombs

The author of this piece studied liberation theology as Ecumenical Fellow at Union Theological Seminary, New York, before completing his PGCE at Birmingham University. He now teaches Religious Education at Lampton School in Houslow, Middlesex. In this article he argues strongly that Christianity is being used by the Government as an instrument of social control.

Introduction

The 1988 Education Reform Act provisions on religious education and school worship have been widely perceived as strongly biased towards the Christian faith. The purpose of this paper is to consider the potential implications of such bias for the well-being of religious education and the integrity of Christianity in schools. It is in the light of these considerations that the real threat to members of minority faiths in Britain can best be understood.

It will be argued that any official emphasis or bias towards Christianity is due more to Christianity's anticipated role in imposing social consensus than for its educational importance or value as a religious faith. The schools that collude in the pressures towards a Christian bias in the curriculum and worship of the school are therefore acting against the best interests of sound education as well as to the detriment of Christianity and all other faiths.

Finally, it will be suggested that the widespread perception of the 1988 Act as requiring emphasis on Christianity often confuses the intentions behind the Act with the actual legal requirements it sets out. Although the intention to promote a Christian emphasis must be recognised and understood, there is still considerable scope for those concerned with religious education to oppose it within the current provisions of the legislation.

Religious Instruction and the 1944 Education Act

To understand the motives for the apparent bias towards Christianity, it is illuminating to look at the situation in 1944 when religious instruction and worship were first made compulsory in schools. The need for a

unifying ideology to promote social cohesion was keenly felt and explicitly stated.

What is of vital importance to the nation at the moment is the lack and need for a unifying philosophy or general conception of life.¹

The inclusion of compulsory religious worship and instruction in Part 2 Section 25 of the 1944 Act was seen as a decisive contribution to this. Compulsory worship was intended to promote a more homogeneous acceptance of the Christian values that were believed to underlie British society. Religious instruction in the classroom was not intended to test these values in an open and critical way but to facilitate their transmission by explaining and developing them.

The widespread current approach involving multi-faith teaching based on educational concerns is radically different from the 1944 understanding of Christian instruction based on nurture. The first syllabus to formally recognise the multi-faith approach was the Birmingham Agreed Syllabus of 1975. The shift to a pluralist outlook was accompanied by a dramatic change in understanding the legitimacy and methodology of religious education. The rationale for the subject was no longer instruction *into* the Christian tradition but open-ended education and critical questioning of different faiths. This approach has gained increasing ground since 1975 and religion in schools has therefore ceased to play its previous role in promoting social consensus through the transmission of Christian cultural values and heritage.

The 1944 Act did not anticipate this new approach to teaching religion and whether or not the Act was reconcilable with it is a debatable point. However, the

fact is that for a considerable time religious educators have been committed to educational justifications for their subject rather than religious rationales, Christian or otherwise.² Indeed it has been suggested that only on such a basis can religious education be a legitimate part of the current school curriculum. The multi-faith approach is seen as the most appropriate framework for this educational purpose. Social reasons for multi-faith religious education are certainly an additional factor in certain areas but it should be stressed that the primary reason for the new approach has always been educational. Religious educators have stressed that the multi-faith approach is better suited to the modern world, whether or not other faiths are represented in the immediate local community.³

Political policies behind the Education Reform Act

At almost the same time as new syllabi were being developed to reflect the new role for religious education, the economic and social situation in Britain entered a critical period of structural upheaval. As in 1944 concerns over a social crisis played a significant part in determining educational policy. Whilst the response to this new crisis certainly started under Labour in the mid-seventies it has been given dramatic new impetus by the influence of neo-conservative and neo-liberal interests on the Tory Government since 1979.⁴

The legislative response to the social crisis has not been to create a single compulsory subject as in 1944, but to gain centralized control over the whole curriculum. Despite this far more radical use of 'education' to create social consensus, it first appeared that religious education in any form would no longer be an important concern. In the haste for early publication of the first draft of the Reform Bill, religious education was not even mentioned under the provisions for the National Curriculum. The Department of Education and Science were content to point to the fact that religious education would continue to be regulated by the 1944 provisions.

As the initial contradictions in the Bill were worked out, the Conservative political agenda came to be applied more systematically. The opportunities for religious education to continue to play a significant part in these policies became clear.

When the churches and religious educators took an initiative to secure the place of religious education in the school curriculum, the movement was hijacked by Baroness Cox's demands for amendments to reaffirm the traditional nature and purpose of religious education. Against the new trends in religious education, neo-conservatives hoped to reinforce the intentions of the 1944 Act to use instruction in Christianity to promote social cohesion.

The danger to the integrity of Christianity that this will involve is already clear. Even within traditionally conservative Christian circles, there are strong reservations over such a development being imposed on schools. A faith that is imposed inevitably loses its integrity as a faith. Given the current situation in schools, the bias towards instruction in Christianity would clearly be such an imposition. In the House of Lords the Bishop of London was moved to oppose

Baroness Cox's amendments in favour of an emphasis on Christianity with the declaration that: 'It is extremely difficult for a bishop to vote against the inclusion of the word Christianity. But I think I am being more realistic about what the situation is actually like in schools and classrooms'.⁵

When Christianity is not only being imposed but being imposed as a tool in reactionary social policy it cannot be in the long-term interests of either Christianity or of the schools themselves to accept this. A consideration of the possible implications that the role that Christianity and religious education might be forced to play makes this clear.

Potential implications for Religious Education

To some extent, the intentions behind the 1988 Act may appropriately be seen as in essential continuity with the provisions of 1944. However, two factors reveal their more reactionary potential.

First, the 1944 Act may have intended Christianity to be the predominant religion but it never formally required it. The wording seemed sufficiently flexible to allow multi-faith approaches. The 1988 Act is widely seen as intending to consciously remove this flexibility. Whereas the 1944 Act was happy to leave considerable responsibility with the schools, teachers and others concerned, it seems to be intended that the new Act will take away much of this freedom.

Second, the current social context is very different from that operating in 1944. In 1944 the attempt to sustain social consensus by imposing a Christian ethos was questioned by some, but the full realization of Britain's status as a post-Christian society was still to become widespread. Since then, there has been a steady process of secularization and a corresponding decline in traditional Christian beliefs. To reimpose Christianity in the face of this secularization is far more reactionary than anything attempted in 1944. Furthermore, at the same time there has been a dramatic increase in non-Christian faiths in Britain with the arrival of non-Christian communities. It is the potential implications of the 1988 Act for non-Christian minority groups that is perhaps the most worrying, as was made clear in the last number of *Forum*.

The Act is intended to impose Christianity not just on the secularized but also on practising members of other faiths. In reasserting that British society is Christian, it immediately suggests that all ethnic groups in Britain who are not Christian are not truly British. There is more to this issue than purely religious sensitivity. It has been argued that it is a conscious policy of the Conservative Government to divert attention from the true causes of the current structural crisis in society by manipulating nationalist and racist feelings to make scapegoats of ethnic minority groups.⁶ In this light, the social cohesion that is encouraged by claiming that Britain is Christian cannot be separated from wider racist policies and the increasing victimization of ethnic minorities.

Intentions, outcomes and future prospects

Opposition to using Christianity and religious education in this way has prevented Conservative political interests from systematically determining the

actual outcome of the Act. It must be emphasized that what has been described here has been the politics and intentions behind the Act and not the outcome of those interests on the Act itself. The bias towards Christianity that is so widely deplored is not supported by the Act as clearly as discussion of the Act often appears to assume. Indeed close reading of the Act suggests that although a privileged position may be given to Christianity there is no requirement for this.⁷

However, even if the neo-conservatives have so far been frustrated in the wording of the Act, they have certainly appeared to win the public debate. A climate of opinion has clearly been created which argues that religious education in schools should be biased towards Christianity and this has forced those with responsibility for religious education to go on the defensive. Parents and Governors have been given considerable power under the new Act. If they accept the widespread interpretation of the Act as requiring an emphasis on Christianity, the situation will become increasingly difficult for the multi-faith lobby, regardless of what the Act actually says.

The purpose of this paper has been to examine some of the interests behind the Act and show the dangers for all involved with religion and education if these interests are not resisted. True social cohesion cannot be imposed by reactionary policies and victimization

but must be built up in open dialogue with all members of society. Multi-faith religious education has a valuable role to play in contributing to this. For the moment refusing to accede to the pressure of a bias to Christianity is justified under the Act. How long this may continue is likely to depend on how well a counter-offensive is mounted to expose and refute this harmful political manipulation of the subject.

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Equal Opportunities in the 1990s: Reconstructing Equal Opportunities in Schools After the 1988 Education Act

John Hopkin

John Hopkin is Head of Geography in a Midlands comprehensive school. Here, he argues that, despite the Neo-Conservative influences on the National Curriculum, the future for Equal Opportunities might not be as bleak as some have suggested.

The 1988 Education Reform Act aims to improve educational standards throughout England and Wales. The prospect of sweeping change, and the evidence of its right-wing origins, caused dismay amongst many parents and educationalists and particularly amongst proponents of equal opportunities in education.

The Act has its origins in the ideology of the New Right, a disparate collection of groups and individuals whose unifying goal is a radical restructuring of society. The New Right articulate the values of a consumer democracy: those of choice, consumer rights and accountability, values which are strongly represented in the 1988 Act. They see the theory and practice of the market as the secret of educational reform. However, along with these 'radical' proposals for reform, runs

an equally strong current of curricular conservatism, represented in the National Curriculum proposals, which accords with the New Right's view of the state whose role, having divested its other responsibilities to the private sector, is reduced to safeguarding 'British' culture and traditional values.

It is at this point that the values of the Right meet the values of equal opportunity head on. For Gill (1989), for example, the Education Reform Act was:

propelled by popular fears, fuelled by the media and government attention to the policies of particular LEAs. It is striking that these LEAs were those with a clear policy commitment to anti-racist and multicultural teaching. Such policies were presented as being highly political, the preserve of the 'loony left' and anti-British,

whereas the essentially conservative constructs of the Right were associated with patriotism and tradition.

It is no accident that the ideologues of the New Right, so influential in setting the agenda for the 1988 Act, have been in the forefront of the attack on equal opportunities policies. The pamphlet 'Anti-Racism, An Assault on Education and Value' (Palmer, 1986) exemplifies their thinking; contributors repeatedly stress that anti-racism threatens 'British' values and culture. For the Right, prejudice and discrimination are reduced to the behaviour of (aberrant) individuals, and the responsibility for racial disadvantage transferred to Black people themselves; attempts to deal with such problems become 'interference' by the 'nanny state'. In such a society, the aim is to *assimilate* minority groups, rather than to celebrate ethnic and cultural pluralism, to preserve the status quo, for example by promoting traditional roles for women, and to promote a differentiated society. As Scruton (1980) declares:

It is not possible to provide a universal education. Nor indeed is it desirable ... (equality of opportunity) seems to be neither possible nor desirable. For what opportunity does an unintelligent child have to partake of the advantages conferred by an institution which demands intelligence?

Opportunities for Management by Schools and LEAs

Early reactions showed that many believed the prospects for equal opportunities in schools in the 1990s to be overwhelmingly dismal:

the conjunction of elements (authoritarianism, sanctioned prejudice, centralisation of control, disregard of informed views sanitised views of heritage) portend a national catastrophe in that they indicate that the conditions now obtain for the other side of being British (chauvinism and racism) to ascend (Gill, op.cit).

After nearly two years in which to become acclimatised to the new Act, it is now perhaps the time to evaluate the possibilities offered by the Act and especially by the National Curriculum proposals; how can LEAs, teachers, parents and governors manage the reforms in order to reconstruct a place for equal opportunities in the 1990s?

The National Curriculum

To many, the National Curriculum, based on a conservative model of traditional subjects, threatens more progressive curricula and courses, often the very areas through which equal opportunities have been delivered.

But do we need to swallow the rhetoric of the Right, who characterise schools as wasting time on 'equal opportunities' lessons when pupils should be getting on with the three Rs? Although there is tremendous pressure on courses such as PSE which fall outside the narrow boundaries of traditional subjects, good practice in education for equal opportunities has long been identified as a process of curriculum permeation, of *process* as well as *content*. Although the curriculum will be dominated by the core and foundation subjects, they are the same subjects which in many cases have

formed the backbone of work on equal opportunities in the past.

What the National Curriculum establishes is the framework for an entitlement curriculum, which may benefit equal opportunities in two ways. Firstly this framework, with its clear structure of aims and assessment objectives, will encourage rigour in management at classroom, departmental and school level by demanding a detailed review of the whole curriculum, tied to individual and institutional performance indicators. This is clearly of central importance if schools are to convince sceptical parents and governors that such initiatives are 'consistent with the highest standards of teaching and learning (and) fundamental to excellence in education' (Anderson, 1989). Secondly, schools can no longer discriminate by race or gender between pupils in the curriculum they offer. Ruddell (1989) argues:

many black parents see a statutory common curriculum as the best way of ensuring their children do not get unfairly neglected. By giving all pupils the right of access to all levels of activity, this entitlement may help reduce the focus of low expectations and low standards on Black pupils.

What of individual subjects in the National Curriculum? Although the reports from National Curriculum Working Groups have been a mixed bag, with history and geography in particular proving disappointing prospects, there is room for optimism in others. The English report, for example, emphasises the positive contribution of bilingual pupils;

bilingual children should be considered an advantage in the classroom rather than a problem. The evidence shows that such children will make greater progress in English if they know that their mother-tongue is valued (DES 1988).

Design and Technology was the first working party report to include positive and forward-looking recommendations on gender and race issues;

Throughout our report we have emphasised that design and technology have equal relevance to girls and boys and it is essential that they have experience of working in a balanced range of contexts It is important that teachers take a positive approach to a mixed range of cultural backgrounds in their pupils it is equally important that schools where there are few or no ethnic minority pupils understand the cultural diversity of modern society (DES 1989b para 1.42-44).

Further support is given by the developing picture of cross-curricular issues. As the guidelines to the National Curriculum outlined in 'From Policy to Practice' (DES 1989a) assert:

The foundation subjects are certainly not a complete curriculum. They will cover fully the acquisition of certain key cross-curricular competences the whole curriculum for all pupils will certainly need to include coverage across the curriculum of gender and multicultural issues.

The model of cross-curricular dimensions (including equal opportunities), skills and themes, is good news for equal opportunities because it fleshes out the narrow, subject-dominated conception of the curriculum, and because it places equal opportunities on the agenda of change as an entitlement, identified across all subjects, which will be open to parental and

public scrutiny. Perhaps this might just force schools and departments to take equal opportunities seriously and take the chance to review their own practice in the formal and hidden curriculum.

Further, these cross-curricular issues closely accord at secondary level with the ten TVEI principles of entitlement, including equal access to the curriculum for girls and Black pupils. TVEI entitlements are geared to systematic review and evaluation at LEA, partnership and school level. Careful monitoring of TVEI entitlement represents an effective way of raising equal opportunities issues relating to pupils' attainment, as well as broader institutional factors, and of evaluating success in meeting equal opportunities targets in National Curriculum subjects and cross-curricular themes.

Although we may be rightly cautious about the intentions and effects of national testing, an alternative perspective is to see this framework as an opportunity for progress. The entitlement curriculum, together with greater accountability to parents, could represent an opportunity to counter low expectations of achievement in Black children, as Eggleston (1989) suggests:

if teachers and also pupils and their parents were armed with a realistic and reliable diagnosis of their capabilities there is little doubt that the range of opportunities for Black children would be enhanced It is wholly feasible that the evidence that could arise from such testing could be evidence against which Black childrens' opportunities could not be denied.

The National Curriculum SATs will measure a narrow range of academic attainments; schools are legally obliged to report on them. However, there is no reason why, at either the individual or institutional level, schools should restrict themselves to the agenda set by the Act:

(Baker's) reforms will be domesticated and the intended minimalist and mean market approach to the individual assessment, whether of the pupils or of the schools, will be quietly broadened We can avoid the worst effects by changing the picture on broader canvas (Brighouse 1988).

Many schools will wish to broaden assessment by, for example, using records of achievement to ensure that a wide range of attainments is validated and to enable pupils to reflect on and record their achievements, attributes and experiences, irrespective of their ethnicity or gender.

As with the individual, the ten TVEI entitlements, represent a powerful basis for evaluating and publicising institutional performance. In support of a broader concept of performance, Thomas (1988) suggests that schools could also draw strength from their role as a focus for local communities, rather than going down the competitive road outlined for them by the Act:

Pressure would be eased if an authority gave greater emphasis to the community role of its schools, stressing that a school should link with its local community or neighbourhood and that its performance profile would address that dimension Add to these strategies those still-powerful conceptions of social and professional morality and we have a basis for encouraging the potential winners in a more market-oriented school system not to pursue their advantage without regard to its effects on others.

Beyond the Baseline of Entitlement

Although the National Curriculum is in many ways a very narrow one, it is important to remember that it is not the whole curriculum; it is perhaps more useful to consider it as a baseline entitlement for students on which teachers, schools and LEAs should build.

The 1988 Act does much to reduce the powers of LEAs at the same time as confirming the growing responsibilities of parents and governing bodies. However LEAs retain important influence, together with governing bodies, through their responsibility for the curriculum in individual schools. This partnership, with the statutory, detailed curriculum review entailed, represents an opportunity to interpret and extend the National Curriculum to include the values and priorities of parents and local communities.

What is less certain is how accountable schools will be to LEA guidance on this and other issues:

Some parent governors have been notoriously reactionary when it comes to education for racial equality and a lot of work will need to be done to guarantee that their new power will work in our favour (Ruddell, op. cit).

Current good practice rightly highlights the need to involve staff, parents and governors in the development and monitoring of such policies:

the role of parents and governors must be taken very seriously without their co-operation, equal opportunities policies may well flounder, if indeed they are not strangled at birth The evidence shows that unless the home reinforces the idea of gender equality, children are likely to grow up with stereotyped views and expectations, whatever the ethos and practice of the school (Anderson, 1988).

Many authorities, recognising their new roles, have begun programmes of governor training; and very clearly equal opportunities needs to be identified as an important element.

Returning to the issues of rigour and accountability, it seems that what teachers may have here is an opportunity to begin *reconstructing* a place for equal opportunities, rather than simply reacting to legislation. Although accountability is central to the Act, it is a conception of accountability in the educational market-place, accountability of the professionals to the consumers (seen as parents and employers). What teachers had before, and plainly cannot return to, was professional accountability, an exclusive conception whereby the profession was answerable only to itself. Ball and Troyna (1989) argue for a new conception of accountability, public accountability:

public accountability should be the pivot on which the service should be based. This would indeed require a move away from the status quo, from merely defending teacher and LEA autonomy. Rather, parents and the wider community would be drawn more closely into educational decision-making, but as citizens, rather than consumers.

Such a conception of accountability, based on 'a radical approach to community education' would mean far greater consultation with, and empowerment of, parents and members of the community on issues such as equal opportunities. It accords well with existing and

developing good practice in implementing equal opportunities policies at school level.

Conclusion

The 1988 Education Act will have a lasting impact on education in England and Wales. However, in spite of early reservations, it seems clear that this impact need not be wholly negative; indeed the Act presents a number of opportunities which may be exploited to develop and strengthen equal opportunities in schools.

What is also clear however, is that educationalists need to recognise the new educational climate they are working in. The 1988 Act articulates a new set of values, the values of the Right, which seem hostile to equality of opportunity within a comprehensive state education system. The basis of reconstruction must seek to set up effective alternatives which

educationalists must present openly, making the values of equality of opportunity more explicit in their work and based on a new concept of entitlement, rigour and accountability in education for the community.

This is where the strands of opportunity contained in the 1988 Act converge with good current practice in developing and implementing equal opportunities in schools. Teachers, schools and LEAs, through their management of the 1988 Act, can seize the initiative in reaffirming the positive values of a comprehensive state education, values which assert the need to improve the quality of education for all and demonstrate a commitment to justice and fairness. These values are congruent with the values of equal opportunities in education and are arguably still important core values of British society, however defined, to stand against the mean-minded, competitive spirit of the times.

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Community Languages in the Curriculum

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The purpose of this article is to raise awareness of issues relating to 'minority' languages in the British education system. The article discusses the background to the debate about Community Languages (CL) and goes on to examine the position of CL in the National Curriculum. The training and other implications of language diversity in the National Curriculum are also discussed and some recommendations offered.

What is a Community Language?

A broad definition of a Community Language (CL) offered here is: a language spoken by a specific community in Britain. It is a language of minorities — an 'ethnic' language or 'heritage' language. It is the

mother tongue of 'ethnic minority pupils'. It is the first language of early socialization and concept formation of 'immigrant' children. Thus CLs have connotations of ethnicity, cultural groups, race and religion. A CL is often taken to be a 'black' language, specifically a South Asian language. Some examples of a CL are: Gujarati, Panjabi, Turkish, Greek, Polish, Spanish, Urdu, Swahili, etc.

Due to its connection with the mother tongue of 'immigrants', a CL is tolerated, and sometimes taught, for cultural maintenance for 'ethnic minorities'. CLs have been seen as facilitating filial and community interactions, bonding relationships which come under heavy strain due to the generation gap, economic independence and individual freedom. It is essentially

a deficit model, a compensatory model. It was hoped that the alienation caused by changed circumstances and racial discrimination would somehow be ameliorated by increased family communication and cultural transmission through the CLs. It was thus seen as a special need, a part of Multicultural Education. The teaching of CLs is thus dominated by this emphasis on culture (and thus on religion), carried on by voluntary groups running evening and week-end classes (called Supplementary Schools — thus revealing the compensatory, deficit model). CLs are thus seen as having more cultural than linguistic importance. Some schools, however, have tried to introduce CLs in their mainstream curriculum with some grudging limited support from education authorities and the education establishments.

CLs and the National Curriculum

The introduction of the National Curriculum (NC) has changed the situation somewhat. Briefly, 'The Education (National Curriculum) (Modern Foreign Languages) Order 1989' requires that at least one modern foreign language be taught as a Foundation Subject with the National Curriculum. Languages are specified in two schedules. Schedule 1 contains the 'working languages' of the European Economic Community (EEC) — French, German, Danish, Spanish, Portuguese, Italian, Modern Greek, Dutch. Schedule 2 languages are: Arabic, Bengali, Hindi, Gujarati, Chinese (Cantonese or Mandarin), Japanese, Panjabi, Russian, Turkish, Hebrew (Modern), Urdu. The condition attached to the two schedules is that a schedule 2 language can be a Foundation Subject only if a schedule 1 language is first offered to pupils of secondary age (11-16). The CLs are thus given some recognition as a valid subject of study as a part of the curriculum of secondary schools.

The rationale behind language learning is outlined in 'Modern languages in the School Curriculum: a statement of Policy' (HMSO, 1988) as follows:

Learning a foreign language brings educational benefits beyond the attainment of practical skills, important as they are. It affords insights into the nature of language and language learning. It contributes to an understanding of the cultures, attitudes and ways of life in other countries which is important in a country with complex and extensive international relations.

It can promote a disciplined and active approach to learning and the satisfaction of gaining competence and understanding which are both rewarding and useful.

The policy statement goes on to justify the place of a modern foreign language in the curriculum. The document also foreshadows the inclusion of CLs in the curriculum in Para 8:

The Presence in many localities of significant numbers of people whose mother tongue is not English provides a climate of awareness of languages and opens up interesting and challenging opportunities for language learning. The place such community languages should take in the school curriculum is an important and complex question which merits more detailed consideration than was possible in the consultations which preceded this statement. We intend to consult separately on this issue in due course.

The intense pressure brought to bear on the Department of Education and Science (DES) has paid

off in that CLs are accorded enhanced status, lifting them out of community-based activities and are given legal and moral support for inclusion in the school curriculum. It enables the Local Education Authorities to take into account local linguistic demography and serve the community better. It accepts, however indirectly, the fact of bilingualism of thousands of pupils and recognises the needs of the community. More importantly, from the point of view of methodology, it allows CLs to work more closely with other (European) languages and share resources with modern language departments. CLs are therefore recognised as modern, contemporary languages.

However, the two schedules apparently reinforce existing linguistic apartheid — particularly, the condition giving the schedule 1 languages priority over schedule 2 languages, which will be perceived by pupils, ethnic communities and the education establishment as giving community languages second class and low status. The EEC languages will benefit from the national network of support, whereas the schedule 2 languages will be localized and dependent on demand, competing with restricted resources and time. Moreover, these languages are more likely to be taken up by inner-city schools where there is a sizeable population of minority language speakers. The condition permits schools which are so inclined to discriminate legally against schedule 2 languages — especially the 'black' languages such as Gujarati and Urdu. The recruiting of teachers of schedule 2 languages will be heavily restricted, thus limiting the career prospects of these teachers. In short, the two schedules with the condition constitute a linguistic caste system which is likely to be sanctified by law.

The two schedules also store up political problems for the future. What happens, for instance, if and when Turkey joins the EEC? Will Turkish be 'promoted' to Schedule 1? Also, the schedule 2 list is subject to pressures from the community. In the original Draft order, Hebrew was absent but Arabic was present. The former has been included in Schedule 2 clearly because of political pressure from Hebrew speakers. How would the DES respond to similar pressure in future?

The creation of two schedules has thus little to do with education and much to do with complying with EEC requirements, whilst at the same time recognising the needs of the minority communities. Cynics might say that the two schedules could be a device to resist EEC dictates about languages (e.g. the Lingua Programme) and using the ethnic communities as a shield against regulations from Brussels.

Be that as it may, the National Curriculum does provide CLs with an opportunity to improve their methodology. Traditionally, the teaching of CLs emphasized literacy rather than oracy.

The suppression (witting or unwitting) of CLs in schools in order to learn English has led to CLs becoming second rather than first languages — English being the dominant language. CLs have now an opportunity to develop their own distinctive approach within the National Criteria. Teaching materials in CLs have hitherto reflected traditional roots in being too heavily cultural, moralistic and non-secular. They have relied on teacher-centred, authoritarian methodology which is seen by many pupils and educators as

unprofessional and is a major cause of lack of motivation in pupils and of low status.

The materials are unrelated to the experiences of the pupils in Britain and are based on orthodox, linear models of language learning, with emphasis on grammar rather than on communicative competence.

From the point of view of the whole curriculum, there are distinct advantages for CL speakers. Firstly, CLs can be a base for increasing bilingualism with all its long-term benefits for cognitive and social developments. They can also form a base for learning other languages. In many inner-city schools, some of the best motivated and able learners of a 'modern foreign language' are bilingual pupils. CLs also offer scope for concept development, even in secondary schools. In this respect, CL methodology can be more advanced than modern language methodology in that the CLs can be, for part of the time, the medium of instruction in many subjects such as Humanities and Mathematics. They also offer an opportunity for bilingual pupils to work across subject boundaries by producing bilingual work, bringing modern language departments in closer collaboration with other departments. CLs in the curriculum heighten monolingual teachers' sensitivity to cultural and linguistic diversity and help them to appreciate the benefits of bilingualism and to be more open to language teaching in general. This awareness and sensitivity would be reflected in their teaching and in their relations to other pupils, thus contributing greatly to harmony in schools. Finally, CL speakers would be more freely able to contribute to teaching resources and encourage the 'ethnic' community to take a more active part in schools and in education generally.

Future Possibilities

Education, like politics, is the art of the possible. Here, then, are some possibilities. The ingredients are there, just add political will.

(i) Developing professional materials for teaching CLs

This requires a joint effort by the LEAs, schools, national bodies such as the National Council for Mother Tongue Teaching and language-specific groups such as the Gujarati Shikshan Sangh, University Linguistics and Educational Departments and Community organizations. Setting up local writers' and artists' groups together with language teachers can easily be done with support from the LEAs.

(ii) Training the Teachers

This again needs collaborative effort from the Universities, Polytechnics, LEAs and institutions such as the RSA and the Institute of Linguists.

(iii) Supporting early bilingualism and continuing the support right through a pupil's education

The prevailing provision for bilingual support is based on assimilationist ideology which strives to absorb 'ethnic' populations and encourages English monolingualism. It is basically racist and tokenistic. It is quite possible to *teach* CLs — oracy and literacy — in primary schools. It was not long ago that French was taught at this age

range. We can learn from their mistakes, no doubt, in the changed circumstances of today.

(iv) Encouraging teacher/pupil exchange and visits

Visiting the countries of origin of the target language undoubtedly adds to a deeper appreciation of the language. For CL learners, it has the additional advantage of renewal of cultural and linguistic roots. At the moment, it is very difficult for CL teachers to tap into the procedures and funds for exchange visits used by European language teachers. The EEC, British Government and the LEAs together with the host country could easily make these facilities more widely available.

(v) Increasing intra-communal communication

Non-Gujarati pupils — especially monolingual English speakers — learning Gujarati, say, will enable these pupils to interact more fully with CL speakers. Learning other people's language (especially if they are neighbours!) has the undoubted potential of communal understanding and appreciation.

(vi) Research projects

could investigate the state of bilingualism in Britain and conduct longitudinal studies of bilingual pupils. These projects could also raise the general awareness of benefits of high levels of bilingualism and inform future policies in education, increase the effectiveness of support services such as Schools Psychological Service and contribute to a fairer assessment of ability and attainment of pupils.

(vii) Helping to improve Supplementary Schools

Earlier in this article supplementary schools were referred to as evidence of the deficiency model. This need not be so. Bringing supplementary schools under the Education Department of the LEA would be a first step.

(viii) Formulating a Language Policy

Finally, the educational establishments — the DES, LEAs, Schools and Colleges, Universities and Polytechnics and Centres for Multicultural Education — could make an unequivocal and operational statement of policy for bilingualism and CLs. Such a statement could be as follows:

Language Policy Proposed Statement

'... believes that bilingualism is an educational asset and is committed to valuing and nurturing it. In accordance with the National Curriculum requirements and with its policies on Multicultural Education and Equal Opportunities, ... pledges its support for encouraging bilingualism across all the phases of a pupil's statutory education. We particularly support early bilingualism and the teaching of Community Languages as Foundation Subjects at secondary level, and enjoin all schools and colleges to promote language awareness and bilingualism and actively combat linguistic racism.'

Developing a whole-school policy for special educational needs: one school's experience

Michael Small

Having been Curriculum Deputy at St. Gregory's High School in Warrington since the School opened in 1981, Michael Small has had special responsibility for S.E.N. since 1987. Much of his work in school, as the article explains, has been done in conjunction with the LEA Special Needs Adviser and with the local educational psychologist.

For some time schools have been urged and advised to re-examine their policies for pupils with special educational needs (S.E.N.). As a result, there have been changes in materials and teaching techniques; also, and more fundamentally perhaps, there has developed a change in philosophy and perception with a movement towards greater integration of S.E.N. pupils into mainstream classes with a support teacher rather than catering for them separately in withdrawal groups.

Much of all this will be familiar and can be traced back directly to the Warnock Report and the 1981 Act both of which called clearly for an ending wherever it might be appropriate and judicious, to the separate educational development of S.E.N. pupils.

The following article is not in any manner an attempt to justify or rehearse the educational philosophy of Warnock or the Act. Rather, it tries to consider, with some degree of hindsight and from the inside, the way in which one comprehensive school has tried to implement the spirit and philosophy of an integrated, whole-school approach to special needs teaching and learning. In so doing it considers how the change came about, how it was managed and 'sold' to colleagues, the tensions involved, the in-service training that took place and the potential benefits to all the members of the school community, particularly the young people with learning difficulties.

Background

St. Gregory's High School, Warrington, is a five-form entry Comprehensive School which caters for 700 pupils between the ages of 11 and 16. It opened in 1981 to serve a reasonably mixed catchment area and now draws pupils from every Catholic primary school in the Warrington district and some beyond. External examination results are above the L.E.A. and national averages but this should not mask the fact that each year there are not insignificant numbers of pupils with learning difficulties and a statement of special educational needs of a physical, behavioural or cognitive nature.

Until fairly recently, S.E.N. pupils were taught in traditional groupings either through withdrawal for extra help or by the creation of a smaller 'bottom' group. One specialist 'remedial teacher', helped by one

or two part-time colleagues, catered for the needs of these youngsters. She worked in a traditional way, i.e. with and through youngsters in small groups and there was little attempt to collaborate with specialist colleagues.

One can now concede quite readily that this approach was somewhat restrictive for S.E.N. pupils, but there was an upbeat aspect to it. The school has always been totally committed to the concept of equal curricular access for all pupils, regardless of ability. All pupils followed a common curriculum and there was a good track record of, for example, all pupils studying a modern language and a science to 16 and all pupils taking a full range of external examinations. Staff were very familiar with the idea of a bottom-up approach to methodology and resources.

Reasons for Change

A number of factors coalesced to take this further and to sway the school to try consciously to develop what is now known as a whole-school approach to teaching S.E.N. pupils. Firstly, the L.E.A. (Cheshire) — always progressive and concerned for all its pupils — seemed to take on board very seriously the recommendations made by Warnock and gave considerable prominence to the status of special educational needs in its secondary schools. Secondly (and presumably in the eyes of the L.E.A., arising from the first point), a new adviser for special needs was appointed and he was extremely sympathetic to the ideas the school had. Thirdly, in line with L.E.A. recommendations, one of the school's deputy heads was given overall responsibility for special needs — this ensured that the area was represented in management and perhaps provided it with the clout it formerly lacked. Fourthly, the school was quick to develop close links with a new senior educational psychologist in the area and through him it seized upon the opportunities available where support time was available for youngsters with statements of need. Finally and perhaps most importantly, there existed within the school a very positive climate which wanted the best for young people, saw the potential in the proposed changes and did not often feel threatened. To this can be added a history of valuable and practical in-service training.

A policy of integration

Therefore, in the early summer of 1987, the school decided to work towards developing a policy of integrating S.E.N. pupils into mainstream classes with, wherever possible, a support teacher. We saw in-service training as the key to this because many colleagues were likely to be called upon to give up time to act as support teachers and because every subject teacher in every department would, after a period of time, have had experience of a support teacher working alongside. Such a move called also for a change in approach and strategy from what was formerly our 'remedial' specialist. The first change was her title to special needs co-ordinator. This was more than a change of name — increasingly she would be called upon to work alongside colleagues, to devise and adapt materials and to take on a much more collaborative and consultative role, working through teachers as much as with pupils. Accordingly, we designated all our in-service training for the next two years, including 'Baker' days, as preparation and servicing time for this major thrust. A crucial element in this training, we felt strongly, was that it should be practical and rooted in what went on in the classroom.

In addition, departments were told from the outset that they would be expected to produce aims and content for all work in the first two years. These had to be differentiated and broken down into three levels — core, foundation and extension — with means of assessment for each level and unit of work. This had two benefits — it gave the change the 'kick' and focus it needed and it concentrated minds on the concept of differentiation in mixed-ability groups which we felt would be central to any success.

The first training day was run by the school's educational psychologist and a nationally-reputed former lecturer in S.E.N. at a college of education. Their brief was to give some background to the Act and to the concept of statementing youngsters, to raise colleagues' awareness of the potential of S.E.N. and to give some ideas through workshops of the nature of learning difficulties.

This was followed four months later by a two-day residential conference funded by the L.E.A. which used the expertise of the same visiting consultant, this time to lead us in the practical exercise of considering and reviewing materials and resources. Thus the whole exercise took on a practical slant and this mode was continued.

A further strand in the plan, mentioned earlier, was the changing role of the head of S.E.N. and her training. She was given promotion, was seconded for a term to follow a diploma course at a college of education and completed a school-based dissertation on catering for S.E.N. pupils in French, C.D.T. and science. These three areas were ones which particularly interested her, ones where she had some support teaching experience and ones which, we knew, had been successful in integrating youngsters with learning difficulties.

Her role became one of co-ordinator. In a non-threatening way she was able to gain the confidence of colleagues and to become much more of an adviser. Together with a support tutor colleague, she ran very

successful workshops for all departments where they really got to the heart of reviewing and devising materials, work-sheets and text-books. Importantly, she began to divert colleagues' attention to the needs of able pupils and took on this brief for extension work. It is fair to say that any success in the development of S.E.N. work stemmed directly from this changing role of the S.E.N. co-ordinator.

Reasons for success

Firstly, the climate was right — there was a familiarity with change and a preparedness for it. In addition, there was a strong tradition of valuing all youngsters including those with learning difficulties.

Secondly, the exercise at all times had the very active support of senior management in the school. Much of this was 'up-front' and involved running various activities and sessions. To this can be added the active support and time of the S.E.N. adviser and the school's educational psychologist.

Thirdly, and already referred to, was the crucial non-threatening nature of support and advice given by the school's co-ordinator for S.E.N. This cannot be over-stated. In such a sensitive area, the need to be aware of personal fears and concerns and to proceed cautiously, but at the same time to persevere determinedly, is of paramount importance.

Fourthly, colleagues were willing to move from theory to practice and to consider closely issues such as the pace of lessons, teaching methodology, materials used and the whole business of classroom practice. All of this was helped along considerably by the practical nature of the task, the definite period of time set aside for its development and by colleagues' willingness and support for each other.

Finally, large numbers of colleagues were practically involved in the training through running workshops, reviewing materials and making presentations. Consequently, they felt they had a major part in establishing and developing changes and in owning them.

Conclusions reached

Inevitably, there have been difficulties. Support teaching requires time for preparation, consultation and reviewing, much of it collaboratively and this time has been hard to find (memo. to timetabler for future years!) Some colleagues, not unsurprisingly, have been less willing than others to participate enthusiastically and to change existing practice. Some have felt that spending two years on one aspect of INSET has been too much, while others feel there is a danger that we will all now consider ourselves experts on S.E.N. and may become complacent over this aspect of our work in future. Another concern has been that the exercise has over-emphasized pupils with learning difficulties and not given enough emphasis to able youngsters. All of these are legitimate concerns.

In my view the exercise has had the very real value of grasping the opportunities and monies available under new INSET procedures to provide training initiatives all housed within one institution. These initiatives have been tailored to the school's own needs and very practically based. Because of this, they have

had a direct and very immediate effect on the work of a large number of people in the school. Certainly, the initiatives have demonstrated that 'Baker' days can have value, but need to be taken seriously, need to be part of a wider package, need the support of large

numbers of staff who must feel directly involved and finally, and in my opinion most importantly, must be of a practical nature with a clearly-defined target and end product which must be measurable and involve changes in behaviour and practice.

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16. Public Schools Commission, Volume II, 1970.
17. G Whitty, J Fitz, and T Edwards, **Assisting Whom? The Benefits and Costs of the Assisted Places Scheme**, Paper presented to BERA (British Educational Research Association), 1986.
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19. For example, parent groups in Bedford tried to raise the matter in relation to the Harpur Trust Schools.
20. DES, Statistics, Vol. 1, Tables 26 and 29, 1977.
21. 'Voluntary Schools — Harmony or Discord?', Case Guidelines for Schools No. 3, 1981; A Dummett and J McNeal, 'Race and Church Schools', Runnymede Trust, 1981; 'The Dual System of voluntary and County Schools', SEA, First Report, 1981; 'All Faiths in All Schools', SEA, 1986; 'The Church of England Wants to buy an Ealing Comprehensive: Why this is a National Issue', by M Maycock, NUT, 1979; 'Learning From Diversity', Department of Christian Doctrine of the Catholic Church, Bishops Conference of England and Wales, 1984; 'A Future in Partnership', Church of England National Society, 1984; 'The Dual System: End it or Mend it', **Teaching London Kids**, Issue 14, 1982, and Issue 22, 1985; **Education For All**, Swann Report on Multi-cultural Education, 1985.
22. Members of the Diplomatic Service, the Communications Division, the Overseas Development Administration, and Technical Co-operation Officers. Information was available only for the numbers currently getting boarding subsidies: 1538. (House of Commons, Question No. W6, 19 January, 1990). No information is available on numbers getting day school subsidies either in the UK or overseas.
23. House of Commons, Question No. W8, 19 January, 1990. See also House of Commons, W79, 26 July, 1979 and W31, 25 May, 1978.
24. £9,213,000. House of Commons, Question No. W6, 19 January, 1990.
25. House of Commons, 156W, 12 January, 1990 gives information for 1988/89. For total numbers, see also Question W104, 6 December, 1988.
26. House of Commons, Question 154W, 12 January, 1990.
27. House of Commons, Written Answers, 16 January, 1980.
28. House of Commons, Question 106W, December, 1988. In addition entrants must pass a test, an interview and receive their headteacher's endorsement (154W 12 January, 1990).
29. Letter from Douglas Hurd to Chris Price, MP, 14 January, 1980. £90,000 was 'inadvertently' omitted from the total in a previous answer.
30. House of Commons, Questions W9 and 10W, 19 January, 1990. The total was £2,139,278, an average of £1390 a pupil.
31. House of Commons, Question 155, 12 January, 1990 stated information not available to allow costs to be estimated for military fares. Ten years ago, however, (W19, 16 January, 1980) military holiday visit fares were estimated at £1,270,000.
32. Estimated from previous costs (House of Commons, Question W19, 16 January, 1980) and assuming the same numbers.
33. House of Commons, 156W, 12 January, 1990.
34. House of Commons, Question W6, 19 January, 1990 Diplomatic corps, including Communications Division: £7949 a year.
35. **Comprehensive Education — Away From Home**, a report of a Conference on Boarding and Residential Education, held at London University, 1979, CCE (Campaign for Comprehensive Education), 1980.
36. **Privatization — Paying the Price** LRD (Labour Research Department), January, 1987.
37. House of Commons, Question, 19 November, 1986: £13,700,000 for TV advertising and £12,732,000 for press advertising.
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39. See NATFHE, 'The Great Training Robbery: An Interim Report on the Role of Private Training Agencies within the YTS', Birmingham Liaison Committee, 1984; 'Youth Unemployment and Training', Report of the Labour Movement National Inquiry, 7 volumes, Birmingham Trade Union Resources Centre, 1987; YOUTH AID Bulletins No. 20 and 21; **Work for the Future**, Society of Civil and Public servants 1986; and C Benn and J Fairley (eds), **Challenging the MSC**, 1986.
40. **Towards a Skills Revolution**, CBI, 1989.
41. Norman Fowler, Press Release, Department of Employment, 22 November, 1989.
42. 'Extra Cash for Opt-Out Schools', **The Independent**, 4 February, 1990.
43. Kenneth Baker, House of Commons, 29 June, 1989.
44. Labour Research, Vol. 77, No. 11, 1988; see also 'Mounting Cost of Baker's Beacons', **The Independent**, 29 June, 1989.
45. Briefing Papers on CTCs, Report of NUT Conference, 12 December, 1989.
46. NCPTA, Survey, 1985.
47. HMI Report, May, 1986.
48. EEC Committee on Budgetary Control, Working Document, 1-345-81, 1981.
49. House of Lords, Hansard 1004, 23 January, 1990.
50. Ian Williams, **The Alms Trade: Charities, Past, Present and Future**, Unwin Hyman, 1989.
51. Roy Yates, 'Boarding Need in Comprehensives' **Comprehensive Education Away from Home**, op cit.
52. DES, Statistics, Vol. I, 1977 showed that 7 per cent of boarding education (excluding special schools) was provided by the state. This has virtually disappeared.
53. National Council of Social Services, **Charity Law and Voluntary Organizations**, Bedford Square Press, 1976. The recommendation in full: 'In regard to education, the new test of "purposes beneficial to the community" should admit to charitable status only those institutions whose education systems cater for a range of clear educational needs throughout the whole community'.

Discussion

Dear Editors,

re: **Forum Volume 32, Number 2, Spring 1990**

I have recently subscribed to your magazine, and read with interest the first copy which I received, which focussed on R.E. and collective worship. As you are aware, this area of the 1988 Education Act has given rise to considerable discussion and debate, and quite a lot of misunderstanding, and misinterpretation. As a contribution to the debate, I would like to make the following comments on the articles in this volume:

1. In the Introduction, I think it is misleading to talk about 'statutory provision of religion'. The provision for worship and religious education should be understood within the educational aims of the Act (Section 1 (2)).

2. Similarly, the interpretation that 'Christianity prevails' in the Act is open to question, in particular for local authorities committed to a multi-faith approach.

3. The view that 'humanist, agnostic and atheist perspectives' are not by definition religions is likewise misleading. Whose definition? There is alas no commonly-held definition of religion — amongst scholars or adherents. The fact that many Hindus and Buddhists are quite happy to consider themselves atheist, agnostic or humanist tends to contradict your oversimplification. This also calls into question your very laudable aims (last paragraph of the editorial).

4. Turning to Owen Cole's article — page 48, I think that it is the Local Council rather than the L.E.A. that decides on membership of SACRE. In practice, councillors will delegate this to C.E.O.'s, who in turn tend to delegate to advisers with responsibility for R.E.

5. I think Owen is wrong in suggesting that heads who apply to SACRE for a determination are 'passing the responsibility' to someone else, or are 'washing their hands of the whole business'. In my experience, for example in Brent, where the majority of county schools have been granted determinations, applications were done on the basis of widespread consultation with parents and faith groups.

6. Contrary to Owen, many schools are considering worship and R.E. as separate — indeed, the D.E.S. has done so as well. In fact the provisions of the Act allow this, as they are quite different, and have quite different implications.

7. Ralph Gower's article is also imprecise at times, as well as being tendentious. For example, in reference to G.C.S.E., although six religions are specified (not defined!), this has not prevented the majority of schools which have G.C.S.E. Religious Studies from running entirely Christian courses.

8. I am not sure where Ralph Gower gets his notion that 'in law, most means 51 per cent' — this would certainly not hold up in a court of law (which is not to say that a particular court would consider most to mean 51 per cent!).

9. Anthony Page produces an incredible sleight of hand to argue that in R.E. Christianity should be first amongst equals

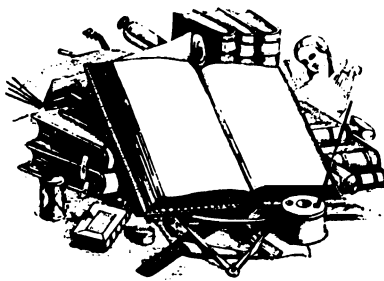
— no doubt he also knows what 'broadly Christian' means! Perhaps he should go the whole way, and argue that R.E. should be daily, and done collectively or in 'groups', etc.

10. The articles by Malcolm Horne, Usha Sahni and Mary Jane Drummond go some way in redeeming the magazine, though by now it is clear that in my opinion the previous articles have contributed to the general confusion regarding the provisions of the Act.

11. I am also worried by the review by Derek Gillard of the book by Edwin Cox and Jo Cairns — I have had occasion to review the book myself, and have found it highly tendentious and misinformed. My review appeared in a recent edition of 'Look Hear!', a magazine which has a wide readership amongst teachers responsible for R.E.

In conclusion, can I say that I find the balance of the magazine does not appear to be in keeping with the laudable aims, as an alternative to many staid and conservative journals, and as a forum for the discussion of new trends — many of the articles which you allowed to be printed take us back twenty years.

Yours sincerely,
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Reviews

Working-Class Responses to the Schooling Process

Schooling Ordinary Kids: Inequality, Unemployment, and the New Vocationalism, by Phillip Brown, Tavistock Publications (1988), pp.210, £9.99.

This book starts off from the premise that working-class secondary pupils in post-war Britain can be divided up into a number of key groups. First, there has always been a minority of pupils who appeared to accept the ethos of the school, usually because they believed that by arming themselves with enough qualifications to compete for middle-class jobs, they could climb the 'ladder of opportunity' and thereby 'escape' from their class of origin. Second, there has been

another minority who seemed determined to reject the school as a middle-class institution seeking to inculcate bourgeois modes of thought. This is the group much written about by sociologists and particularly by David Hargreaves in his **Social Relations in a Secondary School** published in 1967 and by Paul Willis ten years later in **Learning to Labour**. And third, there is that large number of 'ordinary' working-class pupils who 'neither left their names engraved on the school's honours boards, nor gouged them into the top of classroom desks'. It is with this so-called 'invisible majority' that Phil Brown is chiefly concerned. His carefully written and thought-provoking study attempts to explain why the 'ordinary kids' of the title did not conform with the ethos of the school but were nevertheless willing to 'make an effort' as part of a genuine attempt to 'maintain command of their own lives'.

The book is based on research carried out in a large urban settlement in industrial South Wales, here called Middleport. Middleport is socially and culturally divided into distinct 'north' and 'south' areas. While the north is characterized by middle-class private housing, the south has retained much of its appearance and identity as a traditional working-class area, even though much of the original industrial base has been eroded with the cutbacks suffered by the heavy engineering and steel industries. Much of the data for this study was collected in the south of Middleport and largely in one school: a co-educational comprehensive school located in a densely populated working-class neighbourhood of terraced housing and enjoying an average reputation in the town. The data used is basically of two kinds: questionnaire data to give the study breadth and ethnographic data to give it depth.

The book begins with a perceptive account of the post-war debate about social class and educational performance; and the author devotes much space to the contrasting theories of David Hargreaves and Paul Willis before putting forward his own ideas for understanding patterns of educational behaviour amongst working-class youth.

Hargreaves was concerned to show how the schooling process itself worked to the disadvantage of a large section of working-class pupils. He argued that in the early years of the secondary school, most pupils were more or less conformist, but that the streaming process led to the formation of an anti-school sub-culture among the pupils in the lower groups. By the beginning of the fourth year, if not earlier, the hierarchical ordering of pupils had created a sense of failure and rejection among those in the lower streams, for which the 'delinquent subculture' — a sociological neologism coined by Hargreaves — offered some sort of rational compensation.

Willis, on the other hand, has always argued that the creation of an anti-school subculture is not a *consequence* of educational failure, as suggested by Hargreaves, but a *cause*. For Willis, rejection of the secondary school as an alien bourgeois institution is a truly *working-class* response. In his view, working-class pupils do not negotiate their relationship with the school in the light of what the school has to offer, given their position in the academic hierarchy, but in terms of the consequences

which academic success has for *being* a working-class adult.

As a result of his own research study in an unemployment blackspot, Dr Brown rejects both the Hargreaves and the Willis perspectives as being unduly simplistic and pessimistic. At the heart of his book is a fascinating account of the views of working-class pupils in the early 1980s — a period of mass redundancies and few job opportunities for school leavers in industrial South Wales. The insights gained lead Dr Brown to the conclusion that it is wrong to argue that either the educational system simply fails the working class or that the working class simply fail themselves. Rather, it is the interplay between identities and institutions which enables us to understand the various working-class responses to the schooling process.

To some extent, the sub-text of this book — though not, of course, the main findings of the project — has been overtaken by events. We hear fewer demands now for the increased vocationalization of working-class education. Diminishing concern about the levels of youth unemployment and the 'triumph' of New Right pressure groups so evident in the preparation of the 1987 Education Bill represent something of a defeat for the 'new training philosophy' deprecated by Phil Brown. The new City Technology Colleges, cited in this book as a manifestation of the 'new vocationalism', are, in fact, part of a quite different project: concerned with the destruction of LEA power and the break-up of the state system of education as we know it. Much has happened since the early 1980s.

Nevertheless, this is an excellent study which provides evidence for one of the major arguments that *Forum* has been anxious to promote over the years: namely, that the structure and organization of schooling *does* make a difference to the way 'ordinary kids' respond to school and assess their future prospects.

CLYDE CHITTY

Appraisal

Studies in Teacher Appraisal, by Glen Turner and Philip Clift, Falmer Press (1988), pp.223, £9.95.

I have had a refrain going through my head over the last few days (and I am writing this at the end of October 1989). It runs, with apologies to Gerard Manley Hopkins, as follows: 'October is appraisal month and I muse at it and wonder why'. Actually, I know why. Partly as a result of feelings of deserved guilt for being late with this review if I want it to be included in the Spring number of *Forum*. But mostly because in the last few weeks I have had my first experience as an appraisee and as an appraiser, been involved with others in beginning to think through a major appraisal training package and constructing a bid for undertaking a significant part of the appraisal training of a large LEA, and having taught a session on appraisal. I have also been reading the reports on appraisal from the National Steering Group, the Cambridge Evaluation Group and HMI and the response from the

Secretary of State to the NSG's recommendations. His response has almost certainly ensured that 1990 is unlikely to be remembered as the year of appraisal.

However, even if the DES has probably missed an opportunity to build upon the good will generated by the NSG's proposals, representing as they do a late flowering of consensus within the traditional education establishment, it still seems that many LEAs and schools are committed to introducing some kind of appraisal system. Those that are will find Turner and Clift's book worth reading. It reports on a study in which much of the field research was carried out between October 1984 and September 1986 and was funded by the Leverhulme Trust. The work was in two stages. The first resulted in a register containing information on fifty-six appraisal schemes operated by schools and colleges.

In phase two, from this population of fifty-six, eight institutions were selected for case-study examination. In making this selection a number of factors were taken into account designed to achieve a representative sample according to: the four basic types of schemes identified in stage one, the purposes of different schemes and their stage of development, the extent to which involvement was 'voluntary', the size and educational phase of the institutions involved, and their location. The final set of studies included two primary schools, four secondary schools, one upper school and one college.

Early chapters offer a brief description of the project in terms of its purpose and method. By interviewing and observing relevant staff, the authors set out to: 'explore and present the variety of approaches and reactions to appraisal, not to attempt to tease out its relationship to the idiosyncrasies of particular institutions'. They acknowledge that this approach meant presenting their findings in terms of issue rather than by individual institutions. I can understand why they have taken this approach, but regret it. I much admired Clift's earlier study of 'The Art Department' which offers an insightful account of departmental review in action within a single large comprehensive school. It is hard to see in what sense the decontextualized accounts we are presented with in this report can be described as true case studies.

But this is not to suggest that Turner and Clift do not make interesting use of the views and words of their respondents in their discussion of such key issues as: the introduction of appraisal schemes, the purposes of appraisal, appraisal interviews, strategies for collecting evidence, levels of involvement, the appraisal of Heads and of a Senior Management Team, teacher perceptions of appraisal, the impact of appraisal and the costs of appraisal. To date, there are numerous papers and books on the practice of appraisal. Few have much to say about how appraisal is seen and practised by those most intimately involved — teachers as appraisers and appraisees. Turner and Clift have made a useful start. I hope other researchers will follow.

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Radical Venture

Free School: The White Lion Experience, by Nigel Wright, Libertarian Education (1989), pp. 73, £3.95.

Fourteen 'free schools' were set up by radical libertarians in the 1970s and a few state schools attempted to adopt somewhat similar philosophies for a while. That era now seems long past, but what they were challenging still merits consideration.

Opened in Islington in 1972, White Lion Street Free School was a private venture dependent on fund-raising and charities until the ILEA took it on ten years later. Nigel Wright worked there as a teacher for four years, which was considerably longer than most. There was high turnover among both staff and children, the latter mostly staying 2-3 years and spanning nursery to secondary age ranges but never numbering more than fifty. They were predominantly white working class and most of the older ones transferred there at about 13 after unhappy experiences in local secondary schools. A few middle-class parents, and all staff, chose it for ideological reasons.

Intended to develop and be evaluated as a model all-through, neighbourhood Free School, it offered an alternative for which it had to recruit by parents' or children's choice. Their criteria did not necessarily accord with the founders' and workers'. In practice, it provided a neighbourhood nursery from which some children continued for a while and a haven for some older children already alienated by regular schools.

Nigel Wright discusses the tensions and problems encountered by this small inner-city day school whose stated ideals were to give its children freedom 'to learn what they want to learn — so long as it does not interfere with anyone else' and to be a self-governing community where children, parents and staff should have equality in democratic decision-making within the Principles of Operation which were drawn up when it had been running for five years.

Quoting one of the original workers who identified 'one of the great paradoxes' as that the children's 'freedom as used by them was not used as we wanted them to do', he observes that staff consequently tried to manipulate that freedom by constant nagging and by locking doors to protect equipment. He cites many everyday examples of the children's refusal or inability to abide by decisions agreed either at the weekly meetings or individually negotiated.

Few children were there long enough to learn how to exercise freedom democratically. The workers' confused ambivalence about adult roles in this learning context cannot have helped them.

Sadness and enthusiasm pervade this thoughtful and thought-provoking little book. Nigel Wright has striven to be honest, eschewing the judgemental or partisan. He reluctantly concludes that White Lion lacked any coherent and transmissible sense of purpose because its libertarian theory was flawed by unresolved inherent contradictions. It challenged traditional orthodoxies with negative convictions but was unable to develop positive, practical alternative strategies.

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