

SCHOOL

is a

CRIME

SCENE



THE R.Y.S.E + BUST-CARD

Hi there!

This zine was put together as provocation- and a call for action against a schooling system that is a crime against humanity.

We're writing this as a generation facing the biggest global challenges in human history, as our planet collapses and inequalities deepen. In these times we need to come together and heal, to stand up and fight, to dismantle global hierarchies, to shift power into the hands of the people; to be brave in the face of devastation.

Instead we're still being forced through a schooling system that separates us from each other, community and our earth. It treats us like shit, and teaches us to treat ourselves like shit. It has historically and continues to be used as a tool of domination and submission. Schooling destroys our ability to create change - when our lives quite literally depend on young people learning to things differently.





That's why we say schools are
crime scenes.

EDUCATION

school. An educated man is one who has spent years of his youth in the class-room, while an uneducated man is one who has had little in the way of schooling, perhaps because he had to go out to work when still a boy. We

The world has little place nowadays for the uneducated man. Times, as reading, writing, and arithmetic called, were sufficient to show a man of ordina-

This zine was put together by the Radical Youth Space for Educations- the RYSE- a political education project for young people trying to create change. One of our key understandings of the world is that we need our generation to get empowered and organised in their communities. Through this, we've come to see school as a big enemy! So over the last 3 or so years, we've been running workshops, doing events, having conversations with students + teachers + parents, reading work of legends like Paulo Freire and occupying universities amongst other things - to build up our analysis...

The writing for this has been done over that period of time- meaning the tone and energy changes throughout! some of it is written by M fresh outta school and angry age 18, and some of it is written by M aged 21 after all the actual learning since she left :p a lot of it was also written by R over the time period of ages of 25-8, having been through uni and then realising the world is fucked and we need to organise. Some of the important things to know about our context are: we're both born n raised in the UK, from middle class backgrounds, went to state schools and got good grades.



Sick Nurse



Project

Empire Knowledge



PROFICIENCY



OUR PRECIOUS HERITAGE

There's a lot missing from this story- so don't read it as if it's complete. But we know that a lot of what is said in this zine is very important. We have many folks to thank for their input and guidance so take a look at the back page for that!!

It's not everything we want to say- but we wanted to share something instead of nothing... plus practising anti perfectionism and remembering its more about process than an end point. So - if ya got questions, challenges, feels, bits to share or anything- get in touch on insta @ther.y.s.e - or at theyse@riseup.net . Seriously, do buzz us!

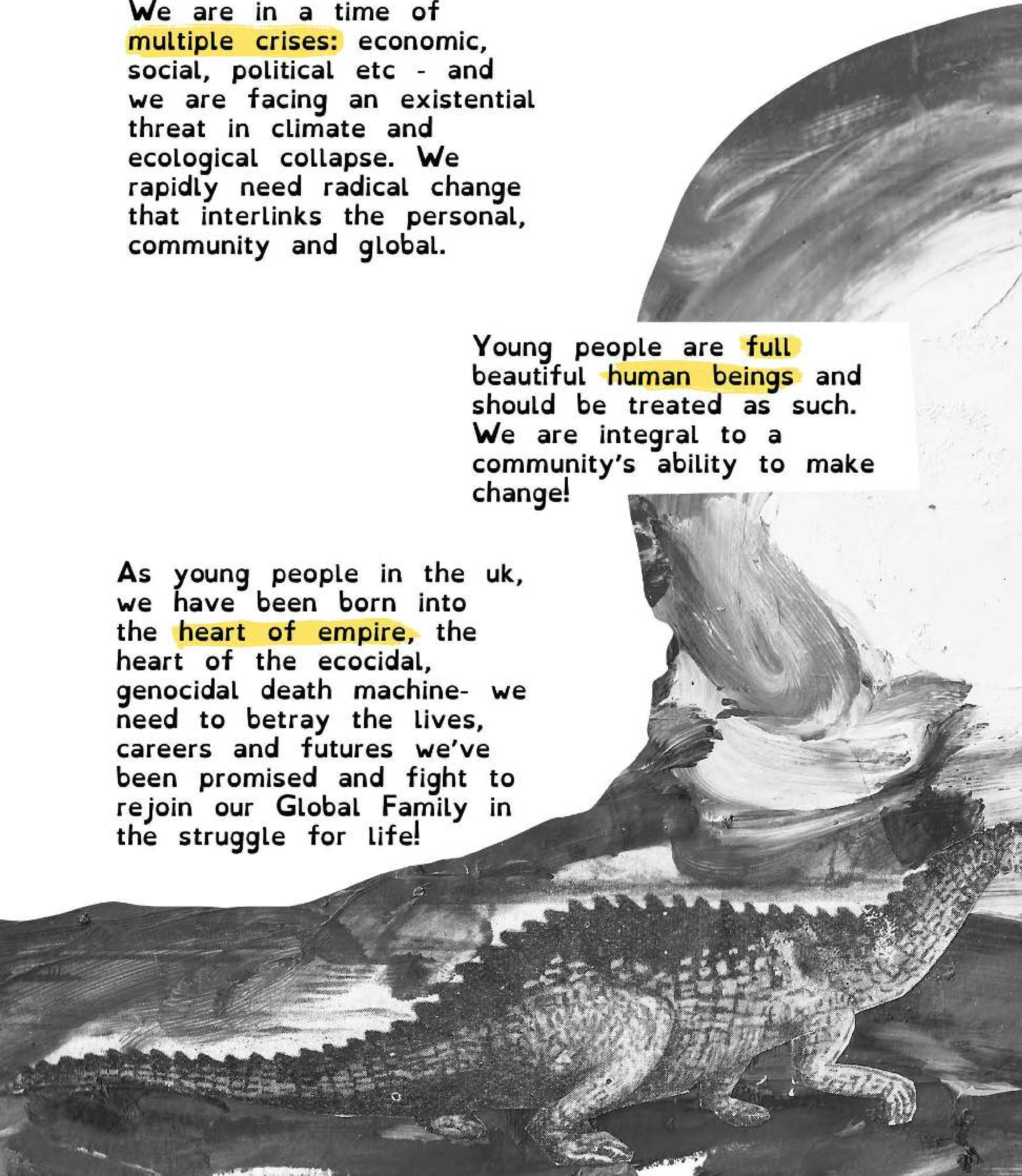
THERYSE.ORG

Here's a few bits of framing - some of our core understandings- that the rest of the zine is based off...

We are in a time of **multiple crises:** economic, social, political etc - and we are facing an existential threat in climate and ecological collapse. We rapidly need radical change that interlinks the personal, community and global.

Young people are **full beautiful human beings** and should be treated as such. We are integral to a community's ability to make change!

As young people in the uk, we have been born into the **heart of empire,** the heart of the ecocidal, genocidal death machine- we need to betray the lives, careers and futures we've been promised and fight to rejoin our Global Family in the struggle for life!



And finally:

True change will never be brought about by those currently in power - instead we must physically disrupt the status quo, build power together and create space to reimagine the world we need- from the grassroots.



KEY CONCEPTS

Crime scene

Somewhere that a serious offense has been committed in violation of morality and is under investigation (in this case by us as people of conscience (fuck the police!)). In the Schooling context, we're investigating offences such as abuse, coercion, detainment, dehumanisation and more. This is a term we learnt from our elders in the Stop the Maangamizi: We Charge Genocide and Ecocide campaign- big up!!

Overt curriculum

The overt curriculum is the content of lessons, the information we are examined on eg fire of London was in 1666 or h₂O is water.

School

When we say school, we mean the mainstream compulsory schooling system that was born in Europe and is now exported across the world. Sometimes people use the term factory schooling for this!

Covert curriculum

The covert curriculum is the messages and deep stories we absorb through the process of schooling - eg all my friends are competition, or that punishment follows rule breaking, or that being a farmer is less valuable than being a banker

Paternalism

The policy or practice on the part of people in authority of restricting the freedom and responsibilities of those subordinate to or otherwise dependent on them in their supposed interest. - i know what's better for you more than you do and I will suppress your protests on this...

Planet Repairs

A powerful term for the coming together of reparatory, environmental and cognitive justice.

Cognitive Justice

Understanding that there are many forms of knowledge global / scientific / indigenous / local - and they can co-exist together. Undoing the miseducation, repairing our minds and making knowledge accessible

Reparatory Justice

Requires stopping the harm - involves us taking our lands back -building sovereignty - exercising our right to self-determination and supporting true repair

Environmental Justice

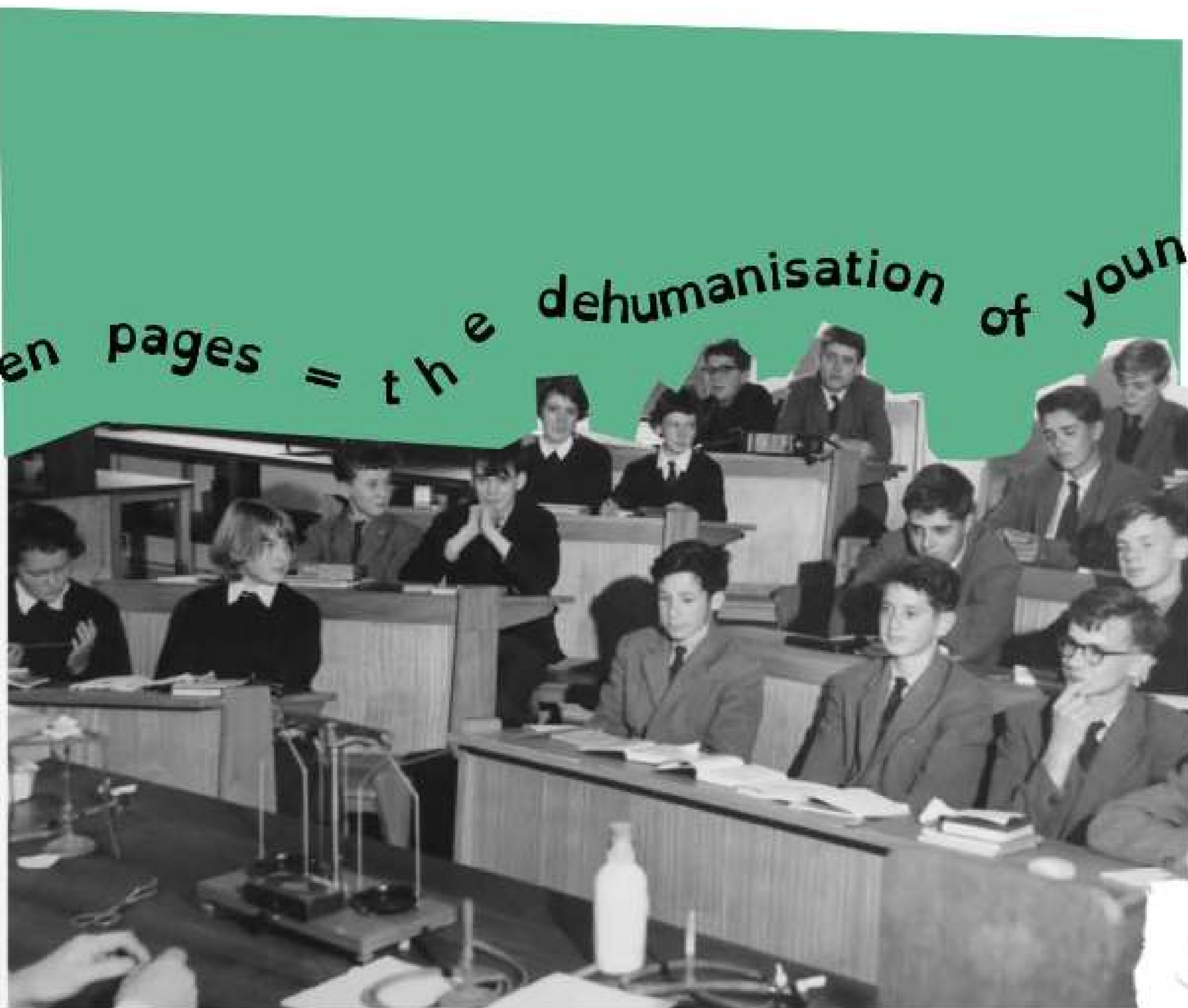
The restoration of ways of being and benefiting from the land and its resources, away from exploitation and towards interconnectedness

Radical Consent

Applying consent to life beyond sex- the idea that all interactions between people should be based on active, informed, and freely given consent...

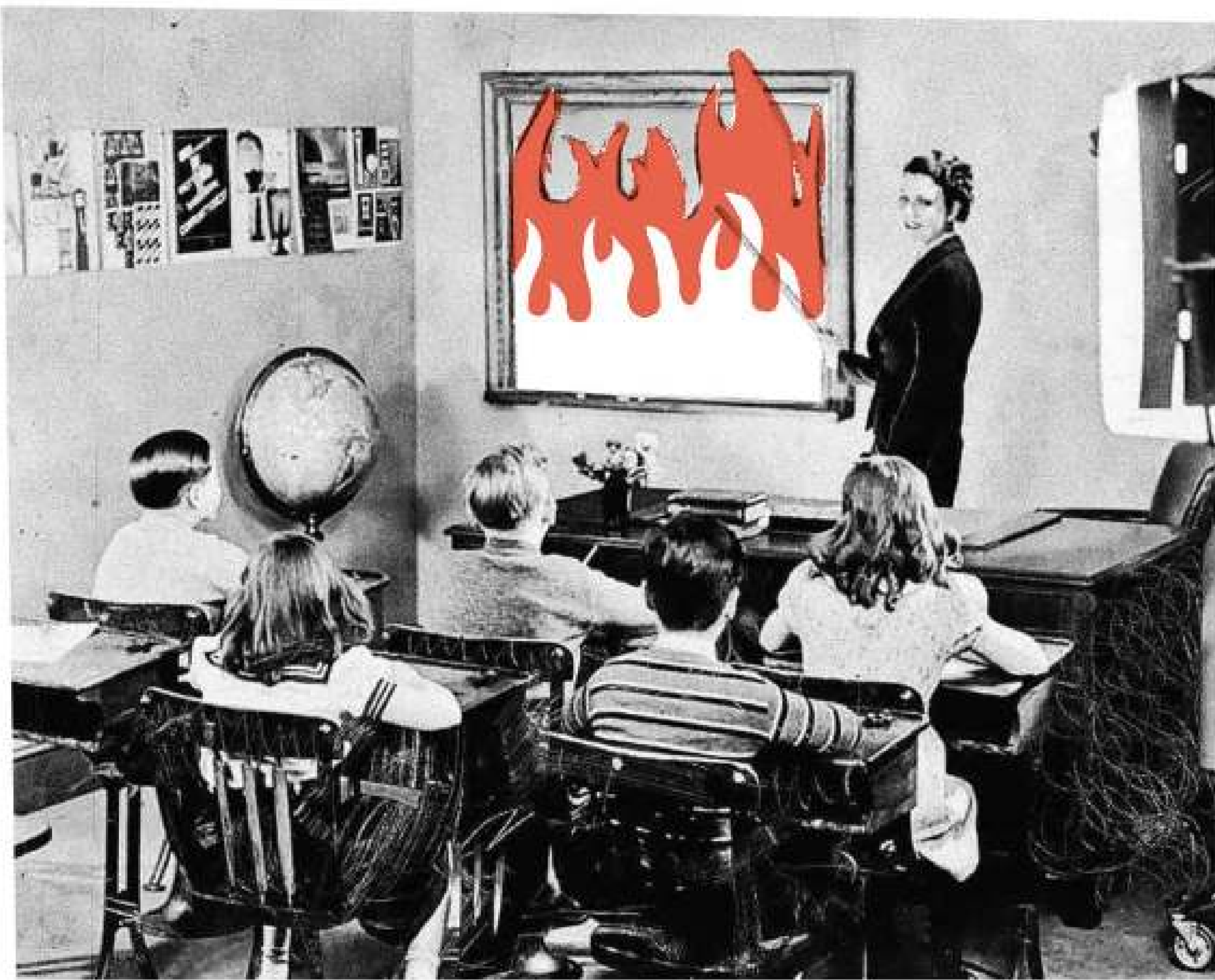
There's a lot to dig into so we've tried (a bit) to sort it (ish) into a flow that makes some kind of sense:

Green pages = the dehumanisation of young people



1

Red pages = school stops us creating change



3



Blue pages = school as a tool of empire

2



The first crime we will outline:

THE DEHUMANISATION OF YOUNG PEOPLE

Our schooling system cannot treat young people as full human beings or it couldn't function.

Paternalism

Student's experiences and ideas are deligitimised through the story that 'we know what is good for you better than you do'- with school fundamentally lacking any form of dialogue/ democracy that ppl who champion education seem to value in other parts of society. The message is clear- young people are not yet full enough human beings to have autonomy over their own lives. In the process of telling someone that they don't know what's good for them, you begin to destroy any capacity that person has for imagining better alternatives, or for thinking that solutions are even needed. Lots of young people can't imagine school being any other way.

DISCLAIMER - while we believe these dynamics exist throughout our schools - both primary and secondary - here we're talking mainly thinking through the lens of students aged 13-18, those coming more fully into themselves and their place in the world. As such, while how we work specifically with our children (<13) is not the subject of this zine, we hope it will spark much needed vital conversation in there too.

"Wellbeing"

For as long as the purpose of schooling is standardised grades, this will always contradict any attempts to tell us our wellbeing matters- all the harm enacted on us is supposedly for our own good- but we never consented to that. In essence, the school cannot look after the student because at the end of the day, its job is to tell them they matter less than the information they must absorb.

"The main lesson of school is that in order to participate fully you have to accept that your ideas are never important."

Student-Teacher Relationship

School requires strong authority over the student - necessitating a strict hierarchy within the classroom and wider school. This hierarchy is based on the concept of 'the more schooling you've had, the more worthy you are' where the students are inherently less valuable than the teachers, younger students less than older students. One of the ways this broken relationship is maintained is through absence of trust in relationships between teachers and students. To have those supposedly guiding you lacking trust in you means you lose trust in yourself.



Don't ya think it's kinda (very) fucked to have a culture where it is normalised for young people to have breakdowns, anxiety attacks and burnout in the name of a 'success' which is built on lies of a promised future anyway?

By the age of 16 we have labelled half of a generation as failures, through a percentage based grading system that has losers inbuilt. To always be told you are not good enough, especially in comparison to your friends- that sucks.

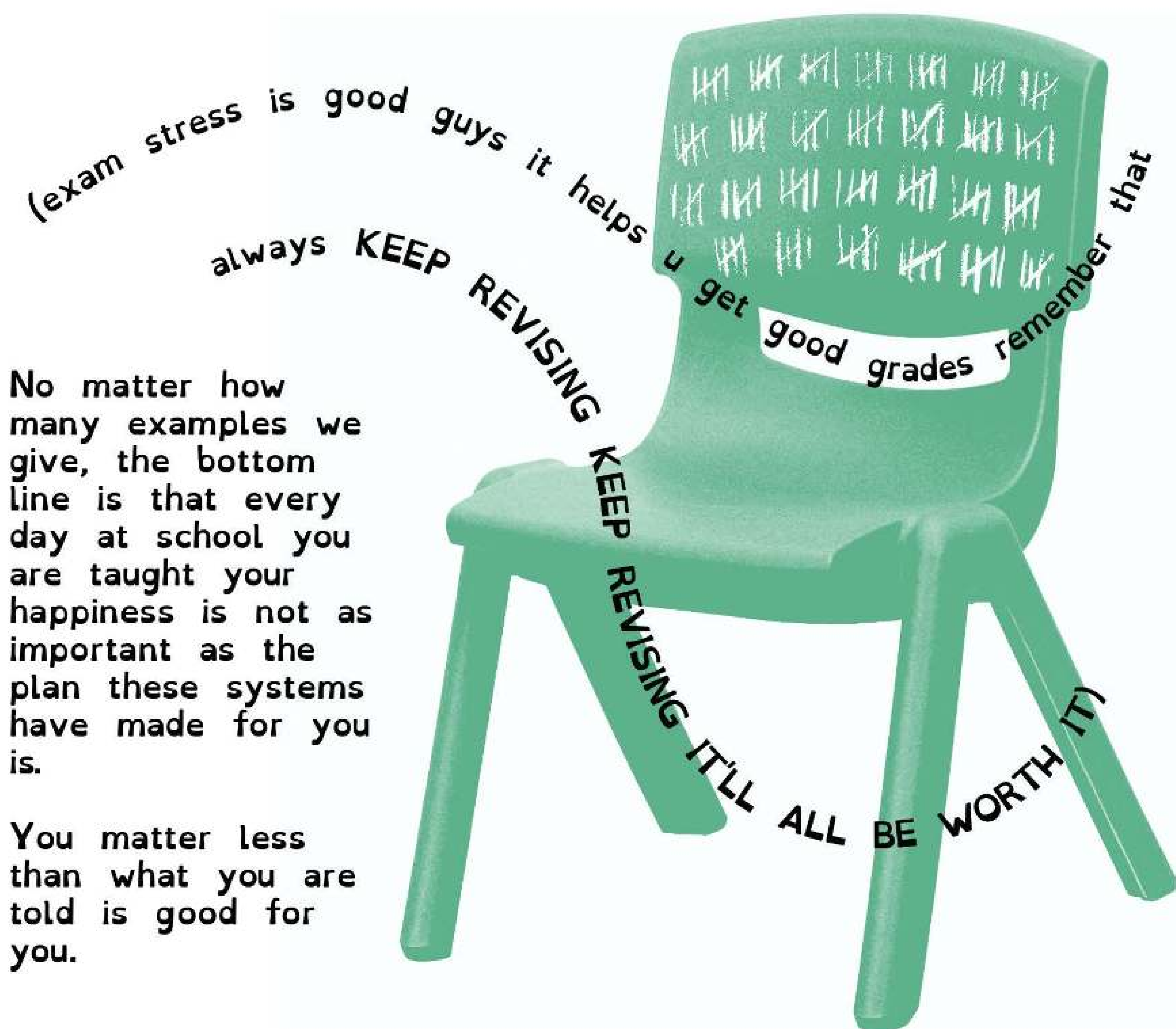
Why tf do we do that?

Well the truthful answer is because school wouldn't work if it put young people before grades.



Idk how many ppl in their 14 years of schooling ever had a lesson on how to love themselves. Or how about how to let other ppl love them in a healthy way. Or even how to develop basic healthy coping strategies aside from the make sure you 'exercise when you have exams to get rid of stress'. There is no one that can persuade me the excuses of learning we have called SRE or PSHCE (or another weird acronym) go anywhere towards actually supporting young ppl with all the stuff that comes along with growing up in a stress inducing broadly unloving environment.

3/4 of uk children spend less time outside than prison inmates (and all prisons should be abolished!)- obviously not all cos of school but it definitely isn't helping to lock kids up for 7hrs a day.



No matter how many examples we give, the bottom line is that every day at school you are taught your happiness is not as important as the plan these systems have made for you is.

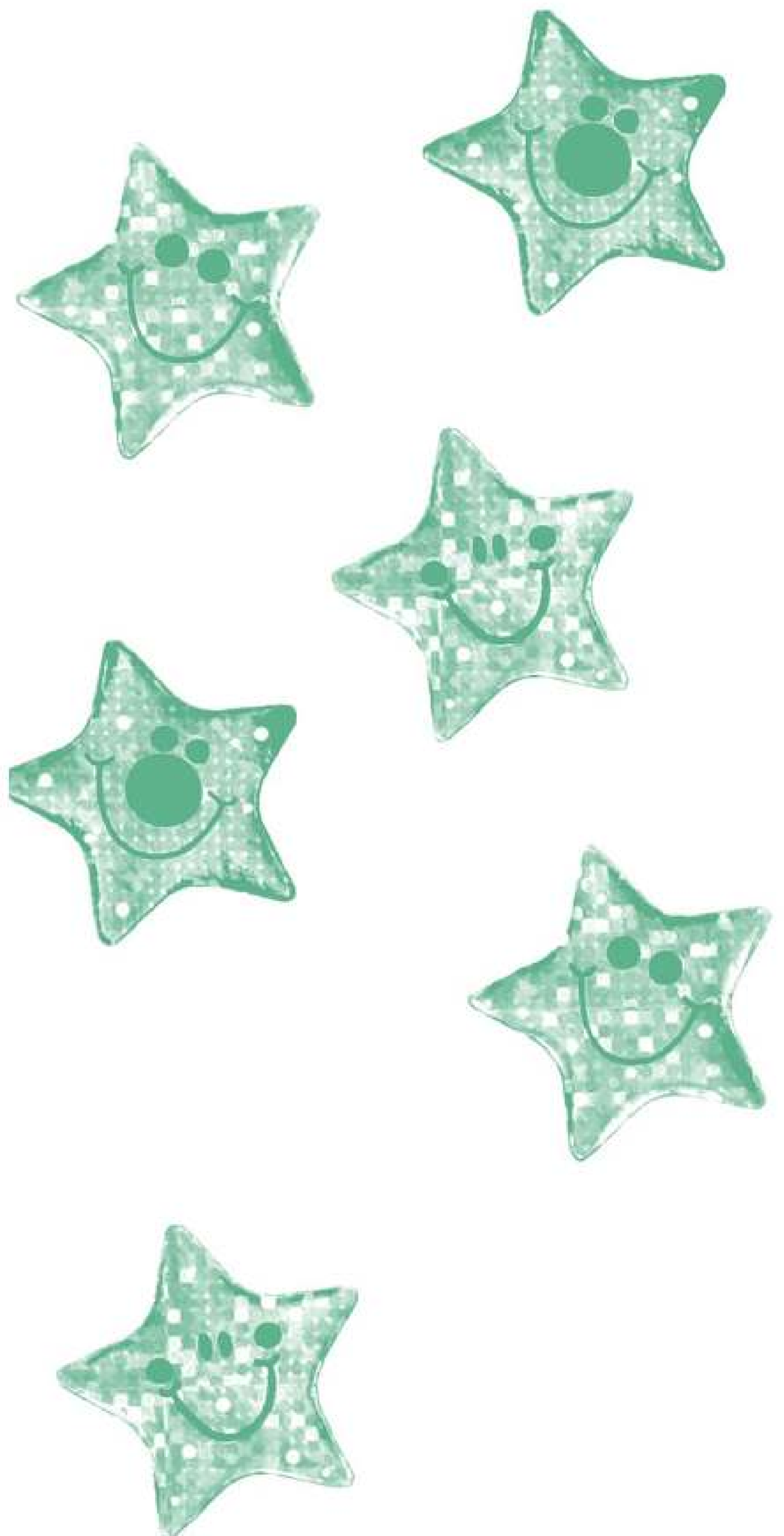
You matter less than what you are told is good for you.

"We do prioritise wellbeing - there's lots of stuff in place to support young people"

Ofc a lot of schools have a load of things in place to support us- and lots of teachers obviously give a shit about their students (or think they do :p)

For sure some of these things are really valuable to the young ppl they benefit - tho not always haha. But our point here is that schooling as an institution doesn't give a shit about young people- the stated point of school is to get qualifications -and on your A Level certificate it doesn't give an explanation of how much you've grown (or more to the point been bashed down) as a person.

There is no accountability for how many young ppl are hurt by this system - its not even a conversation. You can try to argue that school prioritising wellbeing, or at least is trying hard - but you simply can't back it up because schools don't gather the data, they know it would condemn them!"



I'm in year 13. In my last set of mock exams (not very important ones at all) my friend got a B in her english paper. this is a great grade, but because she, her mum and the school 'expected more of her', she almost immediately started having a panic attack. she ran downstairs and i followed her into the toilets where she had a panic attack that lasted for around ten minutes. Eventually she managed to slow her breathing and we were brought into the head of sixth form's office as she tried to recover. after talking to her for a while she was then told that she should go back to her lesson 'because missing more learning time will only make matters worse'. at this point my friend was only just recovered enough to walk without help. instead of reminding her how little these exams mattered, she was told that this had at least been a good lesson on how she needs to be better prepared in the future.

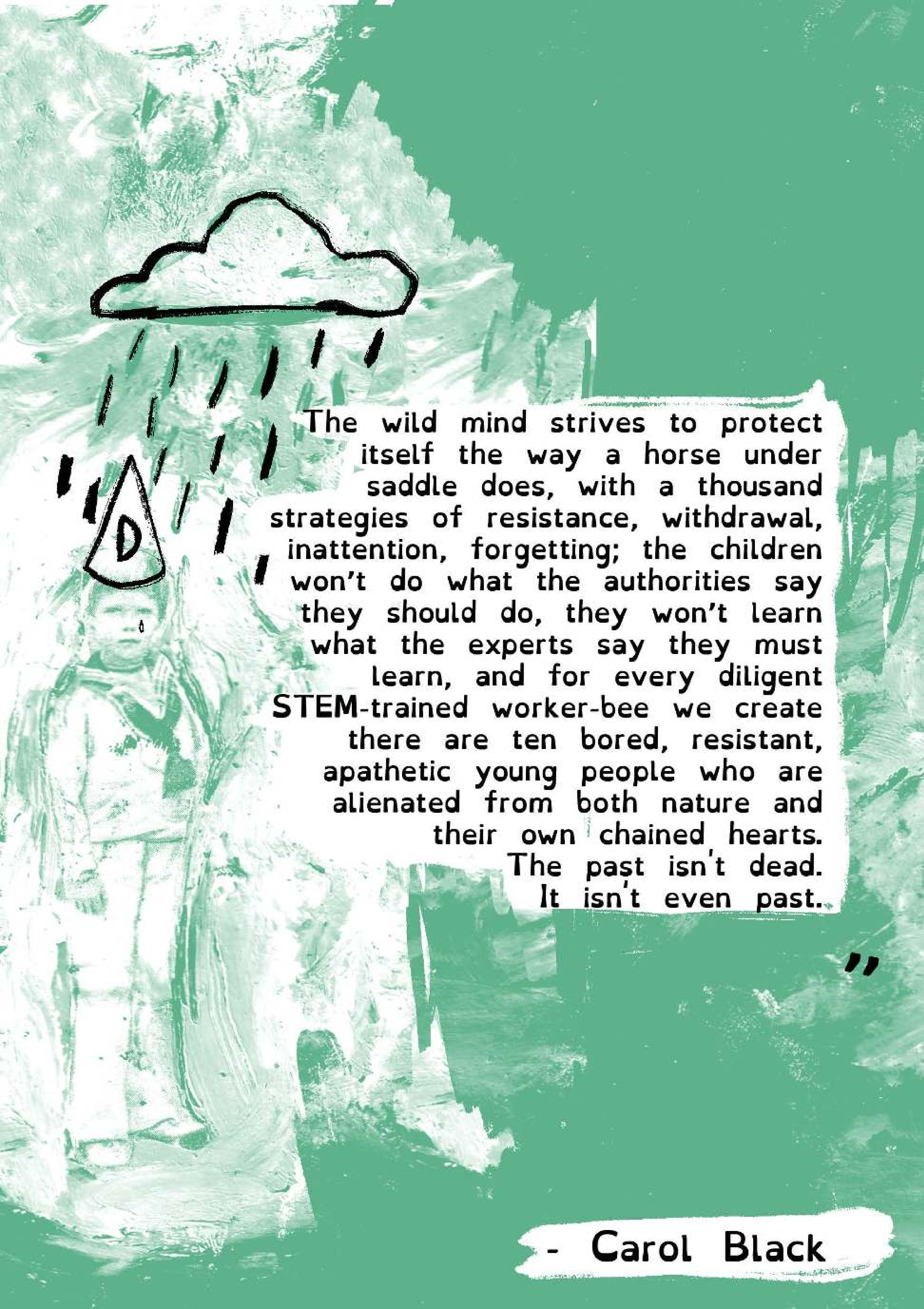
If the only solutions offered to young ppl in distress are for them to try harder to fit the expectations of a frankly abusive system, how can we claim to have their best interests at heart? This system makes us complicit in the brutal dehumanisation of our young people.



“

These original purposes were so effectively built into the structure of modern schooling -- with its underlying systems of confinement, control, standardization, measurement, and enforcement -- that today they are accomplished even without our conscious knowledge or assent.

They are not, of course, accomplished in the ways that the social engineers had in mind. These 'visionary men' assumed human nature to be infinitely malleable; children were to be molded and fashioned like any other industrial raw material into a predetermined finished product, and industrial utopia would be the result. But they did not count on the power of children's instinct for dissent.

A child in a white raincoat stands in the rain. Above them is a hand-drawn black cloud with rain falling. A hand-drawn black triangle with a white 'D' inside is positioned near the child's head. The background is a textured, abstract painting in shades of blue and green.

The wild mind strives to protect itself the way a horse under saddle does, with a thousand strategies of resistance, withdrawal, inattention, forgetting; the children won't do what the authorities say they should do, they won't learn what the experts say they must learn, and for every diligent STEM-trained worker-bee we create there are ten bored, resistant, apathetic young people who are alienated from both nature and their own chained hearts. The past isn't dead. It isn't even past.

- Carol Black

SCHOOLING AS A TOOL OF DOMINATION AND EMPIRE

This section is about how enforced mass schooling has historically and continues to be used as a tool of domination across the world.

White man's last burden

Modern compulsory mass schooling is a European invention (In the UK schooling's origins were preparing workers for the factories- tearing people away from their traditional practices and into the machine of industrialisation) and the only reason it is seen as simply natural, a universal right, is because of the colonial domination of the West.

Schooling was, and is, a primary tool of western power - in how it works to break down local cultures, instill the supremacy of western thought and to make people dependent on globalised neo-colonial capitalism. In essence, the colonisers raise the new generation to maintain and deepen control and dependency - the white man's burden to educate the global majority has never been about freedom.



THE WHITE

Colonial schooling offers a path not of freedom for the collective from domination but of the false escape of surrender for the 'white-minded' individual - Frantz Fanon's 'white mask' - a chance to climb up the pyramid of colonial power without ever challenging the bloody base upon which it stands.



MAN'S BURDEN. — *The Journal, Detroit.* (1898)

Coloniality has always been about the acquisition of land to plunder - resources to exploit, land to occupy and people's bodies to turn into machines of extraction. In such a fight, forced schooling is among the most powerful weapons ever devised, acting not to entrench peoples in their land as violent confrontation can, but to raise their young to not value or even know their land. This insidious and violent separation from tradition, from locality and from community - combined with the internalised inferiority inherent in learning another's world is supposedly superior to your own - undermines at all levels the ability for colonised people to rise and defend the land they belong to. One cannot defend that from which one feels alienated - and thus, as long as the classroom remains a site of colonial separation, violently rupturing peoples from land, it cannot be separated from the extractivist machine that is modern western society.

For example the recent public outcry around residential schools in so called Canada- the state sponsored child abuse system to eradicate the cultural power of First Nation peoples. Through this particularly recent and violent example, you can see school being used as a tool of domination- a huge challenge to the idea of schooling as a progressive force throughout history and across the world now.



“The identification of mass graves of Indigenous children in Canada and the launch of investigations into similar burial sites in the US has exposed the devastating impacts of schools... Today, around two million tribal children are attending Factory Schools”

- Survival International



HUMAN MONOCULTURE

The spread of western schooling has been largely about the creation of a truly global population, one easily ranked, organised and most importantly dependent upon the world that shapes the schooling. If everyone learns the same rules, then those rules become not one way of doing things but instead the way.

You may have heard about biodiversity from some biology lessons at school, and you might remember that when there is more variation within an ecosystem it is much more likely to survive a change in environment; for example disease. The diversity of genes means that the population is much more adaptable and resilient, whereas a monoculture (the cultivation of a single crop in a given area) can get wiped out in one go. If we look at humanity in this way (which we should because we are part of the earth) , and see how we give young people all over the world exactly the same introduction/indoctrination to life, then it is not looking good for our resilience and ability to adapt to difficult situations. And as such, our ability to meet, let alone survive, the multiple crises unfolding all around us is surely vastly diminished as culture after culture - all offering unique ways to solve problems - is deleted in the name of progress.

As the monoculture spreads, schooling creates a world of ever less human diversity, of ever decreasing beauty, spirit and imagination - schooling is to human cultures as the bulldozer is to the rainforest.

“We resist this kind of education, whoever it comes from. They give their kind of education because they want our children to hate jungles. They want our children to hate their own culture. They want to create distance between children and parents”



- Indian tribal rights activist Soni Sori.

KALINGA INSTITUTE FOR SOCIAL SCIENCES ("KISS")



The biggest Factory School in the world. KISS is home to 30,000 tribal children: it states openly that its mission is to turn "tax consumers into tax payers, liabilities into assets."

we drew a lot of inspiration for this part of the publication from the documentary "schooling the world" - you can watch it for free here

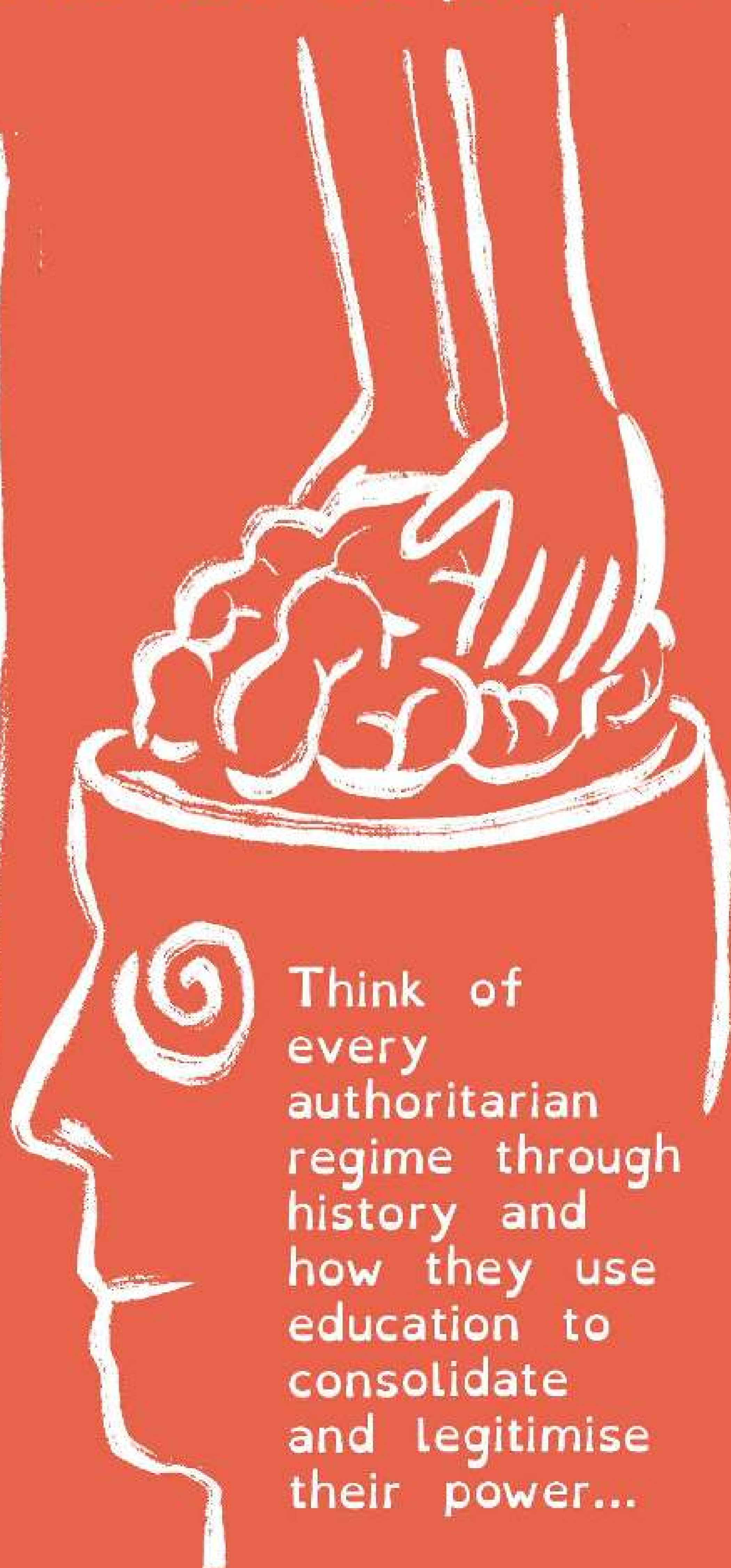


SCHOOL STOPS US CREATING CHANGE

We leave school deprived of skills such as questioning, autonomy, disobedience and imagination - but we must shift from a system that kills young people's ability to imagine and enact change in the world - to one that actively supports their flourishing as forces of change. Here we will layout how and why school breaks our change making potential - for once we know the poison we can find the cure!

School as propaganda

We are brought up under the impression that school is the place where you learn fundamental truths - it is there to prepare you for life, so we assume it must be a holistic, objective, comprehensive understanding of the world. Believing this - paired with the brutal crushing of young people's imagination - many people leave school with no understanding of the many ways of knowing and ways of being in the world, beyond the dominant 'universal' story of the world taught in school.



Think of every authoritarian regime through history and how they use education to consolidate and legitimise their power...

Skilled up in Acceptance

Curiosity is the essence of education and learning, the ability to question the world, not simply accept it. And yet, above all else what schooling requires is acceptance. The acceptance of the authority of the teacher, acceptance of the validity of the information presented, acceptance of the tasks you must complete, acceptance of a loss of control over your body (ever thought how fucked up it is you have to ask permission to go to the toilet??)- all are fundamental to the school's authority over the student. As such, schooling can only promote an empty curiosity, one founded on a deep acceptance of authority, a curiosity that must never ask: 'why can't things be different?' School co-opts and corrupts the idea of learning - actually limiting the opportunities elsewhere for real learning in young people's lives.



Individualism

Schooling ranks the youth - it sits you in rows, it throws the same information at all of you and it tests you to see how much has stuck - in essence, it asks you to compete for grades by which you and your peers can be ranked and dispatched into the world. Bound together not in solidarity but in competition, another generation of successes and failures - but shhh, you can't talk about the failures - schooling never does talk about those it fails, because well if you fail it's your fault right? You just didn't learn as well as other people, you just weren't good enough, you failed - and you have no one to blame but yourself.

Schooling sits you down and tells you your place, not by simple decree, but by making you work for it - making you climb on and over the bodies of your friends (no sharing answers here!) in a mad dash for the top - all eyes upward, always upward. School is about inserting young minds into the hierarchies of the world, and teaching you that most important lesson, that hierarchies are defined not by the base but by the summit - that those who succeed are always better, that they are more human, than those who have failed. And then simply asks you not, where are we going? Not what's best for us? But simply, where are you going? This is you against the world and you better start climbing!





Sharing Answers

In school you are meant to put your own progress ahead of everyone else's, to believe that you are inherently better/worse than others and that that justifies success and recognition for some and difficulties and exclusion for others. When you are in an exam hall, sharing answers with the person next to you is also going to negatively affect your grades because we have a system that is **DESIGNED** for the majority of ppl to fail. It's literally how exams are graded that in order for you to succeed, others have to fail. This fucked up idea is how school makes us all believe that success comes from competition not collaboration. Rather than looking at what beautiful things come from collective effort, school tells you off for doing homework with your friends.



1. a. 6 ✓
b. no ✗
c. $3\sqrt{2}x$ ✗

2. a. i. $4T \times 3$ ✓
ii. 36.26^3 ✗

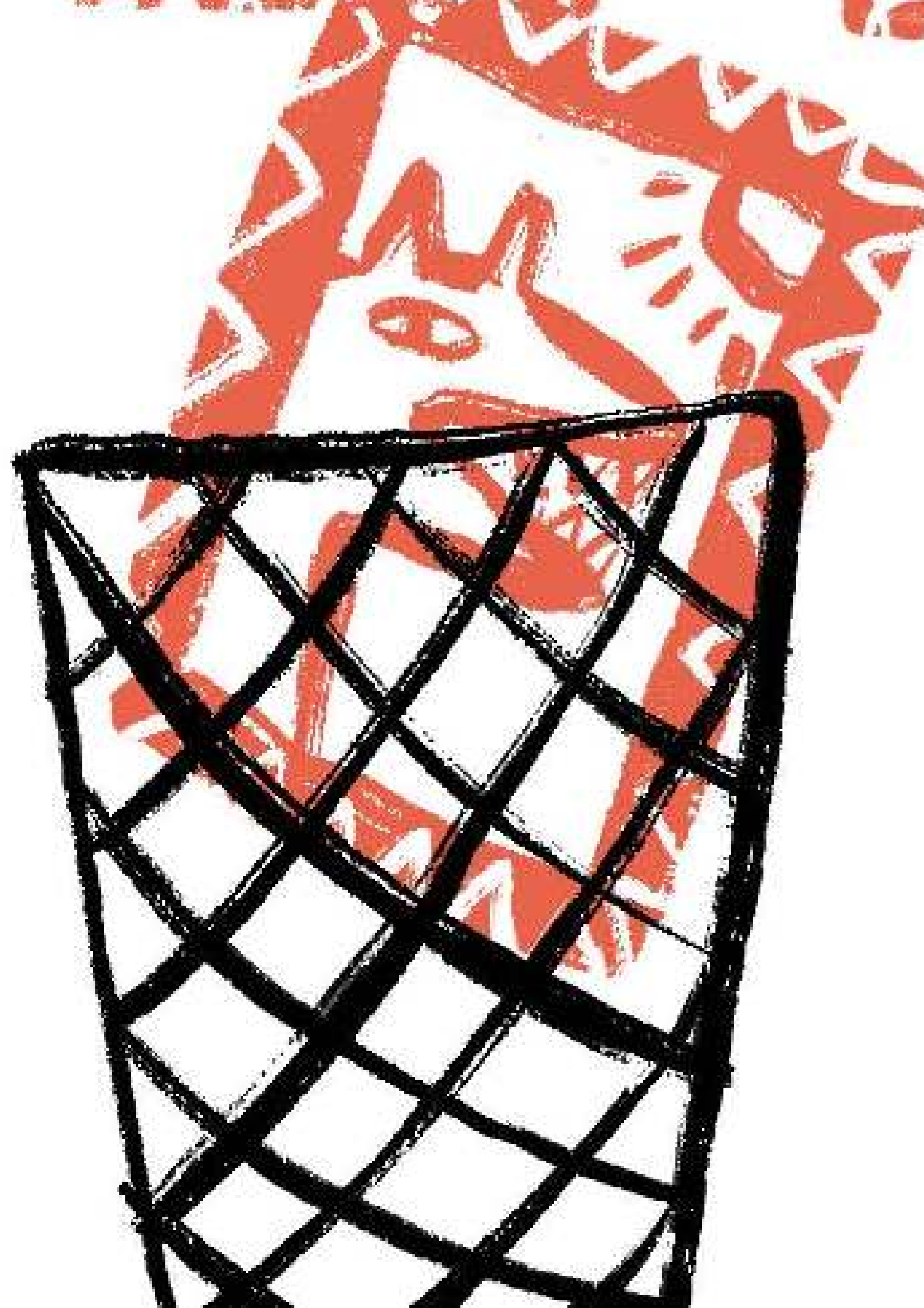
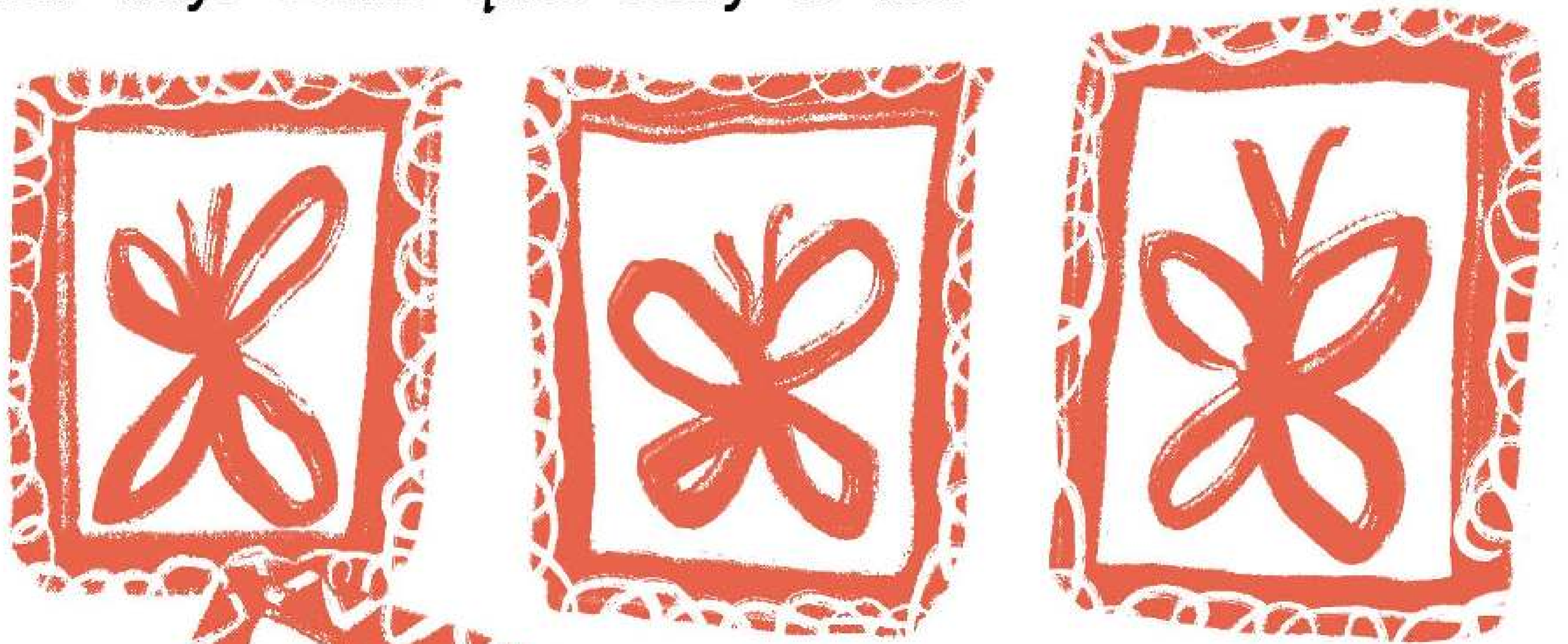
Struggle and change are collective processes, many people acting together to transform society, their lives and the world around them. Schooling in its role of preparing young people for a world of competition is an individual process, you against the world, your grades, your work, your success - it is the process of isolating the individual so they can neatly be inserted into the great competition of life. As such, schooling and collective struggle are always at odds - you cannot win change with a struggle of one and you cannot join the collective when you've learnt to see others' success as your failure, someone else's freedom is seen as your loss.

Imagination

Lots of people will have experienced the 'that's really interesting, but we need to get back on task', or the 'we don't have time to go into that because it won't come up in your exam'- and this is an obvious way that school squashes curiosity and imagination. The focus of lessons can never be imagined when we have a curriculum that is so restrictive, when exploration is a distraction from what needs to be done. And this runs throughout school in so many ways- we are told off for doodling, or presenting our work wrong, we lose marks for mistakes and so there is no value in risk taking. Facts are always valued above ideas in school (all the english nerds will @me here but bro we are given 'creative writing' tasks, with the title, structure and outline given to us by a teacher) and often we are faced with humiliation for thinking outside the box. In school, the way to success is to tick the boxes as efficiently as possible- it's easier to memorise other people's ideas than come up with your own when one will be rewarded and the other might not. Creativity is even stifled in lessons like art- grading things requires standardisation. Think of the fact that if you ask a group of adults to draw something, many of them will say 'i can't draw'. In school they learnt that their style of creativity was illegitimate, graded a fail. Ask the same children and you will get a range of beautiful, wonderful and weird pictures. That is, until they are told not to colour outside the lines.



I dont think it's hard to see how school crushes imagination and creativity. Maybe its harder to see why this is so bad. At the risk of quoting an intellectual white man, Einstein is famous for dropping out of school and becoming an expert scientific problem solver. He said "Imagination is more important than knowledge. For knowledge is limited to all we now know and understand, while imagination embraces the entire world, and all there ever will be to know and understand." "Logic will get you from A to B, imagination will take you everywhere" and lots else along similar lines. Not only does squashing imagination slowly crush what makes us human and in love with the world, (lol this is pretty bad on its own) but this warped view of what is important will be our own downfall. Facing the multiple global crises that we are now, with generations of people unable to think in new ways seems quite scary to me.



In the words of Audre Lourde 'the masters tools will never dismantle the master's house'. -we can't solve our problems with the same thinking we used when we created them... and we need to dismantle this house pretty quick and totally...

We think this slightly undermines the whole 'school is preparing us for the future, argument :0/



Obedience

In school you must follow the rules. We are taught to expect punishment for breaking these rules evennnnn if it's not our fault we broke them/ or it was something beyond our control. Insert quote from every teacher ever "that's no excuse for not doing ur homework". And ofc the "if you argue back one more time it'll be two detentions". Teaching people that there are rules laid down for them that they must follow or risk punishment is a great way to get people into a state of mind where they accept authority as something that is good for them, or if not good for them then at least it is scary enough to not be worth challenging- or acting out against it reactively cos it makes you feel like shit.

We have to learn to break the rules, because only when one can break the rules do we hold the power to rewrite them. If we can take action against something that has previously been seen as unchallengeable, people will be inspired to do the same.



"But school is an important equaliser in society- giving every kid a chance to better their prospects"

The idea that school is an equaliser is a bit silly really when you think about the fact it is literally designed to stratify each generation, by criteria that are supremacist, while barely recognising the violent inequality of all the starting positions- all of this getting us to battle each other for a promise of a future that is built on bloody lies. (because, even if everybody succeeded at school, you would just run into the fact that the current structure of the global economy does not provide enough good jobs for the growing number of graduates, and our planet cannot sustain that lifestyle)

School literally takes each generation and segregates and ranks them based on this specific form of 'ability' which then determines the rest of your life prospects. And so much of young people's ability to conform to this expectation depends on the rest of life circumstances that they are handed. That's fucked.

And while it is true that school for a load of people is a route out of hardship, or even provides a real safe space for people away from home, it is pretty clear that school fails to counter these problems on any fundamental level. If school is there to provide young people support and give everyone an equal chance then it is doing a shite job.

Imagine if we put all the money and time into developing community centres, anti oppression work and real support networks that we do into schooling. And yes on an individual level lotsa schools/teachers do really cool work- but this is not anywhere near widespread enough, or comprehensive enough. Look at the stats if you have to- racist exlusion rates is an often cited example and it's a pretty clearly damning one. Schools do not prioritise anti oppression work- they cannot because perpetuating hierarchy is one of their fundamental roles. If we want a chance in this fight against domination, we have to fundamentally challenge the school system.

This zine is not "interesting"

O

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US

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ME

We don't want you to read this zine as if it's a english exercise, or anything else school would hand you for that matter.

Thru school (amongst other things) we learn to interact with important, dangerous and emotional things as if they are abstract concepts that don't actually affect our lives. Often people say 'that's interesting' - like it was thought exercise, not a matter of life and death. Emotionally engaging and critically reflecting on things actually impels us into action which we need to take!!

So, instead of saying damn that was interesting read, let's say- damn- that made me see something differently, what am I gonna do about it??

Aaand if you don't know where to start- theres' a lot of people who have been saying this stuff for a very long time and are doing a lot about it. PTO!!!





PLANET

REPAIRS

ACTION

LEARNING

EDUCATIONAL

REVOLUTION

If we take seriously what has been covered in this publication, then it is obvious that any challenge to this miseducation system has to be global and tackle these crime scenes at the root. In the UK, as some of the people who have been forced through this system for the longest, we are arguably in the weakest position to imagine the possible alternatives to such a system.

Our resistance needs to be about co-learning journeys between communities in different parts of the world- and this is what the Planet Repairs Action Learning Education Revolution process is about.

PRALER is a process to formalize internationalism in the service of communities through learning by doing. If we are to take back our education, our lands and our autonomy for Planet Repairs, we need to come together under the leadership of communities of resistance.

Find out more here for steps to action, including powerful examples of liberatory community education projects across the world.

ALL PEOPLES TO OWN ER



That includes YOU - it is time to work alongside our communities to liberate ourselves.

WE DO THIS UNTIL WE FREE US

PRALER



Who we have to thank + where u should read more!

The thoughts in this zine are built on understandings we gained from many incredibly bold people/places. We wanted to share our gratitude for this and point yall in the direction to hear more from them :)

- The lived experience of young ppl everywhere about school!!

- Paulo Freire - especially his work *Pedagogy of the Oppressed*

- *Schooling the World (2010)*- documentary you can watch at <https://www.filmsforaction.org/watch/schooling-the-world-2010/>

- *Stop the Maangamizi: We Charge Genocide and Ecocide Campaign*

- Bell Hooks - especially her work on *Teaching to Transgress*

- Survival international <https://www.survivalinternational.org/>

- The PRALER process

- Ecoversities Alliance

and more!

RYSEER
SHIIP

IT'S
EMPIRE
BURNING



TIME



NOTES

A large, empty rectangular box with a black border, intended for writing notes.



THANK YOU!!!

Thanks for picking this up- seems you've got some curiosity left that school didn't squash :p hope it lit some kinda fires in you.

and that's what it's all about- coming together to refind and rebuild the parts of ourselves that make us powerful...

We can no longer be complicit in these crimes. The struggle of our young people is the struggle for our future- and it looks to be a rough road ahead.

So let's organise ourselves! What do you need to stand up to? What can you get your people together around? What are these times asking of us- and then lets go and shut down these crime scenes!

theryse@riseup.net
theryse.org