**Education: politics and policy-making with the intellectuals of ‘old’ Labour**

**Epigraph**

There is no virtue in producing socially well-adjusted members of society who are unemployed because they do not have the skills. Nor at the other extreme must they be technically efficient robots. Both of the basic purposes of education require the same essential tools. These are basic literacy, basic numeracy, the understanding of how to live and work together; respect for others, respect for the individual. This means acquiring certain basic knowledge and skills and reasoning ability. It means developing lively minds and an appetite for further knowledge that will last a lifetime.[[1]](#endnote-1)

**Introduction**

James Callaghan delivered a defining speech of his premiership at Ruskin College, Oxford, in October 1976. He talked about complaints from industry that schools were not adequately preparing children for the world of work and expressed concerns about the methods and aims of informal instruction, the need to bring curriculum matters into the public domain, to monitor the use of resources in order to maintain a national standard of performance. It was unusual for a prime minister to devote a full speech to education and Callaghan’s approach was rooted historically in his own early struggles and personal commitment to access and opportunities for working people. Using newly available diaries, memoirs and personal papers, this chapter offers an original account of political conflicts during the lead-up to Callaghan’s intervention and the series of events that surrounded it. In so doing, I provide a critical overview of education politics and policymaking between 1976 and 1979, focusing on particular sets of relations and sites that had some kind of influence upon Labour’s reform agenda.

My storyline begins with Callaghan’s childhood in an era when nearly 90 per cent of people went to work at 14, only 10 per cent achieved passes in public examinations and less than five per cent went into higher education. It considers the provision of universal secondary education in the mid-1940s and the development of comprehensive education from the 1960s. Second, I map and describe a set of 1970s policy networks and highlight some of the intellectuals and politicians within specific power-knowledge relations before moving on to examine struggles over the generation and circulation of key policy ‘ideas’ circulated and reiterated by individuals before, during and after the ‘Great Debate’ on education Callaghan sparked in 1976/77. I use the term intellectual in a sociological and cultural sense to refer to people who have self-consciously drawn upon ‘ideas’ as solutions to social problems and enjoy a level of ‘cultural authority’ in society. I conclude with some reflections on Callaghan’s legacy. The recent availability of the personal papers of Caroline Benn (1926-2000) adult education lecturer and founder member of the comprehensive education campaign group opens an opportunity for deeper understanding of what was at stake in this era.[[2]](#endnote-2)

Non-fee-paying secondary schools did not exist in 1920s England when Callaghan was a boy. An avid reader, he passed a competitive examination at the age of ten and won a scholarship but his impoverished widowed mother had to send his reports to the Ministry of Education at Whitehall to make sure that he had done sufficiently well to have his fees paid for another term. Going to university was simply impossible and this denial of opportunity influenced his thinking a great deal.[[3]](#endnote-3) It meant he cherished education as something precious and demonstrated a sense of inferiority. ‘I haven’t even got a degree’ he exclaimed on hearing he was victorious in the Labour leadership contest.[[4]](#endnote-4) On meeting Bernard Donoughue, head of the Prime Ministerial Policy Unit at Downing Street, he drew a contrast between himself and Harold Wilson. In the second volume of his political diaries, published in 2009, Donoughue recorded Callaghan said at their first meeting: ‘I am not very clever, as you will know from the newspapers. I don’t have Harold’s brain for bright ideas.’[[5]](#endnote-5)

**Comprehensive Struggles and the Intellectuals of ‘old’ Labour**

The 1944 Education Act created universal free secondary education. Claims made in the Norwood Report of 1943 that it was possible to identify three types of children with three types of mind – the academic, the technical and the practical, supported the separation of pupils into three sorts of secondary school - grammar, technical and modern. The new grammar schools would offer a curriculum that emphasized PE, ‘character’ and the English language as opposed to anything more technical or modern. Cyril Burt, the country’s foremost educational psychologist, at that time held that ‘intelligence’ and therefore learning capacity was fixed and innate. For two decades, belief in IQ testing sanctioned the rigidly streamed and competitively selective system that developed. In practice, technical schools accounted for less than five per cent of the age group and while some local authorities established comprehensive schools in opposition to government advice, the issue became whether a child ‘succeeded’ and went to a grammar school or ‘failed’ and went to a less well-resourced secondary modern.

Government reports and sociological surveys soon evidenced the realities behind secondary education for all. It was obvious that middle-class offspring dominated grammar intakes owing to advantages imbued by family background and social class remained a major influence on educational achievement. From 1946, the secondary modern schools and bottom streams of the grammar schools were full of working class children who had a largely negative experience. Defenders of selective education argued only a small number of children had the academic ability to attend grammar schools but research showed that coaching and intensive tuition, used by the middle classes, improved test scores. Added to which, successes secured by 15/ 16-year-old secondary modern school candidates for the new ‘O’ level examination exposed the fallibility of a selection process that made it acceptable for around 80 per cent of mainly working class children to ‘fail’.[[6]](#endnote-6)

Michael Young intended his 1958 book *The Rise of the Meritocracy* to warn against an imagined future society in which individual merit based on a narrow understanding of intelligence, determines social station. In Young’s book women and ‘populists’ emerge as critics resisting the gradual extension of sifting and segregation, denying all opportunity to the rest – who eventually, goaded by the constant reminders of their inferiority, rise in angry revolt. Whilst the rising tide of elitist stratification in British schools during the 1950s in part prompted Young’s work, other conceptions of the term ‘meritocracy’ presumed an equal start, unencumbered by well-documented class inequalities. In 1961 the headmaster of Manchester Grammar School, told the journalist Anthony Sampson. ‘If you want to have equality of opportunity you inevitably have a meritocracy: but you can mitigate the dangers, by producing essentially *humane* meritocrats. The grammar schools must have their own *noblesse oblige* – but in order to have that, they have to *know* that they are a new kind of aristocracy – as Etonians know it’.[[7]](#endnote-7)

By the 1960s, the new emphasis on human capital theory, the need for more public expenditure in science and technology, which sustained economic growth and development, and rejection of deterministic theories of intelligence translated into support for comprehensive education. Labour won the 1964 general election and the new government made the introduction of comprehensive secondary schools a priority, issuing circular 10/65, which requested all local authorities to submit plans for reorganisation. Outside Whitehall, ‘policy intellectuals’ who thought it a mistake for the government to require, not request, launched the Comprehensive Schools Committee (CSC) on 24 September 1965. Key ‘interlockers’,[[8]](#endnote-8) as they are sometimes called in network analysis who act as bridges and brokers included Caroline Benn, CSC Information Officer and editor of *Comprehensive Education*, wife of the then Postmaster General Tony Benn, who joined the Wilson Cabinet as Minister of Technology in July 1966.

There was substantial overlap in membership between CSC and urban think tanks like the Institute of Community Studies (ICS), and Advisory Centre for Education (ACE). Thus, Michael Young (who founded both), Brian Jackson (who co-founded ACE) and Michael Armstrong (ICS and Nuffield researcher) all joined the CSC. Academics included Peter Townsend (formerly at ICS, co-founder professor at the University of Essex), Robin Pedley and Brian Simon, who held posts at the University of Leicester and co-founded the journal *FORUM* to promote the development of comprehensive education. Edward Blishen (*FORUM* editorial board), who in 1950 starting teaching at Archway Secondary Modern School in north London and published an unflinchingly realistic autobiographical novel *Roaring Boys* five years later and future Conservative politician Rhodes Boyson then head at Robert Montefiore Secondary Modern School in Stepney, were both supporters.

Dennis Marsden (formerly at ICS, part of the Sociology team at Essex) who researched and wrote a 1962 book on grammar schools and social mobility jointly with Brian Jackson, outlined three views at the heart of Labour’s public political debate in a 1971 Fabian pamphlet. First, the idea of meritocracy. Second, the ‘social engineering’ approach. Third, the ‘community school’ orientation. The ideology of meritocracy troubled Brian Simon who envisioned comprehensive education embodying humanist objectives with science and technology for all. He noted the shortcomings of grammar schools, with their record of B-and-C-stream failure and narrow curriculum. ‘We have new methods which lay emphasis on learning rather than didactic teaching, a new educational technology’ he said, ‘there is an opportunity to try out what secondary education can do to develop human powers, as opposed to channeling them from an early age, and it is in the general interest that this opportunity be taken’.[[9]](#endnote-9)

When Callaghan took over as Prime Minister in April 1976, Bernard Donoughue’s inclusion of restoring values and standards to Britain’s education system on a ‘shopping list’ of possible areas of intervention enabled him to indulge an old inclination to be Education Minister. In his autobiography, he wrote:

I have always been a convinced believer in the importance of education, as throughout my life I had seen how many doors it could unlock for working-class children who had begun with few other advantages, and I regretted my own lack of a university education. I was also aware of growing concerns among parents about the direction some schools were taking and I was anxious to probe this.[[10]](#endnote-10)

Donoughue set his own perspective out in his political diaries and 2003 autobiography. Three things influenced him. The experience of his wife, then working at the headquarters of what he saw as the ‘appalling’ National Union of Teachers (NUT). The experience of his children in the state school system in Islington and Harold Wilson’s assessment of the Department of Education and Science (DES) as ‘little more than a post-box between the teachers’ unions and their local authority employers’.’[[11]](#endnote-11)

Between 1965 and 1976, the percentage of pupils in comprehensive secondary schools in England and Wales grew from 8.5 to 75.6.[[12]](#endnote-12) Critics saw non-selective education as a formula for decline. A series of ‘Black Papers’ published by right-wing academics and policy groups between 1969 and 1977, was an important focus in which arguments built, individuals and campaigns connected up and a political identity forged. The first targeted progressive methods in primary schools as the root of a period of liberal anarchism and levelling down. The second appeared just before the 1969 Conservative party conference and attacked comprehensive education as social engineering and as a destruction of high academic standards. In ‘The Rise of the Mediocracy’, for instance, Eysenck claimed people of ‘*mediocre* ability’ would submerge ‘people of *superior* ability’ (Eysenck’s emphasis). The fourth quoted the shadow education minister Norman St-John Stevas who claimed a quarter of a century’s left-wing possession of the educational initiative had caused ‘unprecedented worry and alarm among parents’ about quality within education.[[13]](#endnote-13)

In the midst of a Conservative offensive including a carefully orchestrated ‘parental’ campaign in the case of the rebellious Tameside local authority over the ‘threat’ to local grammar schools, Callaghan felt the time was ripe for a public debate on education. Briefed by Donoughue, when he met with Secretary of State Fred Mulley in May, he asked what he wanted to do and what stopped him. Mulley undertook to prepare a memorandum on basic standards and teaching methods at primary level, curriculum choice, examinations and provision for 16 to 19-year-olds. Concurrently, Callaghan approved the appointment of a new permanent secretary at the DES to strengthen central authority. James Hamilton, transferred from Trade and Industry, brought with him an awareness of industrialists’ criticisms that schools were not adequately preparing children for work. Meanwhile, officials produced a ‘Yellow Book’ or briefing paper that reached Callaghan in July. Recommendations included the identification and definition of minimum standards of attainment and a proposal to examine the workings of the ‘Schools Council for the Curriculum and Examinations’ which, with a majority of teachers’ representatives on its governing council, had greater importance as a symbol of the ideology of ‘teacher control’ than in anything it actually did.[[14]](#endnote-14)

Callaghan illustrated his general cast of thinking in his Leader’s speech at the Party conference that autumn. Drawing on Labour’s legacy as a Party of social reform, he suggested a need to gear education more efficiently to the ‘needs of industry’, referenced ‘the anxiety amongst parents at some aspects of the education of their children’ but described positive visits to schools that had impressed him ‘by their innovation and their experiment. He appeared ambivalent towards ‘new ways of learning that were unknown to us, vouched for by the teachers’ and re-emphasised ‘that the greatest gifts a teacher can give to a child are the basic tools of learning and a desire for knowledge. A literate and a numerate child has the key to open the door of learning and the key to the freedom of the mind.’[[15]](#endnote-15)

A series of leaks to the press marked the lead-up to the formal announcement of a public debate on priorities but Donoughue welcomed the chance this afforded ‘to feed in some of my personal prejudices’.[[16]](#endnote-16) Tony Benn’s diary entry for 14 October 1976 is revealing. In Cabinet, Benn had asked the new Education Secretary Shirley Williams, what she knew. Her note read ‘Tony, no question of any change of emphasis on comprehensives. It’s mainly on maths, why not enough kids are doing engineering, etc. A bit about standards. Curriculum will be the main row.’ Back at home, Caroline Benn suggested the aim was ‘to root out the “lefties” who are teaching the social sciences.’[[17]](#endnote-17) Then, on 18 October at Ruskin, Callaghan attacked what he called the ‘educational establishment’. In so doing, he reiterated points about parental unease over new informal methods of teaching, low standards of numeracy for school leavers, the many girls abandoning science at an early age, vacancies in science and technology courses and the unwillingness of graduates to join industry.[[18]](#endnote-18)

**Callaghan’s policy agenda**

A week later, Tony Benn heard reactions during the TUC-Labour Party Liaison Committee. Callaghan said, ‘We may need a core curriculum; to talk about the three Rs can’t be reactionary. We should be thinking about education and employment in engineering, about exams.’ Len Murray, TUC general secretary, put it that education was not training. Benn welcomed the fact that Callaghan had opened the debate ‘because there was a massive attack on comprehensive schools and we had to reject it.’ In a speech Caroline helped prepare, he stressed the divisiveness the 1944 Act engendered, as did the binary system in higher education and exams ‘whereby working-class kids get CSEs and the others get GCEs. We must turn away from the idea that working-class kids should be given technical training and shunted into industry. We have to deal with the massive subsidies to private education, and we must end the strangle hold of the universities over the school exam.’ Shirley Williams warned of a backlash repeating concerns about teaching methods and unaffordable duplication of provision in the 16 to 19 age group. ‘We must look at the basics again and at the big comprehensives and avoid the mistakes of the past.’[[19]](#endnote-19)

Simultaneously, negotiations about the extent and nature of the IMF loan to support the British economy and the size of the public expenditure cuts demanded as one condition of the lending dominated the news. As a discourse of education as training garnered publicity Britain’s premier post-war industrialist, Arnold Weinstock, suggested teachers were featherbedded, inefficient, and putting young people off industry. The director general of the Confederation of British Industry wanted a shift in balance from the arts to the sciences, greater weight to applied studies, more encouragement and opportunities for girls in science and engineering, better, more relevant maths and science teaching, and a stronger commitment to careers education and guidance for every pupil.[[20]](#endnote-20)

A month after Ruskin, the media unleashed a ferocious attack on performance at Holland Park comprehensive school in West London. ‘Showpiece school in exam flop’ captures the tone of the reporting, which called into question school policy to give all pupils the chance to sit external examinations and operate a non-selective sixth form. Critically, this was the school the Benns’ chose and withdrew their children from the private sector in order to ‘go comprehensive’ in 1964. Caroline Benn had been Holland Park’s chair of governors since 1970, when school governance was less open to women and Inner London one of a minority of authorities with school governing bodies. Tony Benn recalls several mentions of her name at the 1976 Labour party conference and sources in her archive show the fallout from events at William Tyndale primary school in Islington, which hit the headlines in 1975, with almost daily national coverage between October 1975 and February 1976.[[21]](#endnote-21)

Teachers at Tyndale operated a progressive curriculum and a subsequent inquiry called into question their behaviour and methods and encouraged calls for greater teacher accountability.

One of the Tyndale staff had connections with Rhodes Boyson, now a newly appointed MP and a leading voice in the Conservative critique of state education. Boyson presented the affair as an educational disaster in which left-wing ideology had taken over from good teaching and blighted the opportunities of working-class children. In his 1975 publication *The Crisis in Education*, he declared ‘the intellectual deprivation of children occurs at the moment of conception in the dance of the chromosomes’ and urged the ‘malaise’ in British schools had followed from a breakdown in the organisation, curriculum and values of British traditional education.[[22]](#endnote-22)

During the period of her governorship, Caroline Benn dedicated her life to building effective comprehensive education at Holland Park. The school implemented unstreaming and a common core curriculum and gave all pupils previously written off academically the chance to sit an exam at 16 and stay on beyond the years of compulsory schooling. Holland Park pass rates reflected this policy and the problem of unemployment meant fewer left school as soon as they could (at the end of the term in which they became 16) and more took GCE O levels in the summer of 1976 (75 per cent compared with 44 per cent from comprehensives nationally). Staff and students defended the school’s reputation for attainment, participation and retention. ‘My old school just dismissed me as dumb’ one student said. ‘They wouldn’t let me try for any exams there.’ Another feared labelling them as ‘tearaways’ meant local employers would not welcome applications from the school’s alumni.[[23]](#endnote-23)

Two Conservatives helped stir the controversy over Holland Park’s results in 1976/7. Robert Vigars, leader of the opposition on the Labour-controlled Inner London Education Authority (ILEA) and Holland Park governor and borough councillor Muriel Gumbel, a former mayor of Kensington and Chelsea who sent her son to Eton. In 1975, Vigars organised a school visit by St-John Stevas. Now he made direct comparisons between events at Holland Park and the Tyndale school. Angry parents called for his dismissal but the Authority proved reluctant to remove him from the governing body of a school in his ward. Holland Park’s head teacher asked Gumbel to explain the link between Holland Park’s exam results and the husband of the chair of governors. She ‘exposes by her innuendo the political background to the whole smear campaign against the school’ he wrote in a letter to the press. ‘Its “unique catchment area” includes the worst slums in London, which are, need I say it, the responsibility of the borough council on which Mrs Gumbel has the honour to sit’.[[24]](#endnote-24)

Inside Parliament, a new Education Act received royal assent on 22 November. It defined comprehensives as schools not entered as the result of selection tests (which was also true of secondary moderns) and unlike legislation in other countries, it did notinsist that all authorities had the duty to provide comprehensive education by a set date. Nor did it bring the private sector into reorganisation. Pro-comprehensive campaigners urged the Secretary of State to make local authorities observe the law, end selection and refuse permission for place buying in private schools. Certainly, the retention of grammar schools (with their power to reject and select on social as well as on academic grounds) in some areas meant the debate on attainment took place on a systematically sloping playing field. Yet measures of performance at 16, university entrance, and percentages in full time education at 17 or 18 did not show a system ‘in crisis’.[[25]](#endnote-25)

Next spring, energies funnelled into Callaghan’s Great Debate because of his insistence that the government needed to take the public and the teaching profession with them. In an early example of something Williams noted became fashionable later on – consultation with the users of public services,[[26]](#endnote-26) there were eight regional conferences (invitees only accepted), each attended by a minister and about 250 people from within education and without. The issues for discussion were: (1) the curriculum for 5-16 year olds. (2) The assessment of standards. (3) The education and training of teachers (Boyson suggested the calibre had fallen). (4) School and working life.

The comprehensive education campaign group put the case that a common core curriculum without the immediate introduction of a single examination at 16 and without support on unstreaming would be less effective than it could be in overcoming disadvantage and raising standards. In their view, all young people were capable of acquiring the knowledge and skills, albeit in different ways and to degrees, from the major activities or disciplines of secondary education (humanities, sciences, languages, arts, crafts and physical education) up to the age of 16 plus. Thus, they fought for a system of education that did not make distinctions in terms of provision, resources, and opportunities for reasons that could not be justified except in terms of relevant differences. Theirs was an argument against the orthodoxy that ‘certain types’ start work at 16 and have no further education, while others ‘naturally’ stay on for higher education. Indeed, *Labour’s Programme ‘76* argued university entrance requirements had too great an influence upon secondary school curricula, which should reflect the educational needs of the community as a whole. Instead of cuts, it proposed using the opportunities afforded by the fall in the birth rate to improve the quality of schools, and teacher-pupil ratios, particularly in areas of greatest need and urged a halt to proposed cuts in teacher supply.[[27]](#endnote-27)

Teacher demoralization was one result of Callaghan’s intervention. NUT President Max Morris thought Callaghan ‘focussed attention on the alleged shortcomings of everyone in the service except those responsible for organizing, administering, paying for it, and for deciding policy at top level.’ All ‘skilfully designed to divert attention from the massive cuts imposed on the schools and further and higher education by all governments from December 1973 on.’[[28]](#endnote-28) Shirley Williams said later that her intention was to secure consent through public participation, which was why she supported legislation to give parents a legitimate say in the management of schools through representation on governing bodies. However, the abortive Education Bill she brought before Parliament was contentious.

In her 2010 autobiography, Williams said she ‘wanted to see diversity among schools, as distinct from a selection-based pecking order’. In her view, parental choice on grounds of faith or internal organisation (progressive/ traditional, mixed/ single-sex) ‘would strengthen support for comprehensive schools’ but the Labour left and the NUT disagreed. ‘Led by Tony and Caroline Benn and quietly supported by one of my junior ministers, Margaret Jackson, they opposed my proposals in the Party and in the Parliamentary Party.’[[29]](#endnote-29) Sources show Caroline Benn was then a co-opted expert on the education and science subcommittee of Labour’s national executive. In the winter of 1977/78, she met with the Parliamentary Party’s Education and Science Group to discuss parental choice, which she thought would exaggerate, rather than reduce inequalities between schools, as well as between children of parents who are knowledgeable and those who are not. Those who had fundamental issues with the way fixed ‘ability’ thinking and discourse regards children were alarmed to find protection of admission ‘based wholly or partly on selection by reference to ability or aptitude’ enshrined in the proposed legislation. Caroline Benn spotted the proposals, by chance chairing Labour’s subcommittee in the absence of Joan Lestor (who was ill). As another co-opted education expert, Tyrell Burgess put it, ‘The Labour Government could not find a way to legislate to end selection in 12 years, but in 12 days it has found a way to bring it back’.[[30]](#endnote-30)

At this point, press leaks from the DES suggested a desire to include an Education Bill in the next session of Parliament. Shirley Williams raised it at Cabinet. ‘She said that every other bill that people wanted was included in the Queen’s Speech except hers, which would be popular.’ Told by Caroline that ‘it was contrary to the whole tradition of allocation and would create chaos in the local authorities,’ Tony Benn intervened. His warning of electoral damage was not popular with Williams but Callaghan said Benn was entitled to raise it in Cabinet. ‘I stopped the bill from going into the Queen’s Speech’, Benn noted, ‘not that I think it would have gone in anyway, but I may have helped to kill it.[[31]](#endnote-31) The Bill’s absence seemed to beg the question who exactly is Education Secretary as *The Guardian* reported on 5 November 1977.

Obviously, late developer Callaghan feels some paternal responsibility for his great debate on standards and rumour has long detected a difference between Portsmouth Northern Secondary’s Jim and Somerville College’s Shirley. There is also the question of winning votes on education, to which Mr Callaghan has no great objection in principle. Yesterday we listened to Mrs Williams rattle rapidly through the Government’s achievements; defend herself against Mr St John-Stevas’s charge of bullying over comprehensives (very stern about her duty at this point) and insisting that standards have not fallen.[[32]](#endnote-32)

What has happened to the missing education Bill asked the opposition? Armed with a cutting from *The Times Educational Supplement* headed ‘Choice Row Splits Labour’, St John-Stevas moved to a picture ‘it does not do her justice, but it is not bad - underneath which there appears “*Shirley Williams: 'I will*”. On the other side, there is another picture, rather more unflattering, underneath which there appears “*Caroline Benn: You won't*.'" He called it ‘bad enough’ having ‘Macbeth in the Cabinet, we do not want Lady Macbeth around as well’. The nub of the matter was to present Williams as a weak Minister ‘unable or unwilling to take the decisive action needed in education’ but he rather undermined his appeal with a smug peroration in Latin, which he declined to translate ‘since standards have not fallen’. As Callaghan stoutly declared ‘I don’t know what it means’, it fell to Labour’s Bryan Davies to ask whether achievements in Latin were the new measuring rod?’[[33]](#endnote-33)

**Conclusion**

We remember Callaghan today for the contribution he made to a policy area for which he never held direct ministerial responsibility. Looking back on the Ruskin legacy for the Open University’s Education Bulletin radio series in 1993, Callaghan explained his speech made waves. ‘Oh the PM he was clearly too political to talk about education what on earth does he know about it anyway which might have been true but at least I’d got the interest of lots of parents and children at heart and they could correct me if I was wrong.’ Some thought he did change the agenda. ‘That now the focus was on a particular section of the school population, which in terms that he might have used, were the “non-academic” pupils,’ as Caroline Benn put it. Stuart Maclure, who had become editor of the *Times Educational Supplement* in 1969, called it a ‘watershed’ when a ‘proactive’ Ministry of Education was going to go out and start making some change.’[[34]](#endnote-34)

From the perspective of 2020, Callaghan’s distrust of what he called ‘progressive education’, support for meritocratic selection and emphasis on accountability measures, helped prepare the ground for an active restructuring of the educational system that reinforced a hierarchy of schools just as Caroline Benn predicted. Unlike the double standards embedded in much of the media reporting of allegations about educational decline, she and Brian Simon did present detailed evidence from both sides about comprehensive education. The 1977 Green Paper made it clear that there was no evidence that standards in schools had fallen. The pity is that the psychosocial costs of Callaghan’s personal self-identification as ‘uneducated’ due to lack of a degree may have manifested itself in an unreflective conservatism that never understood the arguments and values of Labour intellectuals who made the educational case against segregation based on so-called ‘ability’.

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2. Caroline Benn papers, UCL Institute of Education. ‘Caroline DeCamp Benn: a comprehensive life, 1926-2000’, British Academy/ Leverhulme: SG131085. [↑](#endnote-ref-2)
3. J. Callaghan, *Time and Chance* (London: William Collins, 1987), p. 35. [↑](#endnote-ref-3)
4. S. Williams, *Climbing the Bookshelves* (London: Virago, 2010), p. 176. [↑](#endnote-ref-4)
5. B. Donoughue, *Downing Street Diary Volume Two: with James Callaghan in No. 10* London: Pimlico, 2009), p.15. [↑](#endnote-ref-5)
6. O. Banks, *Parity and Prestige in English Secondary Education: A Study in Educational Sociology* (London, Routledge and Kegan Paul, 1955); D. Reay *Miseducation. Inequality, education and the working classes* (Bristol: Polity, 2017); B. Simon, *Intelligence Testing and the Comprehensive School* (London: Lawrence and Wishart, 1953). [↑](#endnote-ref-6)
7. Young, M. *The Rise of the Meritocracy* (London, Thames and Hudson, 1958); Sampson, A. *Anatomy of Britain* (London: Hodder and Stoughton, 1962), p.190. [↑](#endnote-ref-7)
8. S.J. Ball and S. Exley, ‘Making policy with ‘good ideas’: policy networks and the ‘intellectuals’ of New Labour’, *Journal of Education Policy*, 25: 2, p. 152. [↑](#endnote-ref-8)
9. D. Marsden *Politicians, Equality and Comprehensives* (London: Fabian Tract 411, 1971); B. Simon ‘What is a Comprehensive School? Replies to Dennis Marsden’, *Comprehensive Education*, 1970), 14 (1), pp. 6-8. [↑](#endnote-ref-9)
10. J. Callaghan, *Time and Chance*,p. 409. [↑](#endnote-ref-10)
11. B. Donoughue, *In the Heat of the Kitchen* (London: Politico’s, 2003), p. 240. [↑](#endnote-ref-11)
12. B. Simon, *Education and the Social Order 1940-1990* (London: Lawrence and Wishart, 2010), pp. 443, 586. [↑](#endnote-ref-12)
13. Op cit, pp. 396-9, 443. [↑](#endnote-ref-13)
14. CCCS *Unpopular Education: Schooling and social democracy in England since 1944* (London: Hutchinson, 1981), p. 217; J. Callaghan, *Time and Chance*, p. 409; C. Chitty *Towards a New Education System: The Victory of the New Right?* (Lewes: Falmer, 1989). [↑](#endnote-ref-14)
15. Leader’s speech, Blackpool 1976: James Callaghan (Labour)http://www.britishpoliticalspeech.org/speech-archive.htm?speech=174. [↑](#endnote-ref-15)
16. B. Donoughue, *Downing Street Diary Volume Two*, p. 82. [↑](#endnote-ref-16)
17. T. Benn *Against the Tide: Diaries 1973-76* (London: Arrow Books, 1990), p. 626. [↑](#endnote-ref-17)
18. Blackpool 1976; ‘The Prime Minister’s Ruskin speech, *Education*, 22 October 1976, pp. 332-3. [↑](#endnote-ref-18)
19. T. Benn, *Against the Tide*, p. 631. [↑](#endnote-ref-19)
20. A. Weinstock, ‘I blame the teachers’, *Times Educational Supplement*, 23 January 1976; J. Methven, ‘What Industry Wants’, *Times Educational Supplement*, 29 October 1976. [↑](#endnote-ref-20)
21. T. Benn, *Against the Tide*, p. 616. [↑](#endnote-ref-21)
22. R Boyson, *The Crisis in Education* (London: Woburn Press, 1975), p. 98. [↑](#endnote-ref-22)
23. *The Sun*, 11 November 1976; *Evening Standard*, 12 November 1976, Caroline Benn (CB) papers, UCL Institute of Education, Box 41/1, Holland Park School 1970-78. [↑](#endnote-ref-23)
24. *Kensington News and Post*, 19 November 1976; 25 March 1977; CB Box 41/1. [↑](#endnote-ref-24)
25. C. Benn (1976) ‘The Comprehensive Reform: All over but the Reorganizing’, *FORUM*, 19 (1), pp. 2-7. [↑](#endnote-ref-25)
26. S. Williams, *Climbing the Bookshelves*, p. 234. [↑](#endnote-ref-26)
27. Campaign for Comprehensive Education, 1977, p. 5. CB Box 1/5 Labour Party (LP) Science and Education Subcommittee. [↑](#endnote-ref-27)
28. Morris, M. quoted in R.V. Seifert *Teaching Militancy: a history of teacher strikes 1896-1987* (London: Falmer, 1987, p. 136). [↑](#endnote-ref-28)
29. S. Williams, *Climbing the Bookshelves*, p. 237. [↑](#endnote-ref-29)
30. C. Benn to B. Simon, n.d., CB Box 1/5 Labour Party Science and Education Subcommittee. [↑](#endnote-ref-30)
31. T. Benn *Conflicts of Interest Diaries 1977-80* (London: Arrow Books, 1991), p. 232. [↑](#endnote-ref-31)
32. M. White ‘In the Gallery: opposing schools of thought’, *The Guardian*, 5 November 1977, CB Box 3/5 LP Science and Education Subcommitte. [↑](#endnote-ref-32)
33. ‘Education and Social Services’, 4 November 1977, https: hansard/parliament,uk/ [↑](#endnote-ref-33)
34. BBC/ Open University, *Witness to Change*, 20 June 1993. [↑](#endnote-ref-34)