

# Education

School bell go ding-dong-ding.  
The children all line up.  
They do what they are told.  
They mind their manners well.  
Their little lives are all laid out.  
Oh, teachers of the world:  
teach them to fake it well.  
Just teach them not to criticize,  
to 'yes' the bosses, impress the clients.  
Just get them into the factories, into production,  
get them into line.  
Mama don't seem to care  
if she may break their hearts.  
She clips their wings off.  
They never learn to fly.

**Buffy Sainte-Marie**

The critical importance of education in either maintaining the present society, or developing an alternative to it, makes education an area of high priority for the Values Party.

The Values Party has followed these guidelines in developing an education policy:

- education is the development of the whole person (physical, emotional, mental, spiritual, individual, economic, political, social) rather than simply the processing of the person into society;
- equal access to education is one of the entitlements of New Zealand citizens;
- education is a lifelong growth and not something confined to formal institutions or particular age-groups;
- decentralisation of the administration of education is a necessary long-term goal, to be achieved through making functions and decisions the responsibility of the most appropriate levels;
- as school structures and procedures are a statement to coming generations of what society expects of its citizens, the objectives and procedures of co-operation and participatory democracy must be visible in the administration of schools;
- equality of educational opportunity requires that there be diversity in educational styles to allow for individual differences and preferences; but diversity without equal opportunity of access is iniquitous.

If New Zealand is to develop a just, co-operative, and community-based society, education is a vital aspect of that development. Our present system of education is competitive, its administration hierarchical, and effective power rests in the hands of a few.

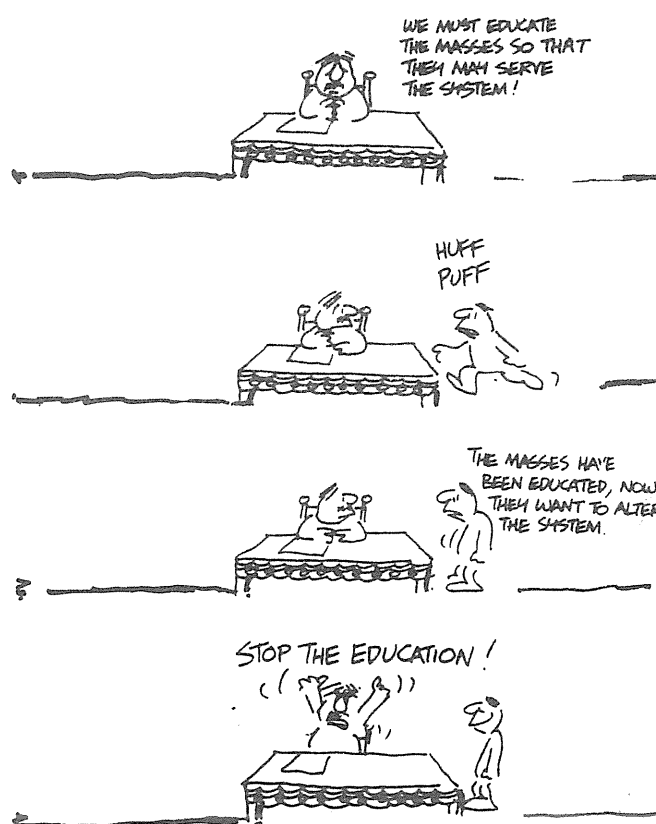
In 1972 the Values Party said that "our education system is not equipping young people with the skills they need to cope with life in a changing world ... At the present time many of the topics which our children are being taught are irrelevant to their needs, and the way in which they are being taught renders them of even less value". While the criticism remains valid, we feel

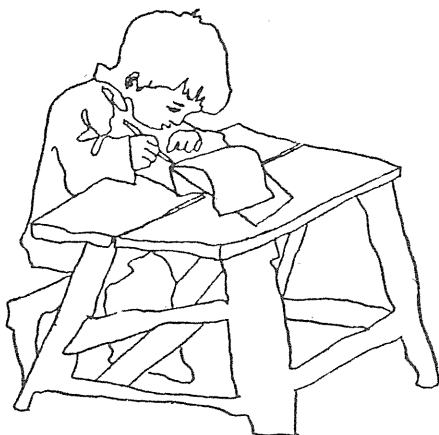
that it would be no improvement just to update the system so that it caters better to a society which is fundamentally competitive and materialistic.

The intentions behind the Educational Development Conference were laudable, and the Values Party would implement the major recommendations of the final report of the Advisory Council on Educational Planning.

Some of the immediate problems facing education that haven't been addressed adequately by recent governments or the Conference include the whole relationship between education and work, the impossibility of "second chance" education when adults need to receive a full-time wage to survive, the developing exclusiveness of teachers, an administrative structure which prevents people at all levels - central, regional, or local school - from working efficiently and effectively, and the necessity for a hard look at the comparative facilities and roles of technical institutes and universities.

Deeper problems haven't really been tackled at all. As we approach the centenary of our present system in New Zealand, 70 per cent of the labour force have no educational qualification at all; the ratio of males who are qualified to females is about 3:1; there is a conservative estimate of between 50,000 and 100,000 adult New Zealanders who are virtually illiterate; and rural, lower-class or maori students make do with poorer facilities in an alien system.





### Decision making

The most fundamental reforms are those which will make others possible. Many educational reforms are not possible at the moment because the central level of administration has too much power and too many functions, and at the local level contact between schools and their communities is limited.

### The Values Party

- Seeks complete reform of the decision-making process in education. This would be achieved through a re-arrangement of functions and powers among schools, and community, regional and central levels of administration.
- Believes functions should be discharged at the most appropriate level but if regional, community and local school levels are to perform new functions effectively they must have greater experience of responsibility and better relations with the people whom their decisions will affect.
- Would act immediately to establish Community Education Councils consisting of elected members representing teachers, parents, students, the general community, and appointed representatives of the administrators. These councils would be based on a high school and its contributing primary schools and pre-school organisations. Existing boards serving some of these functions would be phased out.
- Would expand the responsibilities and change the composition of the Educational Development Council. With the Minister as chairman, and representatives of Parliament, teacher and community groups, and the Department, the new Educational Development Council would set current and long-term priorities for educational development, establish minimum allocations of funds and channel central funds so as to compensate for any regional differences. It could also act as a body of appeal on disputes, and have the statutory powers of the Minister.

### Funding

#### The Values Party would

- Give central and regional levels power to allocate proportions of expenditure, and promote educational priorities with the proportion of funds remaining.
- Give community Education Councils greater independent loan raising powers. Bonuses would be available to Community Education Councils which, while meeting overall funding requirements, kept their spending within their total allocation. Communities could thus plan their incomes to meet their incoming needs.
- Seek to increase the percentage of the national income devoted to public expenditure on education, rather than just keep expenditure in step with inflation.
- Give increased priority to funds for research and development, achieving lower teacher:pupil ratios at all levels up to sixth form, continuing education, and pre-school education.

### Curriculum and Assessment The Values Party

- Believes there is a case for a compulsory core of the curriculum to foster the minimum skills needed by our society but that other content and skills should be learnt on a voluntary basis according to the individual's need, to whatever level he may specify.
- Would remove sex discrimination and intelligence-level limitations on such options as home economics, woodwork or work experience.
- Would support, through the Education Development Council, such innovations as flexible timetabling and open-plan schools to reduce the demand for new school buildings and to make more efficient use of school plant.
- Would press for development of a syllabus and teacher materials in important living skills such as law and citizenship, consumer rights, rights and responsibilities of employers and employees, town planning, housing and accommodation.
- Endorses the implementation of the handbook 'Human Development and Personal Relationships' and would actively press for open discussion in the schools of controversial matters. [We see no good point in denying our teenagers the freedom of discussion allowed their elders, and much benefit to society in encouraging its future citizens to make informed judgements.]
- Would examine school texts and teaching material to eliminate any sexual bias. [See Education section in "Status of Women".]
- Would make Maori language and Polynesian culture compulsory to schools, leaving it open to the local Community Education Council to decide whether it should also be compulsory to students.
- Does not favour the sort of segregation that goes with streaming or special schools, nor assessment procedures which rely on competition with others for places or passes, or which do not take account of the particular talents or skills of the student.
- Would abolish national examinations and would promote internal assessment procedures which are used for valid educational objectives. We regard teacher groups as the most reliable and informed as to what is a valid educational objective.

Some changes are happening to our education system. We are not sure that these are always for the better or are always co-ordinated. Internal assessment, for example, is an advance in itself, but if it means that students' and teachers' workloads are increased still further - many secondary students are spending 60 and 70 hours a week on school work even now - better teacher training, especially in-service training, and better conditions of work for teachers, are a necessary adjunct.

### Pre-School

#### The Values Party

- Seeks to make pre-school education available in all existing and new primary school areas. Where no alternative exists, pre-school facilities would be made available in the primary schools themselves.
- Would make development courses and day-care centres available for parents and expectant parents through such existing facilities as secondary schools, would support the Parents' Centre Movement and similar organisations in the establishment of these, and would support the establishment of play centres.
- Advocates an extension of aid to approved play centres and kindergartens. Any centre which provides custodial care should meet specified standards, and should be assisted to meet these standards. Standards in the areas of human relationships and of qualified staff are held by the Values Party to be more important than standards in the physical conditions of buildings.

### Schools

Management of a school should be in the hands of those familiar with the school. Decision-making procedures should anticipate the students' rights and

responsibilities as citizens. There should be more attention paid to making schools more congenial environments for both pupils and staff. Pupils need to be treated like human beings rather than as components of mass production.

Instead of harrasing and prosecuting truants and those who are unable to adapt to school, the Values Party would investigate alternative methods of education more suited to their needs.

#### **The Values Party would**

- Liberalise correspondence school admission requirements.
- Make the school leaving age flexible and ensure that all students and parents know that every New Zealand citizen is entitled to 15 years' free education, and that this period would not have to be taken

all at once. People should be able to return to secondary school to continue their education at any age.

- Upgrade and extend school library services, so that they can cope with the demands of curriculum innovations requiring more audio-visual facilities.
- Extend guidance counselling and supportive aid. We believe early diagnosis of emotional disturbances and learning difficulties is more important than later attempts to cope with them and would therefore concentrate on upgrading these facilities in primary schools.

#### **Intermediate Schools**

We believe that instead of a healthy mixing of age groups such as exists in traditional primary schools, intermediate schools isolate children at a particularly awkward age from the influences of and responsibilities to older and younger children. In teaching subjects rather than children, intermediate schools



pander to obsessions with prestige learning, at an early stage, of science and languages. In removing children from the smaller local primary school, intermediates force children to travel further, to a larger institution, with which neither they nor their parents are likely to develop a sense of belonging.

### **The Values Party**

- Would convert existing intermediate schools into primary or secondary schools according to the local needs and the particular situation.

### **Diversity and Equality**

The Values Party recognises the need for alternatives in education but rejects the concept of elitist independent schools.

### **The Values Party**

- Would make it obligatory for Community Education Councils to provide a variety of educational styles within their district, to give students and parents more freedom of choice.
- Supports the development of less formal educational agencies such as Learning Exchanges, community colleges, Masterton's Community Action Programme, and "schools without walls" such as Christchurch's Four Avenues. We would make further finance available to assist such ventures, and seek to integrate them into the State system to preserve equality of access.
- Recognises that certain areas are poorly provided for in social services and that teachers and schools bear the brunt of associated problems.

### **Tertiary and Continuing Education**

#### **The Values Party would**

- Establish an adult education bursary for those taking "second chance" education.
- Expand community colleges, education through the broadcasting media, and correspondence courses, and would publicise existing opportunities for post-secondary education.
- Seek to apportion tertiary education funds in ways that redress present imbalances.
- Ensure that every secondary student has the opportunity of at least one period of work-experience before leaving school.
- Ensure that vocational guidance was available to every school leaver. Vocational guidance officers would be attached to the offices of Community Education Councils, and their work extended so that their services were available on demand not only to school leavers but to mothers returning to the labour force, workers changing jobs, and people approaching retirement.
- Undertake an immediate full-scale review of the existing facilities and needs of continuing education. In particular the number of technical institutes should be increased and existing buildings and equipment considerably upgraded.

### **Teachers**

#### **The Values Party would**

- Retain the responsibility of registering teachers within the Department of Education, but supports the moves to have teacher grading made the responsibility of the profession.
- Pay all teachers on the same [secondary] salary scale recognising that teachers at all levels give the same kind of service to the community. There is no reason why a primary teacher with a B.A. should receive less than secondary teacher with a B.A., nor why the principal of a secondary school should receive more than the head of a primary school of similar size.
- Favour the phasing out of the bond system. We would replace it by a system of alternative service in the public service and would bring student teacher bursaries, along with other tertiary and adult

education bursaries, into line with the cost of living.

- Encourage more men to be involved in pre-school and primary education and more women in tertiary education, to achieve a more even sex balance. [In kindergartens, the ratio of male to female is 0:700; in primary schools 6:10; in secondary 6:4; in tertiary, 6:1.] We would also encourage people of more mature years to enter training colleges and be given greater financial assistance. Appointments for all teaching positions would be made by Community Education Councils, teachers, teachers' unions and departmental representatives in consultations.
- Make appointments of principals a matter of election by the staff concerned and the School Council or similar body. These appointments would be reviewed continuously by the staff and would be subject to termination at any time by the election of a successor. Once a term as principal was completed, the person could resume normal teaching duties or apply for a principal's position elsewhere.

Often principals are the best teachers in the service, but their administrative duties keep them out of the classroom. Few have any administrative or management training before taking up their jobs.

### **The Values Party would**

- Extend the system of Bursars to relieve the administrative burden on Principals, and would expand in-service courses in school administration.
- Enable teachers to have access to in-service training at a rate of one term per three years' service, and encourage schools to promote staff discussions on objectives and procedures. All teachers should be recompensed for expenditure they make to maintain their training.
- Give tangible support to schools and staff involved in helping student teachers on section from training colleges so that sections can achieve their full educational potential.
- Support an increase in ancillary aides for teachers, and would encourage the employment as ancillaries in schools, of parents and grandparents from the community.

### **Education and the Community**

The Values Party sees Community Education Councils as having sufficient responsibilities to justify their having accessible offices. As well as displaying work from local schools, community education offices would advise and enrol local students, house specialist equipment and staff, provide secretarial and co-ordinating services to local schools, and promote education in the community.

The Values Party strongly supports regular school involvement with the community and especially parents in both directions, outsiders coming in and making use of school plant, and students going out to help the community and experience how the adult world works. We see this as the special responsibility of Community Education Councils in liaison with School Councils, and would ensure a specific financial allocation from central government to support and encourage it.