

FROM THE EDITOR

In May 1988 SER published an article which assessed the contribution to education of R. F. MacKenzie. David Gordon's article 'The Legacy of R. F. McKenzie' argued that MacKenzie's critique of the Scottish educational system was the most coherent and valuable aspect of his work and that it had continuing relevance to educationists of the day. In the ten years since MacKenzie's books have gone out of print and very little has been published about this remarkable man. Peter Murphy, former head teacher of Whitfield High School in Dundee, and a former colleague of MacKenzie at Summerhill, has rectified this omission by writing a biography of MacKenzie, *The Life of R. F. MacKenzie: a prophet without honour*. To mark the forthcoming publication of the biography, a symposium on the life and work of MacKenzie was held at Dundee University in mid-November.

The symposium was a unique opportunity to consider the impact of one of the most important radical educators in recent Scottish history and to debate the relevance of his criticisms for today. In the ten years since his death, the establishment has promoted an even more disciplined regime than existed in MacKenzie's time. League tables of schools, performance indicators and a unifying framework for post-16 qualifications are all part of the practical reality for educators today. It is no wonder that radicalism amongst teachers has been stifled or even lost. How many student teachers are exposed to the ideas of those such as R. F. MacKenzie in the course of their preparation for teaching now, or are encouraged to consider alternative systems of schooling?

Participants in the symposium acknowledged that some of MacKenzie's ideas had indeed taken root—though mainly in primary education—and that prospects for renewal in a changing political context in Scotland offer opportunities to revitalise the education system. I hope that the publication of the biography will spark renewed interest in MacKenzie and that it will not be long before someone takes up the challenge of analysing the impact of his ideas on education in Scotland and beyond.

This is the last issue of SER under my editorship. I wish to thank all the authors who have submitted articles to the journal for supporting it over the years; the anonymous referees who selflessly donate their time and expertise; SERA for its support; the Board and particularly the chair, Tom Bryce, for their constructive criticism and constant support. I am especially grateful to the editorial team, Paul Standish, Ian McPherson and Sylvia Jackson, all of whom have worked wonders under substantial time pressure but with such good humour and patience. I feel