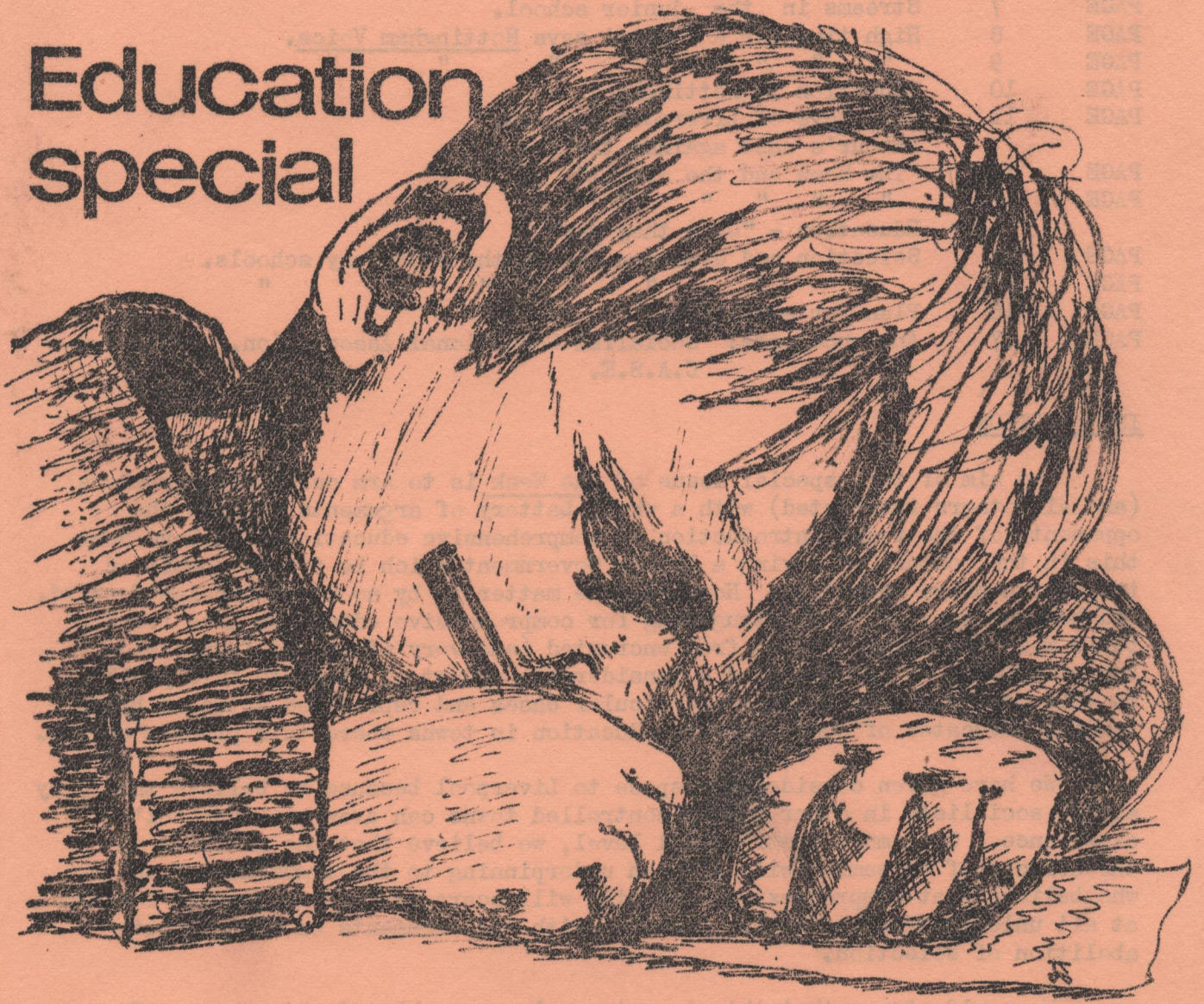


THE Week

Education
special



A NEWS ANALYSIS FOR SOCIALISTS

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INTRODUCTION

The aim of this special issue of The Week is to arm our regular readers (and all others interested) with a whole battery of arguments against the opponents of the rapid introduction of comprehensive education. We have done this in the context of having a Labour Government which is firmly committed to comprehensive education. However, the matter is by no means straightforward, and because many of those struggling for comprehensive education have found their main opposition coming from encrusted (and very often old-fashioned) Labour L.E.A.s we have devoted a considerable amount of space to this problem. To this end we have considered particular cases and reproduced articles by leading advocates of comprehensive education in towns where this problem exists.

We have given considerable space to Liverpool because we believe that many active socialists in other Labour-controlled towns can draw on Liverpool's experience. On a more theoretical level, we believe that the articles on the effects of streaming will give an underpinning to the arguments of those who believe that comprehensive education will scarcely mark an advance forward at all unless streaming goes. Likewise with the arguments on the complete abolition of selection.

We would stress that this is not merely a pamphlet for teachers. Every active member of the labour movement must know how to apply his socialist ideas to practical problems. We trust that this little effort - a combination of very practical case histories and socialist theory - will prove a weapon and a contribution to discussion.

Labour Councils forge ahead

BRISTOL	Plan approved for immediate extension of comprehensive secondary education to cover the whole city.
LIVERPOOL	Comprehensive secondary education for all to be implemented forthwith.
BRADFORD	A scheme whereby an improved Leicestershire system of comprehensive schools be put into operation now approved.
DONCASTER	Has put into operation its own version of the Leicestershire plan of comprehensive education.
DERBY	Modified Leicestershire plan for comprehensive secondary education now approved.
DERBYSHIRE	Modified comprehensive secondary education on the Leicestershire plan already in operation in some areas.
COVENTRY	Complete all through comprehensive system being built.

Tory Councils stick in the mud

NORFOLK	No change envisaged at present in the tripartite system.
LINCOLNSHIRE (Kesteven)	"
HAMPSHIRE	"
ISLE OF WIGHT	"
KENT	"
CHESHIRE	"

What is your Education
Authority going to do ?

NO SELECTION BY HULL TEACHERS from HumberSide Voice.

This year will be remembered in Hull educational circles for two controversial events - first the opening of the David Lister High School, the city's first comprehensive school, and secondly, the abolition of the 11-plus examination. While both of these events are to be regarded as a step in the right direction, it must be understood that they are only the first steps in the development of a genuinely comprehensive system of education. That other steps are to follow appears in Hull's answer to the "Sunday Times" query of November 8th. Hull, we are told, are "Thinking about reorganisation; selection at 11-plus by recommendation; one comprehensive school, four being built." What pattern is to emerge in the future is not clear from such a brief statement.

Another group who have been thinking about reorganisation are the Hull Socialist Teacher's Association and their conclusions are to be found in the pamphlet "Go Comprehensive - A Plan for Hull." They recommend a three-tier system of education, based on three stages:-

The primary school stage for pupils from five to nine years;

The junior high school for pupils from nine to 13 years;

The senior high school for pupils over 13 years.

The pamphlet emphasizes that there should be no selection at any stage in a child's school life. As a general rule the primary school should be a neighbourhood school based on a given catchment area. At the junior high school stage there should be a genuine intellectual, social and geographical mixing of children. This involves a slightly wider area or catchment zone than in the primary stage, but care has been taken to avoid expecting nine-year-olds to travel long distances. The senior high school would be city-wide and movement from the junior high to the senior high would be based on discussions taking place in the pupil's final year in the junior high school.

In these discussions an individual programme of study could be worked out for each child, based on the child's wishes, parent's wishes, recommendations of teachers and, if possible, the advice of the Youth Employment Service. After these discussions the child would go on to the senior high school best able to provide the studies he or she requires.

What advantages would arise from such a comprehensive scheme?

First, the primary school would be freed from the strait-jacket that 11-plus selection has imposed on enlightened teaching. Although Hull has abolished the examination, it has not abolished selection and still grades its children into grammar, technical and modern pupils at 11.

Secondly, the years from nine to 13 could be spent in one school. The authors of the pamphlet see the junior high school as the crux of the new scheme. This is where the pupil will be weaned from childhood to adolescence; this is the important diagnostic stage; this is where personal relationships between pupil, teacher and parent will be most important. In all these aspects 13 seems a more realistic and humane age than 11 at which to make assessments of pupils' needs.

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No Selection say Hull Teachers - continued.

Thirdly, the proposed scheme could be put into operation speedily, without waiting on an expensive new building programme.

All the city's existing grammar schools, plus the David Lister High, would become senior high schools. All other secondary schools would be junior high schools, with a minimum standard of facilities (assembly/dining hall, library, laboratory, workshons, gymnasium).

People who know Hull schools well will realise that many of our older secondary schools cannot meet these requirements, but it is possible with all existing schools, plus the proposed new building programme the authority has already approved to put this plan fully into operation within two years of accepting the scheme.

Speed is a vital factor in these discussions. Quite apart from considerations of social justice, there is the consideration of sheer numbers. By taking advantage of what the Crowther Report called the "valley of the later sixties" Hull could put this scheme into operation when the number of secondary school children will be relatively low. A second population explosion will reach the secondary schools by 1972 and would make reorganisation more difficult and costly.

In the last resort we must ask ourselves what are we doing for our children? And secondly, can it be improved?

According to List 69 of the Ministry of Education we had 5,216 children of 13 years for whom the authority was providing secondary education; 64 per cent of these children were in secondary modern school, 10 per cent in technical and 11 per cent in grammar schools. By comparison 26 per cent of boys in Huddersfield and 31 per cent of girls in Lincoln are in grammar schools. These figures are quoted at length to show the absurdity of selection at 11.

How on earth can anyone seriously suggest that the boys of Huddersfield are more than twice as intelligent as the boys of Hull, or that three times as many Lincoln girls are worthy of grammar school places as the girls in Hull?

Although the figures are not strictly comparable the divergence is wide enough to show the flaws that exist in selection.

Evidence such as the recent work in Manchester which suggests that something like 50 per cent of children may be wrongly placed at eleven is the statistical proof of a system whose faults have been socially condemned for the misery and frustration it has caused.

The case for the comprehensive school is a positive one. It can do for the pupil anything that the grammar school can do. In addition, it can give meaning and purpose to the lives of children who under the present system are offered something less than the best.

A system of education must be child-centred. Every child should receive an education which best fits his or her aptitude and needs, which is another way of saying that every child has a right to a good education. It is time to fit our schools to our children instead of fitting our children into schools. There are no grammar children, technical children or modern children- there are only children, deserving of the best we can give them.

BRIEF HISTORY OF COMPREHENSIVE EDUCATION IN LIVERPOOL from
Arnall Richards.

- July 1955 City Council approved resolution of Education Committee "That immediate steps be taken to establish Comprehensive Secondary Schools" and that the Director of Education be instructed to prepare a scheme to commence in the financial year 1956/57."
- Nov. 1955 Education Committee considered Director's report on Comprehensive Schools. Sub-Committee appointed to implement terms of July 1955 resolution.
- Feb. 1958 Gateacre Comprehensive School opened as the first School of this type in the City.
- Feb. 1958 Education Committee called for a report on the re-organisation on Comprehensive lines of the Stanley Park and Highfield Secondary Modern Schools and of similar groups of schools.
- April 1958 Director's report accepted by Education Committee containing decision to establish Anfield Comprehensive School and to reorganize the Stanley Park and Highfield Schools as Comprehensive Schools.
- March 1960 Education Committee resolved to build the Paddington Comprehensive School.
- May 1961 Labour lost control of the City Council in Municipal Elections.
- Sept. 1961 Education Committee (now, of course, under Conservative control) reversed decision to build Paddington Comprehensive School and substituted two secondary modern schools.
- May 1963 Labour regained control of City Council
- June 1963 Education Committee (once more under Labour control) again decided to build Comprehensive Paddington School.
- July 1963 Education Committee motion approved by City Council:-
"That this Education Committee, believing that Comprehensive Schools afford the greatest possible opportunities to boys and girls of all degrees of ability, affirms that it is its intention that a Comprehensive system of Secondary Education shall be established in Liverpool, and that County Secondary Schools shall be reorganised accordingly at the earliest possible date and, as a consequence, the 11-plus examination shall be abolished; and instructs the Secondary Education Sub-Committee, as a matter of urgency to prepare a scheme directed towards these ends after consultation with the teachers."

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Brief History of Comprehensive Education in Liverpool - continued

- Oct. 1963 Director's report following the above mentioned resolution considered by Secondary Education Sub-Committee, report circulated to Education Committee and teacher's organisations.
- 5th.Nov.1963 Meeting between Education Committee and the teachers' organisations to discuss general lines of development for a system of Comprehensive Education. Recommended setting up of working parties.
- 6th.Nov.1963 Council motion as follows:- "That this Local Education Authority now declares that its objective is to introduce as many all through Comprehensive Schools as is practicable. It further declares that where this is not immediately practicable a two tier system of Comprehensive Education should be introduced as soon as possible, the particular type of two tier system to depend on the nature of the existing schools in the areas in which all-through Comprehensive Schools are not immediately introduced."
- Nov.63/
May.64. Opening of two remodelled schools as Comprehensives (Stanley Park;and Anfield). Liverpool parents Protest Committee (backed by City Conservative Party) begins operations. Protest Meetings held throughout the City and petition forms circulated "S.O.S." ("Save our Schools") campaigns by Conservatives who fight Municipal Election on this issue. Labour Party win eight seats from the Tories.
- 16th April '64 Parents' letter issued by Education Committee, describing broad outlines of proposals.
- May-Nov.1964 Campaign against Comprehensives takes a new direction. No longer directed against Comprehensives as such (!!!) but only against the manner of its introduction.
- Sept. 1964 Opening of Highfield Comprehensive School.
- 15th.Sept.'64 Nine teacher-members of Working Party given a month's leave-of-absence on full pay, provided with an Office in the Education Department and access to the Department's files and direct access to the Director or his Deputy.
- 8th.Oct.'64 Meeting of Working Party after 17 sessions by the Teachers' Representatives in an effort to produce an agreed scheme.
- 13th.Oct.'64 Reports to Secondary Education Sub-Committee on Director's Scheme "D" (Modified) and the Teachers' proposals. Teachers reject Scheme "D" (Modified). Recommendation by Sub-Com. to full Education Committee that Scheme "D" (Modified) be approved.
- 14th.Oct.'64 Special Meeting of Education Committee approve Scheme "D".
- 19th.Oct.'64 City Council approve recommendations of Education Committee for implementing Scheme "D" (Modified) as from September '65.

A SUMMARY OF PROPOSALS FOR LIVERPOOL'S SCHOOLS

from Arnall Richards

The following plan, known as Scheme "D" (Modified), was approved by the Liverpool City Council in October 1964 for implementation in Sept.'65.

SECTION 1 SCHOOLS It is proposed that these schools should be All-through Comprehensive Schools for children between the ages of 11 and 18 or 19. The separate buildings noted in each group would serve as parts of one school, under the overall control of one Head. Each would, however, have a senior teacher in charge and would normally be organised as upper, middle, or lower schools, so that the day-to-day movement of pupils would be small.

There are 16 schools in this category. One of them is a purpose-built comprehensive school. Three more schools in the category have been the subject of such major extensions and remodelling that they are effectively purpose-built. Another purpose-built 12 form-entry comprehensive school will be included in this category when it has been built (1967).

Two more schools will be formed by the amalgamation of existing separate Boys' and Girls' secondary moderns which are virtually on the same site to form Co-ed. comprehensives.

The remaining ten schools will be formed by the grouping of two or three existing schools under a single Head. Schools affected by this grouping included such old-established grammarschools as the Liverpool Institute, the Liverpool Collegiate School, Blackburn House Girls', Alsop's and the Holt. It is over these grammar schools that the controversy rages fiercest. "The wanton destruction of our grammar schools" is the battle-cry of the opposition.

SECTION 2 SCHOOLS The schools in this section would be Comprehensive Schools for children between the ages of 11 and 16. At this stage those pupils who wish to continue full-time secondary education would be able to transfer either to the two schools providing for sixth-form education named in Section 3 or to the sixth forms of the schools in Section 1. This is suggested because it is not expected that any of these schools in Section 2 will have enough pupils wishing to remain beyond the age of 16 to justify the establishment of a separate sixth-form. Several of these schools have at the moment got small sixth-forms, and this Section of Scheme "D" (Modified) has come under attack because of the discontinuance of these existing sixth-forms. There is some substance in this charge, but as Scheme "D" (Modified) is subject to alteration by the Education Committee at any time when circumstances require it the proposed closing-down of existing VI forms may not, in fact, take place. There are twelve schools in this category, none of which is purpose-built. In many of the groupings the individual schools are separated by distances of up to a mile and has been the source of much adverse comment. The view among many teachers is that, given the will, the system can be made to work effectively.

SECTION 3 SCHOOLS There are two schools in this category. These schools will provide facilities for a wide range of Sixth Form courses for pupils aged 16 to 18 or 19 who will transfer from schools in Section 2. Schools located in suburban areas have been chosen for this purpose in order to offer a different educational environment to the pupils from the inner City areas who elect to remain at school beyond the age of 16.

Admission Areas: Each school will be in effect a neighbourhood school. parents will, however, be able to express a preference for their child's attendance at any alternative school on grounds, for example, of preference for co-educational rather than a single-sex school.

STREAMS IN THE JUNIOR SCHOOL by Peter Price

As a teacher, I have been asked by the editor of The Week to write some brief notes about the vexed question of streaming in the junior school. It is a vast subject, and I hope, therefore, this note will make some sense.

Streaming, as readers with young children will know, is the system whereby children coming into the junior school are sorted into their first classes on the basis of what is called their "ability". "Clever" children are put together into "A" classes and "dull and backward" children are taught in "C" classes.

As might be expected, children who are allocated at eight years of age to "A" classes are more than likely to be selected at eleven for grammar schools. On the other hand it would be nearly miraculous for a child in the "C" class to get a place in a grammar school. Not unnaturally, therefore, parents are intensely interested to see that their children are placed in the higher streams. From this you will see that I have related the practice of junior school streaming to the wider question of the eleven-plus selection examination. There are many reasons why these two should be considered together.

Not the least is the interesting fact that in those areas of Leicestershire where comprehensive education is already a fact and all children go on to the same secondary school without any form of eleven-plus taking place, the overwhelming majority of junior schools have already abandoned the practice of streaming.

A lot of evidence has now been accumulated showing that, much to many people's surprise, standards of attainment in unstreamed junior schools are higher than in streamed schools. Even the very bright children seem to do better in unstreamed or "mixed-ability" classes. However, the overwhelming advantage of non-streaming in schools is the way in which this practice helps the less-able children. In unstreamed junior schools, educational backwardness is no longer the major problem it often presents in large, highly-streamed junior schools.

The Week is hardly the place to argue technically the benefits of non-streaming. This has been widely done in the educational press. What does seem important, however, is that a Labour Education Authority should express firm views on this vital question - without, of course, acting in any dictatorial way.

In any case, when eleven-plus selection is really ended, and that cannot be long delayed now, junior school streaming will automatically lose its meaning. "The sooner the better", many a parent, teacher and child will be heard to say.

HIGH TIME FOR A CHANGE ! says Nottingham Voice.

The election of a Labour Government will unquestionably mean that everywhere, throughout the length and breadth of this country, giant steps will be made forward in education. Obviously Nottingham can be no exception.

Now the Labour Party stands absolutely committed to full, comprehensive secondary education. Not only has national policy stated this in every manifesto (and indeed many Annual conferences) since 1945 but local party commitments are no less firm. For example, no later than March 1964, Nottingham City Labour Party passed the following resolution:-

"This meeting congratulates the City Council Labour Group on the success in the Bi-Lateral Secondary Schools. It requests the Labour Group to prepare plans for a further advance in the re-organisation of Secondary Education in order to eliminate all selection procedures and to move towards complete Comprehensive Secondary Education."

So urgent did the City Party see this resolution that it added:

"It believes that these plans should be ready for the 1964 Municipal Elections."

This was certainly a little too much to expect, for the problems of changing over to fully comprehensive education are not just organisational. It will be necessary to prepare the ground by careful explanation to parents of what is involved and by patient negotiation with the teachers who alone can make the transition easy. There can be no doubt, however, that now a Labour Minister is in charge of the Department of Education and Science, the road forward can be speedy and smooth.

That resolution of the City Party may need some explanation to readers.... It uses technical terms with which many parents are not familiar. The remainder of this article attempts an explanation. History is important here. We have to record that in the inter-war years and immediately following the war, Nottingham City failed to provide as many grammar schools as most other authorities. When in the early 1950's 11 per cent of Nottingham children found places in the grammar school, the average percentage for the country as a whole was nearly 20 per cent and for some authorities over 50 per cent. Obviously something drastic had to be done to remedy this situation.

At the same time as Nottingham's lag in providing grammar school places was becoming an object of general concern, the selection examination, the now infamous "eleven-plus" by means of which privileged children were chosen to go to the grammar school was being sharply attacked from all sides.

The temporary solution of Nottingham was as follows: Several very good, new secondary modern schools had been built after the war. These were now organised as bi-lateral schools. Bi-lateral ("two sides") schools as the term suggests are schools which organise two different types of courses (a) "modern" school courses and (b) GCE or, really, grammar school courses. The bi-lateral principle works as follows. First, a small proportion of children are selected at ten years of age for the grammar schools. So eleven plus selection remains. True, the famous intelligence test has been renamed the "verbal reasoning" test (so great had the dislike of the intelligence test become). True, the opinions of the scholastic

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High Time for a Change! - continued.

ability of the children formed by the junior school teachers now carry greater weight. But it is inaccurate to say that eleven-plus selection for the grammar school has been abolished. The best that can be said is that the torture of the old examination has been modified.

What about the "failures" ? Though in spite of the great competition for grammar school places, some purists want us to ban the word "failures". First, if they and their parents are satisfied by this "lack of success", and if the parents do not want the child to stay at school until he is 16, the child goes automatically to his local secondary modern school. Incidentally, according to where he lives, this may be the "modern" stream of a bi-lateral school.

Other children, with parents' support, may still wish to try to cope with a grammar-type, GCE course up to the age of 16. If recommended by his junior school teachers, he may then be allowed to go to the nearest bi-lateral school - into the grammar stream.

Now the first result of this scheme was to raise the number of children taking grammar school courses dramatically - to 32 per cent today. A progressive step to take.

The bi-lateral system has, however, several negative features. First, since there is no sixth form work in the bi-lateral schools, successful GCE candidates have to transfer at 16 to grammar schools if they wish to go on with their studies. Ald.Green, Chairman of the Education Committee, recently stated in a letter that 25 per cent of grammar school sixth form pupils had come from bi-lateral schools. That they are permitted and even encouraged to do this is good; but the fact that the percentage is as high as this proves that the original selection procedure at eleven was very inaccurate. You don't congratulate a thief for not doing a murder and you should not congratulate an education system for righting wrongs committed against children at 11 by promoting them at 16.

More than that, the presence of sixth form work in the grammar school has tremendous educational repercussions throughout the rest of the grammar school. The staff, attracted by sixth form work, is more highly qualified. Scientific apparatus available for fifth form work, for example, is undoubtedly better in the grammar than in the bi-lateral school and evidence is accumulating that, in the secondary modern schools, children with excellent potentialities are to be found in considerable numbers.

The effects too of this two-stage "creaming" on the remaining secondary modern schools proper cannot be over-estimated. Some teachers apparently refer to them as "dust-bin" schools and in Britain today we have no room for dust-bin schools.

Therefore the City Party was wise (even before the election of a Labour Government) to suggest that the time is now ripe for a move towards full comprehensive education.....

Let our City Fathers lead.

EDUCATION IN NOTTINGHAM.

The following letter was also sent to Tribune, the Times Educational Supplement and Nottingham Voice.

It is difficult to understand how Alderman Green*, writing in Tribune November 13th, can consider the Nottingham bilateral system to be "a comprehensive pattern (with a small 'c')".

His letter, when read with the 1963 Annual Report of his Education Committee would suggest that it is a multi-partite system, segregated at 11 by means of verbal reasoning tests and teachers' assessments. About one per cent first-class ability children go to direct grant or independent schools; about 16 per cent second-class ability children go to grammar schools; another 16 per cent third-class ability children go to GCE streams in bilateral schools with a later opportunity to transfer to grammar school sixth forms; about 47 per cent lucky fourth-class ability children go to non-GCE streams in bilateral schools; and 20 per cent unlucky fourth-class children still go to secondary modern schools without GCE streams.

The introduction of this system seven years ago was a progressive move extending grammar-type education and reducing parental worry over the 11-plus, but it is not comprehensive. It uses a selective process at 10-plus with all its implications of labelling children: although recognizing the "late-developer", it has not really escaped from the outmoded doctrine of fixed-abilities since it still "separates the cream". The Committee admits that it is failing to convince its grammar school teachers of their duty to succeed with their less-able pupils.

Should not the Labour Education Committee in Nottingham be considering how this system can be transformed quickly and smoothly into a fully comprehensive one in accordance with the declared policy of the Labour Government?

In conclusion, I should like to welcome Alderman Green's comments on the importance of tackling problems in primary education, but these are parallel and inter-related, not alternative, priorities.

Yours sincerely,

DAVID WOOD. (Hon. Sec. Socialist Educational Association,
Nottingham and District Branch)

* Alderman Green is the chairman of the Labour-controlled Education Committee in Nottingham. At the time of writing the controversy caused by his attitude towards comprehensive education is still raging. Many organisations had put down resolutions opposing this attitude and a special meeting of the Nottingham City Labour Party has been organised to discuss the question. The Week will cover this controversy as it develops.

MORE NEWS OF LIVERPOOL SCHOOLS by a Nottingham teacher

Liverpool is now committed to having comprehensive schools for all children by September 1965. But problems are still thorny. Children in central areas used to pass the 11+ at the rate of only 19%. Thus most new grammar schools were sited in suburbs where the 11+ pass rate was nearly 50%. To be truly comprehensive a school must have a socially varied catchment area. The easy administrative solution to this problem would have been two-tier schools changing at thirteen. The Committee said no - because they knew that the first tier would occupy the old Secondary Mods. at the centre and the old insidious 'Sec. Mod.' atmosphere would soon prevail. In addition, the Burnham salary scales would lure the abler teachers into the top tier schools and rift would be complete. Liverpool have set their faces against this and are opting for 'all through comprehensive education from 11 to 18'. Two tier schools are to be few and far between in Liverpool.

More power to 'scouse land' say I; another generation hence and the debased human wrecks we ^{see} sometimes in 'Z cars' may no longer exist.

LABOUR'S CASE AGAINST THE 11+ extracted from Labour Party 'Talking Points'
Nos 23 1961, 15 1963

In the past 10 years there has been a steady accumulation of evidence against selection at 11. Within the past year this process has been quickened. It is now impossible to read any study of the educational system without finding further evidence against selection.

In its policy on education, 'Learning to Live' published in 1958 the Labour Party proposed a radical reorganisation of the secondary school system on comprehensive lines. In 'Signposts for the Sixties' this policy was reiterated. This document stated that to achieve genuine equality of educational opportunity we must "reorganise the state secondary schools on comprehensive lines in order to end the segregation by the 11+ examination which is now almost universally condemned on educational as well as on social grounds". It is based on a false view of intelligence. It makes quite insupportable assumptions about the existence of distinct types of education. It involves a closed view of society.

It is against this background that about a dozen local authorities have in the past six months decided either to end 11+ selection or to consider doing so. Many Labour Groups are actively considering plans to end selection. All ought to be doing so.

The Labour Party holds that selection is wrong and it will replace it by comprehensive secondary education. There are already 152 comprehensive schools in England and Wales catering for 157,000 children. By 1965 about 11 per cent or more of secondary school children will be in comprehensive schools on present plans. The Party has made it clear the Labour Government would not seek to impose a uniform pattern of comprehensive education throughout the country. Each local education authority should be free to choose its own variant. The common feature would be an end to selection at eleven.

"The Home and the School"* by Julian Atkinson

It would be very difficult indeed to overstress the debt that socialists interested in education owe to Dr. Douglas for producing this book, which shows with great clarity and with an abundance of documentation the class biases remaining in our educational system.

The major thesis of the book is presented in the foreword by D V Glass who writes of the working class child: "Beginning with handicaps, in the sense of having a poorer physical and cultural environment, the child will suffer an intensification of disadvantages, relative to middle class children, during their primary school years. If they live in poor housing conditions, they may well attend schools with a low record of success at the 11+ examination. Those who are least well cared for may find themselves allocated to the lower streams at school and their school performance will tend to conform accordingly. In general they are less likely to receive encouragement from their parents. Between the ages of 8 and 11 years, the working class and middle-class children will thus tend to grow further apart in operational ability".

Douglas first sets the problem by giving us the fact that if working class children had the same chance of getting into grammar schools as upper middle class children of the same measured ability based on tests at 8 years, then 56% more grammar school places would be required.

What then causes the decline in opportunity and measured ability between 8 and 11 years in working class children? Streaming, Douglas tells us, is partly to blame. He gave tests to children at 8 years and then again at 11 and graded them on a 'T scale' where T = 50 was the average. The T score can be converted to IQ as $IQ = 25 + 1.5 (T \text{ score})$

Measured ability at 8.	Change in score 8 - 11 years	
	Stream A	Stream B'
41 - 45	+ 5.67	- 0.95
46 - 48	+ 3.70	- 0.62
49 - 51	+ 4.44	- 1.60
52 - 54	+ 0.71	- 1.46
55 - 57	+ 2.23	- 1.94
58 - 60	+ 0.86	- 6.34

What emerges from this table is that the selection at the point of streaming is self-fulfilling; those who are labelled A improve and those who are labelled B deteriorate. This vitally important selection is by no means without a class bias. There

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* Author: Dr. J.B.H. Douglas. (MacGibbon & Kee 36/-)

are 11% more middle class children in upper streams than would be expected from their measured ability and 26% fewer in the lower streams. Douglas finds that middle class children tend to improve more than working class children in each of the streams. In the upper streams the middle class child on average will improve by 1.63 points while the working class child will only improve by 0.48 points. In the lower streams the bias is more marked with the middle class child improving by 0.78 points and the working class child actually deteriorating by 1.05 points.

Douglas concludes, "Children who come from well-kept homes and who are themselves clean, well-clothed and shod, stand a greater chance of being put in the upper streams than their measured ability would seem to justify. Once there they are likely to stay and to improve in performance in succeeding years. This is in striking contrast with the deterioration noticed in those children of similar initial ability who were placed in the lower streams"

The position is aggravated by the near-permanency of the streaming. While teachers answered that they believed that 19% of children transferred between the streams, the actual percentage was 2.3% !

The uncomfortable message that this book gives us is that the educational system rather than equalising class differences and opportunities, exacerbates them.

EDUCATION - 'WHAT THEY SAY'

In his excellent book "The Comprehensive School" (Penguin 5/6) Robin Pedley, director of Exeter University Institute of Education, said "One cannot resist the conclusion that, although the myth of fair and accurate selection has been exposed since the middle fifties, at least a score of inactive Labour authorities did not want to change. Living on the memory of past deeds and ambitions, their character is essentially conservative. The wind of radical thought and reforming zeal chills their old bones". To this blunt view one can add the statement of the deputy chairman of Liverpool Education Committee, John Hamilton, "Once the political decision has been taken to reorganise education into comprehensive schools, the question is how to do it. This is of course the hardest part of the exercise because while so many people will pay lip service to the ideal of comprehensive education, when they are asked to put into action they find all sorts of reasons for saying why it cannot be done in their particular area".

In case your local Labour Education Committee feel such sources are suspect or at the very least over-zealous here is the Tories own darling the 'Bow Group'. Commending comprehensive education in their latest pamphlet 'Strategy for Schools' they say: "It will be impossible to provide the balanced curriculum envisaged within the existing tripartite system" So now you know.

SELECTION AND DE-STREAMING IN THE SECONDARY SCHOOLS by R. Bolam.

The most striking thing about England's system of comprehensive schools is the apparent confusion in the minds of local education authorities as to what constitutes a comprehensive system. There is, however, one profoundly important characteristic that they all have in common: the fundamentally hierarchical nature of their structure. This is most obvious in authorities like the L.C.C. where at present there are, broadly speaking, four tiers in the hierarchy and for a parent whose child has the ability the order of preference is fairly clear: grant-aided, grammar, comprehensive and finally secondary modern. This kind of situation is almost bound to arise in any area with those four kinds of schools co-existing, and of course in such a situation some kind of selection procedure is equally inevitable. The need for selection is less obvious in those areas where the grammar schools, qua grammar schools, have been abolished, yet although places like Manchester, Liverpool and Bristol will certainly have a more genuinely comprehensive system I have not heard that those authorities intend to abolish selection. The reason is not hard to find. The hierarchy continues, albeit in a potentially more flexible form, in the system of streaming. Hence some form of selection procedure is still required to ascertain the appropriate stream for each child. It matters little whether selection is carried out internally or externally; as long as streaming remains the need for selection will also remain and it will not matter at all how the schools are structured in relation to one another.

It is clear therefore that the abolition of selection inevitably involves the abolition of streaming (as well as of grammar and secondary moderns of course) and it is imperative that the arguments for and against streaming receive careful consideration by those who advocate the abolition of selection. It is fortunate that 1964 has seen so much informed discussion of this very problem in the shape of three books:

Non-Streaming in the Junior School ed. B. Simon (P.S.W. Pub. 5/-)

This book is in four sections and consists mainly of articles reprinted from the magazine "Forum". Section 1 is the evidence submitted to the Plowden Committee by the magazine's editorial board and is called "The Case for Non-Streaming"; the other three sections are concerned with the attitudes of teachers and children to streaming, the transition from streamed to non-streamed teaching, and with the problems of methods in schools and training colleges.

Streaming: an Educational System in Miniature by B. Jackson (Routledge, Kegan & Paul 21/-.)

This book to some extent anticipates the N.F.E.R. research project which is at present going on but of course Jackson's sample was much smaller and thus his study (conducted under the auspices of the Institute of Community Studies) is of limited value, as he himself points out. He looks in some detail at the attitudes of teachers and parents to streaming and also at streamed schools in action.

The Home and the School by J.P.H. Douglas (MacGibbon and Kee 36/-)

This is the third main report on an 18 year study of 5,000 children born in the first week of March 1946 and it deals with their primary school period up to the 11+. It is by far the most important of the three books since it backs up all its assertions with very convincing statistics.

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Selection and De-Streaming in the Secondary Schools - continued

All of these three books are of crucial importance to the debate on streaming. The main points to emerge are:-

- a. Streaming in the primary schools is regular practice and very often takes place at 7 not 11.
- b. Teachers' judgements of ability are influenced by the types of home from which the children come. Middle class children tend to be allocated to the upper streams and lower class children to the lower streams, regardless of measured ability.
- c. The system is self-validating since the less able children in the upper streams improve more than the more able children, while the more able in the lower streams deteriorate more than the less able children.
- d. The annual rate of transfer from one stream to another was found by Douglas to be 2.3% (Vernon regards 10% as the minimum needed to counteract testing errors.)
- e. Very often the A stream children get superior treatment to the lower streams in the form of better equipment and teachers.
- f. Many schools and teachers are successfully teaching children in non-streamed groups.
- g. Teachers on the whole support streaming yet are very often unaware of what goes on outside their own schools (or even classrooms). In particular they are ignorant of such facts as those contained in a-f above.
- h. Parents, too, tend to accept streaming while remaining ignorant of what it means to their children (e.g. that B or C stream children rarely or never pass the 11+).

These points seem to me to present a formidable indictment of streaming, but it is arguable that they are all negative, presenting no positive arguments in favour of non-streaming, and in any case that they apply only to the primary sector. I can only refer such a critic to Simon's book where he will find that much therein is indeed very relevant to secondary education. Briefly, by adopting a more flexible approach to teaching method (individual, group, class and team teaching); by substituting previous achievement for comparison with others as a yardstick and co-operation for competition; by approaching each child as an individual instead of as an approximation to some mythical class average; in short by treating every class as the heterogeneous entity that it is instead of as the homogeneous entity that is administratively convenient to suppose it to be, secondary school teachers are at present teaching normal size classes successfully.

PLAN FOR EDUCATION by Alan Rooney

More councils are now planning for comprehensive education - over 90 now have, or are planning such schemes. And many other authorities are moving in the same direction. Such plans deserve the enlightened support of all socialists.

Eleven-Plus

There is rather wide criticism of the eleven-plus, and the Labour Government is firmly against this brutal system of selection. Under this system, 30 per cent are successful but 70 per cent of our children, mainly working-class, are told that they have failed at eleven years of age.

Of those who pass this examination, six per cent go to the fee-paying public schools, 17 per cent to grammar schools, three per cent to technical high schools and four per cent to comprehensive schools. The 70 per cent failures go to secondary moderns.

It's not surprising that the eleven-plus can cause great distress for the children who fail, their parents and even their teachers. The various comprehensive education plans aim to end this unhealthy competition.

Comprehensives

It would seem clear that the 70 per cent eleven-plus failures, their parents and their secondary modern teachers would gain enormously by the introduction of comprehensive education.

The Liverpool education committee should be solidly supported in their urgent plan to introduce a real system of comprehensive education next year. Bristol, too, is boldly ending its subsidy to the direct-grant grammar schools.

Campaign

But the opponents of comprehensives have organised against them. This should spur parents and teachers of secondary modern school children and all socialists to actively campaign for comprehensive schools.

The opposition comes mainly from the grammar schools. However, their opposition fails to admit that a comprehensive education policy aims to bring all schools up to a grammar school level.

Class Conflict

It's sad to see the way some grammar school parents, teachers and pupils want to keep down those of the secondary modern schools. There's the particularly sad spectacle of some working-class parents with their children at grammar schools trying to keep down "the secondary modern lot". This is probably causing much amusement to the top six per cent of British school-children who attend the fee-paying public schools. How they must be enjoying themselves over these "lower class" squabbles.

Public Schools.

Unfortunately the comprehensive schools won't affect them. The public schools will still provide an education for "top people". The only way to break up the political power of Eton, Harrow, Winchester, Oxford and Cambridge circuit is to ban the fee-paying public schools altogether. This is really vital. It will be no use talking about the quality of opportunity of the comprehensive schools if the rich can still buy educational privilege for their children at public schools. It is to be hoped that Mr. Stewart, the new Minister of Education, will completely remedy this by integrating the public schools into the comprehensive system of education.

SOCIALIST EDUCATIONAL ASSOCIATION*

The aims of S.E.A. are many. It must propagate the ideas of comprehensive education in the Labour Party itself and this is no mean task, since party policy is very often understood only in part by most members. The deeply conservative nature of many Labour L.E.A.'s means also that we must act as a pressure group at Constituency and Borough Labour Party level. In addition to these comparatively simple tasks S.E.A. must continually be examining existing comprehensive schools, selection tests, the rival claims of heredity and environment in shaping intelligence, effects of streaming and non-streaming and the educability of children generally.

*The Socialist Educational Association is affiliated to the Labour Party and was founded from the National Association of Labour Teachers (N.A.L.T.). Address: 29 Beaumont Rise, London, N.19.

NOTTINGHAM S.E.A.

The Nottingham branch has experienced a considerable revival in the last six months. This revival derives from a Labour Government at Whitehall, the need for local initiative in the field of comprehensive education and a local secretary* prepared to devote himself to this particular aspect of the struggle for socialism.

Nottingham S.E.A. Meetings for the immediate future are:-

Comprehensive Schools and the Labour Party - 15th January 1965.
7.30pm at the People's Hall, Heathcote Street, Nottingham.

Teachers' Salaries and the Labour Government - 16th February 1965.
7.30pm at the Clinton Arms, Shakespeare Street, Nottingham.

The International Trend against Streaming and Segregation - 8th March 1965.
7.30pm at the Clinton Arms, Shakespeare Street, Nottingham.

*David Wood, 3 Claremont Gardens, Ebury Road, Nottingham.

C.A.S.E. (Council for the Advancement of State Education)

Did you know that there was a Nottingham branch ?

This rapidly expanding organisation (twelve branches in the Midlands) is non-political and non-sectarian. It exists to promote the improvement of all forms of State Education from primary schools to universities. Anyone interested should write to:-

C.A.S.E.,
2a Mabel Grove,
West Bridgford,
Nottinghamshire.