

ONE YEAR LATER

The first NYS village at Port Launay was officially opened by President René on 1 March 1981. The previous August there had been three one week camps at Port Launay to give students and staff a chance to see what life at the NYS would be like. Nearly 500 children attended these "vacancies experimentales", and their success led to more than 800 students volunteering for the NYS itself. In spite of the pressures this created (for staff, building, organisation, resources) the President has always insisted that all who wish to come would be welcome. He is deeply against selection. For the second 1982 NYS intake at the new village in the neighbouring peninsula of Baie Ternay, more than 1200 students have volunteered. For 1983, to accommodate the expected increase in numbers, a third village is already being planned to be designed and built by the current NYS students themselves. When this is operating, 10% of all Seychellois of working age between 15 and 64 will be involved in the NYS. With 4-500 staff it will be by far the largest establishment in the country, and it will have grown to this size in less than three years.

This is a formidable pace, and it has had its costs. Both teachers and animateurs suddenly found themselves in a quite new educational system, which demanded new materials, new ways of linking education and production, and new ways of living. One thing which is clear from educational experience abroad is that teaching which starts from practical rather than theoretical problems needs far more preparation and creativity. This has had to be developed during the year since there was little time before the village started. Similarly with the animateurs: some were former manual workers, others were teachers, but save for a two months induction course they found themselves suddenly responsible for groups of 48 children, away from home for the first time, having to look after themselves, and solve material and personal problems. More time and fewer numbers would have helped some of these problems, as they would other aspects of the village life: the layout and design of the first two villages for example, or the setting up of the political organisation in the village.

On the other hand, we can now see that the speed of the project has been essential. While the two opposed systems of secondary education existed side by side - the NYS on the one hand, Seychelles College and Regina Mundi on the other - there was always the danger that the old system would remain dominant, and that the division of mental and manual labour would be mirrored in the division between the two systems. The NYS had to grow fast enough to prevent a consolidation and counter-attack by those forces in the country who wished to preserve the old 'relations of knowledge'. Thus it was that in the President's speech inaugurating the NYS he announced that the old system was to be phased out, and both schools closed. This time there were no demonstrations. Students from the two schools had already participated in the August camp, and now were strongly represented among the first intake. Already the girls had been moved from Regina Mundi to Seychelles College. By 1983 Seychelles College itself will be closed.

Domestic Life

The first success of the NYS has been the clusters. Students live in units of 16, and each unit shares a common area with two other units, which together make up a cluster. Each cluster has an animateur with his or her own living quarters attached, whose task in the words of one of the animateurs is to 'encourage comradeship', and serve as a quasi-parent. Originally the units

were seen as the primary social group, with their own cooking area, planning sessions and meeting spaces. But in practise the cluster is the focus. Cooking is done at the cluster level, and most clusters plan their rotas for all three units together. The space between the units is the meeting place for all, the area where some of the core teaching takes place, and where everyone eats. If a library is put up in one of the units it will be for the whole cluster to use. There is a strong cluster consciousness and identity.

The day starts at 5.45 with exercises or a run, followed by cleaning the cluster (called collective hygiene), the preparation of breakfast by the cooking team, showers, and then, at around 7.00, breakfast for all. Between 8.00 and 4.00 the students are involved in education/production, but after 4.00 they will usually return to their clusters for tea and games (many clusters have made their own sports pitches), the preparation and later eating of the cluster supper, reading, discussion, making music and so on. Lights go off at around 9.30.

One thriving side of cluster life is agriculture. Many clusters have developed their own vegetable plots and beautifully constructed flower gardens. The animateur of cluster B9 was formerly a young peasant farmer, and he has worked with his cluster, teaching them the skills of the field. This cluster now produces more than they need for themselves so that they give the surplus to the central store in exchange for fertiliser. The plans about what to grow, and how to grow it are made and discussed in the cluster.

By contrast, the village plots have proved more difficult. In a sense they have become the 'state farms'. Production and work rotas are organised centrally. The students have less identification with the work and absenteeism is high. The problems of socialist agriculture with the tensions between private plots and collective farms have thus been quick to emerge in the NYS.

Similarly with eating. Lunch is prepared by paid workers and served in a central hall, which was once an old stable. Students eat their food often in silence, with little sense of occasion and with high wastage. Some avoid the lunch altogether and return to their clusters to make it themselves. They feel easier there. Certainly cluster meal times are quite different: full of life, comments on the cooks-and less wasted food.

The key is to be found in the question of planning and control. In the cluster no-one can act alone. They are living with others, and have to think of them. But they are organising their own lives in the cluster. All have weekly meetings and some more often. They rotate responsibilities: the co-ordination of cluster life, representation on the village committee, membership of specialised teams concerned with cluster production, with information, finance, culture, sport, and links with the central stores. Similarly they rotate jobs, particularly the chores like cooking and cleaning. There are some animateurs who organise cluster life themselves, but in most cases the planning (and consequences of planning) are the responsibilities of the students.

This has been the root of many initiatives taken by clusters, and has given each cluster its particular character. B5 for example having seen a film about South Africa one evening, were so shocked that they decided to boycott South African goods. They refused to drink orange squash or eat the

cornflakes provided by the central store, and they began making their own jam. B2 took the initiative to set up a cluster library, after which other clusters followed suite. G3 is known for its cooking and its attempt to substitute imports with Seychellois food. G5 has developed a remarkable dance group that performs on cultural evenings. Some run their own fishing expeditions or their own wall newspapers. Many have their own football or netball teams. Virtually all have fashioned their surroundings to reflect their character - with benches, and decorations, smart areas, and in one case a hanging garden from the roof.

What is remarkable is that this sense of identity and initiative has been possible in groups of 48. At the level of the village as a whole, structures have not yet been developed which allow the same sense of identity. In the abstract the students can see that some things need to be done at the level of the village. Not all production can take place within the cluster. The pigs for example are kept centrally for reasons of hygiene. Many parts of the education, production and recreation spheres are organised more centrally. But what has not yet grown are the democratic forms which characterise cluster life. A village committee was started, composed of representatives of the clusters, and of the various groups of adults. But it has had little real power. Given the pressures of a village of 800, and the formidable problems of organisation and administration, many of the decisions about the general life of the village have been made by the co-ordinators, the teachers and even the Board. The observe side of this is the lower identification of the students.

The cell of Seychellois society is the matrifocal family. The aim of the cluster is partly to democratise this cell and break down its division of labour and authority based on age and gender. Within the NYS the cluster plays the part of the family. If you walked among the clusters in the late afternoon you would hear the same sounds and smell the curry coco and the scent of cinnamon leaves just as in any family house in the Seychelles. But the cluster aims to go beyond the traditional family, and to break down its divisions of labour. Thus the boys have learnt to cook and to sew. They do their own cleaning and laundry, in spite of pockets of initial reluctance. Similarly the girls now do typically male jobs - such as building, and fishing, and mucking out the pigs.

Partly, too, the cluster extends the range of this basic cell within which such close personal ties (and hostilities) build up. Clusters of 48 are larger than any nuclear family; but they have developed many of the same emotional features. One reflection of this is the solution of discord. In modern capitalist societies, discord between individuals is often solved by mutual avoidance. Within a family this is not so easy. Longer emotional attachments, and greater economic ties make a pressure to work through and solve difficulties in order to preserve the family relation.

Shortly after the village started, such a difficulty came up in B3. One boy refused to mix. He did not fulfill his rota duties, and some complained that he was dirty. The members of B3 told the co-ordinators that they wanted him expelled from the cluster. So there was a meeting, and after the students had put their case the co-ordinators asked where B3 expected the outcast to go. No other cluster would want him. Should he be expelled from the NYS altogether? After some time the cluster voted for him to stay, and decided they would try and help him. Within a month he was transformed.

A similar initiative took place in July. Various 'misdemeanours' of a kind common among adolescents had come to light. Some students had been smoking and drinking (and even producing drink). There were cases of stealing and some students persistently refused to do their rota tasks. The co-ordinator responsible for this aspect of village life (her official title was co-ordinator of internal and external relations), organised a 'seminar on life' for these students. 30 of them set up tents in the mountain beside the village, and after a normal day of education/production in the village would return to discuss. Some of the adults in the village feared that this would become a 're-education camp'. But in practice the students enjoyed their three weeks there. The group was small and the adults were sympathetic enough for everyone to be able to talk openly about the problems of living in the village: that they enjoyed drinking and smoking and resented control; that they were not treated as adults, and couldn't express their opinions fully. They went on a trail together, as well as organising the tent equivalents of cluster life. The atmosphere was one of living with Frelimo rather than with boy scouts: and as with the boy from B3 it had its effects.

It was evident from the 'seminar on life' as indeed from the experience of daily life in the cluster that one of the most difficult and contradictory issues in the village is sexuality. On the one hand there is a vision within the NYS of breaking down sexism, and the inequalities of gender. "To learn to work with and respect members of the opposite sex should be one of the goals of the NYS" as the brochure put it. Education and production are co-educational, and while clusters are segregated, they are paired into 'brother-sister' clusters. They will organise an evening together, for a film, or discussion. There are dances, and brother-sister hikes, and meals. When one girls cluster was laying concrete round its quarters, boys from the brother cluster came over to help. Between some of the cluster pairs there is great loyalty and partisanship (witnessed in mutual support in volleyball matches). Others complain that the boys look down on them, or have invited another girls cluster for a dance, or won't relate as friends. But in spite of the difficulties these links have been important, and have formed the base for some production, for the training system, and for the village political structure.

On the other hand there is a very strict control of sexuality itself. Parents inside and outside the NYS have insisted on celibacy, particularly for the girls in the village.

The architecture and rules reflect this position. Boys and girls clusters are strictly separated. There are rules about "rights of passage". "Boy students should use the outside road leading to the clusters. They should not use the road in the middle of the girls cluster area. Girl students are

not allowed to use the outside road." "No boy student can go to the girls cluster except for organised activities approved by the village administration. The same rule applies to the girl students." There was a rule which was briefly enforced which segregated bathing on the village beach.

Movements outside the village are limited to the same end. Visits home which at one time took place every other weekend, were later cut to one day every fortnight for those living in Mahé. The primary concern in each case is pregnancy, and the demands of the parents.

There are many contradictions here. The sexual relations within adult Seychelles society have a relative liberalism and marked lack of hypocrisy. Yet a strict repression is enforced on both sexes in the village at the very moment of the growing sexual consciousness amongst the youth. Many of those in the NYS have had sexual experience while at secondary school, and there is an open youth culture on this. It is striking that 26% of all children born in the Seychelles have teenage mothers, almost all unmarried and living at home (a figure which is one of the highest in the world - compare Mauritius and India both with 9%, U.S. with 11%, Granada with 13% or the US with 16%). Only 13% of these young Seychellois mothers used contraceptives - a situation which has been countered by a national campaign of sex education. Contraceptives are freely available at all clinics of the island for children over 14. There are sex education classes held, and leaflets circulated.

Within the NYS there have been similar sex education classes held in brother-sister clusters, which have been remarkably successful. They discuss not just the anatomy of pregnancy, but its social consequences, and the implications of adult sexual relations. It was a burning topic of discussion as to what should happen if an NYS girl did become pregnant.

By the beginning of December six pregnancies had been recorded, four of them as the result of conception before the start of the NYS, and a fifth as the result of conception outside the NYS. Only one case of a fully NYS pregnancy had occurred, and the boy as well as the girl (like the other five mothers) were sent out of the village. Given that nearly 10% of all Seychellois teenage girls have babies annually, the NYS record of only 0.025% is remarkably low.

One reason for this is clearly the village restrictions. But there has also been a gradual change of attitude within the village. For example, during a discussion on pregnancy one boy remarked that it was wrong for a boy to make an NYS girl pregnant, but quite another matter if the girl was not in the NYS. The consequences for both boy and girl within the village are clearly different than they are in the wider society.

All this suggests that the degree of restriction may be unnecessarily severe. On the basis of experiences of such communities elsewhere, the repression of adolescent emotions is problematic to say the least. One common consequence is homosexuality. Another is covert sexual relations without contraception. The general control which is exercised over students - for example in their freedom to return home for whole weekends or feast days - is felt an oppression and threatens to introduce an alienation

among the youth in the project. The explosive consequences of sexual repression of the youth has been most fully analysed by the Austrian psychologist Wilhelm Reich, who discussed it in relation to the youth communes of post revolutionary Russia in the 1920's. He went so far as to suggest that such repression was the achilles heel of socialist youth projects of the kind exemplified in the NYS.

It is in sexual relations that the norms of the old class society - with its stress on virginity for class reproduction, inheritance and status - have reached most deeply and contradictorily into the heart of the NYS. The answer lies with the students themselves. Those parents arguing for strict sexual regulation suggest that the alternative is sexual anarchy. But in progressive co-educational boarding schools in Europe this is far from the case. When given the responsibility teenagers have developed codes of sexual practise which might be seen as capturing the essence of socialism: mutual responsibility, loyalty, sensitivity, care over conception, discretion, love. They enforce their own codes in an informal way. Some are puritan: others are more generous. Few reflect the double standards, assymetry, brevity and for many lack of fulfillment which are so grievously documented in the studies of sex and gender relations under capitalism.

The Production sphere

The visitor to the NYS will be immediately aware that s/he has come to a large farm. On the right of the entrance is a 1.7 acre plot with aubergines, cucumber, lettuce, chinese cabbage, tomatoes and carrots. On a normal day, a group of thirty students will be working there, both boys and girls, with two production workers (one a former farm worker in his mid forties, the other a woman, somewhat older, whose life has also been tied to the soil). Between February and May the 30 students would have represented 4 teams of 10 students each (let us assume that there were 10 absentees), under the guidance of an animateur. Between May and September, the students would have composed two teams of 15 each, working only with the labourers, and occasionally a science or social science teacher. At the end of the week two students from each team would have met in the Study Centre with the farm manager and the two plot production workers to assess their week's performance and to plan the work for the next week.

This was Plot no. 1. In other parts of the village there are 7 other plots: three were at first devoted largely to fruit (bananas, pineapples, melons, mangos, oranges, lemons and guavas); another specialised in cassava; and curving round the road towards the clusters the visitor would see a plot cut into the hillside, terraced like the Incas, with students carrying water up to it for irrigation. With the exceptions of plot no. 1 which was started for the experimental August camp in 1980, all the others have been 'pioneered' by the production workers and students together. New plots would suddenly be found replacing scrub. They would be fertilised, planted in rows, and watered with sprinklers.

On the other side of Plot no. 1 is the launching beach for the fishing boats - two of them - which set out early in the morning with students and each with a fisherman on board, returning in the afternoon with their catch and their nets. As yet the boats have been too small to give the students who work in the fishing teams more than one day's outing a month, but the catches have supplemented the meat, and are planned to expand.

In the early part of the year the distinctive smell of the piggeries would have been found in the middle of the village - but now a new pigsty has been put up by the construction workers and their student teams on the hill opposite the village entrance. The stock of 300 pigs is one of the largest in the Seychelles, and it has supplied regular pork to the clusters throughout the year. The students have learnt not only how to care for the pigs, but also how to butcher them. The carcass - now physically divided - is stored in the deep freezers which are attached to each cluster. Nearby are the chicken houses, with over 1,000 birds - some layers and breeders, others fattened for consumption.

These three sectors of production - agriculture, fishing and livestock - have expanded so rapidly during the year that the village is approaching self sufficiency in food. Bread and rice are still bought in - though a bread project is shortly to be started. Then there are the controversial South African products - cornflakes, jam, biscuits and squash. The herd of cows is also still little developed - there are only 30 in the village, but they are poor milkers, and the stock needs to be improved. The village relies on powdered milk - mainly provided by foreign charitable agencies.

What is remarkable is that within a year agriculture has developed so fast. By August the farm was showing regular monthly profits (when products for NYS consumption were valued at market prices), and there were even sales to the national market (not merely the traditional coconuts and cinnamon bark, but some of the vegetables - there was one notable crop of Chinese Cabbage which even the national distributors couldn't handle to the full.)

The labour for this production is of two kinds: that provided by the wage workers and that of the students. There have been between 9 and 10 wage workers for agriculture and livestock, a production manager, a marketing manager, and five fishermen. The normal working week is 35 hours, but the workers - liberated from the subordination of the plantation owners - often work more. On the farm they were contributing perhaps 400 hours a week. The nominal time contributed by the students varied from a weekly total of 1,600 hours to perhaps 12,000 hours. Actual production time was greatly less.

Four different methods of organising student labour have been tried during the year. At first production was highly centralised. Students were meant to do manual labour for 3 hours a day, largely land clearance, soil preparation, planting, stock care and firewood collection. They were organised in teams of 10, under an animateur who was responsible for four teams, and each team was assigned a task for the week. The mere task of organising work for a collective 12,000 hours was enormous and fell on two people, and in many ways it is striking how much was achieved. This was the period of the land clearances, the construction of the terraced unit 6 (under a particularly dynamic animateur), and the expansion of the piggery. But by May it was realised that the system couldn't go on in this way. There tended to be a lack of continuity in the work, there was no link with education and little participation by the students in the organisation of production. As a result absenteeism was high and growing, among both students and animateurs. The working time fell from 3 hours to 2 or even less as students said they had to have time for a shower and to change into their uniform for the Study Centre. Many would stand around watching others work, taking short shifts, or disappearing on errands. Actual working time was perhaps only one tenth of potential working time, certainly when compared to the effective work of the agricultural labourers.

In May a new system of Blocks was introduced, students would spend 30 hours a week for a month in each of seven blocks, three of which involved primary production: crops, animal husbandry and fishing. In the crops block half the time was to be spent on production and the other half on education related to the crops. With around 120 students in each block, potential student labour time was reduced to 1,800 hours a week, but the ratio of effective labour time increased dramatically. It was easier to organise work for 120 rather than 800 students, and there was continuity for a month, which allowed the students to get to know the workers. In the crops and the animal husbandry blocks the planning system mentioned above came into practice, with student representatives meeting with the farm manager, the teachers and farm workers in the Study Centre on Friday afternoon. For the farm workers in particular this was a great change from their previous life on capitalist plantations, taking part in the planning and assessment of their work, and it was significant that after this a number asked if they could attend classes at the Agricultural school.

In August there was a fortnight's holiday in the village; and a 'state of play' seminar for the teachers. The block system has still not solved the agricultural problem. The students in the crops block felt they were carrying the production load for the whole village, and did much more manual work than other blocks. The agricultural workers tended to work alongside the students rather than 'animating' them, and there were not enough teachers to give regular encouragement. Absenteeism was still a problem. A new system was needed which allowed the students to feel motivated themselves.

It was clear from the success of the clusters that the problem was not the students' attitude to work, but rather its social organisation. It was decided that a major 'land reform' was needed, in which responsibility for agricultural production was shifted to student co-operatives.

While the land reform was prepared, a makeshift system came into force at the end of September in which each brother-sister unit had to work for 2 hours a week on the village plots. Organisation was still centralised, and lack of motivation and absenteeism continued. The workload however was spread so that all 800 students contributed two hours a week, rather than 120 having to work 15 hours.

The co-operative system is being introduced at the time of writing. During the autumn it was widely discussed in the clusters and the village organisations.

Two main options emerged:

- (a) the co-ops would be based on the blocks: the crops block would keep responsibility for two plots, and the seven student groups who go from block to block would each form themselves into a co-op, and be permanently responsible for one plot.
- (b) the co-ops would be based on brother-sister clusters: each cluster/pair would be responsible for one of the nine plots.

The first option had the advantage of organising production in study centre time, the second the benefit of building on the successful clusters. By a majority of 14 clusters to 4, the students opted for alternative (b).

3 hours a week in the study block time is to be set aside for work in the co-ops, plus another hour of soil science. This increases the nominal labour time to 2,400 hours a week, higher than in the Block or during the Makeshift period. But one of the aims of the new system is that the students should not rely so much on the production workers, and that the latter should become more like animateurs than farm labourers. As the President said, it is anomalous to have wage workers in the midst of a co-operative organisation. As a result it will be necessary for the co-ops to work in the late afternoons and at weekends if production is to be secured.

The crucial point about the co-ops is that control is to be given to the students. All the students in the brother-sister cluster are automatically members. Adults may also join - the President immediately volunteered to join and encouraged all members of the NYS Board to do likewise - but the Management Committee will be made up of 4 boys, 4 girls and only one adult, subject to the general meeting, so that power remains with the students.

Each such primary co-operative will be a member of the NYS Union of co-operatives, where again students have a majority. The primary co-op will delegate a girl, a boy and an adult to the main General Meeting of the Union, and there will also be two delegates from the Union General Office which is the executive arm of the Union (and includes a manager, a treasurer, a field assistant, a teacher, an animateur and a co-ordinator). So students have a formal majority of 18 to 11.

The cluster based co-ops are aimed to give power to the producers, and responsibility of conception to those who have to carry through the tasks. They will also allow a continuity which the block system could not: the clusters will harvest their own seeds. But there was another much debated issue about how close was to be the link between production and consumption. At first the students wanted to consume their own products, yet this conflicted with the aim of establishing some division of labour (for example between fruit and vegetables) and a wider consciousness. There was also a question of monitoring production, since the co-ops would not normally have cash revenue, but rather serve the cluster and the village. The result of the discussion has been a compromise: that the clusters will take their production to the central stores for weighing and recording, but will be given priority in its distribution.

If the new system is to work it will be important to maintain the link between production and consumption, and to make effective the new decentralised system of planning and control. Already the production experience of the village has been rich in lessons about the problem of socialist economics, particularly in agriculture. If the new system enables the potential student labour hours to be effectively used, production should increase dramatically - sufficient to serve the external market as well as the village itself.

We have concentrated on the production of the agricultural block since this has had the deepest implications for village organisation. Material production has also been a feature of the other blocks: animal husbandry (an average of 6 hours a week), fishing (one eight hour trip per month) and construction (an average of $7\frac{1}{4}$ hours a week). The construction block for example has helped in the building of the new chicken houses, and

transforming the old pigsties into an Arts Centre. The students involved in plumbing now maintain the toilets in the clusters, as do the electricity students the cluster lighting. Both comment on how being responsible for maintenance makes them more careful of the facilities in the first place: another instance of the significance of linking production and consumption.

Education and its link with production

The aim of education in the NYS in the words of the brochure is to "develop the all-round personality of the students and not just academic ability" and to "re-unite work, daily life and education". As we have seen, cluster life is itself seen as educational. This is mainly informally, but there is a formal element also: the animateur is there in part to encourage conscious reflection on political and social issues as they affect daily life in the cluster; all NYS teachers have a tutorial group of around 20 students, drawn from the same brother/sister cluster, which meets from time to time. Sex education takes place in the cluster, as does core teaching.

Most of the formal education, however, occurs between 8 and 4, and is based in the educational building. This is the starting point, for in spite of the aims of the NYS, the architecture of the village meant that the educational building was separated from production, from recreation and from domestic life, even though education was meant to be one of the currents running through them all. Indeed this building looked like a school, was used like a school, and at first was known as 'the school'.

In the month before the opening there had been a vigorous debate on how the education system should operate. There were two main positions:

- (i) that the new education as envisaged in the brochure linked in with production and daily life should be immediately installed;
- (ii) that a more traditional academic structure should be set up at first and modified progressively.

The second of these was adopted. As in Cuba, and as with Makarenko, production was kept quite separate from education. Half the day was spent in the fields, the other half in the classroom. It was a system which took account of the educational tradition of the teachers, their lack of time to discuss and prepare materials for an alternative system, and the sheer complexity of starting a village of nearly 1,000 people.

Within two months it had become effectively inoperable. Students who worked on the farm in the morning were not in the mood to concentrate in the humidity of the afternoon. They had expected a new type of education - particularly those who had been at the August camp - and found only half an old one. The classes were unstreamed, which meant that the lessons were often too advanced for some, and too preliminary for others (though there were six remedial classes which were given a greater ratio of teachers). Of the 800 students, 118 came from Seychelles College and 112 from Regina Mundi. Many of these complained that they were going over old ground. Students were disappointed that they were not learning practical skills, like mechanics, or typing, or building crafts. One girl fell into a deep depression because she couldn't learn typing, and the co-ordinator's newly trained secretary had finally to set up an impromptu and well attended course. We don't want to overpaint the picture. There was still a remarkable enthusiasm, and the half day set aside every week for projects was a success. But as with production, there was large scale absenteeism from the school, and it was this which forced a change.

We have already encountered the block system in relation to agriculture. There were in all seven blocks in each of which the students spent a full month, for an average of 15-20 hours per week. Each block had an education team made up of teachers, and production workers. They would be responsible for developing a curriculum which tried to blend in theory and practice. As a result there were different balances in each, as shown in the table below:

	Human & Natural Science		Production		Projects		Total
	hours	%	hours	%	hours	%	
1 Crops	8½	53	2½	16	5	31	16
2 Animal Husbandry	10	52	6	31	3	17	19
3 Fish	10½	54	2	10	7	36	19½
4 Construction & Technology	6	45	7¼	55	-	-	13¼
5 Health	6½	44	-	-	8½	56	15
6 Information	5	38	-	-	8	62	13
7 Culture	-	-	-	-	17½	100	17½

Notes:

- 1 Projects often include both science and production. For example in animal husbandry, the projects are roughly half and half theory and practice; in health the environmental health project involves spraying the village against mosquitoes and flies, one block produced 100 guillotines which they used to kill rats, and all were active in a poster campaign against pollution.

The new system allowed many advances to be made. In the animal husbandry block for example the students built an open air classroom next to the pigsty where they broke off to have a lesson on pig diseases or feeding. Plant biology was taught to the crops block. In the information block those engaged in running the Radio Station had Physics lectures on sound and magnetism. The photography group had lessons in optics, while a biology teacher gave lectures on the ear and the eye as part of these activities.

The projects, too, were very effective pedagogically. The Health block went and studied the local slaughterhouse. Another group in the same block did a survey of health and work in local factories, and then submitted a written report to the Seychelles Trade Unions on the dangers they found there. There were projects on local medicinal herbs, another on nutrition and menus using local produce like cassava, some studied the needs of the disabled and their practice of health care and first aid.

The information block produced wall newspapers for the village, and provided the training for a club of students to broadcast three hours every evening to the Port Launay and Port Glaud area (the village station is called "la Vei Port Launay"). Once a month they produce a 45 minute programme for Radio Seychelles on the NYS and its activities.

In the culture block they have made and learnt to play their own musical instruments. Some students designed and produced their own cards which were sold nationally, and one group carried out an excellent project on slavery. They spent time in the national archives in Victoria, conducted a census of the early slave ships, their owners, numbers of freed slaves, and point of disembarkation. Then they analysed these, and wrote a play which was performed to the village, with songs and dances, and costumes modelled on the originals.

There were projects too in the material production blocks - study visits to co-operatives, to a chicken farm, to study fodder crops in the Grande Anse experimental farm in order to develop them in the village. Others visited a slaughterhouse, and the veterinary division in Victoria. In the fishing block the students made 10 canoes of fibre glass, as well as casiere (fishing traps), all of which are in regular use.

These are some examples to give a flavour of the daily activity that could be observed in the village after the block system was begun in mid-May. It has been successful on many counts. Academic learning has become more meaningful when linked to the practical life of the village; a demand has been put on the academic subjects to emphasise those parts of them which are of practical use; the less academically advanced students can participate fully in the block system with the more intellectual, and are frequently helped by them academically, while contributing to the block work in other ways. It has helped to break down the divisions based on academic achievement which marked the school system up to P9.

On the other hand there are still important problems in the block system. For one thing it has been easier to link production and education in the three 'service' blocks where output appears less critical. In the four blocks concerned with material production there was always a pressure on the production workers to produce. For instance, the building workers at one time participated with the teachers and students in planning and assessing the work of the block but later they dropped out because of the practical demands on their time. The tyranny of time which characterises production is in contradiction to the primacy of understanding which marks education and demands more time.

For the teachers the block system has been exceptionally demanding. First, many of them have come from abroad and could not speak Creole. Language, colour, culture and even association with former colonial powers all made communication more difficult, both with students and the production workers and amateurs.

Secondly, most had been trained and worked in traditional academic education, and with a few exceptions, had no time before the village opened to prepare new materials and ideas to carry through the new education.

Thirdly, the overseas teachers often felt they had little power in the village, and that more attention was paid to the representation and life of the students rather than themselves.

Fourthly the teachers were attached to a bloc rather than a group of students. If students only stayed in an activity a week (which happened for example in the Crops bloc where they spent a week each on agricultural science, plant science, social science and the study of co-operatives) the teacher might have to teach the same thing 28 times running to different students week after week. It made it difficult to develop relations with students, and what we could call a loyalty to learning.

The problems of the teachers were often equally problems for the students: of continuity of purpose, understanding, and level. There were still complaints about the lack of time for academic studies, and vocational training. The blocs were experienced as too short or too long, and there was at times a sense of a fragmented curriculum, with different paths being followed by students, each in their own bloc, with their own stream, in different sequences one to another. Absenteeism decreased with the block system but it was not eliminated: it remained a partial barometer of the success of the new education.

Some of these difficulties are already being overcome. Teachers are now being attached to groups of students rather than the blocks. The blocks have been reduced to four of nine weeks each, allowing a greater continuity, and possibility for specialisation. Within each block a distinction has been drawn between minimum knowledge (like the minimum wage) - a knowledge that everyone will learn - and a supplementary knowledge allowing a certain specialisation. In animal husbandry for example some students meet the teacher for further work, because they have become committed to the subject and perhaps see it as a future career.

Experience is also being deepened by time. The project work has provided a store of material which can be used and added to for the second village. The second village can take off from the successes of the first and concentrate on remedying the weaknesses. The new teachers for Baie Ternay are still largely from abroad, but they have had more time to prepare and were recruited specifically for project based socialist educational work.

Problems apart, outsiders can only remark on the extraordinary daring and achievements of the first year of the NYS. In spite of the speed, the NYS has developed an education system which is already one of the most advanced in the world. Apart from the 6 hours a week core subjects (the three languages Maths, French and English) the schooling is unstreamed. It has made a direct attack on the division of education and production, not in the manner of the World Bank and the right in Europe who wish to make capitalist labour more effective, but in order to break down the division between mental and manual labour, and develop both together.

The formal curriculum has neither prioritised abstract thought nor material production, but has treated the production of health, of information and culture each as important a field of study as the primary spheres of production.

Finally it has refused conventional systems of assessment, in rejecting metropolitan examination systems, and for the time being allowing each block to experiment with their own kind of assessment. The Health block has

developed a game which serves as a test at the end of the month. In construction, the educational team assesses the students on the basis of knowledge, attendance, behaviour and production. In the radio station project four students were elected by the others to assess the work of all. Most projects have finished with a collective presentation - which has been an important education in itself and a way of assessing the work of the project group collectively. As yet no decision has been taken on an overall assessment at the end of the second year, but the methods developed so far provide a basis for resisting the pressure from some quarters to adopt an examination system of the conventional kind.

Re-creation

Just as the smells of the village suggest a farm and a family, so its sounds would - to a delicate ear - give some idea of its distinctive culture. The significance of these sounds would perhaps only be clear to a Seychellois. Take language for example: as the year progressed more and more of the lessons and the work of the blocks were conducted in Creole. When within recent memory children were punished for speaking their own language at school, the reclaiming of this language for education is part of a cultural liberation. Most of the students find it much easier to express themselves poetically, comically or dramatically in Creole, and all these forms have found some remarkable exponents among the students. Even among the teachers the language balance is changing: from July the weekly teachers meetings were conducted in Creole and immediately it was noticeable that the Seychellois teachers were able to talk more freely, chair the meetings and so on.

What Creole is to language, sega, moutia and kamtole are to music. In a country so quickly drenched by European tourist culture over the last decade - not just directly but through the coming of cheap radios - the significance of the re-vitalising of traditional Seychelles music should be clear. It is a spontaneous rather than militant movement: Abba songs are now as much a part of Seychellois culture as Paul Newman films or Liverpool football. Yet the vigorous music of the NYS which can be heard in many corners of the village, particularly in the evening, is almost entirely in Seychelles' own tradition. There are now within the village 9 bands. Of these three are girls' bands (including the celebrated 'Shady Ladies') - the first women's bands ever to play in the history of the country. As we have seen, many make their own instruments in the cultural block, as well as practice and discuss music and its historical development. For some ears, the resultant sounds are seen as anti-music, but this is not a general view, certainly among the students. We can speak of a clear village musical culture emerging, not just among the bands, but the singers too. One student, Emmanuel Marie, writes his own songs and his own music, and signs regularly on Radio Seychelles.

In the clusters during the evening there would be other sounds apart from one of the bands or the guitars: "La Voi de Port Launay" on the cluster radio; in one perhaps a film lent by the French or Algerian embassies, or a video, or a set of slides. Every month there is a cultural evening, where students perform to a high standard: not only music, but modern dancing, and poetry, and plays they have written ("Two parents meet the animateur to discuss their son", "The coming of the slave ships to Mahé").

Some of these could be heard in any school - and indeed in many homes. But there is a vitality and range within the village which reflects the emphasis put on the development of the 'skills of the senses' in the NYS. It shouldn't be idealised. It feels 'normal'. There are students who are bored, caught in the ennui of youth. But standing back for a moment the renaissance of Creole and the Seychelles music is an achievement, part of the active character of the village culture and its spontaneity.

It touches more than music. There are now separate cultural workshops: one for bodily expression; another area for sewing and embroidery; a dark room for photography; a music room; a studio; the radio station, and now a striking library. These are facilities which together with the time and encouragement given by the teachers in the cultural block, would be quite outside the reach of a majority of young people in a traditional educational system.

Moreover the fact that they exist within the NYS changes their content as well as their form. The beautiful posters designed and circulated by the Health block as part of their health education campaign would be one example; the contents of the plays and poems would be another. And few conventional schools would have their students making a critique of the design and architecture of their own village and contributing to the design and building of another.

These recreational activities have not been subject to the same degree of discussion and redirection as have the spheres of production, education and even some aspects of cluster life. Nor, we should add, have the sports activities, which have centred on the stadium and the beach. But there are two activities on the borders of re-creation which have been argued over. The first is the extent to which there should be military training, the second the kind of political education.

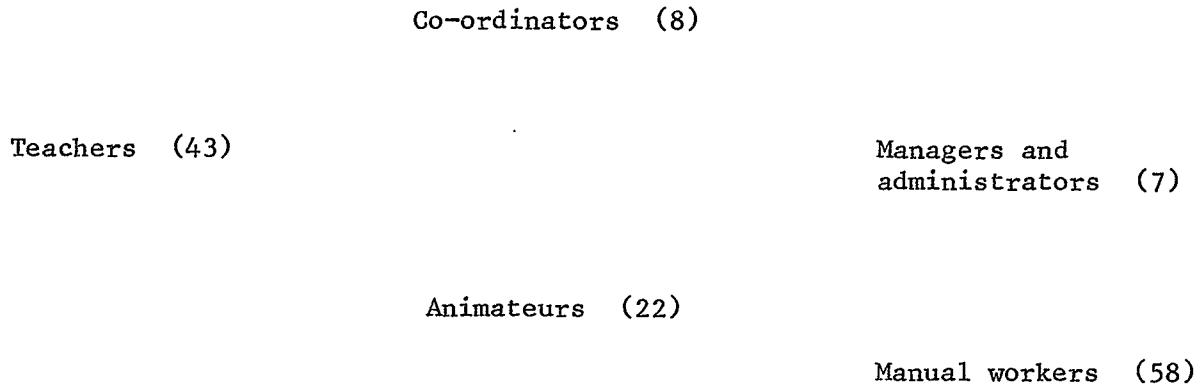
As far as military training is concerned, we have already seen how the NYS consciously avoided the military model of a National Youth Service. Yet for a country whose neighbour The Comores was taken over by a small boatfull of mercenaries the question of defence cannot be ignored. President René has built up the Seychelles army for this reason, and he and the government have been concerned that everyone including the youth should understand this danger. In the NYS one reflection of this was regular drill, one and a half hours a week for every student. Another was strict security on a 24 hour basis by the students on the entry points of the village. This has resulted in a broad consciousness among the students of the danger, but for most it remained somewhat abstract and routine.

As for political education there is a feeling that the most important form it can take is the practical one of building a new society and reflecting on the problems and issues as it progresses. There has been some "animation socio-culturelle" using films and slide shows to start discussions, one example was "The last grave of Dimbaza" - the film about South Africa which led to the B5 boycott of that country's goods. Another was Joris Evens "Story of a Ball" about self-criticism in a Chinese school during the Cultural Revolution." But of more formal political education on the broad issues of the theory of the party, imperialism, socialism and so on there has been relatively little - possibly too little - reflecting in this the intense practicality of René's strategy of socialism.

Relations between the adults

The social relations of a school are usually discussed in terms of the relations among the students, and those between the students and the teachers. But relations among the adults are also important. If divisions and antagonisms among the adults prevail, the NYS experience suggests that it will be that much harder to transform the relations between adults and the students. This whole aspect of village life was one whose importance we only gradually recognised as the year progressed. There had been little preparation for attacking the divisions between different groups of the adults, yet these divisions were now slow to emerge.

There were five main groups of workers, shown in the diagram below:



the figures in brackets represent the number in each group at the beginning of the year in March 1981.

The first major division was between the manual workers, particularly the skilled manual workers, and the teachers. The former felt, as one electrician put it, that they were looked down upon by the teachers. Although many of them were involved with teaching the students (the carpentry for example, or the plumbers, or the pig-keepers), they were paid much less than the teachers. The manual workers worked with their hands and taught the students, while the teachers only taught, and would tend to leave the village earlier than the manual workers. In some blocks the teachers were only marginally involved in production (this was true in agriculture): in others where the two groups worked together (in pig keeping for instance) there were elements of misunderstanding; the teachers might think the manual workers unscientific in their methods, while the manual workers with no formal training in teaching or indeed in the aims of the NYS, often concentrated on one or two keen students (as if they were apprentices) leaving the others neglected. Nor in general was there the time necessary for successful co-operation; when there was briefly - during the August recess - the plumbers took the lead in extending their workshop and installed toilets and showers on which the students could practise. They also began to take an interest in the curriculum.

In the Health block the nurses and the health inspector had experience in explaining the principles and practise of health care. Together with the Seychellois doctor, they took the lead in teaching, and the formal teachers

were secondary. The teachers themselves felt not enough biology was taught, whilst the health worker thought the teachers knew little about health, and wanted to take over the curriculum. Here was the conflict between concrete and abstract approaches to a subject. Both were important, but at least to begin with they could not be effectively blended.

In the cultural block on the other hand, two manual workers from outside the village were appointed as teachers - one to teach music (he had played in a band), the other to teach 'bodily expression' (he had been active in a theatre group and in the practice of yoga). These teachers (and a young animateur who also helped teach drama and bodily expression) had no degrees, nor indeed any 'O' levels. Yet they had skills which the block system allowed them to diffuse.

The element of tension to be found in a number of blocks is in one sense a positive sign. The block system was bringing together workers and teachers and asking them to work differently. The fact that both found this hard is not surprising. More time and discussion is needed. What is striking is that in some cases the link between the production workers and the teachers has become productive and close (in construction for instance), and that the block system allows (in the case of the cultural bloc) for manual workers to become teachers in spite of their having only primary level education.

With the start of the co-operatives it is hoped that the manual workers will increasingly act as teachers and guides, allowing the students to do the manual work under their guidance. But this too will take time - to train the manual workers in teaching techniques, and to encourage them not to do the work themselves (as the keepers of the pigs have tended to do).

One element of the problem that existed between manual workers and teachers was differences in nationality. Of the 39 full time teachers 31 were foreign. In all half the teachers were from the first world, 30% were from other third world countries, and only 20% came from the Seychelles. Those from English speaking countries (like the UK, and Sri Lanka) could not speak Creole and this immediately imposed a barrier - on top of the cultural and class differences which existed in any case.

Differences of nationality was the second major division among the adults of the village. We find it overlaying the tensions not just between the teachers and the manual workers, but between the teachers and the animateurs, the teachers and the co-ordinators and even within the teachers group itself. The issue arose most sharply over the elections to the village committee in April. Three teachers were elected, and all were from abroad (two Canadians and a Mauritian). The chief co-ordinator was in a dilemma. These teachers had not been recruited on political grounds, and therefore did not necessarily sympathise with the aims of the NYS. Since the teacher's meetings at the time were conducted in English, the Seychellois teachers tended to be at a disadvantage. She therefore over-ruled the election, and replaced one of the Canadians with a Seychellois.

The result was a crisis among the body of foreign teachers. They felt themselves deprived of democratic rights. They could not see the other side of the argument which (however the affair was handled) implied a non liberal version of democracy, a version which sought to give power and representation to the progressive forces in the Seychelles, and not to everyone irrespective

of class or political position. The teachers experienced a distinct national anti-foreigner feeling. Many reduced their commitment to the project: doing the turn for which they were paid, but little more.

The affair raised the issue both of democracy and of nationalism and internationalism. One of the broader strategies pursued in the Seychelles had been to use foreign skills to undercut the opposition of the privileged professional strata within the country. The government were only able to abolish private practice in medicine because they could hire doctors from abroad to replace those Seychellois who left. The same was true in the formation of the NYS. Some people in the Public Service were opposed to the NYS and the transformation of the education system. The President thus invited in 'progressive' help from, abroad, some paid for by their governments (Guinea), others coming to work for short periods free of charge, with their fares and subsistence paid for by the Seychelles. This use of 'red experts' from abroad had been adopted successfully in Mozambique to counter the flight of Portuguese technicians after independence in 1974. A similar 'internationalism' was now being adopted in the Seychelles.

There are, however material difficulties in this course. Language is one. The deep hostility to colonialism is another - for some of the new visitors came from the former colonial powers, Britain and France. However sympathetic, they could be easily seen as representing a new dependence. Even the most progressive of these foreigners came from very different political and cultural backgrounds to the newly independent and revolutionary Seychellois. Confined as they were by the pervasive social democratic state in the advanced capitalist countries, the visitors saw the Seychelles as a chance to contribute to a practical reconstruction that would be impossible in Europe. As one Seychellois teacher benignly said: the foreigners come to the Seychelles either for money and the sun, or to promote their own ideas.

Too often the difficulties which arose were collapsed into issues of nationalism. They were not helped by the fact that in the first year many of the recruits from abroad were chosen in a conventional way, and promised straight jobs and good conditions, when in fact they were going to be asked to be involved in a major experiment. Some of the teachers found it hard to adapt. But even those who did adapt, or who had come with a political commitment to the NYS, often had difficulty integrating themselves in a society which is struggling free from the ashes of colonialism.

Not all the tensions among the adults should be ascribed to the necessary reliance on foreign teachers. Seychellois teachers have largely been trained in traditional methods and were unused to co-operation with the workers in the production blocks. Teachers whatever their nationality were privileged as a group since the grading hierarchy and salary levels of the old society were preserved among the adults of the NYS. If we consider another division, that between the teachers and the animateurs, we find the animateurs with a feeling of inferiority, with a long working day (up at dawn and on duty until half past nine at night) and with only limited leave outside the village. In pay, conditions and status therefore, the animateurs felt secondary to the teachers: yet they were contributing as much to the NYS, and many had similar training to the teachers (some animateurs had been manual workers and peasants, but quite a number had been trained primary teachers before coming to the village).

What we can detect is that the new education was making demands that challenged the traditional categories of adult labour. Manual workers were being asked to become teachers. Teachers were encouraged to participate in production. The animateurs were to be the guides of collective personal life. Yet the adults were being hired and paid according to the grades of the old education system. There was accordingly a contradiction between the new work of the adults and the old system of grading and control. It is of great significance that the President has now asked for a review of these old structures, and that a new, more egalitarian system may itself become the seed for a different salary structure in state employment as a whole.

A final word should be said about the co-ordinators. Seven of the eight were Seychellois, four of them teachers, one a government inspector, one a youth worker, and one a nurse. What is remarkable about their composition, however, is that four of the seven are women, (including the principal co-ordinator) and all of them are black. In a society for so long dominated by whites, and by men, this is a profound transformation. They have carried much of the pressure that followed from the size and pace of growth of the village. All have suffered from the demands of the immediate. Decision has followed hard on decision, often with too little time to consult and involve, or to explain. We could view this in terms of political power, and certainly in one sense the co-ordinators are to the village what the politburo is to a socialist state. Their problem has been how to build the NYS in the face of many internal and external pressures from the old order, and at the same time to develop structures of democratic control. In part these structures are economic: the co-operatives for example represent a decentralisation of power in the field of production. But they are also more formally political, and it is to the evolution of these structures that we now turn.

Politics

Formal power in the NYS is vested in what was initially called the NYS Advisory Board but which has since become simply the NYS Board. This is chaired by the President, and comprises two Ministers, five Permanent Secretaries, and two of the Co-ordinators. The President sees the board's function as that of a custodian, ensuring that the objectives of the NYS are always kept in mind. In a sense it determines the broad directions and the major issues of policy - on assessment for example, or the change to Blocks or Co-operatives.

This still leaves substantial scope within the village itself - not only in organising the daily life of the village, but in generating new initiatives and responses. In the domestic sphere each cluster elected from the early days of the village a co-ordinator from among its number. His or her task was to make sure that different responsibilities in the cluster were carried out, and linked up, and to chair meetings. The term of office was usually for a month and non-renewable, but some clusters have varied this. B5 for example finally adopted a system of changing the co-ordinator every day in order to ensure that those with less confidence would gain experience in the job. The general system is not universally successful (the co-ordinator may for instance become an instrument of discipline on behalf of the animateur), but in general it has worked well among both boys and girls.

It is in the middle ground that political organisation has been less robust. For the first two months the main power in the daily life of the village lay with the 8 co-ordinators: it was a centralisation which paralleled that in the field of production. But in mid April a village committee was formed which was to consist of 9 students (one elected from each brother-sister cluster), 3 teachers, 3 animateurs, representatives from the production workers, and all eight co-ordinators. This gave a decisive majority to adults. The results of

First there was the problem of the three foreign teachers that we have already touched on. Second all nine students elected were boys: in some cases two or three girls found themselves standing against one boy, and split their vote; in others it appears that some girls voted for boys but few boys voted for girls. The result led to many discussions. When it came up on the village committee some of the boys felt the girls should also be represented and that the students' numbers should be expanded to 18. Others however, argued for the system as it existed and were quite happy with their preponderance.

The Committee ordinarily met once a fortnight - more often if necessary. Its main problem was its power, and its own constitution and responsibilities occupied the bulk of the meetings. Should it be able to interfere in the affairs of the clusters? No - only in relations between clusters. Should it have the authority to make and enforce the rules? But were there not existing disciplinary committees, and were the co-ordinators not the executive arm of the village? The discussions were serious and fruitful, but in August they were interrupted and from the teachers discussion in the recess a new structure was proposed.

The problem was identified as the mixing of students and workers. It was therefore proposed that there should be a students committee and a workers committee, both of which should elect delegates to serve with the co-ordinators on the Village Committee. As with the National Peoples assembly, the delegates could be varied from meeting to meeting according to the matter to be discussed. The plan was approved by the co-ordinators but was slow to be implemented.

While the village has clearly lacked an adequate political focus, the question of an adequate form of internal democracy has - it is clear - been vigorously discussed. Equally important the cluster has established itself as a zone of considerable political autonomy, and the co-operatives represent a decentralisation of political power over the economy to the cluster level as the result of a crisis over labour in agricultural production.

The Coup

On the evening of November 25 a group of South African backed mercenaries attempted a coup in the international airport of Mahe. When it was clear that the coup would fail, 45 of the mercenaries escaped on an Air India plane which they hijacked and flew to South Africa. 8 of the party escaped to the interior of the island and were later captured and made public the details of the coup, its backing and its plans.

The effect on the country was profound, not least in the NYS. It was reported soon after the coup that the mercenary plan was to make for Port Laundy and take the students of the NYS hostage in order to reduce the country.

Each cluster responded in its own way. One of the girls asked a co-ordinator to tell the President that if they were captured they would rather die for their country than that the mercenaries should take over. One of the boys clusters decided to sleep with their boots on to be ready for an attack. The "Voi de Port Launay" broadcast continuously the latest reports it received throughout the week that the curfew was in operation. The mood was remarkable and unanimous. When the pre-recorded tapes were captured and played over Radio Seychelles and the arrested mercenaries had it was found that the NYS was indeed to be one of the first targets of the attacks, and that the mission was to 'liberate' the young. "But we are liberated" they kept on saying in the village.

What the coup attempt did was to give new meaning to many aspects of village life which had been somewhat abstract to the students until then: the importance of self-sufficiency in production, the need for good information about overseas politics and internal news (a number of clusters found to their dismay that their radios were out of order), and the importance of vigilance and security to allow everyone to defend the new life that they were building up. A number of the clusters now saw the point of B5's policy of boycotting South African goods, and began planting new fruit to provide material for the jam co-operative. Whereas previously picking coconuts up from the mountain had been regarded as dirty jobs, now boys and even girls (who had been especially opposed to the work) went out to gather them.

Suddenly not only did these principles take on new meaning, but the very gap between what had been built up in the village and what it had replaced became focused and abrupt. The loss of the old system of elite education appears to have been one of the factors to have motivated the Seychellois exiles around Mancham who organised the coup. The remarkable achievements of the NYS contributed to the deep-rootedness of René's popular support and the effective unity which led to the coup's suppression. When the 24 hour curfew was lifted, a demonstration called at less than 24 hours notice gathered together 10,000 people, nearly a fifth of all the inhabitants of Mahé. The speed and direction of the NYS had found their full justification in these events.

Within the five years that he has been in power, President René has achieved much quite apart from the NYS. He has doubled the minimum wage, and cut income inequality between the high and the low paid from 1:23 to 1:8. He has introduced guaranteed work for all, and social security for those who cannot work through age, illness or childbearing. In line with providing every family with their own home he has prohibited the ownership of two houses, and expanded the housebuilding programme. The district clinics, the Crèches, and the strict zoning that has been practised in education as in football, are all part of a welfare system more radical than anything so far achieved in advanced capitalism.

But quite apart from these distributional measures what distinguishes President René's strategy is his insistence that all policy should be seen in terms of its political consequences, and that means the strengthening of working people as a political force at the expense of the former landed proprietors and commercial bourgeoisie. His economic policy has not been to nationalise the private economy (which he was in no position to substitute) but to build up an alternative dual economy under the control of the state financed by international tourism. More broadly he has stripped the former rulers of their political and cultural power while leaving their dividends for the time being intact.

The NYS must be seen against this background. It is at one and the same time a most radical cultural counter offensive against capitalist education, and a seed-bed to create a quite new set of social relations in the wider society. In a real sense President René sees the youth as the bearers of the most important part of the revolution - its creative force. Just as the NYS board is the custodian of this vision, so the state is he feels the custodian for the new socialism to be built primarily by the youth. His faith in the young, and in the working people of the Seychelles has led to his resolute refusal to 'statise' the NYS and run it from the top. He wants the students to have room to build, and to be animated not controlled. It hasn't always worked. Since it is real it has contradictions. But what we can say after one year's practice is that much has been achieved, the positive forces are still strong, and that they may not only achieve a remarkable educational system, but - in time - a quite new practice of socialism itself.