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'Skill', 'competence' and 'competences' in Youth and Community Work.

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Since the publication of the Albemarle report (1959), youth workers have largely taken for granted the need for, and possibility of, 'skilled' forms of their practice. Any debate has focussed on the context for applying such skills ('one-to-one', group, community, organisation, training), with (rather less often) attempts being made to 'unpack' what is involved in, say, counselling or supervising 'skilfully'.

From the mid-1980s - and now with a focus on youth and community work - a further shift occurred in the language being used to describe this expertise. Increasingly the concept of 'skill' was replaced by that of 'competence' or 'competences'.

This paper will consider why this latter development occurred and what its significance has been both for youth and community work itself and for the training provided for it, it will seek to place these questions in a broader economic, political and ideological context and to examine the key concepts of 'skill', 'competence' and 'competences' from a range of critical perspectives: historical, sociological and psychological.

Early conceptions of youth work: the 'personal qualities' of the leader

For much of its history, 'youth leadership' was very largely understood as a 'movement' with an explicit missionary intent. Dominant groups, operating from positions of considerable religious (or at least moral) certainty and class power, were assumed to have the right, the obligation and the ability to impart their 'world view' to the (working class) young. How well the adults concerned carried out this task was seen to be related principally to whether they had the necessary (in-born and/or in-bred) 'personal qualities'.

At the start of the century, for example, Charles Russell and Lilian Rigby (1908) were emphasising that, for boys' club work, 'the beginner needs only to be a man possessed of firmness of character, common-sense, and optimism, qualities which, far from being rare, are a very common inheritance of the ex-public schoolboy and men of that stamp'. By the 1930s, Gertrude and Godfrey Pain (1932) were still talking of the importance of the girls' club leader's 'personal touch, her vision and spirit'; while one writer as late as 1948 was urging youth leaders 'to be shop-windows through which young people can see and admire all that is good and worthwhile', (Quoted in Davies and Gibson, 1967).

By the late 1950s, references were appearing to the youth leader's 'technique'. However, a central concern remained the 'golden rules of conduct' for the leader: being 'realistic in outlook', knowing members, and 'making ourselves socially desirable' (Macalister Brew, 1957).

'Professionalism' and the emergence of the skilled youth worker

Throughout the twentieth century however, and especially post-1945, wider economic, technological and political changes have subjected this dominant ideology to increasing scrutiny. Most significantly for this paper were the pressures which came 'from below': from, for example, organised sections of the 'labouring classes' and from Black and women's groups as well as from often commercially-inspired forms of 'popular culture' which was sharply at odds with endorsed ruling group values.

These developments did not produce any **fundamental** shifts in economic, political or even often 'cultural' power. However, they did come to be reflected in state policies, including 'social policy'. These not only began to acknowledge the need to provide institutionalised forms of schooling and support which were more responsive to working class needs. In a society which, certainly by the early 1960s, had convinced itself that 'it had never had it so good' and that 'we are all middle class now', they were presented and justified as if questions of power - who had it, who didn't and how it was used - had finally been settled. As a result, by the 1960s 'politics' had been evacuated from both 'education' (including 'social education') and 'welfare'.

The 'social problems' which remained were thus explained as largely personal and interpersonal. To solve them, it was asserted, the most positive thing 'society' needed to do was, through education, to equip each of its citizens to make the fullest use of the 'equality of opportunity' then being created. Safeguards against failure included shoring up family life where this seemed to be under strain, or 'treating' or 'readjusting' individuals who broke down - or who broke the rules.

For a short time, and exceptionally over the whole 'run' of British history, enormous faith was thus placed in this kind of 'social engineering'. The 'skills' of 'experts' acting with considerable 'professional autonomy' (teachers, careers officers, psychiatrists, social workers, probation officers and even youth workers) were at a premium - though on the (albeit usually implicit) condition that they carry out the specifically educational and remedial tasks assigned to them. Indeed, the special anxiety which existed at that time about a widening 'generation gap' meant that policy-makers were liable to be particularly impressed by claims of well-honed skills for working with 'youth'.

The Albemarle Report carried out its review of the Youth Service at a transitional time in these developments, when this 'social democratic' view of social policy was being refined. Not surprisingly therefore it continued to display considerable respect for that older 'movement' tradition of youth work. It still saw, for example, 'mature persons with a natural gift for leadership' as an important source of recruitment; and it warned against the 'incalculable mischief' which could be caused by 'obtuseness or weakness of fibre' (Paras 248-9).

Nonetheless the Report itself, and developments it set in motion, prompted some significant shifts of thinking. In particular it called for 'a strong body of skilled workers' who could 'bring a trained mind to bear . . . (and) experiment with new techniques and new modes of youth work'. (Para 244)

It also led to the establishment of the National College for the Training of Youth Leaders, whose staff took up very public positions on the need for high levels of 'professional skill' (see Matthews, undated and 1966; Sidebottam, 1963; Leighton, 1972); and for a practice 'discipline' '. . . rooted in an understanding of human relations' (Davies and Gibson, 1967, 145). In the 1960s and 1970s full-time youth workers increasingly identified themselves with these aspirations, giving considerable attention to establishing the special nature of their expertise.

In relation to the 'youth work' which(at least until the early 1970s) continued to be a specialist focus of attention, these esoteric skills seemed to include:

- Understanding, even 'diagnosing', the 'needs' of the actual young people with whom the worker was directly involved.
- Listening for, understanding and interpreting the implied (non-verbal) as well as the spoken content of communication which took place in the 'informal' meetings central to youth work practice - both amongst young people and between young people and adults.
- Observing and then interpreting the processes and dynamics of young people's peer group interactions: how roles were taken up and used, how informal as well as formal power and influence was acquired and used, how these affected the tasks undertaken by these groups, and so on.
- Intervening in these processes - one-to-one, within young people's peer groups, in 'community' or organisational situations - through the use of leisure or other relevant 'activities', and through other non-verbal as well as verbal means.
- Carrying out these interventions in ways which were congruent with youth work's social educational values and aims.
- In similar ways and for the same ends, intervening in key relationships amongst the providers of youth work and perhaps other services.
- Identifying and helping to release or make available to young people relevant resources - human, financial, material and so on.

At times this notion of 'skill' contained images taken from technical and technological areas of work - that is of functional manipulations of 'components' and 'instruments' which would allow workers to shape and mould their 'material' to ends which were clearly definable and were generally agreed as desirable. The more explicit, influential and more relevant models however were derived from the prestigious and powerful occupations of medicine and psychiatry (especially psycho-analysis).

Within youth work the attempts to elaborate and systemise these models never went to the extremes of, for example, some expositions of 'casework'. (See Hollis, 1964; Perlman, 1957). Nonetheless most discussions on training and management simply assumed that a distinguishable and distinctive youth work expertise did exist, and was embodied in 'skills' which could and should be imparted to as many practitioners as possible. Only when you had this training and had acquired these 'skills' could you be regarded as 'qualified'.

The reaction against professionalised 'skill'

Repoliticising welfare

Even when - in the later 1960s and the early 1970s - such assumptions were most taken for granted, doubting voices existed. Many of these came from that traditional school which, unmovably, saw good intentions, the right personality and intuitions, warmth and spontaneity as the bed-rock of all 'youth leadership'. For them, the notion of 'skill' smacked far too much of calculation and impersonality and therefore was at best questionable and worst dangerous.

Similar questions were raised from more 'social scientific' perspectives. (See for example Wooton, 1959; Halmos, 1965). Though usually focussed on the relatively big battalions of psychiatry, social work and teaching, these critiques undoubtedly had knock-on effects for, and were increasingly picked up by, youth and (now) community workers.

In particular, a view re-emerged that practice-with-people could never be a-political. One dimension of this, emerging particularly clearly from the reviving women's movement of the time, was the focus on 'the personal as political' - that is, on those elements of power within face-to-face relationships which significantly affected how they develop and how they are experienced (differentially) by those involved.

Inevitably, however, it also raised more 'macro' questions: about who, within society generally had the power to allocate vital material resources, to shape worker-client exchanges, and (no less crucial) to define 'social problems'. Though not new (see for example Wright Mills (1943)), such perspectives gained renewed impetus in the early 1960's. This came from, for example, 'the rediscovery of poverty' (see Able-Smith and Townsend, 1965; Coates and Silburn, 1970), and from critiques of predominantly 'individual pathology' explanations of social problems embodied in descriptions like 'inadequates' and 'problem families'. This critique was embodied in 'Case-Con', the publication of the revolutionary social work movement, which introduced satirical articles like 'Can-u-cope' with your favourite compere 'King Konn', (Case Con, 1970).

Structural (and especially economic) analyses were thus developed which once again made political action (often characterised as community activism) fashionable. This encouraged groups to work 'collectively to alter their access to services, to provide facilities they desired and to improve their own and their neighbourhood's position.' (Holman, 1974.)

This reinstatement of politics into 'welfare' meant that no longer was it taken for granted that, by their 'skills' alone, the human relations 'experts' could resolve individual and social problems. It also cast serious doubt on whether these skills were so exclusive to the professional experts. Politicians, policy-makers and even 'laypeople' on the receiving end of services were all beginning to assert their right and their ability to contribute distinctively and at least as relevantly as the experts.

Challenging professional effectiveness and professional power

At the same time, evidence began to accumulate that the effectiveness of the new professionals' 'skills' was far from proven. In 1970, for example, in 'professional' welfare circles, Mayer and Timms' study of 'working class impressions of casework' caused something of a sensation. It revealed that, at the very least, major conflicts of perception existed between 'worker' and 'client' on what was useful social work 'help' and what was not.

As others began to draw together supporting evidence from further afield (see for example Nokes, 1967), another long-neglected question surfaced: in whose interests were these claims to special expertise being made? The conventional and usually taken-for-granted answer of course was: 'the client', with 'the welfare state' being projected as society's 'moving frontier of social conscience'. However another possible answer which began to attract attention was: the state itself and the class and other dominant interests it supported (see Handler, 1968).

A third possible beneficiary of such professional autonomy and power might also be identified, however: the professionals themselves. Indeed, by the early 1980s Wilding (1981), writing for a socialist readership, was expressing deep concerns about the narrow self-interest and the lack of (especially political) accountability of such professional groups.

With even greater impact however, **the Right,** too, began to take an interest in their role and power. In 1983 for example, a 'think tank' set up by the prime minister herself, noted how

> the concept of the professional, with his claim to his unique understanding of his area of practice (sic), when incorporated in a state bureaucracy, can . . . lead to service provision being driven by producers' (ie professionals') views of what ought to be provided . . . rather than consumers' views of what they want. (*The Guardian,* 1983.)

The result was a series of vigorous attacks on the 'caring professions' by the Thatcher administrations of the eighties which left many of their claims to esoteric skills in tatters.

Bridging the gap between 'worker' and 'client'

Specifically within the youth and community work field, claims to special expertise were anyway seen to be seriously flawed. For one thing, they could distance workers from the people who were supposed to be benefiting from their work. Hamilton (1972), for example, noted a shift amongst youth workers 'from an expressed concern for the young, to a strategy which will, hopefully, elevate the workers' status within the community'. He called for youth and community workers 'to drop their so called objectivity and decide whose side they are on'.

In 1973 the Association of Community Workers (ACW) more or less did this formally by allowing anyone defining themselves as a community worker to become a member. One of its reasons for doing this was 'the wish . . . to maintain a "client-centred" viewpoint'. (Cox and Derricourt, 1975, 77.)

The move however was also based on the view that 'community work skills are not particularly well defined; they are as much derived from experience as training, while many of them are supposed to be readily developed among the clients themselves. Mystifying these skills must go against many of the tenets of community work as an activity'. (Cox and Derricourt, 1975, 84.)

Nor were such views confined to ACW. The often heated debate which led the Community and Youth Association to convert itself in 1983 into the Community and Youth Workers Union was run through with similar concerns. Within it, a crucial objective was greater recognition for the rights and (significantly) *the abilities* of part-time workers, most of whom did not of course have a nationally validated training or qualification.

With hindsight, such criticisms can no doubt be seen as over-simplifying, even romanticising, the notions of the 'client-centredness', 'consumer choice' and 'experiential learning' on which they relied so heavily.

Nonetheless, by the early 1980s their challenge had had its effect. The professionals' claims to 'objective', even 'objectified' forms of youth and community work 'skill' came under increasingly critical scrutiny. More and more they were seen as too exclusive; too identified with the defence of privileged and powerful positions for some workers as against others; too liable to distance these workers from those who were supposed to be the beneficiaries of their work. The ground was well laid for more 'experientially-led' and (purportedly) less divisive conceptualisations of this work.

From professional 'skill' to worker 'competence(s)'; two debates, one language.

It was onto this stage, from the mid-1980s onwards, that the notions of 'competence' and 'competences' were launched into youth and community work. From the start, these had two separate trajectories, each with independent origins.

Stimulus from within: youth and community work sources of 'competence' and 'competences'

One, coming directly from within youth and community work itself, represented something of a direct response to the challenges to professionalised 'skill' outlined

above. However, more positively, it arose too from a search for more 'empowering' forms of education and training for unqualified youth and community work practitioners which were implicit in the critique.

Within the now widely re-named 'youth and community work service', the report of the Panel to Promote the Continuing Development of Training for Part-time and Voluntary Youth and Community Workers (PAVET), *Starting from Strengths*, was undoubtedly the most influential embodiment of this shift (Bolger and Scott, 1984). Increasingly influential, however, have been the usually separate efforts within community work more broadly to get recognition for, and indeed now formal accreditation of, uncertificated workers' learning from past practice and from their wider 'life experience'.

'External' stimuli: pressures from vocational education and training

Training for youth and community work is of course part of the wider field of vocational education and training and has always been influenced by it. It is not surprising therefore that notions of 'competence' and 'competences' have entered it from this source, too. These however have been shaped particularly by, first, the Manpower Services Commission (MSC) and then by its vigorous offspring the National Council for Vocational Qualifications (NCVQ) and **its** current highly solicitous guardian, the Department of Employment.

These developments, it seems, though not untouched by the critiques of the professionalisation of 'skill' in the human relations occupations, have little if anything to do with concerns to empower their unqualified staff. As we shall see later, they stemmed overwhelmingly from very long standing anxieties about Britain's economic and especially industrial performance. Amongst other things, these seemed to indicate two priority focuses: 'social and life skills' training, especially for young workers, through which conformity and compliance could be learnt (see Davies, 1979; Finn, 1987); and training in 'hard' (though low level) technical skill seen as essential by employers. In its pursuit of the latter, NCVQ has increasingly prompted - indeed, required - vocational education and training to resort to the language of 'competence' and 'competences'.

We suggest later that some of the arguments advanced by *Starting from Strengths* contain internal inconsistencies which have generated their own confusions within youth and community work's training discourse and practice. This confusion has however been confounded by another, no less serious, communication problem: a failure to clarify - indeed, often, even to recognise - how NCVQ notions of 'competence' and 'competences' rest on assumptions and values which are sharply in conflict with those central to most youth and community work training.

As a result - and with some profound political, institutional and above all pedagogical consequences - participants in youth and community's debate on education and training seem constantly to be separated by a common language.

The Starting from Strengths conception of 'competence'

The impact of Starting from Strengths

The primary focuses of *Starting from Strengths* were part-time and voluntary workers in the education-based 'youth and community services', including the voluntary organisations within this: and their need for alternative, non-course routes to training and qualification. However, its effects on all aspects of training for youth and community workers have been profound, not least in its initial articulation of 'competency'-based approaches to this.

This influence is clear on CETYCW's endorsement guidelines (1989, 1991) as well as on regional 'portfolio'-based schemes for part-time workers (see for example YHAFHE, 1991). It was a key element in the CETYCW report on training the trainers (Young, 1988); provided a basis for Bainbridge's work on validating learning from experience (1988); and was the focus of long and sometimes heated debates within the apprenticeship schemes developed under the DES's Educational Support Grant Scheme 'Youth Leaders for the Inner City'.

Indeed by the end of the 1980s this reliance on 'competence'-based frameworks was more or less taken-for-granted and was paving the way for strong links between youth and community work training and further and higher education generally - through for example the credit accumulation and transfer schemes (CATS) being encouraged by both NCVQ and Council for National Academic Awards (CNAA) (Banks 1990).

The rationale of Starting from Strengths

Duncan Scott made clear in his foreword to *Starting from Strengths* that it rested on a commitment, not to be de-professionalise but to de-mystify the practice of youth and community work. Even so, the report displayed that scepticism about, even distrust of, 'professionalism' within the 'caring' occupations which had surfaced more generally in the later sixties.

The report was highly critical of professionalised models of training and qualification which ended up defining the non-professional 'primarily in terms of needs and deficits' (P. 18). In part the authors attributed this to the way the notion of 'skill' had been used. According to its evidence only some part-timers were to merit 'high quality (training) schemes' aimed at promoting 'professional skills and understanding' (P. 18). Most of these workers were seen by their (full-time) professional colleagues as operating at a lower level of skill than themselves - a conclusion which clearly significantly shaped the report's recommendations.

Though it was *Starting from Strengths'* critique of professionalism which led to that broader radical reassessment of training for youth and community work discussed above, it drew heavily too on the best positive principles of the work itself. It was influenced by the early writings of both the Black Consciousness and the women's movements. It was also rooted in concepts of empowerment (see Freire, 1970) and was linked in with a range of progressive developments in adult education. These emphasised a negotiated curriculum, informal learning outside institutions and full recognition of a **process** of learning which could not be divorced from what was being learnt.

In his Foreword, Scott cautioned: 'Beware the romantic image of the unpaid volunteer'. Indeed the report itself explicitly eschewed such idealism, noting for example the 'collusion with sexism' of some of the part-timers involved in one of its case studies (P. 27). More recently Scott (1990) has gone on to expound these warnings even more fully and convincingly (see review in this issue).

Nonetheless, *Starting from Strengths* gave a strong endorsement to the role and contribution of 'indigenous' workers within youth and community work. It regarded such workers as deriving an invaluable mandate, credibility and self-worth from their membership of the very groups and communities with whom they worked. It concluded, too, that they had learnt and could go on learning from their experience, not just as 'youth and community workers' - a label which many anyway rejected or did not fully understand - but also from their broader 'life experience'.

Most crucial in the context of this paper however, *Starting from Strengths* suggested that, precisely because of their wider experience and the insights this gave them into the lives and needs of young people and their communities, these 'unqualified' workers had at their disposal vital tools for their trade. These included 'knowledge', 'understanding' and above all 'skills' which, the report concluded, their more 'objective' professional colleagues often did not have and would probably never acquire.

It thus defined some key tasks, for 'trainers' and others in youth and community work. These included, without mystification, acknowledging that these workers, through having negotiated a range of complex personal and interpersonal processes had made these skills their own; identifying where and how such skills were relevant to good youth and community work practice; and then giving credit for them however they had been acquired.

The most obvious effect of this analysis was *Starting from Strengths'* commitment to move training for part-time and volunteer youth and community work away from restrictive formal courses. But it was much concerned, too, with access to such opportunities for qualification for previously excluded groups. In pursuing this issue it relied on a rigorous analysis of **power** within the training process. This was, and remains, crucial to its whole commitment to the notion of 'competence'.

Who will define 'competence'

The crux of the argument within *Starting from Strengths* rested on the evidence it collected firstly that a worker may be competent without the benefits of a formal training course; and secondly that - certainly at that time - course assessment procedures were 'usually limited to what has been achieved on the course' (P. 28).

In its first substantive discussion of the concept of 'competence', it therefore questioned the idea that:

> . . . the only way to assess whether people are **competent** to practice is to require them to undertake the prescribed qualifying course. Competence may be gained through appropriate training opportunities; much, however, may be gained from practice itself and also from learning from other life experiences . . . Competence can be gained in a variety of ways . . . (P. 28; emphasis in the original)

Crucial to this logic is the way it shifts considerable power **of definition** to the actual or potential possessors of 'competence'. That is, it gives great credence to 'meanings' of 'competence' as these might be experienced, understood and then expressed by (part-time and voluntary) youth and community workers themselves.

In this context 'meaning' is itself a crucial concept. It starts from an attempt to understand human behaviour

> not from the point of view of an outsider but from the point of view of the **behaver himself** (sic). It is concerned with the person's own unique experience of himself and the world around him (sic). (Combs, Avila and Purkey, 1971.)

It is thus based on the proposition that

> The person's private world cannot be directly invaded or manipulated. No matter how strongly it may be bombarded from without, the feelings, attitudes, ideas and convictions of which it is composed remain forever the sovereign possessions of the person himself (sic), (P. 82).

From this it follows that

> for the person who holds them, meanings are the facts of life. A fact is **not what is;** a fact for any person is what he **believes is so,** (P. 82).

Applying such perspectives too uncritically carries the risk of ignoring the wider (again, especially power) relations in which 'personal meanings' are constructed. When these are considered, it becomes clear that such 'meanings' can never be pure or untouched by 'external' influences. Indeed, in subtle but very influential ways, any individual will internalise a wide range of dominant ideas and values to the point where they become part of her or his expectations, self-expectations and even self-identity.

Nonetheless, in this context, the conception of 'meanings' outlined above can act as a useful, if flawed, analytical tool. For, though *Starting from Strengths* was never as explicit as this about the theoretical propositions on which its conceptualisation of 'competence' was based, its overall rationale clearly rested on a recognition of, and indeed deep respect for the 'meanings' attached to the term by part-time and voluntary workers.

After all, it was, according to the report's own evidence, **their** perceptions and **their** perspectives which for far too long had been undervalued by their would-be professional superiors. And it was these perspectives, the report suggested, which needed to become much more influential in determining both the process and the content of the routes to training and qualification open to them. Indeed, without this underpinning framework of assumptions, the report's notion of 'competence', and the strong advocacy of 'portfolios' which flowed from it make very little sense.

'Competence' - or 'competences'?

However, for very good reasons, *Starting from Strengths* was not able to leave the concept of 'competence' there. It **was** talking about a route to qualification as well as for learning. And this meant

beginning to search out credible procedures and criteria for **assessing** this (especially) past learning.

And so, the report went on to suggest that

> one of the first tasks of any accrediting body would be to draw up a statement of the **competences** required by part-time and voluntary workers. This . . . would ensure that organisations and authorities have a clear view about what **they** require . . . a statement against which current competence could be measured . . . (P. 30); emphasis added).

Crucial to this statement is its move from 'competence' to 'competences'. This was never acknowledged or explained even though it is by no means obvious that the second is merely the plural of the first. When an individual is described as 'being competent', what is usually being offered is a comment on her or his overall capacity to carry out a role or function. 'Competences', on the other hand, implies a range of discrete abilities or capacities whose singular, to make any sense must be described not as 'competence' but as '**a** competence'.

Since the appearance of *Starting from Strengths,* this confusion has continued and indeed deepened. Nor is it just a semantic quibble. It has had some far-reaching practical consequences. For, embedded within the notion of 'competences' are a perspective and set of theoretical assumptions which are in sharp conflict - perhaps even incompatible - with ones which start from workers' own 'meanings' of 'competence'.

In particular 'competences' requires a definition based on an 'objective frame of reference' - that is, one which 'makes its observations of people from the point of view of an outsider, someone looking on at the process'. (Combs, Avila and Purkey, 1971).

Starting from Strengths did not avoid this issue entirely. In advocating portfolio routes to youth and community work qualification, it noted that steps would have to be taken 'to deal with the tension between organisational requirements and the individual learning needs of the part-time and voluntary worker' (P. 30).

Bainbridge's *Taking the Experience Route* recognised a related set of tensions:

> We need to be aware of the implications of making definitive statements about competencies. It will always run the risk of being prescriptive to the extent that it works against the rich diversity of the field, or of being so vague it is meaningless (P. 13).

These implicit complexities and contradictions seem to have been largely overlooked in the understandable enthusiasm to convert *Starting from Strengths* into policy and practice. The array of 'portfolio' routes to qualification which have resulted have generated a great many creative, albeit often pragmatic, ways of resolving this tension. What such pragmatism invariably involves, however, are (often hidden or undeclared) 'political' processes - that is, as *Starting from Strengths* acknowledged throughout, uses of *power* by different 'interests' to decide how their competing perspectives and needs are to be balanced.

In the case of currently competing conceptions of 'competence(s)', one crucial dimension of this power struggle would seem to be: who has achieved or can achieve the greatest power of **definition?** Or, to put the question another way: whose 'meaning' of 'competence(s)' will do most to shape youth and community work training policy and practice - the worker or her/his employer?

It is at this point that the Youth and Community Service needs to remind itself that the world - and least of all a post-Thatcherite education and training service - is most definitely not its oyster. Beyond it, as we shall see, are imperatives arising from powerful economic pressures, which in the kind of society in which youth and community work is located are extremely difficult to deny. The interests and institutions implementing these requirements have some clear and forceful answers to any unresolved tensions between workers' 'subjective' and accreditors' 'objective' definitions of 'competence(s)'. They also have a mandate to spread and if necessary impose their version of 'the truth', which in the main is that as laid down by the employers.

Some of these 'answers' have already entered the service's training discourse and training practice. Unless these foreign languages are recognised for what they are, youth and community work's resolution of its own *'Starting from Strengths'* dilemmas over 'competence(s)' will be substantially, if not wholly, pre-empted. Intentionally or not, this will lead to an infiltration of values and forms of practice and training which are largely or wholly alien to it.

The NCVQ strand in the 'competences' mesh

'Competences', power relations - and the national economic interest

Just how foreign some of these external languages are is made clear by Eric Tuxworth (1989). He traces the NCVQ's concept of 'competence' to managerial methods and analyses developed in North America in the 1920s which, for economic reasons, had renewed impetus there in the 1960s.

At that time, powerful economic pressures were building up in Britain too. After what was seen as decades of technological and trading decline relative to Britain's main competitors, renewed demands appeared from influential political, educational and industrial quarters for an 'up-skilling' of the workforce. For such policies, the severe economic crisis of the mid-1970s was something of a watershed. Clearly seen at the time as a major threat to the very viability of capitalism, this initiated a period of major restructuring in British industry in general and in the labour force in particular.

The MSC was in fact conceived and created before the crisis arrived. Its establishment in 1973 was described by one government minister as 'a momentous event in Britain's social, industrial and educational history'. It was charged with engineering the training revolution which, as the minister also said, had been 'an objective some of us have been working for for many years'. Its approach was to be consensual, involving industrialists, trade unionists and educationalists. (Quoted in Ainley and Corney, 1990).

By the early 1980s, however, the MSC was accountable to a right-wing Conservative government which positively rejected consensus politics and was determined, once and for all, to lick British industry into shape. Amongst other

things, this certainly involved giving greater control of vocational training to employers.

Overtaken by other events, and in particular by the effects of the economic crisis, by the early 1980s the MSC's most obvious preoccupation was the mass unemployment, especially amongst young people, which had by then reappeared. However, within and behind the reports and short-life schemes streaming out of the MSC lay some radical longer-term aims. These included 'vocationalising' schooling, at least for so-called non-academic (that is, largely working class) young people; and restructuring post-school vocational education and training. Quite explicitly, the intention here was to turn out a much more 'flexible' labour force better adapted to 'the needs of industry' as identified by the employers themselves.

One specific requirement within these economic priorities was to rationalise an incoherent and confusing pattern of vocational qualifications owing most, it seemed, to historical accident. The result was the National Council for Vocational Qualifications. Given its origins in yet another MSC initiative, this has from the start reflected, not just the narrow vocationalist ideology which characterised all the MSC's work, but also the broader Thatcherite political and economic agenda. (For a fuller discussion of these policies, see Davies, 1979; Davies, 1986, Chapter 3; Finn, 1987; Wickham, 1988.)

Throughout the 1980s the speed and reach of these developments was increased by demographic trends. As the number of new young entrants to the labour market fell (very sharply), a much higher premium was placed on recruiting and retraining older workers - and by the most economical means available. A series of reports emanating from government departments, the Confederation of British Industry as well as the MSC itself codified and refined what was required.

These culminated in 1988 in a government white paper *Employment for the 1990s* (Department of Employment, 1989). In making a very clear statement on the balance of power assumed amongst training providers, this threw into relief some of the dilemmas already raised, directly and indirectly, in youth and community work training by *Starting from Strengths.* (Young 1988; Bainbridge 1988).

> Britain needs a framework which can help to deliver relevant and effective training where it is needed, is responsive enough to adjust to changing labour market conditions both nationally and locally, and helps **employers** and **individuals** to make the right decisions about their training needs. The system must be planned and led by employers, because it is they who are best placed to judge skill needs; it must actively engage individuals, of every age, background and occupation, because they have much to gain from appropriate investment in their own training and skills; and it must co-operate with the education service. (Department of Employment, 1989 P. 38; emphasis added.)

Here the allocations of power are unmistakable. In charge is the employer, with her or his needs paramount. Then, as an unavoidable necessity is the 'engagement' of the individual worker, in so far as her or his interests are useful to the employer. And finally, and very much as the poor relation is the education service.

Some very practical and clearly political expressions of this hierarchy are now firmly in place - not only centrally (NCVQ) but also locally, in the Training and Enterprise Councils (TECs). A further major push in this direction will take place in April 1993 when central government takes over the funding of the FE colleges.

Unambiguously therefore influence over - indeed dominance of - post-16 education and training outside the universities is with employers, and at all levels: as funders, providers and setters of standards. And increasingly the raison d'etre for such provision is: how effectively does it identify and develop 'competences', with (again) the power of definition being firmly located in 'the market'.

In developing their own forms of education and training, youth and community workers will ignore this wider context at their peril - especially if they go on relying on concepts such as 'competence' and 'competences'.

'Competences', 'functional analysis' and systems theory

The NCVQ strand of the 'competence revolution' mirrors important features of the developments so forcefully and creatively advanced by *Starting from Strengths* - not least the crucial notion of a national vocational qualification based on giving credit where it is due (Miller et al, 1988).

However it is here that the effects of separation by an apparently common language need to be confronted. For, in the emerging NCVQ version of the 'competence' revolution, the concept involves a mechanistic breakdown of a **role** into its component tasks and indeed sub-tasks. What then takes centre-stage is not the individual worker, as in *Starting from Strengths,* but the task itself.

Instead of being student-centred, training thus becomes entirely function-centred. As a result, it concerns itself only with the 'competences' (plural) which *Starting from Strengths* went on to explore when it needed to consider assessment. No place here even for acknowledging that tension between 'competence' and 'competences' of which *Starting from Strengths* was at least aware; and certainly no place again for workers' own 'meanings' of 'competence' derived from 'life experience' which (as in youth and community work) may be relevant to their occupational role.

Building on experience gained in the YTS, and anxious to ensure that 'competence' should not only be measurable but should be germane to the specific occupation, the NCVQ has developed, and indeed continues to develop, a competence identification process called 'functional analysis'. Within an NCVQ 'lead body', each occupation is carefully analysed according to its outcome.

The questions asked are:

- What is the key purpose of this occupation/job/role?
- Once the key purpose is identified, what are the skills necessary for its achievement?
- At what level are these skills required?
- What level of understanding will be required of the worker?

- What knowledge will be required of the worker?
- With which other skills or group of skills will the specific requirements for achieving this outcome overlap?
- Of the 'units of competence' required for this outcome, which are 'generic' - necessary for several interrelated outcomes but falling within the remit of the same lead body - and which are specialist?;

and crucially,

- What training is required for successful completion of the task?

Occupational 'competence' is then defined as the sum of the units of competence. Skills, knowledge and understanding are identified only as far as they serve the key purpose of the occupation, again as identified by the employer.

The model is thus one of a task, occupation or indeed whole profession as a (social) system. The worker or trainee, the trainers and the employers are all actors within the system, inter-relating with other elements such as 'skills' or resources, and operating within a given, though largely unstated, ideological context. The 'inputs' are 'human resources' (people), training and training opportunity and the output is the worker in the prescribed key occupational function - even to the required levels of understanding and versatility. The maintenance of stability and balance within this system will serve the functional imperatives of full employment and economic growth. It will certainly (in the private sector) maximise profits for an individual employer.

It could be argued that providing specific facilities for people's social education, community development or leisure pursuits requires particular inputs; and that a system model is as good as any other for describing and clarifying the operation of that provision in terms of the inputs necessary to get specific desired outputs.

The defects of the model, however, are the defects often pointed to in systems theory generally. Social systems are boundary maintaining. Their thrust is towards, not change, but the continuation of the system itself. Energies are directed at ensuring balance between input and output. Boats, in other words, are clearly not to be rocked. Certainly, the balance of power is not to be called into question.

Systems theory has for many years been a popular organisational model in industrial relations. Farnham and Pimlett (1990) discuss John Dunley's application of Parsonian theory from which much of it seems to be derived and suggest three major shortcomings:

Its inability 'to give sufficient weight to "influenced action" '

Its belief in a unifying ideology.

Its inability to analyse change and conflict.

Finally, Farnham and Pimlett quote Allen (1976, 13):

> (Systems theory) provides a plausible explanation of reality in that it recognises conflicts which are visibly apparent, yet it is as protective of the 'status quo', and as unquestioning about existing relationships, as the purely unitary approach.

An outcome-led systems model rests uncomfortably with the values of community action, empowerment and demystification, and is deeply disturbing when applied to education and training. Central to education are development, exploration and indeed risk. This is no less true for the teacher than for the student. All that is intrinsic to the process of learning - enquiry, conflicting and ambiguous ideas, tangential and divergent thinking - is precisely what a systems model puts in jeopardy.

Youth and community work cannot function with practitioners or policymakers who have been prepared as if for a closed system and on principles of learning which de-personalise them. Its workers need much more than an induction into discrete, easily demonstrable and measurable 'competences', shaped to serve narrowly prescribed goals. Yet, however much adjustment or refocussing is attempted, these are the inescapable images, perspectives and understandings which the lenses of system-theory provide when they are trained on the social world around us.

'Competences' and training for youth and community work

None of this is meant to deny the potential practical and institutional advantages of a national framework of qualifications at all levels of education and training. It could encourage the accreditation of prior learning which, when integrated into credit accumulation schemes and modularised course systems, could significantly widen access to qualifications. It could also reduce barriers, allowing much greater flexibility and lending some consistency and coherence to the qualification maze referred to earlier. And all this could dovetail well with the 'competence'-based training and qualifications increasingly being introduced by youth and community work.

These however are only **potential** gains. Rather than liberating and empowering 'the unqualified', a NCVQ-led framework could lead to their incorporation into the (lower levels) of a qualification structure little geared to their strengths or needs. Credit may well in future be given more readily for existing skills. Nonetheless, unless other structural as well as personal shifts occur, this could simply result, as Scott (1990) points out, in the strengths of lower status worker being 'accredited' - but at the occupational 'level' which they have already attained. Those already excluded from what *Starting from Strengths* called 'high quality training' could thus continue to find themselves on the outside, confined to second class qualification routes rooted in employer-led definitions of 'competences'.

For, training which is (in NCVQ terms) 'function-centred' cannot be 'student-centred'. The two are mutually exclusive. For one thing, within such a model, personal skills, and the use of self and relationships amongst participants, if considered at all, are all reduced to the status of dependent features of the system in which they exist, without autonomy or value in their own right. People are thus hardly seen as actors in the situations in which they feature.

This means that the **process** of educating - or even training - individual students/workers is given a very

low priority. Indeed in some versions of the model, such a personally developmental process is all but written out. When outcomes are all - when all that counts is whether workers can 'do the job', 'carry out a given task' - then how they get to this point quickly comes to be seen as a subsidiary matter, perhaps even irrelevant.

Indeed, the logic of this line of thinking can be carried even further. With such imperatives, ends - usually largely untheorised and under-analysed - can very soon come to justify virtually any means. Value-based educational or even training methodology then comes to be seen as even worse than an irrelevance. To quote the hugely detailed 'functional analysis' carried out by the NCVQ's Training and Development 'lead body'; it can become 'disruptive' to achieving 'group consensus' and those other known and non-contentious goals and outcomes required by employers (TDLB, 1991, 55, 56).

The message for youth and community work trainers is therefore clear; if the student can be made to appear in a box, surrounded by input and output arrows, as just one of many sub-systems (including 'units of competence'), then youth and community work training is in danger of becoming closed, routinised and non-participative - and of working to someone else's goals and outcomes.

Ever since *Starting from Strengths* appeared and NCVQ was set up, youth and community work trainers have been struggling to tackle these issues, sometimes head on. For example, the CETYCW team drawing up the (MSC-funded) report 'Learning to Deliver' apparently discovered (quite late) that it was far from straightforward 'to take existing work on trainer competencies and to translate this into youth and community work terms'. Even after this, it still 'could not reconcile (its) preconceived ideas about core competences with a value based curriculum and method'. It was, it seems, only able to move forward on the basis that 'all future trainer training had to examine critically the explicit and implicit assumptions and values upon which it was based'. These needed to include those aspects of 'the hidden curriculum' which 'perpetuates many of the inequalities in our society'. (Cane's foreword in Young, 1988, 5.)

Since its establishment, NCVQ's own thinking has continued to develop. Its notion of 'competence' is far from static, and is certainly not confined narrowly to 'skill'. It has become an important focus for the analysis of vocational education, and the papers from the 1989 Leicester symposium (Black and Wolf, 1990) reflect a wide range of thinking within the Council itself which suggests that it could remain open to influence.

Moreover in work NCVQ has sponsored which comes closest to youth and community work - the report and recommendations of the Community Work Feasibility Study (COSLA, 1990) - it shows itself as capable, on paper at least, of responding to external pressures and even perspectives. The influence on this document of, for example, the Federation of Community Work Training Groups and of women and Black community work consultants, is unmistakable. The report gives important and sometimes impressive recognition to both the essential values of community work and its process-based approaches and methods. It is also honest about the 'degree of scepticism regarding the competence-based approach' which exists in the community work field.

Yet the document remains, unmistakably, an NCVQ product which is perhaps all the more dangerous for its seductive 'concessions' to more liberal and even liberationist perspectives. Complex human processes still end up encapsulated in intricately connected hierarchies of boxes. The core terminology is still 'market response', 'marketing' and 'quality product'. And within this overall context, the proposed consultative processes for taking this initiative forward are made to seem like forms of 'awareness-raising' designed to ensure that the 'consulted' come round to accepting and endorsing the report writers' proposals. Almost a case, it seems, of community work being hoist by its own participative petard.

This report does not suggest that, in clarifying its view of 'competence(s)', NCVQ may be capable of moving some way towards the kind of perspective on which, not *Starting from Strengths* but later work like *Learning to Deliver* are based - and which require that, in considering 'values', power relations are analysed and the existence of conflict accepted.

After all allowances have been made however for a possible increase in the plurality of perspectives within NCVQ - and given the wider political and economic imperatives stemming from a balance of power tipped heavily in favour of employers - we remain deeply sceptical about such a development. NCVQ's 'bottom-line' ability actually to take on such perspectives is far from convincing. Indeed for us, a very different conclusion seems inescapable: that the functional analysis and 'units of competence' which are ultimately so intrinsic to the NCVQ approach are incompatible with the value positions which are central to youth and community work and to youth and community work training.

Two track education and training

Despite these pressures - and for very sound reasons - efforts continue to be made to locate training for youth and community workers within this national framework of vocational and professional qualifications. Once again however the contradictions need to be faced.

As we write, it seems that the inclusion of higher education courses at NCVQ Levels 4 and 5 could be something of a rubber stamping exercise. Occupations like youth and community work therefore, for more 'political' and pragmatic reasons, need to remain extremely cautious about committing themselves to the NCVQ procedures for dealing with qualifications at these levels. If they plunge in too enthusiastically and too uncritically, the kind of 'functional analysis' which such participation would require could lead to major concessions being made on values, content and method which subsequently turn out to have been unnecessary.

In fact, the principles and values embodied in the best practice of youth and community work are in danger of being squeezed out anyway in a pincer movement from within the wider vocational education and training field. On the one hand, since the privatisation of the polytechnics where most of the courses are lodged, competition for student numbers has massively intensified.

As a result these institutions are more and more gearing their courses to the prescribed requirements of employers in the hope that the latter will 'buy' places and even second employees. This again points to a curriculum designed to serve specific economic interests, with academic rigour, critical thinking and anti-oppressive practice all being seen as dispensable.

If national vocational qualifications work as they should, however, a national framework for qualifications will not only be established at these higher levels. Rightly and potentially radically, qualifications gained at Levels 2 and 3 will also become a means of access to them. And yet, these very developments could constitute the other 'squeeze' on key youth and community work principles. As narrowly conceived 'competence'-based and 'function'-centred notions of education and training establish themselves at these lower levels, the pressure may be very hard to resist to make these same criteria and approaches central to 'professional' initial training.

Given both this scenario, and the more direct pressures being exerted on higher education outlined earlier, the power relationship between the individual, the provider of education and training, and the employer seems most likely to tip still further in favour of the latter. For youth and community work, two of the most damaging consequences of this seem certain to be that

> As we suggested earlier, education and training beyond the 'lower' levels of qualification will continue to exclude marginalised groups.
>
> The actual education offered will be impoverished, with job specific 'skills' and employer-defined 'competences' increasingly forcing out the more subjectively conceived notions of personal 'competence' essential for the realities of youth and community work practice.

'Competence' or 'competences': negotiating the tensions within youth and community work

One of the strongest arguments in favour of the directions charted by *Starting from Strengths* was (and is) that the non-routine, the problematic and the unpredicted in the practice of youth and community work remain at least as important as what is known, agreed and certain. Indeed, it could be argued, it is precisely these elements of the practice, demanding as they do individual women and men's negotiation, 'on the wing' (HMI, 1987, 2), of intrinsic **ambiguities, tensions and choices,** which constitute youth and community work's defining characteristics.

Some of these dilemmas concern understanding: am I reading out the 'correct' signals from the behaviour I am observing and of which I am part? Some of them are to do with values... is this a 'good' and 'acceptable' way of responding to those signals - that is, of intervening in other people's lives? Some of them are clearly about action: not just should I but <u>am</u> I capable of intervening in this way?

Some of these dilemmas arise from the persons designated role, such as: should I use the power I have, and if so when and how, or should I leave the space for others to act, including of course young people or members of communities themselves? All of them can be adequately described and defined therefore only with a model which acknowledges power, conflict and change. And all in the end depend on behaviour which can only be defined and expressed **on the spot** through the person called 'worker'.

The shift away from 'skills' in the eighties generated a healthy and, especially for trainers, stimulating re-focussing of perspectives on such practitioner's 'meanings'. These gave due weight to what they had learnt from past experience in the settings and with the people they were encountering and how this prior learning might guide their negotiation of such 'unfinished" situations (Mathiesen, 1974). It did this without ever losing sight of the centrality in such practice of knowledge and understanding, and of values which were unambiguous about the importance of power and empowerment.

The first task clearly is to recognise the NCVQ-led challenge to such perspectives for what it is. After twelve years, not just of Thatcherite government but of a dominant (not to say rampant) Thatcherite ideology, this too may be less straightforward than it at first appears. Even those of us who were 'professionally socialised' in the relatively liberal social democratic 1960s and early 1970s seem often now not to notice how far we have let slip some of our 'basic' value positions.

For those who have entered youth and community work during the Thatcher era, such positions have never been, even nominally and rhetorically, the 'commanding heights' of political and especially social policy thinking. Why therefore should any of us assume that, even on 'the left' and certainly on the 'liberal' middle ground, a value-base endorsing critical thinking and conflict analysis will be the taken-for-granted starting point of youth and community work practice or of education and training for it?

In clarifying these kinds of positive educational and training goals, for individual youth and community workers and for the work itself, we thus at the very least need to reassert key elements of 'a *Starting from Strengths* perspective'. In doing this it will be crucial to recall that the notion of 'competence(s)', though important and influential to that perspective, was not central to it. Rather it was 'a dependent variable' of principles and approaches derived from the best liberal adult education traditions and practices.

These, with all their flaws, put the learner at the centre of learning; proceeded from a deep conviction about her or his capacity to learn; and had a vision about where such learning might lead. Moreover, because, at least in part, they came out of struggles against ruling class power, they did not overlook the role which 'education' and even 'training' can play in the assault on injustice, inequality and oppression. Only in this kind of context can a specifically youth and community work use of the concept of 'competence(s)' make sense.

At the same time, the NCVQ-led challenge will now have to be met on the premise that it and its notion of 'competences' will not just melt away. At the level of practice, a stand will therefore have to be made against some of its more restrictive connotations and applications, in particular by going on insisting that knowledge, understanding and values remain central to any practice deserving the name of youth and community work.

In turn this will require that **all** those involved overcome the anti-intellectualism which has characterised so much youth and community work (including some youth and community work training) for far too long (see Jeffs and Smith, 1987). Effectively resisting unwanted NCVQ incursions - even simply avoiding offering up hostages to fortune - will demand a very high quality analysis of what is happening, what we are doing, how and why; and of what we might do, how and why.

Given the wider struggles going on at the moment, however, a 'political' response will also be required, based on partnerships - perhaps 'alliances' is a better word - amongst often separate, and even sometimes competing, education and training interests within youth and community work. These will need to assume as an essential first principle, that neither 'employment-based' nor 'college-based' routes to training and qualification represent **the** response to the needs waiting to be met. In typically contradictory ways, each contains possibilities and disadvantages - while each will remain attractive and relevant to different individuals and segments of the potential clientele. Any resolution of the dilemmas and pressures currently facing education and training for youth and community work which requires the triumph of either over the other will result in only one loser: youth and community work itself.

Clearly the way to deal with the pressures now facing youth and community work is not to reinstate, by another name, the a-political notions of 'skill' and the pseudo-objective theoretical perspective on which it rested in order to return education and training for youth and community work to its pre-*Starting from Strengths* situation. Nor however is it to treat this and other recent sources of stimulation and progressive change as bibles. Because, inevitably, they too contained their own intrinsic and unresolved contradictions (for example over 'competence' and 'competences'), their message needs to be subjected to continuing critical appraisal and reappraisal. (Again see Scott, 1990; and also Scott and Ruddock, 1989.)

Such critiques are made even more necessary by the arrival of NCVQ-style thinking on 'competences' which carries with it a fundamental threat. It could eliminate many of the ambiguities and the complexities within the human dynamic through which 'competent' youth and community workers must pick their way if they are to practice responsively and effectively. In the process it could also reduce this practice to a merely 'technical' (and again anti-intellectual) series of operations which render it meaningless to its practitioners - and useless to those it is intended to support and help liberate.

To meet this threat, youth and community work trainers will need, more explicitly than ever, to embrace 'contradiction', 'ambiguity' and 'tension'. They will need to see these as intrinsic to **their** practice as they are to youth and community work practice itself - and then shape their training strategies, policies and structures accordingly.

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AIDS, Gays and Lesbians in the Soviet Union.

JIM RIORDAN

It would be going too far to say that the Soviet Union has 'come out'. But at least the first serious attempts have been made in the media to tackle the subject of homosexuality. Glasnost alone cannot take the credit. For concern over the spreading HIV phenomenon forced light into the darkest corners of society in search of salvation. After all, the number of people with AIDS in the world now doubles with every passing year, is currently put at over 200,000 by the World Health Organisation (although it estimates that the real figure is three times higher), and the number of HIV positive people has now reached the disturbing total of in excess of five million in some 140 countries.[1]

Initially, in 1986, when the first person with AIDS was registered in the USSR (a foreigner), the disease was discreetly reported as a Western problem, with overtones of retribution for bourgeouis depravity, and accusations against the CIA for an experiment gone wrong. While today published figures are still mercifully low in the USSR, the number of HIV positive people reach some 450 in November 1989 (with 463 foreigners in the country also infected).[2] Nonetheless, the true extent of the disease is admittedly unknown and unrevealed. In the USA, by way of comparison, 61,000 people have already died of AIDS. In the view of V.I. Pokrovsky, President of the USSR Academy of Medical Science, the rate of increase puts the USSR at the level of France in 1981-82, which would indicate that the Soviet Union should have several thousand AIDS sufferers and several hundred AIDS-infected people by 1993.[3] Mikhail Narkevich, Head of the newly-created Department dealing with AIDS at the USSR Health Ministry also believes that 'tens of thousands are likely to be victims within two years'.[4]

Many have been critical of the complacency shown by the Health Ministry and the authorities responsible for taking measures against AIDS. The former Chief Health and Hygiene Doctor for the USSR, P.N. Burgasov, had written in an article for *Literaturnaya gazeta* in mid-1986 that

> We do not have conditions conducive to the mass spreading of the disease; homosexuality is a grave sexual perversion punishable by law (Article 121 of the Russian Federation Criminal Code) and we are constantly engaged in explaining the harm that comes from taking drugs. Nor do we have excessively extensive contacts with foreigners.[5]

Others added that, unlike most Western countries, the Soviet Union imported no donor blood, had no organised communities of homosexuals with their own clubs, and had a ban on pornographic pictures and films. 'All this naturally restricts the Soviet sexual revolution by contrast with, say, the USA. And although we have a growing number of drug addicts, they are hundreds of times fewer than in the USA.' [6]

What was not explained was that as long as the law made homosexuality illegal it deterred people from coming forward for testing and treatment, so no true picture of AIDS could be drawn.

The problem grew while the health authorities more or less buried their heads in the sand. Of the 6,000 specialists attending the Third International AIDS Congress only four were from the USSR; of the 7,000 at the following Congress in Stockholm, only two were Soviet. One reason given for the low number of Soviet delegates was the lack of foreign currency; yet in the same year some 80 Soviet soccer fans were given foreign currency to travel abroad.[7] The media remains virtually inactive on the HIV phenomenon, sex education in schools continues to be ignored, the USSR refuses to recognise the 1988 London Declaration of the World Health Organisation on AIDS information, no adequate production (or imports) of disposable syringes and needles exist (even after the cases of some 70 young children having contracted AIDS from 'dirty' needles in the town of Elista and 24 in A Volgograd hospital (in 1989); and 'safe sex' is hampered by the woeful lack and unreliability of contraceptives; 'in many places they are sold on the black market at inflated prices'.[8]

Small wonder that many people feel that the number of AIDS cases registered is merely the tip of the iceberg.

As Pokrovsky says,

> We simply do not know how many prostitutes, drug addicts and homosexuals we have. All these things are against the law. And until recently we had an absolutely absurd situation worthy of the pen of Saltykov-Shchedrin or even Dostoyevsky: what was declared unlawful was simultaneously said not to exist in nature.[9]

The situation had barely altered by the end of the decade, although increasingly the realisation had begun to dawn that, far from threatening particular isolated groups (like homosexuals), AIDS 'threatens all of us'.[10]

As with a number of previously-suppressed social problems, it was a journalist who first breached the AIDS subject - in the Moscow youth daily *Moskovsky komsomolets* in March 1987 in an article called starkly

SPID (AIDS).[11] The readership response was overwhelming and included many gays (where else could they turn?). A follow-up article in the national youth daily *Komsomolskaya pravda* stated,

> The material on this hitherto taboo subject published in a periodical with an 18m circulation evinced an enormous response, including from those whom we have come to regard as the 'risk group': prostitutes, drug addicts and, of course, homosexuals *(gomosexualisty)*.[12]

The official silence on homosexuals had at last been broken.

In view of the patently inadequate official treatment of the AIDS problem and related issues, some concerned members of the public set up in late 1989 an 'unofficial' Association for Combating AIDS, with its own eight-page information journal called *SPID-Info,* which is sold for 40 kopecks on street corners and outside Metro stations. Besides providing information on the international AIDS situation, the journal acts as a sex educator, agony aunt, and general enlightener. In one of its first issues it dealt frankly and sympathetically with the subject of homosexuality in the USSR, revealing that the USSR Justice Ministry had declared that the number of people tried in court for homosexuality in 1987 was 831.[13]

In the absence of legal gay and lesbian clubs, sex clinics, advice centres, medical or sociological research, nobody had the faintest idea what the real situation was. After all,

> For many decades the problem of homosexuality had not existed. Ideologists of dogmatism and specialists in social medicine simply shut their eyes to it all, reckoning that a society of tempestuous and continuous applause could not possibly take such abominations into the bright future.[14]

The article from which the above quotation is taken was significantly entitled 'The Three Wise Monkeys' Syndrome': see no evil, hear no evil, speak no evil.

Gay men gradually started to write to periodicals, though few of their letters were published in full, only selected passages, giving voice to the dilemmas, bitterness and cries for help. It was through such letters that the public began to gain an inkling of the situation:

> We initially thought that we did not have any here. Then we learned we did, but only a few. Yet in the last weeks and months the readership postbag has regularly included letters from homosexuals themselves. We had a particularly large number from the armed forces and prison colonies where young men are forced to remain for long periods.[15]

So the unthinkable became thinkable: the Soviet Union, despite its 'socialist achievements', actually had homosexuals. Prostitutes and drug addicts were one thing, but somehow homosexuality was more difficult to accept; it meant overcoming age-old prejudice and ignorance fostered over the decades by official and unofficial sources. Some readers were so outraged at the 'shocking' revelations of gays in their midst that they called on the press to stop mentioning gays and 'spare the readers' feelings'. Others were more forthright: 'all gays, prostitutes and drug addicts should be rounded up and shot so as to save the state money on their treatment and to halt the AIDS plague'.[16]

The existence of Soviet gays did not come as a surprise to all Soviet people. Many people must have known of the unofficial gay meeting places in the major cities - like the Sadko Cafe off Gorky Street or the area around the Bolshoi Theatre, known as the 'Blue Ring' *(goluboye koltso),* 'blue' after the popular name for homosexuals *(golubye)* from the assumed connection between them and blue-blooded effete aristocrats of the 19th century.

The Soviet authorities have long been prepared to turn a blind eye to the sexual proclivities of eminent individuals; and that included the flamboyant British spy Guy Burgess and his Soviet lover Anatoly. When cases were heard in court they were not publicised, although the occasional babushka who wandered into a court off the street could get an unexpected surprise, as George Feifer recounts in his *Justice in Moscow,* referring to a hearing involving two respectable middle-aged men caught in a public park. 'The old lady shook her head in disbelief: Gospodi, you mean they were doing that . . . No, no, no, I can't believe it. Gospodi, bozha moi.' Even when the actor and film director Smoktunovsky came to make his film of Tchaikovsky in the 1960s, he could not show the composer's sexual preference which the British director Ken Russell made central to his own film of the great composer.

Past and Present

The official attitude towards gays was apparently fairly neutral in Russia up to the 18th century. It was Peter I who outlawed homosexuality as part of his pro-Western and anti-Oriental campaign. And discriminatory, anti-gay laws remained on the tsarist statute books right up to 1917, when safe sex relations between consenting adults were legalised: the Russian Federation Criminal Codes of 1922 and 1926 carried no punishment for homosexuality. It was only on 17 December 1933 that a special law was promulgated introducing criminal responsibility for homosexuality, involving deprivation of freedom from three to eight years. Some say this was done on the personal orders of Stalin.[17]

Today, the Russian Federation Criminal Code has a special Article on Homosexuality, No. 121, squeezed between articles on 'perverse acts' and 'non-payment of alimony'.

Article 121 *Muzhelozhstvo* ('Buggery'):

> Sexual intercourse between men shall be punished by deprivation of freedom for up to five years. A homosexual act committed with the use of force, the threat of force or against a minor or by exploiting the dependent status of the victim shall be punished by up to eight years deprivation of freedom.
>
> Buggery is an unnatural sexual act between men committed by introducing the male member into the back passage. Other forms of unnatural sexual acts between men shall not constitute homosexuality.[18]

Even after Stalin's death, the *Bolshaya sovetskaya entsiklopediya* of the late 1950s continued to define homosexuality as 'an expression of the moral decadence of the ruling classes in bourgeois countries; in Soviet society, with its healthy morality, homosexuality, being a sexual perversion, is regarded as shameful and criminal'.[19]

When the 1964 International Congress on Criminal Law recommended that all governments abolish criminal penalties for voluntary sexual acts between adult males, some East European countries, namely the German Democratic Republic and Bulgaria, adopted the recommendation - but not the USSR. And when the criminal responsibility for homosexuality was debated at an international conference of sexologists from socialist countries in 1982, as Soviet delegate Igor Kon later reported, 'we were utterly isolated. I informed the authorities and our medics backed the idea of revoking Article 121, but the legal people deemed it premature. Now the situation has altered and as far as I know the draft criminal code contains no such Article'. [20]

Be that as it may, by 1990, the new code had not appeared. What is sure is that for some 56 years Soviet criminal legislation contained one of the most repressive and unscientific articles in the contemporary civilised world. Why? Since no Freudian analysis has yet been done on the motivation for Stalin's behaviour (unconscious defensive mechanism against his own sexual fears, uncertainty about his own sexual powers, his macho Georgian cultural background?) - unlike on such tyrants as Hitler and Mussolini - we have to assume that gay men met the fate of all unconventional people in authoritarian societies, any individual or group differences tend to be alien to the regime and have to be eradicated at all costs. Everyone must behave in the same way. And given the Russian penchant for moralising, any behaviour that ran counter to straight marital sex between the sheets was bound to come in for condemnation as a moral perversion. In this Nazi Germany, Stalinist Russia and Bible Belt America have much in common. It has to be said, too, that the Stalin legislation had a long prerevolutionary history; in a sense the 1933-introduced laws were part of the overall conservative backlash against liberal morality and family legislation once Stalin had become firmly ensconced.

Soviet gays speak out

It was letters to the press from gay men that first and foremost revealed the public ignorance, the official barbarity and personal despair. One of the most poignant is the following excerpt, written in response to the above-mentioned article 'SPID':

> My name is Volodya D. I am 27 and homosexual . . . We are constantly being pilloried and persecuted. Even without AIDS the KGB gives us no peace; we have to suffer Article 121 which punishes couples who cause no one any harm . . . but simply live together and love one another. And that means putting them behind bars for no less than three years . . .
>
> I've been gay for 15 years. No one has perverted me, I made the choice at the age of 12. Being gay has had me thrown out of the Komsomol (and like a fool I cried), put in gaol (18 months in prison and on 'drugs'). It was there I learned to hate our police and law agencies which, in my view, were established specially to humiliate, hurt and destroy a person. After your odious article I'm sure the suicide rate will go up; and if I catch AIDS then, pardon me, I'm not going for treatment. In the remaining 18 months I'll take my revenge to infect as many of you as possible - you upright and sanctimonious people. I'll avenge all the humiliation I've suffered from our justice agencies and police, which protect murderers and persecute homosexuals . . .
>
> Homosexuals are human beings too. The have the same right to life as everyone else.[21]

What torment must have brought this young man to write in such despair? Another gay letter-writer asks where he can go for anonymous counselling and treatment: 'I don't even know if my condition can be cured'. Unable to accept his sexuality, he writes in disgust of public toilets being 'full of homosexuals, as are public buses (where they) try to rub up against you . . .' He comments, 'I would love to rid myself of my bad habits'. [22] A distraught mother writes to *Literaturnaya gazeta* in 1989 about her son Igor; she had no idea he was gay until she was called into the local internal affairs office:

> It was there that I discovered who my son was. One of his friends had contracted venereal disease and had admitted he was having a homosexual relationship with my son. Interrogations began; my son broke down and tried to commit suicide . . . He was saved . . . They kicked him out of the Party and his job under Article 121 . . . He got a year's imprisonment.
>
> When I went to the procurator and told him I would appeal, he told me: 'Go on and do so if you have no shame. If I had my way I'd shoot such scum . . .'
>
> I'd like to know what it is - an illness or a crime. I couldn't find any literature on the subject. Why is science silent? [23]

The 'specialist' responses to such letters reveal how far attitudes to homosexuality have progressed in a relatively short time. When the first substantial article on homosexuality was published in March 1987, it was asserted that attitudes towards homosexuals fell into three categories: (i) hatred for such vile conduct; (ii) contempt for those 'liberals' who confused democracy with anarchy and who, taking their lead from the West, were calling for official recognition of such forms of relations between the sexes; and (iii) a desire to eradicate homosexuality through the legal system. 'Nonetheless, along with a genuine fear for the safety of our children, the matter had to be raised since homosexuals were prime members of the group at risk from AIDS and could turn it into an epidemic'. [24]

A year later, 1988, a rather more sympathetic tone was creeping into 'specialist' commentaries, raising the question of the effectiveness of criminal punishment for homosexuality - since 'It frightens homosexuals, infuriates them, drives them underground together with their many problems, like VD'. [25] One 'expert', writing in the monthly Komsomol magazine *Molodoi kommunist,* even mentioned the fact (!) that 'homosexuals are more hyperactive sexually (much more erotic) than heterosexuals', that 'among gays anonymous relationships, when the partners do not even know each other's name, are very widespread' and that 'now is the time to think of the best way to treat/cure homosexuals'. [26]

This 'statement' from a false (heterosexual) premise fits in neatly with the general moralising in the media about sexual relationships and the reluctance to discuss casual sex at all. Where sex is discussed it tends to be in the context of stable relationships or marriage. In other words, there has been no real debate on sexuality at all. The kind of family policy that was promoted throughout the 1980s (through books on differentiated upbringing for girls and boys, the Ethics subject in schools, the endless stream of propaganda about 'strengthening the family' and producing lots of children, the never-ending images of what constitutes a 'real man' and a 'real woman') has put enormous pressure on young people to conform in all areas relating to sexuality. In such an atmosphere it is a nightmare being gay.

The reasons for men becoming homosexual, given in the above-mentioned article in *Molodoi Kommunist,* echoed those frequently put forward elsewhere in recent years - ie too much physical affection shown by mothers to young sons, schoolmistresses to schoolboys, and the general 'feminisation' of society. As Professor A.I. Belkin, Doctor of Medical Sciences, put it,

> I'm against the wearing away of psychological boundaries . . . (A woman) should not be mannish in her behaviour, nor a man - womanish. That is why, apart from aesthetic considerations, I'm very much against women's soccer, judo, body building and so on. Society cannot be sexless - there lies the social aspect of the problem.[27]

By 1990, however, such Neanderthal views were gradually giving way to more liberal opinions. The above-mentioned Mikhail Narkevich is campaigning 'for the legalisation of homosexuality'.[28] No longer were the specialists branding homosexuals as perverts or sick. The Vilnius Professor I. Lelis, writing in the weekly *Sobesednik,* asserted that 'homosexuality is neither an illness, nor a crime'.[29] Others have invoked foreign experience: 'By contrast with Soviet medics, foreign scholars do not regard homosexuality as an illness'.[30] And in the view of Igor Kon, member of the International Academy of Sex Research (whose book *Introduction to Sexology - Vvedenie v sexologiyu,* Moscow Meditsina, 1989, was kept on ice for a decade), 'In the great majority of cases sexual preference is not a matter of choice; it is virtually impossible or exceedingly difficult to change, and it is senseless and cruel to punish it'. In regard to AIDS Kon had this to say,

> People seemed to think God was punishing homosexuals and drug addicts for their sins . . . But it soon emerged that everyone else could catch AIDS just as easily and pass it on, while our press, by dint of inertia, continued to blame homosexuals. That was absolute nonsense . . . Serious (foreign) scientists no longer talk of 'groups at risk', meaning chiefly homosexuals, but of 'enhanced risk behaviour'. The danger comes not only from prostitutes of both sexes . . . but from any chance sexual affairs.[31]

Kon makes public toleration and understanding of homosexuality a touchstone of real progress in Soviet society: 'We have to realise that people are different, including in their sexuality. Our society must recognise people's right to be different, as is the case in the great bulk of countries. Attitudes to sexual minorities are an aspect of human rights in general.'

Not all sexologists are so 'restructured'. In early 1989 the chief sex pathologist of Leningrad's hospitals, Boris Malenkov, told *Vechery Leningrad* that 'all homosexuals should be registered so that they could be treated'.[32] If the experts were seen to be so ignorant by homosexuals, what trust could they put in the authorities?

Assaults on homosexuals

One reason for the change in official attitudes towards homosexuals has been the increasing number of assaults on individual homosexuals by muggers ('queer bashers') and so-called vigilante gangs, and the revelations of sexual assaults on army recruits and delinquents in reform schools and prisons, Back in 1983 the *Sunday Times* ran an article on homosexuals as a target for muggers who would steal their valuables and later sell them back to the victims who were too afraid to report the crime.[33] Six years later the *New York Herald Tribune* reported a conversation with two Moscow gays who talked of youth gangs that 'seek out homosexuals, beat them up and rob them'. They were pessimistic about the future, new law or not: 'Maybe we'll get a new law, but I sometimes fear that life here for us is going to get a lot worse before it gets better'.[34]

A steady stream of letters from gays, hitherto suffering in silence, gathered in intensity in 1989. In March 1989 *Sobesednik* admitted that it had had a large number of letters from incarcerated gays 'the weakest of them claiming they had been the object of sexual harassment from camp inmates'.[35]

When the 27-year-old Estonian journalist Madis Jurgen exposed persistent torture and sexual abuse in army barracks, in a series of articles for the Estonian Komsomol newspaper *Noorte Haal,* however, he found himself immediately called up for two-year national service. Fuel was piled on to the controversy when, about the same time, Estonian TV showed a documentary film about a Lithuanian national serviceman, Arturas Sakalauskas, who had been persistently sexually assaulted by eight colleagues in his unit; one day he just reached for his gun and shot four dead. The authorities were moved to act: a full investigation was ordered of the Estonian and Lithuanian cases. As a result, Sakalauskas was put into psychiatric care and the case of the young Estonian, 'Mati', was taken to court. In August Jurgen reported that three of the men who had assaulted Mati had been punished and, although rape was impossible to prove, one got four years in a severe regime camp for physical violence. It also emerged that at least 14 other soldiers in Mati's unit had been subjected to the same kind of treatment as Mati. Fears remain, nonetheless, that the present and future treatment of Jurgen in the armed forces may contain more than an element of army revenge.[36]

In press reports of such cases it is not always made clear that these are <u>not</u> sexual assaults by gays against heterosexuals; it is generally the opposite. As Kon has written, 'In spite of widespread views to the contrary, sexual violence is rarely motivated by sexual needs (in prisons or army camps). It is a means of establishing a certain hierarchy or domination within a group'.[37]

Other cases of what is euphemistically termed 'army bullying' *(armeiskaya dedovshchina),* including sadistic torture and sodomy, have been described in novels and plays, as well as the press. In early 1989 *Moskovsky komsomolets* revealed a case in prison when five brutal recidivists raped a young lad, first beating him unconscious. As the commentator remarked, 'it was important to them to assert their domination'.[38] Once again, it is partly the fear of the spreading of AIDS that lies behind the new coverage of such cases (for they have not suddenly appeared along with Gorbachov). As *Sobešednik* has put it, such sexual assaults in army units and prison only go to 'spread homosexuality and the danger of AIDS'.[39] But the new coverage is also partly inspired by the questioning of conscription and its ethic in the post-Afghanistan era.

Lesbianism

As in most male-dominated countries waking up to the realities of inborn and socially-conditioned sexual behaviour, females were initially excluded from public discussion of homosexual activities, from conduct that detracted from their role as producers of children and support for males. Even in the discussion of 'cures for male homosexuality' there has been more than a hint of putting the blame on mothers for turning 'normal' boys into 'abnormal' men through 'excessive maternal love'.

Yet if the law has never recognised lesbianism as a form of homosexuality (women are not mentioned in Article 121) and if virtually all public discussion has ignored lesbianism, it has certainly been described in detail in the scientific literature. For example, the two-volume edition of *Personal Sexopathology,* published in 1983, gives several detailed biographies of lesbians and frank explanations of their means of obtaining sexual gratification - from oral-genital contacts to the use of dildos.[40] Further, it emerged in late 1989 that sex change operations had been carried out in the Soviet Union for over 20 years - not without problems. In 1969, the Latvian surgeon Victor Kalnbers completed the first Soviet series of operations to transform a woman into a man (who subsequently had 'a happy marriage'). Yet it could not be mentioned at the time even in a medical paper. Instead the surgeon was 'given a severe reprimand for carrying out an operation unacceptable in the Soviet Union and without approval from the Health Ministry'. Questions were even raised in the Latvian Party Central Committee about the surgeon's 'mental fitness' and his 'indulging in debauchery and dissipation'. Although Kalnbers was banned from further operations, his Moscow colleague Professor Kirpatovsky did carry out several operations 'to transform men into women'. As Kalnbers commented to *Literaturnaya gazeta* in 1989,

> Our concern for the people as a whole blinded us to the problems of the individual, particularly those concerning intimate relations. A girl who falls in love with another girl and commits suicide is of interest to no one . . . I recall even the Minister (of health) dismissing my claim that my patient would kill herself by saying 'that's not our concern'. How many tragedies have occurred precisely for that reason!

The editors of the literary weekly added two quite astounding claims, as a postscript, to this full-page article on the sex-change:

> So it was a Soviet doctor who first carried out this unique sex-change operation; yet no one knew for two long decades, just as nobody knew of the wonderful achievements of Vladimir Demikhov - the 'godfather of Christian Barnard' - who carried out the first heart transplant. We can only be glad that our priorities are at last beginning to shift.[41]

It is not the place here to debate the authenticity of such claims; what is pertinent is that a public discussion was just starting in 1989 of women's sexuality. It was launched by a most provocative (for the Soviet Union) article in *Sobesednik* on lesbian love, 'Olya and Yulya', accompanied by an erotic picture of two naked women, one caressing a nipple of the other. While the article's author, Galina Toktalieva, acted as Devil's Advocate in expressing society's moral anguish, she gave space to the views of the 25-year-old head of a psychology research unit. Olga, we are told, had once fallen madly in love with a married man; her hatred of all men had stemmed from this failed relationship. Olga and her lesbian friends had formed a 'League of Activists' to spread their creed and encourage female love and the rejection (and therefore punishment) of men - 'our society is run by parasitic men'.

Olga expresses views familiar to those of many western feminists,

> Women must defend their right to an existence of equal worth, the right to be a thinking member of society, not a birth-delivery-cum-washing machine . . . Intimate relations should be a matter of individual choice. The greatest woman poetic genius Sappho praised female love and friendship . . . Humankind must be punished for the age-old oppression of women, for its humiliation of those who produce life.[42]

It is good to know that Soviet feminism is alive and kicking (again) after some 70 years, experimenting, seeking its way. Inevitably, it has forced the issue of lesbianism into the open and into the forum on homosexuality.

The struggle continues

As elsewhere, the struggle of gays and lesbians has much in common; both oppressed minorities can find strength and support in their concerted efforts for better conditions. It is a hard and protracted struggle, as Western gays have found. And will hardly come as a surprise that conservatives in West and East have opposed the legalisation of homosexual love between consenting adults and proper sex education in schools - the one seeing it as the incursion of radical ideas, the other as the incursion of decadent capitalism and anarchy. As Kon has written,

> Twenty years ago US conservatives blocked the introduction of sex education into schools. Those ultra-rights are the mirror image of our own; they had claimed that having sex lessons in school was a communist plot to corrupt American youth.[43]

Twenty years on, however, the USA is in the forefront of liberal sex education and liberal homosexuality laws;

even President Reagan appeared in a TV health advert advocating the use of condoms and safe sex in the fight against AIDS. Will Gorbachov do the same?

The USSR has a long way to go. By the spring of 1990 no change in the law on homosexuality had appeared and, as press reports confirm, gays are still being harassed by the police and incarcerated. Even should the law change, however, it is one thing to bring about *de jure* recognition, it is quite another to make it *de facto,* to change popular attitudes after decades of officially-encouraged persecution, ignorance and pseudo-scientific blather. After all, as the poet Marina Tsvetaeva, who knew a thing or two about persecution herself, once put it,

> Torment and persecution have no need of tormentors and persecutors; all they need is ourselves confronted by someone different - a Negro, a wild beast, a Martian, a poet or a ghost. Anyone who is different from us is there to be persecuted. [44]

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The effects of unemployment on the early years of adult life: Evidence from National Survey Data.

SANDRA HUTTON

Introduction

At the beginning of the 1980s Marwick (1982) claimed that economic setbacks and technological changes meant high unemployment, and above all, dismal prospects for many of the country's school leavers. Later work by Walker and Barton (1986) also expressed gloom over the long-term consequences of high youth unemployment, loss of income and of the 'social power of the wage'. By contrast, Causer (1987) wondered why there was such talk of decline when GDP had risen 50 per cent from the 1960s to the mid-1980s. in this paper we ask whether there are long-term consequences for the life chances of those leaving school facing the relatively high unemployment of 1978 or whether the general progress of living standards and other changes have compensated. Comparison with those leaving school in 1968 is chosen to highlight the effects of different levels of employment.

The period between the ages of 16 and 26 is one of major change. Having finished compulsory schooling at age 16, most have left home, found work, started-a career, found a partner and some will have started their own family by age 26. We explore this process for young people from age 16 in 1968 to age 26 in 1978, and for those aged 16 in 1978 and 26 in 1988.

In 1968 the full employment of the 1960s still prevailed. Unemployment and, particularly, youth unemployment rose steadily throughout the 1970s, so, by 1978, young people faced a much contracted labour market. Worse was to follow with the massive rise in unemployment of the early 1980s. This hit those aged 16 in 1978 when they were in their early twenties: they were 21 when unemployment was at its peak in 1983.

Of course it was not only the labour market which changed between 1968 and 1978. Some changes, such as the raising of the school leaving age, more young people staying on beyond the compulsory leaving age, and the development of training programmes for young people, were related to labour market changes and the rise in youth unemployment, but there were also changes in family life and in ideas concerning independence and equality for women. The late 1960s and the 1970s saw a battery of legislation on the family, marriage, and gender equality, of which the Divorce Reform Act of 1969 and the equal pay legislation of 1970 are examples. The two groups of young people considered here could hardly have started adult life at more different times. The first group started in 1968 when young people were relatively affluent, and youth style and culture were in full swing. (It was not all roses, however: a 'typical teenager in the sixties' profiled in a magazine in 1962 expected to be 'dead by the time i'm thirty. We all will. It's the strain you know.' (Booker, 1969)). At the end of the 1970s, that gloomy, sober decade of the oil crisis and record inflation, the second group started in the year of the 'winter of discontent', when the ambulance and lorry drivers were on strike, water supplies and sewage disposal were cut off, and bodies were unburied (Booker, 1980). The advent of Thatcherism singles 1979 out as a political, economic and social break with what had gone before. According to a Unesco (1981) publication two different challenges faced our two groups of school leavers. The 1960s challenged youth with a crisis of culture, ideas and institutions whereas the 1980s confronted a later generation with a concrete, structural crisis of chronic economic uncertainty and even deprivation.

Much work has been done on the transition to work for cohorts of 16-19 year olds (Courtenay, 1989; Roberts and Parsell, 1989; Bynner, 1989,1990; Banks and Evans, 1990; Gray and Syme, 1990; Raffe, 1988). Study of this age-range provides good information on the start of adult life but stops before many of the important transitions have been made. In particular, at this age young women and men still have similar lives but a little later their life patterns diverge. The analyses in this paper, in extending the age range, allow a more complete investigation of the effect of the labour market on the progress of young adults. The ESRC Social Change and Economic Life Initiative (Gallie, 1988) considers change in six different labour markets separated geographically rather than in time. It addresses a wide range of issues but, as yet, comparison of the impact of the different labour markets is not available.

The issues explored in comparing 16 year olds in 1968 and 1978 are, first, whether the high unemployment faced by the 1978 group has long term consequences for their progress to adult life. We would expect it to have an effect on their income but it is less clear how expenditure, living standards, and living arrangements will change. Whether men and women have been differently affected will also be investigated. Further, although the general rise in living standards between the two periods of time may mean that on average the 1978 group were hardly worse off, inequality may have increased. Nor do we know how the process of maturation might be affected. It will not be the same for men and women and, given the changes in the perception of the role of women in the interval between the 1960s and the 1980s, may also have changed differently.

In the absence of panel study data we use the technique of quasi-cohort analysis to study the progress of the two groups of 16 year olds. The quasi-cohorts are built from appropriate years of the Family Expenditure Survey (FES): those who were 16 in the 1968 FES were 18 in the 1970 FES and so on. The FES gathers information from a random sample of the cohort at each point in time but it is not possible to follow the same individuals through time. It is, however, possible to chart averages at each stage. The data allow three main comparisons to be made: between young people in the 1970s and the 1980s; between men and women; and changes with age. It also gives us an opportunity to separate secular trends from changes with age and with cohort.

Section 1 investigates the levels of employment among young people in each period and the effect these have had on the income and living standards of men and women. Whether unemployment has affected the ability to leave the parental home, family formation and living standards in the first home are then considered in Section 2. Finally, in Section 3, an attempt is made to measure the effect of unemployment on the whole process of establishing an independent household with a reasonable standard of living. We have described this as an 'event count' analysis. The empirical results reported in this paper are drawn from a working paper (Hutton and Hardman, 1991), which contains all the detailed tables. The study was funded by the Economic and Social Research Council.

I EMPLOYMENT, INCOME AND LIVING STANDARDS

Changes in employment for men and women in each group

The introduction outlined the national trend in unemployment from the 1960s to the 1980s and Figure 1 shows where the two groups we are studying are located in relation to this trend. Those aged 16 in 1978 faced high and rising unemployment and until the age of 22, young men in this group were 20 per cent less likely to be in full-time work than those of the same age in the 1976 cohort. For some young people in the 1978 group, of course, the position is even worse unemployment for young black people and in some depressed areas reached 50 per cent (Horne, 1986). An interesting contrast, however, is that although unemployment was much higher for the 1978 group, the level declined with age. The opposite is true of the 1968 group. This pattern reflects the times in which the two groups are located, the first started optimistically followed by subsequent disillusion, the second at a very low point with nowhere to go but up. It is also related to the economic cycle, but, to understand the implications for a particular cohort it is necessary to know whether it reached that stage in the cycle, from a higher or a lower point. Thus it is important to be able to study, as we can here, the process as well as the final position. *(See Figure 1.)*

A major difference between men and women which underlies many of the findings of this study is that for young women, the change in employment between the cohorts was not so great. It was only at age 16 that young women were very much less likely to be in work than women of the same age in the earlier cohort. By the age of 22, women in the 1978 cohort were more likely to be in full-time work, 57 per cent compared with 53 per cent. Other research has shown that, at a time of high unemployment, women are less willing to give up work to have children and are returning to work immediately after childbirth (Brannen, 1989; Dex, 1987).

Figure 1: Unemployment rates

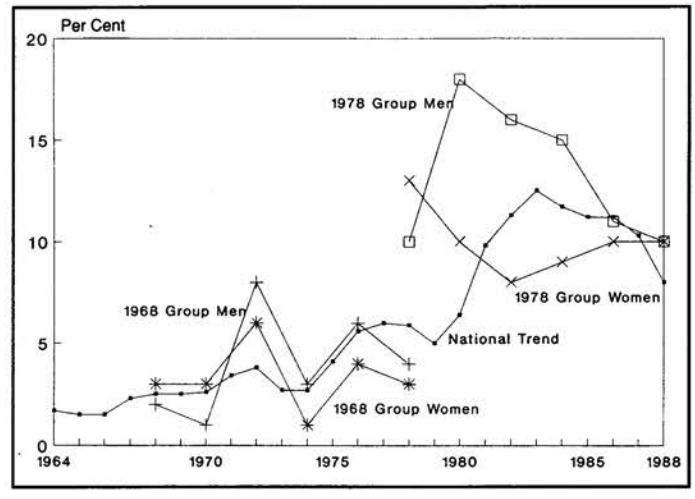
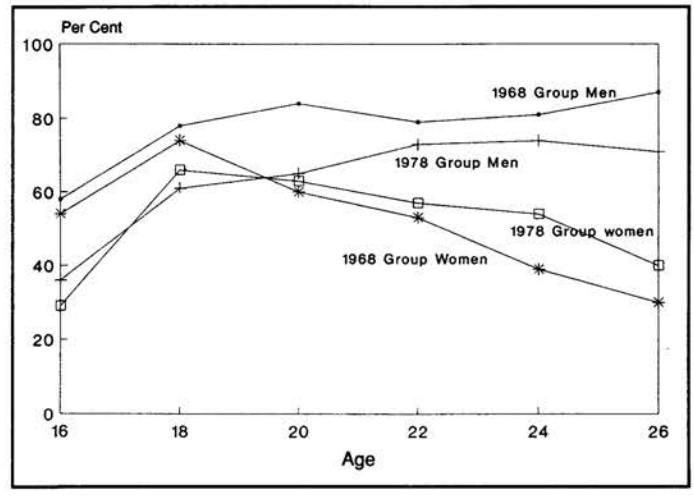


Figure 2: Men and women in full-time work



One strategy to deal with unemployment among young people is to encourage them to stay longer in education, and the school-leaving age was raised in 1973 partly for this reason. In 1968 the compulsory leaving age was 15, hence by the age of 16 some of the 1968 group had already been in work for a year, so although many more young people were in education at age 16 in the 1978 group, it is not a direct comparison. The change in the proportions in higher education can be compared, however, and we find that higher proportions of women in the second cohort were in higher education whereas the proportions of men remained similar. Men gained, however, through an upward trend in the occupational levels of their work whereas the work done by women has changed little between the groups.

It was not possible to compare the impact of training schemes on the two groups because in 1968, when the first group were 16, training schemes were mainly for

adults and the 1968 FES did not have information separately for young people.

Income of men and women in the two groups

Unemployment limits the ability of young people to progress to an independent life with a reasonable living standard through its effect on income. In comparing the incomes of the groups facing the different labour markets in 1968 and 1978 we address two conflicting hypotheses. The first is that unemployment will have a considerable impact on incomes in the 1978 cohort. Alternatively, agreeing with Causer (1987), we might expect the incomes of the 1978 cohort to be greater than those of the same age in the 1968 cohort from the general rise in real wages over the period. Table 1 shows this is true for all except men aged 20 and 22. The high unemployment for young men of this age seems to have resulted in very much lower incomes. The real income of 20 year old men has fallen from £14.08 to £12.53 from one cohort to the other. Not only has the income of these young men not risen in line with inflation, effectively a fall in their real purchasing power, it has fallen even further behind. By the age of 26, however, average income of men in the second cohort has not only overtaken the rate of inflation between 1978 and 1988, it has gone well ahead. Thus, according to this analysis, for the group as a whole unemployment does not seem to have had a long-term, lifetime effect and recovery has been prompt. This may only be true on average, however, for unemployment may affect some young people for a long time.

Unemployment was less severe for women, and, hence, as might be expected, women's incomes are higher at all ages in the 1978 than the 1968 group. Progress to greater equality for women might be looked for between the two cohorts, and there is some narrowing of the gap between men's and women's income for those aged over 18, as shown in the final two columns of Table 1. For 26 year olds, the ratio of men's to women's incomes has fallen from 146 to 112 per cent between the two cohorts. A major influence is likely to have been the equal pay legislation which came into effect in 1975, and analyses show that men's and women's earnings are closer for the 1978 cohort for those aged 20 and over. Men's earnings, however, were still over half as much again as women's and the gap was even wider for those aged16 and 18. Thus young women in the late 1980s continue to have much lower incomes than men. Some of the implications of this for social security and employment policy for women are discussed in an earlier paper (Hutton, 1991). The income available to a woman is unlikely to be high enough to provide an adequate independent living standard for herself and any dependent children. For it to be realistic to base social security policy on the labour market participation of women, pay and conditions in part-time work and the availability of facilities for the development and care of children needs to change.

A further change which occurred between the 1970s and 1980s was the growth in investment, and both men and women were more likely to have income from investments in the 1978 cohort. Although investment income was small, it does indicate the presence of a certain amount of capital or savings and the flexibility and additional security these provide. It is difficult to judge, however, whether it could offset the effects of unemployment or whether it would serve to widen the gap between those in work and those not.

Table 1: Real income (for those with income), £ per week

	MEN Gross Income		WOMEN Gross Income					
	1968	1978	1968	1978				
Age	a	b	c	d	b/a	d/c	a/c	b/d
16	4.17	4.77	3.64	4.16	1.14	1.20	1.15	1.15
18	8.80	10.22	7.06	8.17	1.16	1.16	1.25	1.25
20	14.08	12.53	8.33	10.42	0.89	1.25	1.69	1.20
22	16.12	16.12	9.89	11.87	0.99	1.20	1.64	1.35
24	19.99	19.91	9.57	12.49	1.00	1.31	2.01	1.59
26	19.80	25.22	8.04	11.92	1.27	1.48	2.46	2.12

Comparison of income in and out of work

A more comprehensive picture of the effect of unemployment on income is obtained if the incomes of those in and out of work are compared and household composition is controlled. Table 2 sets out the changes in income for men as they go through what could be described as a typical progression from living in the parental home at age 16, to living with a partner and children at age 26. It is based on the most common household types at each age. Thus, for men, until age 22, they are most likely to be living in the parental home. By the ages 24 and 26, most are living as married couples with or without children. Not being in full time work means a substantial cut in income, and as income increases with age for those in full time work, the disadvantage of the unemployed is heightened. Some interesting detailed effects are that for the 1968 cohort, men with children have higher incomes than their contemporaries without. This is not true for those in the 1978 cohort. At age 26, the income of men in married couples without children, has risen substantially between the cohorts.

Similar analyses were undertaken for women but it was only at ages 16 and 18 that numbers were sufficient to compare incomes in and out of work. At these ages the results were not different from those for men. The analyses did, however, provide further evidence of high incomes of men and women in married couples without children in the 1978 group which suggests a popular image of the 1980's, the decade of the 'yuppie'. These couples seem to have improved their standard of living in spite of unemployment, due perhaps to the greater likelihood of women working and, as we shall see later, to delay in having children.

Table 2: Income in and out of work by household type, £ per week

		1968 cohort				1978 cohort			
		FT	Unemp	Other	N	FT	Unemp	Other	N
A. Men									
16	At home	5.42	*	0.95	96	7.97	3.34	0.92	113
18	At home	9.98	*	1.90	99	12.85	4.56	5.11	113
20	At home	15.34	*	[4.90]	80	15.54	4.83	8.03	95
22	At home	15.79	*	[9.51]	53	18.00	[4.44]	[8.36]	73
24	At home	21.51	*	*	27	19.43	*	15.03	45
24	MC	21.49	*	*	34	23.33	*	*	41
26	MC	20.49	*	*	30	32.93	4.19	16.69	31
26	MC + CH	23.67	*	*	43	29.82	5.69	22.37	35

* Fewer than 5 cases; Means in square brackets are based on fewer than 10 cases.

Changes in expenditure for men and women between the two groups

Expenditure rather than current income is often used as a better indicator of 'permanent' income, and hence living standards, as it is unaffected by the fluctuations because of bonus payments, tax repayments and so on. Table 3 compares the real expenditure of men and women in the two cohorts. There seems to be remarkably little change between the cohorts which suggests that young people in the second cohort have on average participated in the general rise in living standards from 1968 to 1988. There is no evidence of any effect of the high unemployment of 20 and 22 year old men in the 1978 group in comparisons between the cohorts or, between men and women (see columns a/c and b/d). Until age 22, most young people are still living in the parental home, so the lack of effect of unemployment on young men's expenditure may be because parents seek to equalise the outcome for those in and out of work, as Hutson and Jenkins (1989) found in their work among young unemployed people in Wales. The growth of credit in the interval between the two groups may also be used to smooth out fluctuations in income (Ford, 1991). Bradshaw and Lawton (1982) showed that where there was an unemployed teenager in the family, expenditure was greater than income suggesting dissavings or the use of credit. Our analyses further showed that the proportions of those aged 26 recording credit expenditure rose from over 60 to 100 per cent between 1968 and 1978.

Table 3: Real expenditure, £ per week

	MEN		WOMEN					
	Gross Income		**Gross Income**					
	1968	**1978**	**1968**	**1978**				
Age	**a**	**b**	**c**	**d**	**b/a**	**d/c**	**a/c**	**b/d**
16	2.34	2.40	2.54	2.81	1.03	1.11	0.92	0.85
18	4.82	5.25	4.20	5.08	1.09	1.21	1.15	1.03
20	6.17	6.31	6.26	6.52	1.02	1.04	0.99	0.97
22	8.10	7.29	8.56	8.31	0.90	0.97	0.95	0.88
24	7.11	9.80	9.15	10.31	1.38	1.11	0.77	0.96
26	8.34	10.73	8.16	10.67	1.29	1.29	1.02	1.00

Expenditure on commodities

According to Kiernan (1986), the rise in the numbers of school-leavers in the early 1960s and the late 1970s were regarded very differently, the first as a growth in an affluent consumer group, and the second as a disturbing labour market problem. From these ideas we would expect considerable differences in purchasing habits between our groups of young people in 1968 and 1978. With the FES expenditure data it is not possible to identify precisely who benefits from the expenditure, but expenditure on clothing, alcohol, tobacco and transport are more likely to be on an individual basis than such household expenditures as fuel, and durable goods. Expenditure patterns have changed in some respects. Young men in the 1978 group were less likely to spend on alcohol and transport, the first because of lower incomes, and the latter because fewer were paying travel to work costs. Young women in the 1978 group and particularly those aged 16 and 18 were also less likely to spend on transport, and clothes.

On the other hand, Bynner (1990) claims that despite dramatic differences in the employment prospects in the four areas he studied, there was little difference in lifestyle and attitudes except that the Scots were less likely to go to the pub and drink alcohol. Some evidence of this is given by analyses which show that a higher proportion of men in the 1978 cohort bought clothes despite higher unemployment. Also, although 16 year old women experienced higher unemployment than other women, there was a considerable growth in their purchase of tobacco, from 43 to 76 per cent purchasing against a downward trend to around 30 per cent in the general population.

II ESTABLISHING AN INDEPENDENT HOUSEHOLD

The drive to form an independent household is strong and, at times of high unemployment, young people may simply decide to put up with a lower standard of living in order to have independence. According to Harris (1988), part of the sub-culture of unemployment has been the setting up of one's own home. Alternatively, some may delay until the chances of establishing themselves with a reasonable standard of living seem more favourable. Of course, it is simplistic to regard the move to an independent household as being a one-stage process or likely to be uniformly influenced by unemployment and income (Jones, 1987; Hartley, 1990). In this section we investigate how the timing of moving out of the parental home, marriage and having children has changed between the 1968 and 1978 groups.

Timing of leaving the parental home

Unemployment affected the 1978 cohort at an age when many would be considering moving away from the parental home. Table 4 shows that at every age between 16 and 26, a higher proportion of both men and women were still living in the parental home in this cohort compared with the 1968 group. An irony is that by 1977 there was no longer an absolute national shortage of houses (Hill, 1983), although there may have been problems with lack of appropriate transitional housing (Jones 1987). Some evidence to support the sub-culture of unemployment proposition comes from analyses which showed that young unemployed men and women up to the age of 22 were more likely to have left home than those in fulltime work. After this age, however, they were less likely. This result also suggests that unemployment may have had an indirect effect on the timing of leaving home, through the higher numbers staying on in education or the low pay in employment schemes. By age 26 however, the proportions of men living at home in the 1968 and 1978 groups were almost the same. This might suggest that there is a strong tendency, almost a deadline, to be away from the parental home by age 26, irrespective of the level of unemployment. Looking again at how unemployment has affected the 1978 group, however, we see that by the age of 26, unemployment was considerably lower than it had been at age 22. Thus the timing of leaving home may be quite responsive to labour market conditions.

Women generally leave home earlier than men (Kiernan, 1986), and this is true of both groups. However, despite women being less affected by unemployment, the pattern of leaving the parental home is remarkably similar to that of the men. The delay in leaving the parental home even continued for longer. The greatest gap between the proportions at home in the 1968 and 1978 groups occurred for women at age 20 and for men at age 22. This may, of course, be because the 20 year old women typically form partnerships with the 22 year old men. The pattern of leaving home for women may be indirectly affected by the labour market's effect on men. So the process of couples marrying and setting up home seemed still, even in 1988, to depend on the man being in work. Perhaps some were making the decision to leave home based on the women having a secure job, but from the evidence here, the general trend does not seem to have been reversed or even equalised yet.

Table 4: Percentage living in parental home by age and sex

	1968 cohort		1978 cohort	
Age	M	F	M	F
16	98	99	99	99
18	94	85	95	91
20	76	44	80	60
22	46	36	63	40
24	24	12	34	22
26	20	6	21	12

Marriage and children

The secular trend has been towards later marriage (Dunnell, 1979; Social Trends, 1973; Ermisch, 1990). Some links between marriage and unemployment are suggested in the literature. Payne (1989), for example, found a causal link between family formation and unemployment: marriage reduces the likelihood of unemployment and vice versa. Also, according to Ermisch (1989), disposable income has a strong effect on first marriage rates, so where unemployment constrains income the timing of marriage is likely to be affected. Traditionally, long-run high youth unemployment has delayed marriage and child-rearing, but some girls may find marriage and childcare the only available 'career' according to Allan (1985).

At every age, lower proportions of the 1978 compared with the 1968 group were married, which may be related to the change in the labour market, but is also consistent with the general trend in numbers marrying and the rise in cohabitation, shown in the work of Kiernan and Wicks (1990). The greater likelihood of women participating in higher education may also be a factor. Sprague (1990) showed that higher potential earnings on leaving full-time continuous education lowered the 'risk' of marriage.The change in the proportions married at each age may also demonstrate a responsiveness to the labour market, however. At age 20 (in 1984), 20 per cent fewer women were married in the second cohort compared with the first, but by the age of 26, when unemployment was not so high, the difference had narrowed to around 14 per cent for both men and women.

A direct comparison of the timing of marriage of unemployed young people with those in full-time work shows that at younger ages unemployed men and women were more likely to be married, but this was reversed for women over 22 and men over 24. This provides some further evidence for the subculture of unemployment and also, perhaps that younger unemployed women (and men also) find marriage a suitable 'career'.

Delay in leaving home, and lower likelihood of marriage, not unexpectedly, led to delay in having children. By the age of 26, a very much lower proportion of men in the second cohort had children than in the first, only 36 per cent compared with 57 per cent. The low levels of income at age 20 and 22 may also have contributed, although the association between lack of income and delay in fatherhood does not appear to be as strong as might be expected. The proportions of 20 and 22 year old men with children in the second cohort are lower than in the first, but they are not very much lower, only five per cent at age 22. By contrast, it is the younger women in the second cohort who are much less likely to have children, although by the age of 26 the proportions with children in the two cohorts are similar.

Both cohorts have had equal access to contraception through the Family Planning Service, although it was a relatively recent development in the case of the 1968 cohort (Dunnell, 1979; Ermisch, 1990). Thus the delay in having children is a particular choice of the second cohort, and a reaction either to different economic circumstances or to different social norms or pressures. It is not possible to disentangle these with data from the FES, except to observe that the high incomes of young married couples without children in the second cohort and the delay in having children may be related. The opportunity cost of having children, as suggested by Ermisch (1990), is greater when women have higher incomes. Our results also conform to the proposition in the 1973 Social Trends that better family planning would mean family formation may become more directly related to current social and economic background.

Living standards in the first home

The great expansion of consumer durables, and home ownership, in addition to the consensus on social welfare and full employment meant that society was more equal in 1979 than in 1959 according to Childs (1986). Unemployment would have no effect on the living standards in the first home, and this expansion would continue, if only those who had reached a certain level of income and security of income left the parental home. There seems to be some evidence for this in that, despite the high unemployment level at age 22 in the 1978 cohort, more households were buying their own homes than in the 1968 group. The trend continued, so by the age of 26, 70 per cent were buying their own homes compared with 50 per cent in the earlier cohort. As unemployment only affects some people in a cohort, it is likely to lead to greater divergence in living standards, some households will have two earners, whereas others will have none. This seems to be the case in home ownership, households with no earners were much less likely than others to buy their own home, under ten per cent at any age, and less likely in the second cohort than the first.

In general, the secular trend to greater ownership of consumer durables overrides the effect of unemployment. irrespective of any income constraints imposed by unemployment, the 1978 cohort owns more durable goods. In the case of central heating they may simply be benefiting from an improvement in provision by local authorities, developers, and even private landlords. The ownership of a phone, however, is something to be paid for out of current income, and ownership has increased substantially. The growth in ownership of washing machines and cars has been less consistent. For example, 20 year old households in the second cohort were less likely to own a washing machine than in the first cohort. This may reflect the lower likelihood of being a household with children in the second cohort. Two indicators of the effect of unemployment, however, are that from age 22 to 26, fewer in the second cohort own cars, and there is also evidence of greater disparity in ownership of durables between households with and with out earners in the 1978 than the 1968 group

III EVENT COUNT ANALYSIS

The effect of unemployment on the life chances of young people is perhaps most strikingly illustrated in the 'event count' analysis. This analysis compared the number of events, such as having left home, being in full-time work, and being married, which an individual had recorded by a given age. Young people in the 1978 cohort made slower progress in recording these events than those of the same age in the earlier cohort. The results of this analysis are shown in table 5.

In the analysis, an 'event count' is created which adds one point to the score if a person has recorded any of the following 'events':

- full-time work
- professional/technical occupational class
- skilled manual work
- higher education
- married
- living independently of parents
- buying own home
- children.

The indicators have been chosen so as to include some of the major transitions, such as leaving the parental home, finding work, marrying, having children. The other indicators are of a slightly secondary order, but do suggest progress in establishment and security. The two occupational classes chosen both have a high degree of stability, and higher earning power for a given educational level. Buying a house also, in general, suggests more security. The use of higher education as an indicator is more controversial, but was introduced to cope with the many people of this age who do not have full-time work, but are probably likely to achieve work at a higher income level.

Comparing the men in the two cohorts in Table 5, at age 16, 61 per cent of men in the 1978 cohort had achieved none of these events compared with 41 per cent in the 1968 cohort, and by the age of 24, the proportion

Table 5: Event count analysis; percentage recording a given number of events by age

	1968 cohort								1978 cohort							
	Number of events								Number of events							
Age	0	1	2	3	4	5	6		0	1	2	3	4	5	6	
A. Men	Percent							N	Percent							N
16	41	23	36	0	0	0	0	132	61	22	17	0	0	0	0	168
18	16	36	48	1	0	0	0	120	26	33	38	2	1	1	0	126
20	8	32	40	4	9	6	2	110	12	34	41	9	1	3	0	122
22	5	27	31	16	16	10	3	119	8	27	37	11	13	4	1	120
24	2	15	18	10	28	26	2	120	5	19	26	14	13	21	2	133
26	4	13	8	11	31	32	2	113	3	8	16	13	15	25	19	122
B. Women																
16	44	49	7	0	0	0	0	144	66	32	1	0	0	0	0	143
18	14	59	20	6	1	0	0	114	22	53	21	4	0	0	0	135
20	5	38	15	32	11	1	0	130	5	54	21	16	5	0	0	134
22	4	21	19	44	12	0	0	117	9	34	17	31	9	0	0	127
24	1	12	8	54	23	1	0	145	6	21	14	19	31	7	2	148
26	1	7	12	62	17	1	0	145	2	9	17	18	44	8	4	149

recording four or more events was 59 per cent in the 1968 cohort compared with 36 per cent in the 1978 group. A similar pattern occurs for women. Thus it seems clear that the progress of the 1978 group through the events of early adulthood is slower than it would have been ten years earlier. They catch up, however by the age of 26. These changes seem to echo rather closely the changes in the labour market, unemployment was much higher for the 1978 cohort, but by 1988 the labour market had improved a great deal. The results also support Metcalfe's (1980) claim that a period of unemployment on leaving school does not cast a 'lifelong shadow'. This may be true at a general level but for some individuals not finding work may lead to the long term difficulties as described by Bynner (1989). The greater dispersion of the distribution at age 26, particularly for women, gives evidence that some are left behind. The 'catching up' effect at age 26 may also be slightly exaggerated, because comparison is made with 26 year olds in 1978 for whom unemployment had worsened.

Women are less likely than men to score zero above the age of 16, because they leave home, marry and have children earlier. They are also less likely to record scores of five or six events because they are less likely to combine a full-time job, a professional or technical occupation with being married and having children. This is true of both cohorts, which suggests that the structure of men's and women's lives and life chances has not altered a great deal in the ten years between the cohorts.

SUMMARY

Using the technique of quasi-cohort analysis we have compared the progress of young people from age 16 in 1968 to age 26 in 1978, with that of those aged 16 in 1978 and 26 in 1988. The aim was to investigate the effect of the very different labour markets of 1968 and 1978 on the life chances of young people.

Underlying any relationship between unemployment and life chances is its immediate effect on income. The issue here is whether the overall rise in real incomes has compensated the 1978 group for the higher unemployment than in 1968. Our analyses suggest that in general this is the case; only 20 and 22 year old men in the 1978 group had lower real incomes on average than those of the same age in the earlier group. They also faced the highest levels of unemployment. By the age of 26, however, the real income in the 1978 cohort had caught up and gone ahead, which suggests that the effect of unemployment on the group as a whole had been overcome. Comparison of the incomes in the 1978 group of those in and out of work, however, showed how those out of work fell further behind with age as those in full time work progressed up the income scale. Unemployment may well have a very longlasting effect for some, and, as some young people move on into households with two earners, result in much greater inequality.

The lower level of unemployment for women than men in the 1978 group is the foundation of many of the results of the study. Despite this, and the intervening legislation on pay and equal opportunities for women, their income remained much lower than men's.

The relationship between these differences in income, unemployment and living standards, as indicated by real expenditure, is unclear. Real expenditure between the two groups and between men and women remained remarkably similar, which suggests that parents' subsidising of the living standards of their unemployed sons and the growth in credit has helped to even out expenditure.

Perhaps the most noticeable link between unemployment and progress to adulthood appears in the delay in leaving the parental home, experienced by both men and women, in the 1978 group. This runs counter to the 1970s trend for greater independence for young people. That both men and women are affected suggests that their progress is interdependent and that leaving home seems still to depend on men rather than women being in work. Delay in having children is part of a secular trend but may also be a response to uncertainty at times of high unemployment. Despite an increase in owner-occupation and ownership of consumer durables, investigation of the living standards in the first households shows how unemployment has contributed to greater inequality for the 1978 cohort.

The event count analysis strikingly demonstrated the slower progress through the events of early adulthood of both men and women in the 1978 group compared with the 1968 cohort. By 1988, however, in general, they had more than caught up. This delay affected eight out of the ten years following their start in the labour market. Although the group as a whole caught up by age 26, more were left behind than in the 1968 group, providing further evidence of greater inequality in the 1978 group.

What do these analyses tell us for those starting out today? The recession of 1991 is comparable with that of the early 1980s. The optimism for young people generated by the lower numbers coming on to the labour market has dissipated. It looks very much as though the prospect for young people starting adult life in 1991 is very similar to that of those starting in 1978. We have shown in a detached, quantitative way that young peoples' progress to adulthood then was slower than at a time of full employment, but behind these figures are individual stories of disappointment, discouragement and frustration. An economic policy which results in high unemployment is going to demand a high price from young people.

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Participation. An approach to independent learning

CINDY PEEK

Adult education practitioners and theorists have identified some of the component parts of the adult learning experience and this has serious implications for the design and delivery of learning opportunities for adults. There are notable differences between the methods suggested for adults and the methods most commonly employed in the formal education of children and young people. The differences between the intentions and methods of adult education and of youth work are, however, surprisingly similar.

Independent learning

Adult educators have a responsibility to help learners develop their independence and to act, in their own teaching, in ways which advance the independence of their learners (Moore, 1983). Heathers (1955) posits two kinds of psychological independence: instrumental independence involves the ability to undertake an activity without seeking help; emotional independence involves the capacity to complete an activity without seeking reassurance, affection or approval.

One of the ideas on which adult educators have built is that of the learning needs which accompany developmental tasks (Knox, 1979). People are most willing and most able to learn when they most need to know. 'Readiness appears to be largely a function of the socio-cultural continuum of life phases.' (Cross, 1981)

Characteristics of the fruitful adult learning context are dialogue between educator and learner (Moore, 1983), and a series of 'freedoms': to self pace, to follow alternative learning pathways, to select learning goals and of access (Henderson, 1984).

The teacher is a facilitator, enabling students to define their own purposes in learning, and a resource, to be utilised by the students in ways most meaningful to them (Rogers, 1969). S/he respects the uniqueness of the person, has faith in the positive quality of human nature believes in people's responsibility for their own learning. To this end, s/he is an active listener, that is, s/he listens with understanding and tests her understanding by reflecting the meaning of learners' verbal contributions.

The group learning atmosphere is thus non-threatening, conducive to the participation of members and it facilitates effective communication so that members' contributions can be understood by others and utilised by the group as a whole. The facilitating function does not belong exclusively to the 'group leader': rather it can be assumed by other group members as their skills and confidence increase and they lose their initial dependence upon the leader. (Gordon, 1955)

Participation in youth work

Participation in youth work is a method of promoting social and political education; getting young people together around a common enterprise to enable them to develop as individuals, building their knowledge, skills and attitudes. It is not about a planned programme of learning, rather it is about the creation of opportunities which young people may or may not use to develop their own learning. Participation was a major theme of the Youth Service throughout the 1980s. It was the intention of this small piece of research to explore the nature and the context of the learning which young people had achieved through their participation in youth work initiatives, to find out whether their learning was transferable to other situations and whether their experience had been enjoyable.

To complete the research, I worked with three small groups, each comprised of between two and four young people, all of whom were aged between 16 and 24. The first group was participating in the running of its own youth club in a shire county where individual youth workers are relied upon to promote participation at this level. The second group was taking part in a residential training course for senior members and was comprised of one, two or three young people from each of several youth groups in a different shire county. The third group was comprised of young people involved in the national committees of national youth organisations. The settings were chosen for the diversity of experience they could offer to young people.

There is no suggestion that the young people were representative of young people in general, nor even of young people in youth organisations, but there is no reason to believe that these young people were different, in significant ways, from their participating peers.

Young people were first interviewed in groups, each interview lasting about 30 minutes and then semi-structured interviews were conducted with individuals, each of these taking about an hour.

It was possible to organise the findings into three broad categories.

Learning achieved

The young people were aware of their learning gains. They felt increased self-confidence and voiced an ability to take more control over the direction of their lives, more so than prior to their involvement. Some of them recognised that their level of tolerance of others had been

enhanced as a result of their experience. Several said that their attitudes and values on specific issues, for example equality, had changed. There was recognition of their ability to use the skills and knowledge gained, in different settings, and they were unafraid to explore ideas and find out more. They voiced a confidence in developing to their full potential their own projects and interests.

By working together, making decisions, both collectively and individually, and taking responsibility for the processes and the outcomes of their decisions, the questions of 'How?' and 'Can I?' were raised. When developing skills in planning, organisation and research, young people learned how to assess the deficit in their existing knowledge and skills, how to look for and collect information and how to meet their learning needs. By learning to listen to others, young people learned communication skills, articulacy and advocacy.

The young people had extended their ability to make sense of the world around them: looking behind them at social structures: looking at the reasons for their own and other people's behaviour. They became more aware of self and others' needs, questioning norms and re-evaluating attitudes and values. They were able to transfer their understanding of the structures of their own organisations to broader societal levels. Through this process, the young people felt they had gained recognition and were valued as individuals, enabling them to think positively and to motivate themselves.

The key to involvement

Young people had first become involved in their organisations for different reasons and through different people but many had the common experience that youth worker intervention had facilitated more profound involvement, enabling young people to consolidate and build on their learning.

The group who began their participation through helping to run their own youth club were introduced to the idea by a parent, and then because of peer group pressure or support went on to training events. It was during one of these training events that they made contact with a youth worker who suggested other opportunities like taking part in compiling a youth work publication and planning a conference for other young people in their area. It was through these opportunities that the young people themselves believed they gained most learning and most enjoyment. Furthermore, they were able to transfer this learning to their own youth club situation and to within their own community.

Members of the second group had been asked by a youth worker to join their club committee and from this, they went on to senior member training. This enabled them to organise events and projects for other young people, whilst increasing their own learning.

The third group's involvement in national committees also came about through contact with and the intervention of youth workers. In one case, the young person's involvement was incremental. She was first asked, at the youth club, if she would be willing to help out at junior club and then she was asked if she would like to represent her club at a national youth conference. Another young person was offered the opportunity to attend the same national youth conference by a youth worker at a training event. Once at the conference, each of these young people decided to seek nominations from other young people from their areas to the national committee to which they were subsequently elected. Membership of this committee was the stepping stone to greater involvement on the national scene and it was this that the young people talked of at length as the vehicle for their learning.

Ongoing support

The young people were aware of the ongoing support they had been given by youth workers for the duration of their involvement. (It was not, in every case, the same youth worker who had helped to initiate the young person's participation.) Furthermore they were aware of a relationship between the actions of the supporting youth worker and their own learning.

The young people talked of working together with their youth workers, which enabled them to gain skills in decision making, taking responsibility, researching, planning and organising. They talked about feelings of equality between young people as well as between youth worker and young people and felt this had been engendered by the youth workers. There was mutual respect and there were shared expectations that young people could and would take responsibility. Young people were aware of youth workers' active listening skills; they felt that these had, in turn helped them to listen to others; they recorded their feelings of being encouraged and valued; they reported that their listening skills gave them access to more information and resulted in a greater interest in what was going on around them.

One of the interviewees reported a negative experience. He felt that he and his peers had not been listened to, that they had felt powerless and unconfident in the situation, but, even so, felt they had learned how **not** to promote participation.

An approach to independent learning

The principles of participation in youth work reflect the beliefs of adult educators. It enables youth workers to carry out their responsibility as educators to advance the independence of learners. The young people's involvement gives them increased confidence to go on to complete, without help and without reassurance, tasks in the future. This requires that young people learn to identify their learning needs, the deficit between that which they know and can do and that which they do not and cannot.

Youth workers not only capitalise on the 'teachable moments', but also create 'teachable moments' by making and offering opportunities to engender developmental tasks through which young people are able to meet their learning needs. Young people are encouraged to retain freedom and control over access, the pace, the route, and the goals of their learning.

The method dictates boundaries to the style of leadership. The youth worker is a flexible resource, capable of being utilised by the students in ways most meaningful to them. The worker acts in a democratic manner, enabling individuals to take responsibility for

decision making, setting its own rules and standards of behaviour, within the limits imposed by the situation in which the group is operating.

Conclusions here are tentatively drawn because this was a very small piece of research and inevitably it was guided by that which was already 'known'.

> We always know something already and this knowledge is intimately involved in what we come to know next, whether by observation or any other way. We see what we have reason of seeing. (Kaplan 1964)

The young people had clearly learned through their participation. Significant learning had taken place at a time when the subject matter was perceived by them as relevant to their purposes. Each young person had participated responsibly in the learning process. The opportunities had been engendered by youth workers but choice over whether and how to make use of them belonged to the individual young people.

Through the developmental tasks offered to them young people had met their own learning needs. The implications of 'teachable moments', identified by Cross (1981) are especially interesting in the business of facilitating the learning of young adults. The young people had developed, or at least had begun to develop, an emotional and an instrumental independence; furthermore, they were aware of this development, to the extent of recognising their potential to pursue further learning projects.

The need for a facilitative, democratic style of leadership was confirmed. The youth workers, in these instances were group centred, believing that the group existed for the fulfilment of certain needs of its members, seeing the procedures, forms, structures, or rituals of groups as having no value in themselves. Probably the most emphasised function of youth workers was active listening, promoting feelings of equality and mutual respect.

More questions

This investigation did not illustrate all of the aspects of independent learning but, by way of compensation, it raised additional questions about the participative process. It begs answers to questions about the kinds of skills which youth workers find are important to this kind of work and this in turn may reveal suggestions for additions or amendments to the training agenda.

The extent to which young people were aware of the existence and nature of the support they were being given was a surprising find. It would be interesting to find out: at what point in their involvement they became aware of it; ,what their perception of the support they were given was: whether this contrasted with that of the youth workers; whether they felt they could have reached the same conclusions without it.

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Reviews in this issue

NO SPACE OF THEIR OWN: YOUNG PEOPLE AND SOCIAL CONTROL IN AUSTRALIA.
Rob White
Cambridge University Press

THE GENTLE ART OF LISTENING
Janet K Ford and Phillipa Merriman
Bedford Square Press

POSITIVE PERSPECTIVES: DEVELOPING THE CONTRIBUTION OF UNQUALIFIED WORKERS IN YOUTH AND COMMUNITY WORK
Duncan Scott
Longman

CRIME, PENAL POLICY AND SOCIAL WORK
Harry Blagg and David Smith
Longman

PARENTS IN SECONDARY EDUCATION
Berry Mayall
Calouste Gulbenkian

GENDER AND SUBJECT IN HIGHER EDUCATION
Kim Thomas
Open University Press

INVOLVING YOUNG PEOPLE IN THEIR COMMUNITIES
June Lightfoot edited by Harold Marchant
Community Development Foundation

Rob White
NO SPACE OF THEIR OWN: YOUNG PEOPLE AND SOCIAL CONTROL IN AUSTRALIA
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In a survey published last year in one of the tabloids, the sort you'd never buy but can't resist reading when another traveller leaves it behind on the bus seat, Australia came top of a list of countries young people in the UK said they would like to visit or live in. Needless to say the methodology employed in carrying out the survey would not bear scrutiny and neither would the integrity of the journalists who constructed an article around it. The latter told the reader that the popularity of Australia amongst young people was the end product of them watching too many soap operas emanating from that country and the impact of such mega talents as Jason and Kylie. Be that as it may young people have gained a great deal of apparent knowledge about Australia and the 'Australian way of life' from the mass importation of programmes from down under.

How does such knowledge match the picture that emerges from the book under review? The short answer is that is does not. Far from offering an inviting and attractive vista White has produced a text that manages to convey a society that in terms of 'youth problems' fares pretty badly possibly even worse than our own. It is a long time since I read such a gloomy text. According to White our young Australiaphiles if they did go to the land of their dreams would be disappointed. They would not encounter the youth dominated world of the soaps but rather a society that has increasingly pushed younger people to the sidelines. One in which they 'are losing any material or cultural space of their own, to express themselves, to develop their own creative talents and to gain a measure of financial and social independence'.

The text is scholarly and extensively referenced. It is also a useful starting point for anyone wishing to ascertain the key elements of contemporary Australian youth policy. Half the book is devoted to an analysis of the rise of youth unemployment in Australia since the 1960s and the sorry tale of failed and ill-considered initiatives undertaken to contain the problem. In particular it considers the emergence of a youth policy that sought initially to get young people involved in training and education programmes; then sets a high priority upon reducing the costs of welfare and income support for them as the demand grew in unison with increases in youth unemployment; and finally sought more directly to control the public behaviour of those young people who were excluded from the mainstream labour market - to manage their spare time and access to public space. As the author takes one through the labyrinth of short-term programmes (keep your finger on the abbreviations page) the UK reader will be struck by the extent to which the Australian responses match those in the UK. Similarly his analysis of the causal factors will make familiar reading; you are left in no doubt that youth unemployment is not purely an English disease. Attention is also paid to the impact of youth unemployment and the changed nature of the youth labour market upon the schools. Although one might question the crude assessment of the role and function of schooling that is offered the chapter provides a fascinating overview of the reaction against progressivism and the rise in vocationalism that occurred there. As such it offers a fresh and worthwhile comparison with similar trends in the UK.

The second half of the book is largely based on studies carried out by the author on youth crime, the street behaviour of young people and youth orientated welfare provision. Again extremely useful both by way of introduction to the issues and policies it also hammers home the message that a great deal of convergence has taken place regarding styles of working, the needs of young people and the range of problems. By way of a bonus it is a delight to read the author's demolition job on the concept of empowerment .

Obviously this is not a book that will gain a wide audience in the UK. However for anyone interested in comparative youth policy it is essential reading. For those looking for something that will give them fresh insights into UK youth policy it is a text that will repay the time spent hunting it down. For harassed youth workers seeking an antidote for Neighbours, Home and Away, etc .... it may be available on prescription.

Tony Jeffs

Janet K Ford and Phillipa Merriman
THE GENTLE ART OF LISTENING
Counselling Skills For Volunteers
Bedford Square Press 1990
ISBN 0 7199 12830
£6.95. pp 113
From bookshops or by post (£7.82)
from the distributors:-
Plymbridge Distributors Ltd.,
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The Gentle Art of Listening is a pleasure to read and to recommend. It is a book about befriending or counselling by volunteers and the aim of the book is to help volunteers to help themselves in their work. The style is simple and straightforward but not simplistic for the authors deal with complex issues with some subtlety as well as clarity.

The book consists of short chapters with clearly-headed subsections which make it easy to read. Key issues or questions are set out at the end of each main section or chapter and the way in which these resound in the mind is a sure indication of their value to the reader. The book has a generic quality which derives from its sharp focus. It is relevant across the full range of counselling agencies.

The Gentle Art of Listening is intended for practitioners and its focus is the volunteer. The first chapter sets out the basic features of both volunteering and counselling and covers status, authority, boundaries and limits in accessible everyday language. It deals with a common cause for concern, relationships between professionals and volunteers as well as those with the client.

A major difficulty encountered by practitioners in both counselling and supervision is the very low value placed on the actual process of listening itself. Practitioners regularly refer to external pressures on space and time, the pressure to fill every minute with busy-ness, and the gradual erosion of confidence which occurs when the core activity of skilled listening is given such a low priority. Keeping space and time for the client is the first and last thing the practitioner does. It has intrinsic value in itself. The second chapter highlights what is involved in skilled listening, and its importance.

The discussion of listening is taken further in the next chapter, on emotions and feelings.This opens with a clear statement on the value which listening has to the client. The physical, social and psychological considerations are outlined without getting bogged down in any one at the expense of the others. As the chapter is approached from the point of the volunteer and her needs this makes it particularly useful because it provides a language in which the work can be discussed by her.

The considerable progress over the last thirty years in recognising the social constituents of human existence is evident here for the client is not discussed in isolation. A chapter is devoted to the context in which the client exists, and discusses the volunteer's relationship with others in the clients world (the client's family, for example.) Both mental and physical health are discussed in an undogmatic way, and included is a topical section on care for the carers. I take it as axiomatic that counselling is partly about helping clients to reclaim those health-inducing processes in themselves which are part of their human condition. What is particularly pleasing here is that the authors have handled these subjects in a way which makes them applicable to both the practitioner and the client. To discuss pathology simply and with no hint of stigmatising is no mean feat.

Out of the vast store of theoretical concepts on which to draw the chapter on relationships is the nearest one gets to traditional counselling texts. It would be difficult to quarrel with the selection from the analytic field of transference and projection as key concepts for any counsellors. The sections on transference and projection are admirably clear.

Client fantasy can evoke both anger and mystification in beginners, 'He told me nothing but a pack of lies' a volunteer will exclaim in hurt tones. The section devoted to manipulation discusses fantasy and other common features of the covert agenda and deals with both the positive and negative aspects. The subject is one which will strike a chord with volunteers and trainers alike. This chapter ends with a brief discussion of physical contact, and client-volunteer relationships which break down or are 'no goes'

Relationships with colleagues, and particularly with professional staff may be a cause of concern to both volunteers and professionals alike. Helpful distinctions are made between different kinds of authority in the chapter on working with professionals. These, coupled with the reminder that volunteers too become specialists in their field, are just one indication of many that this is a book rooted in experience as well as one which is concerned with individual autonomy.

This is a book for and about volunteers. Refreshingly it does not try to present a pathology of client groups, although it does discuss human behaviour and relates it to the listening volunteer of the title. It is therefore fitting that the final chapter should be about ' Looking After Yourself.'

There are references throughout the book to the need to discuss work. Perhaps one of the first learning points for any counsellor is the importance of time for oneself. This is possibly even more important for volunteers, who along with part-time workers, probably face a general assumption that they have 'plenty of time' whilst in reality they may have far less flexibility in management of their time than do full-time staff.

Time for oneself includes personal time, but also professional time to take stock and this includes the time for the enabling process of supervision as part of work time. This need is referred to throughout the book, as right, usual and necessary and the explanation on page 71 of why this is so is brief but telling.

Volunteering raises an associated question, that of the role of the expert. The authors take a positive view, which I share, on volunteering. This is partly because sole reliance on experts eventually has wider and socially disabling effects. The loss of confidence and autonomy in those who are not 'experts' has been well-argued on a number of fronts. The problems of rigidity of social role is as applicable here as elsewhere. This book is a helpful reminder that experts and volunteers may be one and the same .

This is undoubtedly a useful, relevant book not least in its recognition of the serious contribution which volunteers can make. However this does raise other questions, which are outside the scope of the book. Volunteering has received an increasingly higher profile in the last decade, a decade in which, for example, many counsellor posts have disappeared from education, the health and social services. The political promotion of the market place and an enterprise culture has been accompanied at the same time by the political disparagement of professionals.

Changes in care for the sick, the move into the community for those previously institutionalised, the homeless, the disabled, rape and other assault victims all call for counselling support. There has been a growth of specific agencies, making regular use of volunteers, whether for the homeless, for abused children, the redundant, rape victims or victims of accidents. Whether such demands can be met by increased volunteering seems as open to question as is that of whether they should. There is the danger that what should be public knowledge and concern is hidden away in fragmented private agencies. The logistical effect is to individualise what may be legitimate social and public concerns.

Volunteers may be involved in individual caring processes whilst what is required are political solutions as well. As the authors point out, most volunteer counsellors are women. This raises the further question of the social contribution of unpaid work by the social group which already suffers most from poverty and particularly in old age. The question is not one of whether volunteers or professionals can do the job. It is one of resourses, of public perception and of political will.

Nor does the book tackle issues of culture, for example of ethnicity, of religion or of colour. These factors are acknowledged and their effects, in the preface and in the section on physical contact, for example, but it remains implicit rather than explicit. This does not detract from the value of the book as a generic text on method. This is a short book. It cannot cover everything and one of its strengths is its consistency of focus. It is pointed, concise and relevant.

The reservations I have expressed are those of context. So far as the book itself is concerned, The Gentle Art of Listening is a book which I would confidently recommend to volunteers. I found myself nodding as each point came up, and wanting to top mark again and again. It would make an excellent basic text for training purposes. I for one would be pleased to use it as such and not only with volunteers, for the questions it lists are profound and relevant. It is very readable and production in tape form as well would reach a wider audience. In view of

the increased demands now being placed on volunteers. the support and recognition offered by this book is urgently needed and its appearance timely.

Marion Leigh

Duncan Scott
POSITIVE PERSPECTIVES: DEVELOPING THE CONTRIBUTION OF UNQUALIFIED WORKERS IN YOUTH AND COMMUNITY WORK
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Question: When does an innovative and progressive development turn into a fad?
Possible answer: When its underlying assumptions and ideas are no longer analysed and critically re-examined.

Needless to say, this isn't a quote from some early philosopher: I've just made it up as a starting point for this review of an important and challenging new book. Nor is it a wholly adequate explanation of what has happened in recent years to Duncan Scott's main focus of interest - the role and routes to qualification of part-time and voluntary youth and community workers.

Even so, my little poser may still be worth applying to this area of education and welfare practice and in particular to some (currently) high-profile concepts: 'starting from (workers') strengths'; 'indigenous' community leaders; 'experience' and 'experiential learning'; 'competence' and 'competences'; and 'portfolios' and 'portfolio-based approaches'. For in this book one of the best known exponents of these ideas, certainly in youth and community work circles, puts them to the most relentlessly critical and *self-critical* test.

None of this is meant to suggest that the original 'bible' (*Starting from Strengths*, National Youth Bureau, 1984) which Duncan Scott wrote with Steve Bolger was anything other than ground-breaking. By prising open the view that 'courses = training' + 'qualification', they achieved something akin to to a paradigm-shift, at least within the youth and community service.

Most positively, their report highlighted the 'life experience' which 'unqualified' workers bring with them to their practice – as Black and white men and women who have raised families, lived together as neighbours and held down non-youth and community work jobs. Not only does all this give them a crucial shared identity with many of those they seek to 'serve'. It often also means that at the receiving end what they do is seen as being at least as valuable as the contribution of the much better paid, higher status and qualified 'professionals'.

Yet, though Scott has unapologetically put his name to such views, he refuses to treat them as uncontentious or unproblematic. He uses this book to confront and unpack the dilemas and contradictions intrinsic to them, drawing heavily on three case studies of women community activists, one of whom is Black, and on evidence from sources as disparate as the 1984-5 miners' strike and Third World development.

Take for example his view of surely *the* concept in this whole debate:

> ... it will be unhelpful and damaging to adopt an uncritical and atheoretical approach to experience, for at least two reasons. *Firstly*, the experiences of unqualified people are in no simple sense their own ... (but) reflect, in complex and dynamic ways, the interaction of dominant interests and less dominant/dominated categories or individuals... *Secondly*, experiences whatever their origins, are not synonymous with learning. The task of the educational and training strategy must be to link the need for *theoretical interpretation ... with educational and training practice.* (Emphases in the original).

Typically, from such a starting point Scott more than once goes on to consider, not just the strengths derived from such experience, but also its possible flaws - such as 'the underdevelopment of anti-sexist and anti-racist work'. And then, moving on again, he boldly takes on 'the dilemma of exchanging one set of stereotypes for another'. The white worker, he stresses:

> ... would be justified in reacting simplistic and monolithic assertions. S/he would find it difficult to be *more* discriminatory, but very necessary. Black people are no less variegated than any other social category and no less subject to ideologies which mystify their realities. (Emphasis added).

For any practitioner-with-people, such insights are helpful warnings against both the immobilisation and the collusion with bad practice, which one's own internalised racism or sexism can produce.

Scott warns, too, against the uncritical adoption of other key concepts with which his and Bolger's names are associated. Take for example the notion of 'competence(s)'. He notes how increasingly

> the educational and training purposes of the students are ... (being) primarily (but not exclusively) defined with reference to society, industry and the employer. Statements of function generate statements of competence; performance is then measured against the achievement of competence-led criteria.

In responding to this kind of subversion of a key idea, Scott argues that, in pursuing 'the purposes or functions of education and training! and the statements of related competence', balances need to be tipped in favour of the 'the experiences of the students, rather than, but not to the total exclusion of, the requirements of employers'.

In this context, he also challenges some of the newer and increasingly influential organisations now firmly ensconced on the 'experiential learning' bandwagon. He is clearly very deeply suspicious - to say the least - of the Learning from Experience Trust and the highly individualised philosophies on which its approaches rest, which he sees as failing to examine 'the structurally-derived contradictions (which are) generated within an unequal society'.

He also has a series of sharp questions for the National Council for Vocational Qualifications (NCVQ) which, he claims, 'few commentators, policy-makers or practitioners are even asking'. These suggest that NCVQ's 'harmonising and rationalising of the qualificatory maze' may, amongst other things, be mainly to do with cost cutting; encouraging 'a sharper sense of individual and instrumental careerism at the expense of collective and more egalitarian values'; and benefiting the 'directors' and 'powerholders' of economic institutions.

Not surprisingly therefore Scott insists that the whole field of 'volunteer' work must be understood in its wider economic, political and ideological contexts. He points to the way that recent Conservative governments have, for their own purposes, exploited current debates 'selectively utilising the more developed critical comments about professional practice, whilst simultaneously eulogising about the less defined capacities of the unqualified and the informal'.

It would be quite wrong however to imply that Scott is concerned only with demolition. Underpinning all he writes is a vision - a vision of the as yet barely recognised and certainly unrealised potential of 'the unqualified'.

With his reluctance to take any proposition as given, he at no time romanticises or idealises the contribution of such workers. Not only does he acknowledge that they can hardly provide the solution to all our society's welfare or educational ills. He also systematically penetrates what 'unqualified' means, revealing along the way how not all the values and functions underpinning their 'people-work' are well adapted to the outcomes he favours. And he concludes that 'the "long march" to the liberation of the half million non-professional youth and community workers (*and* the re-orientation of the 5000 professionals) will not be a straight line'. (Emphasis in the original).

Nonetheless these *are* his objectives - and he is unbending in his adherence to them. Repeatedly, his rigorous research as well as his tough analysis leads to the same clear conclusion: what unqualified practitioners offer is both different from, and (at least) as valuable as, that contributed by the 'qualified' and the 'professional'. This in turn means (again at the very least) that they need to be accorded equal attention, status, and resources for training and support. And, even more fundamentally and as a prior condition, it requires that our over-certificated society break with its deeply embedded view of the 'unqualified' as at best deficient ancillaries to the professionals' special and superior skills, and at worst dangerous and deviant intruders into the latter's secret garden.

We should therefore be in no doubt about the core message of Scott's work: these are men and women in their own right, with distinctive skills and insights to offer. Nor does the validity of their contribution depend on the approval or the given definitions of that powerful 'professional' minority which has for so long colonised the work-with-people territory.

Indeed, Scott makes clear, that minority has more to learn from the 'unqualified' than it has even begun to glimpse.

At times this book feels and is rather repetitive. Some of its analysis and conceptualisation come across as rather abstract - an ironic outcome for a work so committed to making the connections between action, reflection and further action. And some of the diagrams and charts may for some readers prove more distracting than illuminating.

Nonetheless, it provides an invaluable antidote to some of the faddishness which *Starting from Strengths* and other recent developments has encouraged, at least within the youth and community service. Indeed for education or welfare 'professionals' who recruit, support, train, or simply exploit the labour of part-time and voluntary workers, it should be required reading. They will find that, though its commitment to these workers burns passionately out of every page, it gives short shrift to the anti-intellectualism which can too easily lead to over-simplification and misdirected energies.

Like all good texts on practice, this is frequently an uncomfortable read. Constantly it left me asking: Do *I really* think like that? And is that how I act?

Bernard Davies

Harry Blagg and David Smith
CRIME, PENAL POLICY AND SOCIAL WORK
Longman 1989
ISBN 0-582-04792-7 pp.152

David Thorpe and his colleagues at Lancaster University have been influential in the development of policies and practice for dealing with young offenders. Their book 'Out of Care' led the way in this field and as a result, for example, intermediate treatment and other community initiatives for young offenders, at least as far as England and Wales are concerned, are now limited to those at the 'heavy end', those about to be incarcerated. At the same time systems management strategies have been developed to keep young people out of the juvenile justice system wherever possible. Indeed, attempts are now being made to use similar strategies with young adult offenders. It is not surprising, therefore, that I looked forward to reading this book, written, as it is, by two of Thorpe's colleagues at Lancaster. Though not in the same league as 'Out of Care', it is nevertheless a welcome addition to the literature concerning social work (which includes probation in this book) and offenders.

The contents of the book can be neatly summarised as follows: chapter one sketches recent changes in criminology which are relevant to social workers; chapter two broadens the focus and places these changes in historical and political context, not least the ideological move to the right over the last decade which has resulted in a more authoritarian state and attacks on welfare institutions; chapter three gives an account, based on research, of how social workers and youth workers have responded to the aforementioned changes by doing what the authors call 'youth social work'; chapter four examines the problem of the prison system not least the size of the prison population; chapters five and six show how social work has responded to official injunctions to play a role in the reduction of the prison population and the management of deviant youth - not least the work of Thorpe *et al* referred to above is charted; chapter seven again draws on research and explores forms of mediation and reparation in criminal justice; and finally the conclusion summarises the main themes of the book - it does not deny the problems raised for social workers by critical theoretical analysis but at the same time does not succumb to a paralysing gloom.

The authors show how criminology can have an impact on policy and practice. For example, sociological influences led to a move away from the medical/psychiatric model and the influences of pyscho-analytic approaches in dealing with offenders. More recently the impact has not been as the early criminologists would have wished - for example, what causes people to behave in such and such a way, and what can we do about it? - but rather in terms of understanding one's own agency as well as others such as the police, and of how current practice may have unanticipated and unintended consequences. Thus, the labelling perspective has led to explicit policy prescriptions - non-intervention, decriminalisation, diversion, decarceration etc. - and such ideas have strongly influenced the thinking and practice of social workers in the 1970s and 1980s. There has been a move away from focussing on the criminal actor towards an examination of those who label and define his/her criminality. Criminology, it is argued, can also give ideas regarding crime prevention and has also led to a powerful new line of thinking which stresses the importance of sex and gender (and I would add race) in the understanding of and responding to crime.

From my own point of view it is a pity that radical criminology or more particularly the 'new criminologists' have not had more influence on social work thinking and practice (though it has to be said that the 'new criminologists' themselves stressed the theoretical rather than the empirical). Briefly, crime and delinquency can be seen as being inherently and inextricably linked to the inequalities of wealth and power in capitalist society and as such can only seriously be addressed by a fundamental transformation of society based on justice and equality. Such 'left idealism' might be unfashionable at present especially, as chapter two points out, the 'authoritarian populism' of the Thatcherite years has meant that 'law and order' dominates, and the whole crime debate can be seen as being owned by the New Right. Nevertheless I think it is too easy to dismiss radical/Marxist criminology and its relevance to practice, a point I will briefly return to.

Social work practitioners will probably find chapters five and six 'developments in social work', of particular interest. The former deals with adult offenders and the latter with juvenile offenders, though there is overlapping between the two. The development of community service is discussed and the authors note that it is now basically compulsory, unpaid, largely menial and manual work. This seems to be a long way from the lofty ideal of it being a way for offenders to develop 'new careers', helping in their rehabilitation by enabling them to discover new possibilities in their lives through working alongside non-offenders and through contact with the needy or dependent in the community. The probation order is also discussed especially the way it has changed, through the Thatcherite years, from being aimed at helping and supporting offenders to being a means of disciplining and controlling them. In short, it no longer remains a modified form of liberty but increasingly a modified form of imprisonment! Incidentally, similar changes can be seen in relation to juveniles whereby work with 'heavy end' offenders increasingly involves surveillance and, again, control. Staying with juveniles, the book notes that current social work practice of systems management and face to face work, in the form of the correctional curriculum for example, neglects issues of structural inequality. There is a real danger that dealing with delinquency becomes simply a problem of technical management, while wider problems of discrimination and oppression on the basis of class, race and gender are ignored. Somewhat feebly, I think, social workers are advised to become involved in campaigning for social reform or legislative change, and to engage in antiracist and anti-sexist practice.

The conclusion provides a concise and useful overview of social work with offenders in contemporary society. It notes that the context of social work with offenders is complex, difficult and often hostile but it is optimistic that social work has something to offer in dealing with many of the personal and communal crises left in the wake of the Thatcherite revolution. Stressed is the importance of face to face work with young offenders ,this providing an important counterbalance to those, such as the Association for Juvenile Justice, who see social work, or, to use the latest jargon, juvenile justice work, solely in terms of systems management. Again the importance of anti-racist and anti-sexist practice is advocated and this is fine as far as it goes. However, my own view is that there is a need for a more radical practice following on from aspects of radical/Marxist criminology. I have argued this in previous articles in this journal, and notions such as politicisation and Friere's 'conscientization' are important here, though unfortunately this is not the place to elaborate on them.

Overall then, this is a useful book and one that deserves to be read widely. I think it will prove invaluabe to social work and probation students, as well as their lecturers, and it also has a lot to say to practising social workers and probation officers.

Steve Rogowski

Berry Mayall
PARENTS IN SECONDARY EDUCATION
Calouste Gulbenkian Foundation, London 1990
ISBN 0 903319-54-3
£4.00 pbk
pp 78

This book constitutes a short description and evaluation of the Parent Organiser project at Westminster City School in London.

The School (Parents') Association appointed a part-time Parent Organiser in May 1988 in order to develop the involvement of parents in the work of the school. This was, and probably still is the only post of its kind in the United Kingdom; hence the financial support of the Gulbenkian Foundation.

During the first two years of the project, which form the focus of the book, an astonishingly high proportion of parents (particularly of 1st and 2nd Years) seem to have been encouraged to involve themselves in the work of the school.

Now Westminster City School is not a typical comprehensive it has to be said, but its characteristics stacked the odds as much against the project as in its favour I suspect. We can perhaps surmise that it is not located in the poorest part of inner-city London, it is a voluntary-aided church school, it is a single-sex boys' school and it has a successful sixth form (part of a consortium). But on the other hand, we might surmise that the independent sector creams a good deal of the young gentlemen locally, and the school population is evidently ethnically mixed (one-third Afro-Caribbean). Even more problematically for parent involvement, we are told that the average parent travels for half an hour to reach the school.

For those of us who all-too-easily assume that secondary schools cannot match the achievements of our primary colleagues in parental involvement in schools because the work of the school is less immediate and because secondary age youngsters resent rather than welcome their parents' interest and involvement, this study presents some uncomfortable contradictions.

The aims of the project included

1. providing help for teachers by releasing them from some tasks so that they can concentrate on teaching
2. enabling activities, such as school trips and events to take place, where shortage of staff is a problem
3. increasing the opportunities for parents to learn about the school as a social and educational institution
4. increasing parental knowledge about the curriculum, and increasing their own ability to help their children with it
5. developing the school as a community of students and adults, including a wider range of adults than just teachers
6. improving the students' sense that the educational enterprise of the school is supported by their parents, with the effect that their own commitment to the school is increased
7. offering the students a supportive, family atmosphere, which might be conducive to good achievement.

In the first two years of the project, one or both parents of almost one-third of lower-school students had offered help of some kind. This was overwhelmingly mothers rather than fathers, though it included proportionate contributions from Afro-Caribbean families. Their contributions were mainly in the following areas: Office work, helping in class (e.g. with reading), library work, specialist class contributions, sports work (e.g. refereeing), school trips and careers work (e.g. work shadowing opportunities).

Further startling results showed that the students who felt most positively about this parental activity were the sons themselves. The researcher points out that not all of the aims are capable of clear evaluation, but on the whole the project is seen to have gone a good way towards meeting them.

Not every school, not even every community school, will want to promote these types of parental involvement, and few if any would be able to fund a part-time Parent Organiser in the mould of a Volunteer Bureau Organiser. But for those which might consider investing in this activity (and the Parent Organiser is said to have generated willing workers to the equivalent hours of two full-timers), this book would prove a useful guide offering tips and identifying some pitfalls.

And perhaps this sort of promotion is not so esoteric for secondary schools - the book claims that Hackney is more than half-way towards its target of £100,000 from non-statutory sources to pay for three Parent Organisers.

Bob O'Hagan

Kim Thomas
GENDER AND SUBJECT IN HIGHER EDUCATION
Open University Press 1990
ISBN 0-335-09271-3
Price £9.99 pbk. £29.50 hbk.
pp.198

I acquired this book to review by happy chance: it was passed to me by a colleague in the Education Department who knows that I teach a course on Gender Issues in Social Work and who thought that I might find the book interesting. She was right: I do - and I think other readers will too.

The book is a 'revised and shortened' version of a Ph.D thesis entitled 'Women in Higher Education' which Kim Thomas completed in 1987. In her acknowledgments she pays tribute to the work of women staff at Aston University who campaigned to improve the conditions and opportunities for women students and staff at the University. Obtaining funding for the Ph.D. thesis was one of their achievements. I mention this because I believe that understanding the background and context of any study is a pre-requisite for understanding the study itself. This study, focusing as it does on gender issues in higher education, comes about because of the efforts of women concerned about these issues. Thus the genesis, process and content of the study are closely linked.

Kim Thomas sets out clear purpose statements for the book as a whole, and for individual chapters. The clarity of her writing is to be commended.

In her opening chapter 'The Question of Gender' the author discusses the issue of gender, education and the significance of higher education, gender and subject choice. She describes her research methodology. Relevant background reading and research is indicated in each section of this chapter, which the reader can follow up if she/he chooses to do so. The aim of the book is clearly stated in this chapter: . . . 'the aim of this book . . . will be to look at the relationship between the "culture" of subjects and our commonsense constructions of masculinity and feminity; and gender inequality in higher education'.

In Chapter Two, Kim Thomas examines different feminist approaches in education and looks at how these analyses might transfer to understanding higher education. In Chapter Three she examines 'traditional' views of 'arts' and 'science' disciplines in education and asserts that the very question of subject choice embodies values and assumptions which are not always explicit. Some of these values and assumptions relate to deeply held notions of gender identity and to social constructions of gender issues.

In Chapters Four-Seven the author gives details of the process of research and of research findings. Chapter Four itself examines how science is both viewed and experienced by those who teach it and those who study it: what values underpin views and experience. Chapter Five parallels the preceding chapter but looks at the views and experiences of staff and students of humanities subjects: English and communications. Again underlying values and assumptions are examined. In Chapters Six and Seven Kim Thomas looks at the interaction between a student's gendered sense of identity and their choice of subject for study. Chapter Seven contains discussion of differences between science students and humanities students. In spite of the differences outlined in this chapter, the environment of both science and humanities disciplines is shown to favour men over women at every level.

Most of Chapter Eight is taken up with a view of the research findings and a discussion of the meaning and implications of the research. The author posits the possibility of change which would mean alteration to admission policies, marking procedures, the introduction of women - only conversion and access courses and the dissolution of subject barriers. She states that further research into the gender constructions and processes of higher education is vital. I agree with all of this, but I would argue that the greatest obstacle to change is what Kim Thomas describes as 'complacency' and the prevailing approach in higher education which is blind not only to issues of gender, but also to issues of 'race' and class.

I have one major reservation about this study. There are very few references to issues of 'race' - I counted mentions in both the opening Chapter and the conclusion and references in discussions about the inclusion (or not) of black writers on English courses. For many years the works of women and feminist writers in this current wave of the Women's Movement did not include perspectives of, and from, black women and white women have been criticised justly for this. While I understand that the study was undertaken between 1983 and 1987 (when most of us were less aware of 'race' issues) I think it is a pity that the author has not taken the opportunity afforded by the revision process to include a description and an analysis of how 'race' and gender issues interact in this study. I would urge her to consider amending this in a second edition.

This book builds up thoroughly and solidly, from the purpose statement and the setting out of the major issues in Chapter One, through the description of the research and the research findings to analysis and conclusions. Kim Thomas' style of writing is lucid and accessible - sometimes I found her statements of her own views better expressed and more interesting than the 'quotes' from staff and students, when I would have expected the reverse of this.

The analysis of the research findings is clear and convincing and confirms my views that the process and content of teaching any subject is not a 'value-free' activity. I have incorporated into my own teaching and research some of the pointers I have absorbed from this study.

So, who might read this book? Or is the question: who should read this book? Despite my strictures above I would recommend it to men and women, staff, students and future students who are looking for an introduction to the complexities of gender issues in higher education. The book is complete in itself but offers many references which can be followed up by the reader. The suggestion for re-thinking and for changing practices and procedures (outlined in Chapter Eight) are positive and challenging. Rethinking and changing attitudes is much harder! This book offers no easy solutions but contributes effectively to what should be an ongoing debate about gender inequality in higher education.

Patricia Cox

June Lightfoot, edited by Harold Marchant
INVOLVING YOUNG PEOPLE IN THEIR COMMUNITIES
Community Development Foundation
60 Highbury Grove
London N5 2AG
ISBN 0 902406 762 0 £4 . 50 + 10% p&p pbk
pp 35

My first reaction to the title of this publication was to think; 'Surely that's what good youth work practice is all about'. Why on earth should anyone need to write a publication arguing that a community development perspective should inform youth workers' best practice. Doesn't everybody know that already?

But of course everybody doesn't appear to have that same sense of community development that I'm sure the authors share with the bulk of good youth work practitioners. For instance, the words have been quite difficult to trace as I have waded through NYB/NYA documentation about what it is that youth workers do as the Service has been taken on a whistle-stop tour of its own identity in order to feed recent ministerial conferences with a palatable menu. Indeed, far from the open-ended age ranges espoused for the Service by this publication, moves from Whitehall and NYA prefer rather to stress a much narrower focus for our best practice finally targetting us on a prioritised group of 13 to 19 year olds.

So the first thing to say about this publication is thanks for publishing it now when the Service is being asked all those pertinent questions. It is a timely reminder that youth work is rooted in a community base, aims to contribute to young people's participation in their chosen communities which themselves are bettered as a result of learning from young peoples ideas, energy and commitment.

The publication itself is a nicely presented piece of work. It takes up less that forty sides of A4 sized paper (green-conscious as well as green-covered), is split into ten clearly defined sections (the largest of which is given over to case studies of real practice) and is effectively summarised in just two sides of recommendations. Even youth workers might be able to find the time to read it and it would probably be an effective use of most youth workers' time, if only to confirm that what they are doing is valuable and reaffirm their commitment to defend it. As the authors themselves admit, they are not describing a particularly new approach but it is nevertheless refreshing to see a national working group placing significant emphasis on some of the fundamental tenets of good youth work practice. I'm sure I'm not the only one who reads 'it is important to recognise that the process is as important, if not more important, than the outcome' with a feeling that such bold statements come like music to the ears of youth work practitioners bombarded with Whitehall's proposed moral and vocational outcomes.

Another refreshing emphasis is that of the youth worker playing the role of an enabler with young people. The publication starts from a recognition that the rights of young people need to be taken seriously and throughout it is keen to emphasise that good practice enables young people to make choices about how to direct their energies and decide on their own needs or potential outcomes. I would personally have preferred it if it had continued to focus a little more clearly on such a rights-based curriculum rather than dedicating quite so much space to the creation of needs-based community profiles, although there is no doubt that Youth Services are often remiss in getting access to some of the useful statistics that effective community profiling can produce.

There are some dangers in skating over some of the dilemmas pertinent to the issues of youth work from a community development perspective. For instance, the community profiling approach could easily become the tool of those who want to use youth work as the flagship for an inter-agency onslaught against vandalism or juvenile crime in a specifically targeted area. Hopefully the authors share with me the need to keep the prime objective of youth work as the social and political education of young people. As long as the techniques exposed in the publication are rooted in a perspective which starts from young peoples rights rather than the community's/society's needs then it has a great deal to offer, and there is every reason to believe that the authors of the publication share my concerns.

Equally, they are sensitive to legitimate worries about youth work being swallowed by wider community issues. After reading some parts of the text though, I did get a bit worried that youth work for young people might get a bit overtaken by the focus on community action. Perhaps it is too much to expect a publication which has thankfully limited itself to the minimum of words to have covered all potential misunderstandings of the direction it is proposing.

I found it overall to be proposing a very refreshing way forward for the Youth Service. It starts from a recognition that young people are often excluded from the communities in which they live and as such have a right to some separate space they can call their own. It views them as positive individuals with positive contributions to make about how their community/ society operates. It then identifies an enabling role for the Youth Service whilst still maintaining its traditional locations under the auspices of Local Authority Education Departments, thus retaining the essential focus as contributing to the educational development of young people according to a curriculum set by young people within the context of their own experiences. All these things which we see as distinctive to the youth work process appear to be embodied in the approaches suggested by the document.

But they then manage to take us a little further and raise our own expectations about the contribution these young people and the Youth Service might make in our communities, and indeed within society at large. The authors dare to suggest that the Youth Service should have a direct link to the Policy Committee and the feared Chief Executive's Department so that the views and opinions of young people can actually influence the delivery of Local Authority services from housing to strategic planning. Can we really move to a situation where the group of young homeless women and/or men can make key recommendations to the Director of Housing about how the system works against them and how it might be changed for the better?

Before we lift our eyes upwards and ask 'if only?!', it might be worth asking ourselves as youth workers whether or not the time has come to cast off our cinderella image and go to the ball! After all, is not the in-word in local government now the 'enabling' authority. And are we not 'enablers' of people, allowing them some space to work out how to get basic democratic human rights in the community/society in which they find themselves. Democracy is about a lot more than voting and if its an important part of a democratic society to ensure that a defendant is legally represented thus enabling them to have their say, why should it be any less important to enable young people to have a direct say about what kind of community/society they will live in for the rest of their lives.

The ideas put forward in this publication may yet help us in realising an important role for both young people and the Youth Service which the mandarins of Whitehall may have overlooked.

Tim Warren.

Classic Texts Revisited: In the Service of Youth.

MARK SMITH

Josephine Macalister Brew (1943) In the Service of Youth. A practical manual of work among adolescents. London: Faber & Faber.

It would be easy to approach this book through a haze of nostalgia. 'Produced in complete conformity with the authorized economy standards', there is no mistaking the feel and smell of the text. It is as much a product of the Second World War as the Dunkirk spirit, Anderson shelters, Vera Lynn and snook. Rubbing shoulders with hints on using wireless broadcasts are discussions of ballroom dancing in the club and the potential of Youth Service Squads. Yet by the end of the first paragraph, that feeling of quaintness is bound to disappear. What we have here is one of the true classics of youth work: of as much significance to its time as Robert Baden Powell's (1908) *Scouting for Boys* and Basil Henriques' (1933) *Club Leadership.*

Josephine Macalister Brew died in 1956. She produced not just one, but three classic books: *In the Service of Youth* (1943); *Informal Education, Adventures and reflections* (1946) and *Youth and Youth Groups* (1957). The last started as a rewrite of the first, but ended up a completely different book, 'because we live in a different world' (Brew 1957: 11). Brew also left us with an array of shorter books and pieces, for example, in the various publications (Brew 1940; 1947; 1949) and magazines produced by the National Association of Girls and Mixed Clubs (NAGMC) and in collections such as Peter Kuenstler's (1955) *Social Group Work.* Yet her legacy spreads well beyond these texts. She was a tireless worker for the National Association of Girls Clubs and was involved in the inter-war years in the influential Association for Education in Citizenship. She made a profound impact on many who knew her. John Wolfenden in his foreword to *Youth and Youth Groups,* published just after her death had this to say:

> Dr Josephine Macalister Brew was known to thousands. She was absolutely unsparing of herself and her energies, and there can be little doubt that it was her burning zeal for young people that burnt her up. Our compensation is that this book makes permanent what might have otherwise faded as ephemeral, her wit, the precise coherence of her exposition, her philosophical mind, and, above all, her abhorrence of what was pompous or pretentious. We shall not hear again that precise and lucid speech from the tiny pinched face behind the thick-lensed spectacles. But in every page of this book we *do* hear it. (1957 : 9)

Over twenty years later when I worked for the National Association of Youth Clubs (the NAGCMC after two further changes of name) her spirit was still abroad in the programmes and projects running there. In many respects, my own work then (Smith 1980) connected directly with Brew's concerns, although at the time I was not really aware of it. Her influence on several generations of workers and thinkers had fed through in an unseen way. So what was it she said that was so important?

In the Service of Youth, to paraphrase the immortal football cliche, is a book of two halves. The first focuses on youth work. It explores the emerging youth service; the work of youth organizers; different approaches to youth work; club management and organization; club activities: physical, emotional, mental and spiritual; and religion and the club. From this Brew proceeds to review the experience of adolesence in British society and the implications for youth workers. Here she examines education, housing, health, employment, juvenile delinquency and leisure. She completes this task by adopting a comparative perspective and then returns to the question 'what makes an ideal youth leader?'

While inevitably a product of its time, this book is the first comprehensive statement of the principles and practice of 'modern' youth work. It was produced at a pivotal moment (see Jeffs 1979: 13-30; Smith 1988: 29-47). The Youth Service had been established by Board of Education Circulars 1486 and 1516; and there had been a massive expansion of youth provision; a change in the social background of both users and leaders; and a fundamental shift in overall character and emphasis. The rhetoric of character building and child saving was pushed to one side. In its place there was an emphasis on enjoyment and recreation, a concern to promote 'cooperation, tolerance, free decision and joint responsibility' (Ministry of Education 1945: 9).

To make sense of this moment Brew drew on a tradition of progressive girls club and mixed club work, as well as her own reading of developments. To this extent she could be seen in a line running from workers such as Emmeline Pethick (1898) and Lily Montagu (1904). However, unlike these predecessors, she was also able to draw upon the educational thinking of writers such as Dewey (1916; 1933; 1938) and the experience of progressive schooling. Furthermore, she was particularly impressed by the forms of educational activity pioneered by the Workers' Education Association, the Labour Movement and the Co-operative Movement (1946: 25). The development of community associations during the 1930s (1943: 56), and the village colleges of Cambridgeshire (1946: 27) also provided her with models for practice. Alongside such developments, there had also been a sea change in understandings of

emotional, moral, intellectual and sexual development and the sub-conscious - of which Brew was aware. While contemporary writers such as Wheeler (1945) were still citing the work of the early theorists of adolescence i.e. Hall (1904) and his popularizer Slaughter (1911), their thinking had been clearly influenced by Piaget (1932) and the Freudian revolution.

So what marks this book out as the first major statement of 'modern' youth work? Here I want to pick on six elements:

- a commitment to community, citizenship and co-operation. The central vehicle for realising this being the voluntary association of members - the club.
- a clear focus on process
- a recognition of the social and emotional needs of young people
- a championing of popular culture as a site for intervention
- a clear recognition of the economic and social context in which work takes place
- an understanding of the potential of youth work for informal education.

Previous writers had, of course, addressed a number of these concerns. What made *In the Service of Youth* special was that Brew managed to bring these elements into a reasonably consistent relationship and to ground this in the daily realities of practice. Here I just want to communicate a flavour of her writing.

Community, citizenship, co-operation and clubs. Much that was written and said at this time about youth work slipped fairly effortlessly into the rhetoric of citizenship. Brew's commitment was not something born of wartime conditions. Rather, it was part of a longstanding concern to promote democracy. She saw in the 'club' a crucial means by which people could freely identify with one another and gain the skills, disposition and knowledge necessary for citizenship.

> The club at its best creates a society of personalities with a community sense, which is the essence of good citizenship . . . We are not concerned with the making of 'good club members' or 'well-organized youth groups', but with a much wider issue, the making of good citizens. This can only be done in a society where each member is important, where each one is given a chance to contribute something to the life of the group - the leader no more and no less than the member. It is for this reason that self-government is so important in club work. If I had to give the first article of my club credo it would be 'I believe in the club committee'. (Brew 1943: 12)

The use of clubs in this way was hardly new and had been articulated most notably within the Boys' Club tradition by Russell and Rigby (1908). Brew's championship was significant because of her preparedness to embrace much looser forms such as the 'in and out' clubs and to engage with ways of organizing which were of young people's, rather than leaders', making.

Process. One of the striking features of Brew's writing is the attention she gives to the way things are done and what can be learnt from process. This is seen most clearly in *Informal Education* (1946) where she structures her chapters around approaches through the stomach; the feet; the work of the hands; the eyes; the feelings; and through the ears. 'A youth leader must try not to be too concerned about results, and at all costs not to be over-anxious' (1957: 183). Her way of working would not be out of place in detached work:

> Only by the slow and tactful method of inserting yourself unassumingly into the life of the club, not by talking to your club members, but by hanging about and learning from their conversation and occasionally, very occasionally, giving it that twist which leads it to your goal, is it possible to open up a new avenue of thought to them.
>
> You must soak yourself in the local atmosphere; you must know the current rates of pay, and slang, and you must be prepared to appreciate standards which are not your own while preserving your own integrity. (1943: 16)

Again this way of working was not unique to Brew. In describing the approach she was drawing on both her own direct experience of practice and that of several generations of workers within the girls club movement (see for example, Brooke 1912). However, what distinguishes her from her contemporaries (e.g. Edwards-Rees 1943; Armson & Turnbull 1944) is the sheer fluidity of her writing and her ability to connect quite sophisticated ideas with examples drawn from practice. Much of the significance of this book lies not so much in what is said as in the way things are put. Her tone of voice, and her descriptions of practice and individuals communicate much about her view of relationships between workers and young people; and where workers should focus their attention. Her attention to form and to process in her writing, mirrors that which she expects in workers.

Social and emotional needs. Brew's attention to the emotional and social needs of young people, particularly in relation to their bodies and to sexual activity, is again a key feature of the progressive girls' club tradition. Much of the basis of her advocacy of mixed clubs lay in this area (1943: 56-63). She devotes an entire chapter to health and a further one to the difficulties of adolescence. Alongside these she also explores how workers can approach questions of physical, intellectual and spiritual development. Again, this focus is hardly new, and we can recognize in her concerns much that had occupied youth workers for decades. The way she talks about 'the boy' and 'the girl' follows in this line and appears at times to make them objects rather than subjects. An impression I am sure she would not want to have given. What she brought was both a belief in young people's abilities to think for themselves; and a concern that workers should not be neutral bystanders in this process.

> Excessive popularity is a nuisance, and wallowing in emotion is a menace, but brutal stamping on the groping of the adolescent is an unforgivable sin. Much modern social work is ruined by too much restraint and has become a purely negative social science, too much ill-digested psychology has made people afraid of showing disapproval, there are too many conscientious scruples about this, and that and the other - in work with adolescents you must not have much conscience, but what you must have must be

guilty of a burning faith in the potentialities of the adolescent himself. The greatest need of this day and age is the cultivation of personalities - people who are capable of thinking for themselves, of forming independent judgement - of living at first hand instead of dabbling in emotion at second hand . . . You cannot create personalities while withholding your own. (1943: 260-1)

Significantly when she came to readdress these questions in *Youth and Youth Groups* (1957), these sections were altered fundamentally and pulled from the end of the book to the beginning. The nature of adolescence became the starting point rather than youth work or, indeed, citizenship. The tone had changed and there was less talk of 'the boy' and 'the girl'. She concludes. 'It is probably in the field of promoting healthy personal relationships that the youth group has most to offer to the well-being of the community' (1957: 102-3).

Popular culture and common culture. One of the most engaging aspects of Brew's thinking and practice is her determination to work with the things that young people themselves value. Were she alive today, she would, no doubt, be encouraging graffiti art projects, sampling and the like. 'The only real sin in all this modern dancing and all this jazz is that it is so frequently shockingly done . . . Start from where your young folks are' (1943: 14). But Brew was concerned to do more than start from where young people are (is this the first time this youth work cliche appeared in print?). She did not want to rate activities on some bourgeois notion of value:

> True culture is the appreciation of everything. from a plate of fish and chips to a Van Gogh . . . We must give our young club members a vision, but it must come by way of co-operation through appreciation to creation. (1943: 15).

Economic and social context. As with other activists within the girls club movement, Brew paid considerable attention to the economic and social conditions that young people experienced. There are chapters on young people's experience of schooling, housing and work. 'No club on earth will succeed with a programme which bears no relation to the industry, working conditions and economic and social background of the area which it serves' (1943: 69). However, there are limits to her interest. She is not overtly political, especially when compared with early feminist workers such as Pethick (1898) or campaigners like Montagu (1904). And, as we have already seen, there does appear to have been a shift in emphasis between 1943 and 1957: a move from such a strong focus on citizenship to the realm of interpersonal relations. This is hardly surprising given the different social conditions that youth work was operating within and was a marker for what occurred in the 1960s.

Informal education. There are only one or two mentions of informal education in *In the Service of Youth* but there is a clear understanding that youth work was pioneering informal education (1943: 173-4). She placed a particular emphasis on working with groups.

> Much of the youth work that we are doing at the moment can only be classified as a brave endeavour to salvage something from the wreck of wartime conditions, but out of that increased tempo . . . there is gradually evolving a new technique - a technique in the imparting of information and instruction, a group technique, a discussion technique, and a new method of training both instructors and leaders. (1943: 168)

Three years later in *Informal Education* Brew brought these elements together in a comprehensive discussion of various approaches. But in *In the Service of Youth* we find the central elements. She placed a special emphasis on thinking about informal education activities and interventions in terms of programming.

> At the outset there are two essential guiding principles - neither the programme nor the plan is sacred - all work among adolescents is a process of trial and error and as much as you must be prepared to build and plan, you must also be prepared to discard . . . A club is a community engaged in the task of educating itself. (1943: 67)

Much that Brew has to say about this area is pertinent today (Jeffs & Smith 1990). What she demonstrates is that within youth work there are substantial and coherent ways of conceptualizing and formulating informal education work. Curriculum she explicitly sees as the property of the school. Much of the rubbish that is appearing in the guise of curriculum development within youth work could be avoided if people were to pay closer attention to the practice wisdom which has been accumulated and sifted by writers like Brew, rather than by gobbling up the rhetoric of other forms of intervention.

Looking back on this book, we can develop a critique along a number of fronts. Brew did not have the political edge or analysis of the early feminist youth workers. While she was concerned with citizenship and community, her focus remained somewhat individualistic. In the end she did not escape her class location. Nor would she have wanted to. There are residual elements which are patronizing. She remained deeply heterosexist and sexist in her assumptions about the 'normal' course of relationships. However, we should take great care not to decontextualize her analysis. What we can see reflected in her writing formed much of the foundation for what was to come in the 1960s: the reconceptualizing of youth work around the notion of social education. Significantly, the classic texts of the 1960s make scant reference to her work. Goetschius and Tash (1967) list her in the select bibliography but do not see as significant enough for inclusion in the annotated bibliography (1967:377). Davies and Gibson (1967) do not mention her at all. Where she does appear in youth work books in the 1960s and 1970s it is usually as a reference to her account of developments in youth work during the war (e.g. Matthews 1966; Evans 1965; Leighton 1972). Perhaps it was that writers wanted to signal their 'newness'. But they owed a considerable debt to Brew as Matthews acknowledged in her revising of *Youth and Youth Groups* (reissued in 1968).

With the demise of social education as a practical tool in youth work, attention has again been focused on informal education (see, for example, the Statement of Purpose for the Youth Service emerging out of the Ministerial Conferences; Smith 1988; Jeffs & Smith 1990). Rather than reinvent the wheel, and as an antidote to the anti-informal stance offered by curriculum development, we would all benefit from reading Brew's work.

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POPULAR FRONT

Who's Zooming Who?: A Look At Youth TV

MAURA BANIM and ALISON GUY

Youth TV is a relatively new and growing phenomenon. In the following commentary, we explore its development, current style and potential and interview Lesley Oakden, an Executive Producer at Tyne Tees TV.

It seems difficult to say what it is, difficult to say who its aimed at and difficult to say what its trying to achieve but there's no doubt that Youth TV is being made in increasing quantities and watched by a growing number of young people. Whilst young people view across the whole range of TV and many not-so-young people tune into 'youth' programmes, there has emerged a series of programmes which, by their timing, format and content have become identified as Youth TV.

From its vague origins in a long history of 'pop programmes' (remember Ready Steady Go!) it has in the last few years become more sophisticated and diverse until now many Youth TV programmes represent 'state of the art' TV in terms of technology, style and content. It has the potential to entertain, inform, involve and empower young people but it can also be seen as a cynical attempt to capture a previously elusive audience (and, in the case of commercial TV, a previously elusive market) and another avenue for the transmission of 'appropriate' social and moral values.

The Discovery and Capture of the Elusive Viewer

The late 70s and early 80s saw the advent of sophisticated TV market research which produced data revealing that, whereas young children (up to 13 years old) were viewing TV regularly, the 13-19 year olds viewed between 25-35% less TV than the all individuals average. The statistics showed that this age group did watch TV but were only 'light viewers', leading 2 ITV Senior Executives to comment

> This means they are reachable but more effort is required to ensure they are reached efficiently and at a more realistic level. [1]

The 'light' viewing of young people was initially perceived mainly as a problem of lifestlye i.e. the 13-19 year olds were too busy with 'sport, the opposite sex and going out to pubs, clubs and wine bars.' However, further research questioned this perception and found that young people were just as 'available to view' (i.e. in a home with a TV set) as other age groups. It appeared that the 13-19 year olds preferred spending their home-based leisure time on hobbies such as 'crafts, model making....looking after their cars and playing a musical instrument'(!). We would also suggest that parental control over the single TV set played a part here (we can't be the only ex-teenagers who listened to Top of the Pops over the rumble of parental disapproval as they waited to watch Tomorrow's World).

In the mid 80s a number of factors came together that seemed to lay the ground for the take off of Youth TV. Firstly, the growth in the ownership of second TV sets and video recorders meant that more young people had access to TVs and control over what they watched. The expansion of the film and music video market showed that young people would sit and watch the TV, as an individual and group activity, if the viewing material was interesting to them.

Secondly, this period also saw the expansion of hours on BBC2 and the dawn of Channel 4. Not only were there simply more TV hours to fill but there was also the remit to widen the viewing audience by catering for 'minority groups'. Meeting the needs of such groups was perceived, at least by some producers, as requiring a different style of TV - a moving away from the often bland (and patronising) approach of mainstream TV and a moving toward a more assertive, advocacy-style of programme that would attempt to involve its target audience. The idea of programmes *by* minority groups rather than programmes *for* them seemed to be gaining currency.

Lastly, it must not be forgotten that during this crucial period Children's TV had also experienced great changes. Although the 'safe' world of Blue Peter et al still existed, other, more anarchic, 'cheeky' programmes were appearing in the Children's slot. Programmes such as Swap Shop, Get Fresh, TISWAS developed the segmented, punchy format, made good use of the spontaneity of their live format, phone lines and young presenters and deliberately created 'nasty' puppet characters whom parents would hate and the kids would love. This development displayed an awareness that children and parents had different viewing agendas and that children were attracted to programmes that hinted at anti-authority and prohibited, but much desired, behaviour (remember Gilbert the green rubber puppet who behaved very badly with celebrity guests he didn't like).

An under-exploited market or an uncatered-for minority group? The impetus for Youth TV seems to have come from a range of sources. However we think its also

important not to underestimate the readiness, on the part of individual producers, to experiment with different styles of presentation and with new technology. In that sense working in TV is no different from working in other areas, we all like giving the stuffy institution a shot in the arm.

Of Formats and Franchises, Rules and Razzamatazz

> I am obsessed with packaging - if you use the right packaging you can make people watch almost anything
> (Janet Street-Porter) [2]

It is often stated that Youth TV has pushed forward the frontiers of TV as a whole. A magazine format with short, sharp bursts of material, eye-catching graphics, an overlay of vibrant music, a combination of frivolity and seriousness and of amateurishness and professionalism has given Youth TV an immediacy, pace and relevance that has had an effect on other areas of TV. It is ironic to note that, despite this knock-on effect, the approaching franchise scrabble for ITV companies and the re-organising of BBC (not to mention the longer-term impact of cable and satellite TV) could mean there is the possibility that Youth TV as we know it may not survive.

Whilst the overall impression of Youth TV programming is one of excitement and 'risqueness', many programmes contain slots which try to tackle serious issues such as homelessness, pollution, international political and social problems. In matters of style, Janet Street Porter is very clear that it is legitimate to use music, graphics, cartoons to 'draw in' the audience and then slot in weightier items, on the basis that such a format allows 'difficult areas' such as news to be digested more easily. She has said of one of her programmes (Network 7)

> [it] was aimed at readers of tabloid newspapers and aimed to give them back the factual information no longer contained in newspapers. [2]

This policy (not unique to her) of 'creative packaging' raises several questions around the assumptions made about young people and what they will or won't watch. There seems to be a received wisdom concerning the notoriously short attention span of today's young viewers (remember Michael Igniateff's condemnation of the 3 minute culture) but whether this is a case of satisfying a demand or manufacturing a demand (and thus a stereotype) is a serious question that has yet to be addressed.

Perhaps a more pertinent question to consider is that many of the 'serious issues' addressed in the programmes also have a contentious element in that young viewers may have different sets of perspectives/concerns than those of older adults (this is particularly evident in coverage of sexuality, alcohol/drugs, censorship). On a cynical level, being controversial and shocking seems to have become part of the 'packaging' of Youth TV, but we think there is a more complex and positive side to this.

As everyone knows what is produced for our viewing on TV is governed by the Broadcasting Standards Council's Code of Practice. A great deal of this Code, which applies to all areas of TV programming, is concerned with what is appropriate viewing for children and young people- for example:

> Where the theme....involves sexual relationships between children under the age of consent....the treatment should not suggest that such behaviour is legal or acceptable.
> Nothing should be done in programmes to encourage any extension of that attitude of tolerance towards the taking of drugs in Britain or the view that taking them was socially acceptable.
> Alcohol . . . can be damaging in its consequences, especially for the young. Much crime, especially among young people, is drink related...., The portrayal of alcohol in programmes ought therefore to be regarded with seriousness. [3]

Whilst Youth TV producers are keen to check out their material with the appropriate authorities and experts, we would argue that, within their 'serious' slots, there seems to be a more reasoned attempt to look at issues from the young person's point of view, to explore alternative perspectives around 'problems' and their 'solutions'. In order to keep the young viewer tuned in (the all important ratings) Youth TV needs to create an atmosphere of contentiousness and anti-authority - a context which can be usefully employed to create a space for some sort of challenge to the handed-down-from-above understanding of the social, political and moral issues facing us all. We think this is the main potential of Youth TV and, though we recognise it has its limitations, it has begun to create access to a powerful form of communication - an opportunity for young people to create and express their own image of their lives in Great Britain today.

This has started to happen in a small way already. The use of a gender, ethnic, class and regional mix of presenters; interactive phone lines; a diverse range of musical styles and a mixture of trivia and fact, means that the young viewer is more likely to see an accurate reflection of themselves, or at least part of their experiences, in Youth TV than in the conventional, and growing, TV diet of soaps, quizzes and cop shows.

Interview with Lesley Oakden, who worked on The Tube and on Check It Out (a magazine programme aimed at young people), which ran from 1979 to 1982.

MB/AG: How did the idea for Youth TV start?

LO: Its very difficult to say where the original idea came from. It seems to have begun in the late 70s and maybe it was just a general trend sweeping across the TV world, maybe it was because the hours on TV were expanding and there was more room for experiment and minority programming.

MB/AG: Which programmes would you identify as Youth TV? What are the age ranges being targeted and how does this affect timing slots?

LO: There's quite a wide range starting with Byker Grove, Grange Hill, Press Gang, Children's Ward - these are more specifically aimed at younger teens (13-15s). This age range is meant to be catered for by Children's TV but , although they do watch some, they are not catered for properly and in fact don't watch that much TV at all. An Audience Researcher and I have done 4 years research into this group and we are currently

preparing formats which should answer their very specific requirements.
The older teens are more specifically targeted, possibly because they have more obvious spending power and are a more attractive proposition to schedulers and advertisers. Programmes such as The Crystal Maze, Red Dwarf, The Word, The Tube, Def II, Vic Reeves' Big Night Out, Reportage, Rapido, The Chart Show - are aimed at older teenagers and younger adults, targeted officially in TV terms for the 16-24 year olds. They have fairly specific timing slots. Not primetime on BBCl or ITV as they are a minority audience. At C4 they're on 5.30-7.00pm and then later on, around 11pm. At BBC2 there are slots available in the early evening. ITV doesn't really focus on older teenagers so their Youth programmes are scattered around the schedule, maybe 6.30 regionally, late night or late Saturday morning.
But of course you find young people of all ages watching a huge range of other programmes especially soaps and sophisticated comedies like Roseanne and Spitting Image etc.
MB/AG: What are the essential elements of Youth TV?
LO: There is no set format- its very dependent on who the producer is. People tend to think that certain elements make up Youth TV, pace, a mixture of music, images, graphics, alternative comedy etc. Certainly the over-riding factor is that the elements have to grab an audience that is fairly cynical about the media and TV generally and are not avid watchers. However, both content and style in these programmes are fairly individualistic.
I think the presenters are definitely a clue to the style of Youth TV. People such as Magenta, Jonathan Ross and the Reportage crew. They seem to be chosen because they are young, roughly the same age as the target audience, and are trendy and articulate. The Tube became a cult because of Jools Holland (among other things). Presenters tend to be reporters and quite professional and of a wide ethnic mix. I reckon there's a lot of positive discrimination going on. On the whole, viewers should be able to relate to the presenters.
MB/AG: Why do many Youth TV make regular use of phone lines and phone votes?
LO: Its a great way of seeming to be relating to your audience, reacting and being 'in touch'. It is also a staple part of live TV and an element that guarantees immediacy and surprise. Youth TV requires pace and immediacy and phone lines are a good way of achieving this.
MB/AG: Are Youth TV producers aware of the fanzine legacy?
LO: Yes, certainly in the early days. The Tube had strong links with Fanzines and their writers in its planning and early series.
MB/AG: We'd like to ask a few questions about the content of Youth TV now, especially the mixture of music with more serious items. Who generates the issues to be addressed in the serious slots, who decides how a contentious issue is handled, and how is the balance between fun and seriousness decided?
LO: Serious issues are included depending on the format. The producer and research team are reactive to any issues that are current and important and are responsive to lobbying from individuals and groups that contact them. We consult the experts in every case in order to present an objective and accurate picture of whatever issue is being considered.
As regards the mixture of pop and serious bits, Youth TV takes music pretty seriously and doesn't set out to try and give it credibility by mixing it with serious bits. Generally though, young people are interested in that mix and the whole aim is to reflect what the audience wants to see. Its possible that younger teenagers tune in for the music and are then led into watching more serious items.
As I mentioned earlier, producers in Youth TV are probably more conscious than other producers of the need to challenge race/gender stereotypes. If you're interested in producing Youth TV, it goes with the territory.
MB/AG: Are there any constraints on content?
LO: Yes, there are guidelines and the producers have to be very careful to stick to these. Most producers are responsible and sensible people and take an overview which will be sensitive and are aware of matters which might offend. Obviously things have lightened up since the days when Check It Out wanted to do a programme on homosexuality and found it difficult to find enough people to take part. Also when we wanted to cover contraception there was a huge rumpus! So when you think about it Youth TV broke new ground in taboo areas which are now regularly on TV-AM, This Morning etc which are seen as safe, middle-of-the-road programmes.
Usually the producer of the programme hopes to be able to decide what to include for herself but, if necessary, refers upwards to Executive Producer, then Head of Department, then Programme Controller then the ITC [Independent Television Commission] itself.
MB/AG: Will the new guidelines have any affect on the amount, style and content of Youth TV?
LO: The new White Paper won't affect style or content in any direct way i.e. there are no new guidelines that take us back to the past. However the new systems coming into to play might affect the amount of programmes of this type. They are obviously not populist, that is they don't attract particularly high ratings (for example the Tube average was only 1 million viewers), so in a market-led TV world they might fall victim to cheap and cheerful telly. Whatever else you think about Youth TV it has, on the whole, high production values and plenty of money in the budget.
MB/AG: Speaking as a TV producer, which Youth TV programme do you like the best?
LO: That's difficult to say as each programme has qualities one can admire, but if I had to go for one it would be the Rough Guide series on BBC2. Its a highly watchable and non pretentious treatment of a tired old format (the travel show). Its informative, amusing, well-researched, well-shot, innovative and - a producer's dream - well-funded!

As mentioned in the commentary and in the interview, TV producers are always on the look out for original ideas for formats for new programmes and content/style of existing ones. They also welcome feedback and comments on their output and many, especially in areas

of 'minority programmes' such as Youth TV, are actively encouraging wider access to TV. The authors would like to make it clear that the opinions contained in the commentary are their own and not those of Lesley Oakden or of Tyne Tees TV.

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Working Space

Reducing HIV Infection among young men who have sex with men

DAVID MILLER

MESMAC Tyneside is a project hosted by Newcastle Social Services, and it is funded by the Health Education Authority, along with 3 other pilot schemes in Leeds, Leicester, and London. MESMAC stands for *men who have sex with men-action in the community;* its overall brief is to reduce HIV infection and promote safer sex among gay men and other men who have sex with men. This includes men who would identify themselves as heterosexual, and who may be married. There seems to be a particular 'macho' peer pressure on Tyneside men to conform and marry even if they have strong doubts about their own sexuality. There are two full-time community workers and one part-time administrative assistant in Newcastle, and the main thrust of the work depends upon the use of community development techniques to consult men, assess their needs relating to HIV and other related issues, and to work with them to strengthen the community and set up new groups and networks which will enable a collective response to HIV and Aids. This is, not surprisingly, a task which is fraught with difficulties, and it sometimes feels as if the workers are stepping through an elaborately laid minefield. Sex, sexuality, and a potentially fatal virus constitute a powerful brew. HIV prevention requires a radical change in social attitudes within a very short space of time; when working with gay men it is vital to positively affirm gay sexuality and lifestyle and thereby increase self-esteem and confidence. If a gay man hates himself for being gay, he's going to have a limited interest in HIV prevention; at its worst, this can amount to a kind of 'I deserve it' attitude. Likewise, if the gay community is not strong, it cannot take collective action. We must therefore be committed to endorsing gay sexuality, which leaves us open to attacks from those people who either support Section 28 or who use it as a shield for their own homophobia. If, as I read recently, HIV prevention implies a fight against the establishment, then we run the risk of biting the hand that feeds us.

It is vital to address the needs of young men as part of our work, but this brings with it new difficulties. Only men of 21 and over are legally allowed to have sex (in private), so if we work with men under 21 we can be accused of encouraging or condoning illegal activity. We must, however, live in the real world. The age barrier of 21 is discriminatory, and as gay men ourselves we are unlikely to be sympathetic towards it. Some gay teenagers are certain of their sexuality as early as 12 or 13, and may become sexually active. Young gay men are especially vulnerable and in need of support, and in terms of safer sex information it is hugely beneficial to reach them at an early stage where we can perhaps encourage them to have the sort of sex which minimises their risk of HIV infection. We may want to give them condoms and lubricants: does this constitute irresponsible incitement to illegal activity (and it seems that the police may take this view in the context of detached work), or is it realistic and valuable?

I believe that HIV prevention work within schools should address the needs of young men who already identify as gay, yet this is seen by many as a no-go area. The arguments run thus: it's difficult enough to do any sort of sex education, let alone HIV prevention. If we then cater positively for young gay men, this will enrage parents, cause a rumpus within the Council, allow sensationalised press reports, and set back the cause of effective HIV prevention for years. It is more prudent to nibble away slowly at prejudice and opposition, and not to promote a backlash. Teachers too are not necessarily liberal, and you need to win their support slowly; ideally, staff and students will raise issues concerning sexuality and HIV themselves.

The contrary argument is as follows: how are staff and students expected to have the courage to raise these issues if a lead is not given from above, if a climate is not created whereby it is permissible for teachers to be lesbian or gay and for students to admit to their sexuality? If negative parental attitudes are a barrier, how will you ever change them in the future if you don't address the issue with young people now, some of whom will go on to be these all-powerful opinion-formers? If schools and educators aren't prepared to take a stand on this, to do the work carefully, sensitively, and confidently, who on earth will do it? Youth clubs may provide a more relaxed environment, but not all young people use them, and youth workers themselves are not immune to homophobia and heterosexism.

To what extent, then, can one allow people to cite political hot potatoes, the principles of slow attrition, not alienating sensitive groups, and so forth, as reasons for not effectively tackling HIV prevention for young gay men? When does a reasonable argument become an excuse for inaction and prejudice? The dividing line is

tortuously unclear. MESMAC is currently collaborating with Newcastle FRIEND to re-establish a group for young gay men on Tyneside, and it is hoped that the group will start in July 1991. We are also trying to reach young men who are selling sex; similar work is being done in a number of British towns, and other workers have already identified the main concerns of these young men: poverty, homelessness, hunger, drugs, hassle from the police, and abuse. These issues cannot be separated from the task of HIV prevention.

Recent reports in the gay press have suggested that young gay men are abandoning safer sex, or that they are not even adopting it in the first place, helped maybe by rationalisations such as 'I'll be O.K. so long as I only have sex with other young men'; the assumption made is that young men having sex with each other and not with older gay men who've 'been around' are somehow magically preserved from the risk of HIV infection. This provides yet another argument for prioritising work with young men, and I hope that MESMAC and other similar projects can make a valuable contribution in this field.

IN SHORT

BENEFIT UP-RATINGS

	Claimant	*Adult Dependent*	*Child Dependent*
Unemployment Benefit	41.40	25.55	10.70
Sickness Benefit	39.60	24.50	10.70
Invalidity Pension	52.00	31.25	10.70
Invalidity Allowance			
	(higher)	11.10	
	(middle)	6.90	
	(lower)	3.45	
Statutory Sick Pay	(higher)	52.50	
	(lower)	43.50	
Severe Disablement Allowance	31.25	18.10	10.70
Statutory Maternity Pay	44.50		
Maternity Allowance	40.60	24.50	
Invalid Care Allowance	31.25	18.70	10.70
Attendance Allowance	(higher)	41.65	
	(lower)	27.80	
Mobility Allowance	29.10		
Industrial Injuries Benefits			
(up to 100% dependent on level of incapacity)	84.90		
Child		*From October 1991*	
(only/eldest)	8.25	9.25	
Benefit (others)	7.25	7.50	
Lone Parents	5.60		

Income Support Applicable Amounts

Single under 18	23.65	
exceptional under 18	31.15	
18-24 yr olds	31.15	
25+	39.65	
Lone Parent under 18	23.65	
exceptional under 18	31.15	
18 yr olds +	39.65	
Couple both under 18 yrs	47.30	
one/both over 18	62.25	
Dependent children		*From October 1991*
under 11 yrs	13.35	13.60
11-15	19.75	20.00
16-17	23.65	23.90
aged 18	31.15	31.40
+ Premiums		
Family	7.95	8.70
Lone parent +	4.45	
Disability		
single	16.65	
couple	23.90	
Severe disablement		
single	31.25	
couple (one disabled)	31.25	
couple (both disabled)	62.50	

Income Tax Personal Allowances	*Per annum*	*Per week*
Standard Personal Allowance .	3,295	63.37
Married Couples Allowances +	1720	33.08
Additional Personal Allowance or/+	1,720	33.08

National Insurance Rates

Gross weekly earnings	
Earnings below 52 pw	Nil
Between 52-390 pw	2% on first 52 9% on rest up to 390

(Source: National Welfare Benefits Handbook, 21st Edition, 1991/2, Child Poverty Action Group)

CHILDREN
The results of an enquiry into practices known as 'pin-down' in Staffordshire Children s Homes were published. The enquiry was carried out by Allan Levy QC.
(Source: The Times 31.5.91)
Guidance/Children In Residential Care
The provisions of the Children Act relating to how children in residential care are to be treated in future will be published in June.
(Source: The Times 31.5.91)

COMMUNITY CHARGE
Legislation in the Autumn will repeal Community Charge and replace it with a 'Council Tax'.

Charge Caps
The latest to be set by Environment Secretary, Michael Heseltine were for:

Greenwich, Langbaurgh, Middlesborough, Reading, Somerset, Milton Keynes.

Lambeth, Bristol, Warwickshire and Wirral had their charge caps increased.
(Source: DOE News Release 16.5.91)

Reductions
The DOE released a new leaflet explaining who is eligible for Community Charge reductions. Leaflet entitled 'You and the Community Charge'.
(Source: DOE News Release 21.5.91)

EQUAL OPPORTUNITIES
The Bar Council announced a review of its employment policies affecting women.
Source: The Times 3.6.91)

The Policy Studies Institute published a report on employment discrimination against black workers, 'Racial Justice At Work'. The evidence is that ethnic minorities continue to be disadvantaged in employment opportunities.
(Source: Daily Mail 7.6.91)

HEALTH
NHS Reforms
Reforms were brought into effect on 1 April 1991. Amongst the changes at a local level are new duties for Family Health Authorities (formerly Family Practitioner Committees). FHA's will now be obliged to use competitive tendering and to carry out medical audits.

AIDS/HIV
Figures were released on the known incidence of Aids cases and associated deaths up to Oct. 1990. 3,798 cases were recorded. 2,040 deaths occurred.
(Source: Social Policy Digest, Journal of Social Policy, June 1991, Cambridge University Press)

A Green Paper was issued by the Government setting out a national strategy (including targets) for health.
(Source:The Times 4.6.91)

HOMELESSNESS
The Government claims to have made significant progresss in easing the plight of rough sleepers in central London as a result of its three-year initiative. The Housing Minister, Sir George Young, says the aim is to 'make it unnecessary for anyone to sleep rough in London'.
(Source: DOE News Release 17.5.91)

SCHOOL LEAVERS-FALLING NUMBERS
Projections of young people leaving school to the year 2001 show a steady fall. The annual total is expected to be approximately a third lower by 1993/4.
(Source: Social Policy Digest, Journal of Social Policy, Cambridge University Press, June 1991)

LEGISLATION IN PROGRESS

CRIMINAL JUSTICE BILL - Royal Assent expected in July 1991

CHILDREN ACT - Comes into force October 1991

CHILD MAINTENANCE - A White Paper 'Children Come First' - Makes contentious proposals. The suggestion is to set up a CHILD SUPPORT AGENCY to trace absent fathers and to extract payment for maintenance for children. It is proposed to reduce benefit for women who refuse to name absent fathers.

'Youth Within Social and Cultural Change'

Third Nordic Youth Research Symposium

The 3rd Nordic Youth Research Symposium will be held in Copenhagen, Denmark from January 23 to 25, 1992.

The symposium is a bi-annual event. The first symposium was held in Oslo, Norway, in 1987 and the second in Savonlinna, Finland, in 1989. The symposium operates as the main link between youth researchers in Scandinavia, the Baltics and Europe, attracting around 200 participants from a range of disciplines.
The symposium aims at interdisciplinary and trans-national discussions focusing around 'Youth Within Social and Cultural Change'. Within this overall framework, themes of special concern are:

* gender and generation
* multicultural youth
* youth history and historiography
* applied youth research

Sessions will be divided between keynote addresses given by invited international youth researchers, theme presentations given by invited Scandinavian speakers and workshops open for individual papers. The conference language is English.

Youth researchers from all disciplines are invited to contribute to the program by presenting a paper on one of the areas mentioned above. Instructions for contributions, as well as more detailed information, can be obtained from:
The Secretariat for the Third Nordic Youth Research Symposium, University of Copenhagen, 19 St Pedersstraede, DK-1453 Copenhagen K, Denmark Fax +45 33115996. Telephone +45 33912166 extension 451 (Ms. Nina Krarup) extension 443 (Mr. Joi Bay) E-mail (EARN/BITNET) krimjoib@vm.uni-c.dk

The Third Nordic Youth Research Symposium is organized by researchers from the University of Copenhagen and The Royal Danish School for Educational Studies in cooperation with The Nordic Youth Research Committee. The symposium is funded by Danish research councils and The Nordic Council of Ministers.

YOUTH AND POLICY

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Submission Details

Material for the journal, including correspondence, is welcomed within our stated editorial aims.

Please send all material to the relevant editor named below, PO Box 10, Blaydon, Tyne and Wear NE21 5LY. Material not published will be returned if possible, but contributors should note that this cannot be guaranteed and are advised to keep copies.

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ARTICLES. Articles of 2,500-10,000 words are welcome and should be written in accordance with the Journal's style. For a style sheet and contributors' notes please contact Judith Cocker.

FEEDBACK. We welcome letters concerning the journal or on issues concerning youth in society: Maura Banim.

REVIEWS. Suggestions for future review material and names of possible contributors are invited from the readership: Chris Parkin.

WORKING SPACE. Working space is aimed at those who may not normally consider contributing an article and may be written in whatever style the individual feels comfortable with: Tia Khan.

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