On 11 March, Ms Carole May, headmistress of St Paul's & All Hallows C.E infant school in London N17, called in the police to talk to 4 Black infants because, according to her: "they had money on them which they should not have". The police arrived forthwith, and interrogated the children as if they were arch villains. The children were made to feel like criminals, not only to themselves, but in the eyes of their classmates. Despite the fact when it was discovered that the money was not stolen, no apology was made, neither was the reaction by headmaster/teacher towards the children taken into consideration. The children took the initiative to organise for change, to suggest solutions to the problem, a solution which was made, neither from the headmistress nor from the police.

This action was then fully supported by school governors and the Dept. of Education and Science. They claimed that her action was "unfortunate" but nonetheless "she acted in good faith". Rightfully incensed, a Campaign was launched by the Small Black Parents Pressure Group on Education, which demanded that the headmistress be sacked and an end to the policy of inviting police into schools.

EDUCATIONAL CAMPAIGNS: 70s.

To understand our current educational struggles, we should constantly examine our past.

In 1971, the Black Unity and Freedom Party (B.U.F.P), established one of the first independent Black supplementary school in S.E. London as a response to the racism of British society that affects badly the education of our children.

In our programme (No.8) "We demand an end to racist education...Black children must be taught their true history and culture". In effect, Black parents must have greater control over their children's education by representing our interests on governing boards.

As Black parents (mostly mothers) became more involved and concerned about the under-achievement of their children in British schools, research undertaken by Bernard Coard who published what became an invaluable text: 'How the West Indian Child is made Educationally sub-normal by the British School System", further strengthened the commitment of parents to organise for change. Pickets and demonstrations followed. Some older Sch. children took the initiative by setting up their own Black Studies sessions, which was met with hostile reactions by headmaster/teacher/attending headmistress whose paranoia likened these studies to be nothing else but Black Power militancy. However, in the face of community support, 'parents and B.U.F.P. Black studies was repriviledged. Staunch questionings as to why Black pupils only entered dead-end jobs with no prospects brought about the introduction of Access courses to enable entry into higher education (although only in teaching and the social sciences).

EDUCATIONAL GAINS AND LOSSES

As a result of the struggles of the 70s, few Black people were able to get through the education system because of increased consciousness raising. But having attained nominal success, there is increasing evidence which acts to cancel out such gains.

Instead of joining with the masses of their people for continued progress and liberation, individuals have opted for operating the same racist system. Dishing out apologies for the masters.

In 1985, almost every large Black community has established an education project focusing on the effects of racism.

As working class Black parents continues to demand and expect worthwhile education for their children these projects are by and large supported. However, because of lack of political consciousness amongst the mass of Black people they are encouraged to believe that such goals are possible under the present system, which in reality it is not. The assumed leadership by the newly educated does not and will not expose this truth because of their own vested interest: the truth of the matter being, that capitalism exists on the exploitation of the masses, and the last thing it requires is an highly educated population. Since higher education raises expectation and reduces profits. Only a small proportion need to be educated to maintain control over the vast majority for which they are amply rewarded with high salaries. In general by giving lip service to genuine demands for improvements but never pointing out that meaningful changes can only come about from a total change of the system, namely to a socialist one.

CHANGES: WHAT CHANGES?

Recommendations for change which include calls for Positive Discrimination in education, more Black teachers, administrators and governors, is expected to have a dramatic impact on the education and life prospects for Black children.

Due to the lack of genuine leadership, education for Black children is clearly not getting any better. The B.U.F.P. in principle and practice has struggled for reform in the present capitalist system. We have never, however, tried to separate that struggle from the struggle against capitalism.

To effect a successful struggle, we should also be aware of the ever changing face of capitalism, especially with regards to involving members from the oppressed group to its own interests.

SUPPORT THE B.U.F.P. in its efforts to mobilise all progressive Black groups to fight for a genuine non-capitalist education for the benefit of humankind.