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EDUCATION OR SCHOOLING?

IN TODAY'S SCHOOLS we see a process of what is commonly called "education". Most people praise "education" and value it highly. However, if what we see in the existing institutions of learning is "education" we would be wiser to condemn rather than condone it. For what exists in fact is an education industry which prostitutes learning to serve the ends of the commercial society in which we live (trade, industry and profits being the gods). The purpose of schooling today is to socialise young people in its own image to perpetuate society as it exists at present.

The schooling system we observe today attempts to mould the minds and bodies of the vulnerable ones (all of us by law remember) who pass through its claws. Schooling imposes goals, ideals and character rather than allowing individuality and freedom (dirty words!). Conformity is a god to worship as it makes useful submissive citizens. Authoritarian dogma, petty and illogical rules, and humiliating punishments like lines, detention, the belt or cane, sarcasm and insults are used to help secure conformity.

In addition the schooling system is riddled with competition and meaningless goals, this involves also the artificial compartmentalisation of subjects for study. The highest value is placed on exam success, even though this usually has no relevance for one's future occupation. It does, however, show that the student has sufficient stamina and resistance to tedium and irrelevance to make them good workers who know their place and what is good for them.

What constructive proposals can be made to help rid the wrongs of this repressive, authoritarian, undemocratic system of schooling?

Basic changes must be made to enable people to seek education on a voluntary basis instead of being forced into schooling.

We would wish to see:

-No coercion, that is voluntary choice concerning seeking education and subjects. This would mean the end of schools as they exist today.

-No artificial difference in status between those who teach and those who learn.

-No competitive element.

-No exams, assessment, or compulsory syllabus.

-Individuals alone to decide what to learn, how much, when and from who, and to what level of attainment. After all, forcing someone just helps to ruin any actual or potential enjoyment in a subject.

Of course this sort of transformation cannot occur in the field of education while the rest of society is unaltered. To have an educational set-up geared to people's needs and wishes we need a completely new social system controlled by the whole community and run in the interests of all the people, not for the profits of a small minority. Human happiness, individuality and freedom should be of paramount importance, both in the field of education and wider in society as a whole. We must never forget that school kids are equal though younger human beings.

Cath Gascoigne.

SOME NOTES ON DE-SCHOOLING AND ITS IMPLICATIONS

DE-SCHOOLING simply stated refers to a process whereby schools as a separate institution within society catering for a specific age group of the population, are gradually dissolved into the wider community.

Advocates of such a process vary in their estimates of how far and how rapid such a process should be, but all see schools at present as an alienating force incapable of providing people with the abilities needed to get along in the modern world.

The development of more and more re-training courses for people in industry and for teachers themselves is a partial recognition that it is no longer possible (if it ever was) to learn a "body" of knowledge in early life that will be sufficient to cope with problems throughout life. The increasing pace of technological change has suggested to some that we need to learn from the start, not a set volume of knowledge in various compartmentalised subjects, but rather the techniques and methods of seeking out information and teaching ourselves. This also needs to be a much more co-operative activity than the individual competitive climate promoted in schools today.

At first this might seem to imply a new, even more elevated status for schools and teachers as the providers of such techniques, and this might initially be the case. But once people have started to teach themselves in a co-operative fashion the distinctive role of teachers must eventually disappear. You no longer have a situation where what is learnt is strictly defined and controlled by teachers and educational administrators, who then appear as "authorities" to be respected. (1)

Self-seeking of information cannot of course be carried on adequately within the confines of a class room, so immediately the compulsory nature of school attendance is called into question, and here problems begin to arise, for the school is not merely a neutral institution providing education, it is in its very form a means of social discipline and social grading. Some loosening of school attendance rules parallel to "flexi-time" arrangements for workers might be possible, but complete de-schooling demands vast changes in many other aspects of society.

For the functions of the school to be absorbed into the wider community, that "community" must itself be opened up. This would involve not just the occasional "works visits" with a lecture from the managing director to follow, but a continual flow of people and information at all levels of activity in factories, offices, hospitals - everywhere! It would require people with time to spare and an interest in their work for its own sake, something existing commercial society continually prevents. Such time could only be found in a society that progressively eliminates all waste and socially useless work. (2) Not only would work situations have to be opened up, but also the restrictive monogamous relationships in their present institutionalised form that are still the educational environment of most young children.

The de-schooling idea if not taken to its logical conclusion will inevitably be defeated by the arguments of liberal educationists - these so-called "practical" people of this world. For instance Maureen O'Connor in the Guardian (July '73) demonstrates theoretically that any/for de-schooling within the present social framework would only increase the educational advantages of better off workers. Although she accepts the myth of school as the only provider of opportunities for the poor, neglecting the "failures" that are created, there is still some validity in her arguments. They can only be answered by making de-schooling both theoretically and practically one part of a programme for the complete transformation of existing society. /success/

Some changes can be made within the existing framework of society. "Free" schools for instance operating on the periphery of the existing state school system can provide examples and

pointers towards new non-compulsory methods of education. The growing self-organisation of students and radical teachers in state schools may carve out some areas of freedom, (3) but a revolution is required through out society if any major change is to take place.

Mike Ballard

References: -

- (1) "Teaching as a Subversive Activity" Neil Postman and Charles Weingartner.
 - (2) "School is Dead" Everett Reimer.
 - (2) "The Great Brain Robbery" Keith Paton.
 - (3) "Libertarian Education" periodical.
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IDENTITY AND ABILITY

Introduction

Some time ago John Holt was asked by the editors of the "Educational News", N.Y.C.

"If schools were to take a giant step forward this year, toward a better tomorrow, what should it be?"

Holt's answer was,

"It would be to let every child be the planner, director and assessor of his own education, to allow and encourage him with the inspiration and guidance of more experienced and expert people, and as much help as he asked for, to decide what he is to learn, when he is to learn it and how well he is to learn it. It would be to make our schools instead of what they are, which is jails for children, into a resource for free and independent learning, which everyone in the community of what ever age could use as much or as little as he wanted."

This undated quotation comes from a book published in 1970. While there have been a few minor changes in the educational system, some forward some backward, it is certain that this ideal state of affairs is a long way in the future. In the meantime we should all be looking closely at what is happening in our schools to the large majority of children who are forced to attend them, because by being aware of what schools do to children we can help the children we have contact with to combat the system. One aspect of the miseducation system is the way in which children are labelled for various reasons in terms of ability and the affect this has on their opportunities, choices and choice making ability.

Fixed Ability?

During the first six years of a child's life he learns a great deal, from physical manipulation to verbal communication. It is generally felt by educationalists that after these first years educationally a child's ability has been fixed, and he simply plays the cards that have been dealt to him by fate. However a child's educational ability may not be fixed in this way at all, ~~ability~~ it may be the expectations of his ability which are fixed. It is true that the difficulty of so-called "culturally deprived" children can and occasionally are overcome, as similarly the apparently advantaged child can in some situations become an educational failure.

The concept of fixed ability is based on the belief that a child's capacity for learning is fixed and measurable. The use of intelligence or I.Q. tests which label children in different ways, such as average or above or below average can affect the rest of the child's future. Both through his own self-conception and the teacher's behaviour towards him, because a teacher's behaviour towards each pupil is modified by his conception of each pupil's character and capabilities. One of the pre-determinates of a child's ability is seen as social class. Social class analysis has shown

that children from the lower end of the social scale and with poor environmental conditions (by "middle class" standards) tend to do less well academically than more socially advantaged children. A knowledge of social class analysis or simply class prejudice leads to labelling qualities the teachers expectations of individual pupils. Both I.Q. testing and social class analysis have a tendency to be self-fulfilling.

Language.

Another aspect of the fixed ability idea also related to social class is the development of two different types of language, or linguistic code, one "elaborated" and one "restricted". The former is the wider use of language which is not context bound and is used for widely differing purposes. It is the language of explanation and description and is familiar to most "middle class" children by the time they reach school age. "Restricted" language is context bound, lacks description and explanation, it is also familiar to the "middle class" child but is the only language available to most "working class" children. This distinction reflects a difference in child rearing practices and culture rather than intelligence. However the school is necessarily concerned, in its present form, with the transmission and development of "elaborated" language and meanings. This puts the "working class" child at a disadvantage which he may never overcome, not only because he may never learn to understand his teachers, but also because his teachers may fail to see beyond his restricted language to aspects of himself which he has not learned to conceptualise, and in consequence the child is seen as lacking educational ability.

Time Perspectives.

"Middle class" and "working class" people are often thought to have different time perspectives. The "middle class" are supposed to have a future orientated time perspective which leads to a tendency to defer gratification, whereas the "working class" are supposed to be orientated to the present and seek immediate gratification. If this is true, and it may ~~not~~ be to a certain degree, it is hardly surprising since the "middle class" person is more likely to be in a position to plan ahead. As a consequence of these differing time perspectives and a good deal of "seeing things as they really are" "middle class" children tend to seek further education because of its long term advantages whereas "working class" children are more likely to leave school at the minimum age. Therefore the "middle class" child is more likely to see some relevance in school work whereas the "working class" child may seem to be lazy and uninvolved because of the lack of relevance school has for him. Most teachers come from the same cultural background and adhere to the same time perspectives as their "middle class" pupils. They tend to view these pupils therefore in a more favourable light. A culturally formed time perspective, where it exists, is not necessarily any indication of a child's educational ability, but because of this cultural difference the child with the "wrong" perspective may, as we have seen, be labelled by their teachers as lazy and as a potential failure.

Sex

Social class is not the only identity factor which affects teachers judgement of children, both the child's sex and age are important.

While little acknowledgement is given to the differences made between boys and girls at school, accepting that girls at birth do not have a lesser ability than boys it is surprising that far more boys than girls apply to universities, or seek some other form of further education. Sex roles play a part in the educational performance of girls since the majority of them are brought up expecting to marry and give up work at least for some time. Girls are expected in our society to be more passive than boys, so their motivation and participation in school work and activities tends to be less than boys. There is a danger of these differences being

judged as differences in ability which has become fixed at an early age. I would suggest that these differences have to be continually reaffirmed by society throughout a girls school career for them to be maintained.

Age.

A child's age not only determines when he begins school or when he leaves it, it also determines what is expected of him at school. Children are most invariably grouped according to age and judged collectively with their peers. While it is clear to both parents and teachers at what stage in reading development, for example, a child has reached, the most important criteria under the present educational system is not his achievement as an individual but how does he compare with other children of his own age. This creates the necessity for testing of some kind so that it is made clear to each member of a class his position in that class. Testing may be advantageous to the child who's reading ability is for instance at a higher level than the rest of the class, though this is a dubious assumption because the pressure to remain at the top may swamp his ability to diversify. Testing is likely to be disadvantageous to the child at the bottom end of the class who is almost certainly as able as the top child but who has not developed his reading skill at the same rate and is already in the early stages of his school career labelled as lacking ability.

Conclusion.

Within the concept of fixed ability then testing and examining is not only natural but necessary even though for most children (and adults) the work produced is in no way indicative of their actual ability and knowledge. Both tests and examinations are prepared for and much of the information "crammed" is soon forgotten, for some pupils who suffer acute anxiety on such occasions it is forgotten during the examination itself. The regurgitation of material in any case does not prove that the pupil actually understands it.

Finally I think that a child's early environment and resulting identity must to a degree affect his reactions to school. Instead of seeing this as an unchangeable entity, I believe that it is the school by defining the children in particular ways and by trying to force them into the school's idea of what they should be, actually produces the results upon which the idea of fixed ability is based, and reinforces the initial differences between children.

Kate Hall

We hope to continue with a discussion of language and social class in future issues.

See also "Language and Class-A critical look at the theories of Basil Bernstein" by Harold Rosen, Faling Wall Press.

LETTERS, ARTICLES AND FINANCIAL ASSISTANCE TO:-

S. D. RITCHIE,
c/o HILLCROFT COLLEGE,
SOUTH BANK,
SURBITON,
SURREY.

AUTHORITARIAN CONDITIONING AND CLASS CONSCIOUSNESS
--a few points.

The most pressing problems facing Socialists at the moment must surely be: how to account for the apparent failure of the revolutionary movement and how are we to progress in the future? It's now 125 years since Marx and Engels wrote the Communist Manifesto, yet the only progress we can report is that many thousands of young radicals and left-wingers are still being drawn into parties and groups that are a gross caricature of the bourgeois society that they so readily condemn. For all their talk of 'principled leadership' and raising the consciousness of the 'masses' they have little influence and remain in warring Leninist factions. Their main contribution has been to reinforce the prevailing mystifications of modern capitalist society: the need for leadership; that the majority are incapable of transforming society on their own -- that this job has to be done by some vanguard (by definition an elitist minority) that will bring about change for, or rather despite, the rest of society; that men need the compulsion of the state -- albeit a 'Workers State'. In short, they are of little threat to the ruling class in countries where the material and ideological conditions do not create the need for a Bolshevik revolution and the consequent emergence of a state capitalist system.

Ultimately the question must boil down to one of, "Why do the exploited masses accept their own exploitation and repression as natural and rational?" If we can answer this we may be on the way towards changing the system. Of course for our Trotskyist friends the answer is simple -- it all boils down to a question of 'principled leadership'. Apparently the last half-century of working class history has been one of 'betrayals' by revolutionary leaders, the incorrect theoretical understanding of those leaders, the class collaboration of the trade unions' bureaucracy and the consequent acceptance by the workers of the poison of reformism. However they fail to answer certain obvious questions -- why have the workers (who are apparently just champing at the bit for revolution) repeatedly accepted these betrayals? why if all that is needed is a Party based on those with 'a correct theoretical grasp of the historical circumstances', have they been unable to form one? Most importantly they fail to question how an equalitarian, free and humane society can be built by parties, and consequently people, basing their ideology upon the best bourgeois traditions of manipulation, leadership, blind following of the Party line, and the revealing of sacred truths from the writings of 'great masters'. They will usually mutter something about it being 'dialectical' and happily remain in cloud-cuckoo-land. For the moment we can leave these unfortunate would-be generals in search of their non-existent armies.

A somewhat more convincing argument is put by more sophisticated Leninists and many genuine, but naive revolutionaries. They will talk about the media (television, radio, papers and advertising) being in the hands of the ruling class.* With their all pervading influence in our lives, is it surprising, they will ask, that ruling class ideas are so widely held by the exploited and oppressed. Unfortunately the situation is not as simplistic as this would suggest. Indeed the argument is incorrect from a marxist point of view -- for it gives to

* e.g. from "Time to Change Course", the latest CPGB 'analysis':

Yet, although this machinery of control and repression is always available to it, the British ruling class does not rule solely, or even mainly by the direct use of this apparatus. It also rules by the force of its ideas. By their control over the mass media, education and all other means of influencing people's opinions, by virtue of the force of ideas instilled into people's minds over decades, the capitalists have been able to persuade the majority of working people that the present rulers should be left in charge because "they know more about such things than we do".

ideas a power to totally override the material conditions of life, strangely idealistic for our dialectical materialists. Indeed this argument would suggest that the Socialist Revolution is impossible --- for how could the propaganda of socialists possibly hope to overcome this barrage of bourgeois ideology.

So we are forced to look further afield for any intimation of the answer; to look to an area that trad. marxists seem loath to touch, the no-mans-land where only libertarians have dared to tread. Authoritarian Conditioning.* To analyse this argument we must briefly examine the life of an average working class kid. His parents are pro-monarchy, patriotic, xenophobic, anti-dope, racist (to an extent), sexist, anti-strike, anti-student, and anti-longhair -- in short the average British worker, and of course it matters little whether he votes Labour or Tory. From the moment of birth the process of learning to obey begins. Rigid and obsessional parents start by imposing regular feeding times on the kid, then regular pottng habits and as it grows a little older the inculcation of "good habits and manners". The kid learns that rebellion of any sort is liable to be punished or treated as an aberration of a childish mind. He learns that the father is the one who dishes out the punishment, father becomes associated with authority. On reaching skool-age the kid learns that teacher is another source of authority, this authority also dishes out punishment -- either being kept late after skool or in during 'play time'. Skool teaches kids that work must be done during certain hours and that its 'play' must be restricted to ludicrous 15 minute periods-- the implication of course being that work and play must be separate. He learns that his natural abilities will be rewarded, and the fear of failure for not being academically-minded. Thus even at an early age he is learning a mode of behaviour totally suited to capitalist society. He's learning to fear authority, something that engenders 'overcompensations': fear of authority is turned into respect and servility; fear of sexuality is turned into prudery**. And so the process goes on ***, the end result is more than a simple obedience response to those in authority, it's a whole character structure admirably suited to an authoritarian social system. This person

* E.g. "the fact that the vast majority of the exploited and manipulated have largely internalised and largely accepted the systems norms and values (for example such concepts as hierarchy, the division of society into order-givers and order-takers, wage labour and the polarity of sex-roles) and consider them intrinsically rational." From As We Don't See It p.12 by Solidarity (London).

** See Solidarity's "The Irrational in Politics", although they perhaps overemphasise the 'human nature' aspect -- and for a critique of this aspect see "The Sexual Politics of Wilhelm Reich" by A.L.B. in May 1973 Socialist Standard.

*** For a pretty good analysis of the role of universities see Anti-student and LSE-- a Question of Degree by Bob Dent e.g. "Although in this case it was the teacher who was unconsciously acting as an agent of repression, the most serious problem lies in the students themselves. Many times it is the students who prevent discussion which is not on the syllabus for fear that it might not help them in their exam. This self-policing aspect of student consciousness is in some ways the basis of student 'freedoms' After 12 years of succeeding in the schooling system, we have deeply internalised the authority relations of the classroom. Hence it is 'safe' for the authorities to allow a little relaxation in control because the student has learned to control himself. When this begins to break down, however, discipline will begin to tighten up." Bob Dent, p.11.

becomes afraid of the very idea of freedom, for such a suggestion comes upon rationalisations that prevent the listener from realising that their whole lives are wasted working for an absurd system that degrades and exploits them. Such an analysis does not suffer from the idealism of the previous one, for these very ideas and ideals become a part of the persons behaviour -- in short a material condition.

But the system is incapable of reproducing itself indefinitely in this way. The very nature of class society compels the workers to struggle against it. Economic life forces men and women to come together in mutual aid institutions of a defensive nature, indeed the very fact of being human necessitates such institutions in all aspects of life -- no matter how thorough the conditioning:

"In short, neither the crushing powers of the centralised State nor the teachings of mutual hatred and pitiless struggle which come, adorned with the attributes of science, from obliging philosophers and sociologists, could weed out the feeling of human solidarity, deeply lodged in men's understanding and heart, because it has been nurtured by all our proceeding evolution". (P. Kropotkin, Mutual Aid, p298)

Economic factors force women out to work, this has resulted in a desire for 'equality' in employment and in the home. This desire for 'equality' results in the wives questioning of the males' dominance, and the polarity of the sex-roles. Indirectly this can lead to a questioning by the child of the authority-relations in the family -- who should he respect/fear, father, mother, both or neither? (Witness the growth of the so-called liberal family). The decline of many of the old imperialist powers has resulted in the decline of the concepts of national glory and unity. Previously these had acted as a cohesive force in class-divided society where all else had failed* -- but with the collapse of the Empire this palliative has largely failed to stop workers examining their own economic situation. The result of these (and other factors) can only be a crisis in the values of modern society. In c

The crisis in traditional morals has led to the formation of such groups as Women's Lib, Gay Lib etc., and the present so-called "permissive society". The need for mutual aid throws up such groups as Claimants Unions, Tenants Associations, Squatter's Association etc. Many of these people are in the process of attempting to change their own ideas and hopefully their own lifestyles.

Yet all this is a painfully slow process and one that capitalism is always seeking to subvert. The Trade unions are becoming little more than adjuncts of the state. Sexual liberation becomes sexual exploitation, sex is used to sell everything from chocolate to sports cars. The hippy Counter-culture was commercialised and even dope is achieving a sort of respectability, all the 'best' people turn round and no doubt it'll soon be legalised. Capitalism is a highly flexible system and one that will often adapt itself to meet and accommodate any challenge -- or attempt to smash those that it can't.

What should be the attitude of Socialists to these organisations? To my mind it is insufficient to write them all off as mere reformist movements. We should be attempting to show the positive, very revolutionary aspects of their struggles -- whilst at the same time pointing out the failure of reformism to solve many of their problems. This is not to say that we ourselves are not in the need of any demystification.** By engaging in constructive dialogue with such groups we can at the very minimum extend our own understanding of capitalist society and extend our own level of socialist consciousness. A purely propaganda approach

* And they still do to a large extent e.g. the idiotic "I'm Backing Britain Campaign" started by three typists (Subsequently made redundant) to do an extra half-hour wage slavery a day for free in the 'national interest'.

** Many Socialists still retain remarkably bigoted views, particularly in

is doomed to failure, workers have been hearing socialist propaganda for years and the effect has been minimal. It is only by a combination of revolutionary propaganda, constructive dialogue and encouragement of the positive (revolutionary, express or implied) of these groups that we can start the revolution. I would suggest that this is the only way we can break down the authoritarian conditioning and replace alienation by class solidarity; then we can begin to progress.

Bob Miller

NOTE: Copies of the article, "Solidarity, the Market and Marx" by Adam Buick are still available on request. Also a few copies of our first issue with a critique of the Socialist Party of Great Britain by Davy Donaldson.

WORTH READING

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American Situationist document, published 1972.

Contains articles on:-

Society of the Spectacle

Sexual Poverty

Spanish Civil War

Councilism

History of the S.I.

37½p

POST SCARCITY ANARCHISM

By Murray Bookchin. Ramparts Press. £1.50

THE TYRANNY OF STRUCTURELESSNESS

Deals with the formation of elites in informally organised groups. Originally published in America and reproduced in this country by some women's lib groups.

THE POLITICS OF HOMOSEXUALITY

By Don Milligan. Pluto Press. 20p

THE RECURRENT CRISIS OF LONDON

C.I.S. Anti-report on the Developers. 60p

TAKE OVER THE CITY

Community Struggles In Italy. Lotta Continua. 20p

Most publications referred to here can be obtained from
"Rising Free" 197 Kings Cross Road, London, W.C.I.

Related thanks are due to our friends Jenny Jones and Lorraine and Ed Russell for helping with the production of the last issue of our "occasional" journal.

heard to sexism. I've even heard one sum up Women's Lib. as "free dildos".

THERE HAVE BEEN several unsuccessful attempts to graft the ideas of Freud on to the body of Marxist theory to provide a criticism and explanation of society at a psychological as well as a socio-economic level. There is certainly a need to enrich Marxism in this way but the biological orientation of Freud and his Hobbesian view of man made unity between an undiluted Freud and Marx impossible.

Freud's biological orientation can be exaggerated. His final theories contain both social and biological elements, although he didn't develop the social elements very far. This was done by Freudian revisionists, principally Fromm, Horney and Sullivan who became known as the neo-Freudians. The neo-Freudians greatly reduced in importance the biological element and stressed the interpersonal and social aspect of personality. This can be seen in Fromm's approach to the Oedipus conflict:

"In seeing the Oedipus complex as the central phenomenon of psychology Freud has made one of the most important discoveries in psychology. But he has failed to give it adequate interpretation...neither the sexual attraction nor the resulting conflicts are the essential in the fixation of children on their parents. As long as the infant is small it is quite naturally dependent on the parents, but this dependence does not necessarily imply a restriction of the child's own spontaneity. However, when the parents, acting as the agents of society, start to suppress the child's spontaneity and independence the growing child feels more and more unable to stand on its own feet; it therefore seeks for the magic helper and often makes the parents the personification of 'him'...the need for being related to such a symbol of authority is not caused by the continuation of the original sexual attraction to one of the parents but by the thwarting of the child's expansiveness and spontaneity and by the consequent anxiety" (Fear of Freedom, p. 153).

Anthropologists have criticised the Oedipus complex by pointing out that in societies with different family structures this conflict is unknown and if the conflict isn't universal it can't be instinctual. Even just looking at our own society, says Fromm, the Oedipal conflict is not instinctual but neurotic. The child who isn't unconditionally loved by his parents feels isolated. Because of his weakness and dependence this isolation causes anxiety and forces the child to escape the anxiety-producing isolation by clinging to one or other of the parents. Here we have the basis of Fromm's (and Horney's) approach. They said that man developing naturally (i.e. in a specifically human relationship to others) would be a generous, creative and loving person. Other orientations towards the world -- conformity, the wish to submit or the wish to dominate -- are not as Freud suggested the result of libido being fixed at a particular erogenous zone but are defences against a basic anxiety.

Freud saw man's nature as anti-social. In his model of the psyche the id contains the instinctual drives -- sex and aggression; the superego is civilization introjected by the child via the parents. The superego represses; the ego sublimates. Affection, for Freud, would be aim-inhibited sexuality. His view of man was the same as the utilitarians (and Hobbes) -- a egoistic atomized individual -- with the difference that sexual gratification not economic gain was the driving force. Fromm and Horney (and Marx) saw man's nature as social, or good to use a moral term. This was what was specifically human about man and when he acted in an anti-social manner he was alienated from his potential or essence.

Fromm called man "the freak of the universe". He is part of nature and yet separate from it. Unlike other animals, he is not driven by instinct but acts of reason, and his reason makes him aware that in comparison to the universe he is a speck in time and space. He is aware of his inevitable death and aware of his isolation and vulnerability in a potentially hostile world. Isolation means weakness, which increases the possibility of destruction and this gives rise to anxiety. The central problem for Fromm is the way in which men overcome separation and achieve unity with the world and other men. The human awareness of mortality and of insignificance in the face of the universe is an existential problem which each age

attempts to solve by its central religion or philosophy, that is, by postulating a purpose behind the universe and adopting a morality that makes man part of the purpose and therefore part of the universe. Unity with other men is a social and historical problem which man can overcome by re-arranging his society.

Like Freud Fromm stresses the importance of early relationships with the parents for producing the adult attitude towards others. If the child is rejected or only conditionally accepted he is left with a feeling of basic anxiety or fear of the world. He is left with a feeling of unworthiness and depends on others to assuage this feeling. The failure to make relationships with others gives rise not only to anxiety but to guilt and shame and an attempt to drown this by recourse to alcoholism, drug addition or compulsive sex. The kinds of relationships that might be adopted are various, conformity and submission or domination being the main ones. These relationships might be considered normal depending on the society, but for Fromm they are distortions of man's essence.

Fromm is more interested in social character, that is the character structure that members of a given society share, than in individual variations from it. Before discussing the connection between social character and society I'll look at Marx's materialist view of history. One of the problems of Marxism is the relationship between economic and other factors in society. Marx saw society as a set of social relations. The fundamental social relation, the one that largely determined the others, was the relations men enter into to produce wealth. Slave and slave-owner, peasant and lord, wage-slave and capitalist are relationships that depend on the level of the means of production and in turn determine the political, social, religious and even sexual relations of a society. But political power, religious ideas and so on act back on the economic base and can influence the way society evolves. Marx developed his materialist conception of history at a time when an idealist version of history was prevalent. Talking here of the Young Hegelians Marx said that they "consider conceptions, thoughts, ideas, in fact all the products of consciousness, to which they attribute an independent existence as the real chains of men" (German Ideology, pp. 5-6). I don't think it was Marx's intention to replace a one-sided idealist interpretation with a one-sided materialist interpretation, although the emphasis is on the economic factor. I think he would have wished his materialism to be a heuristic device rather than a dogma:

"Empirical observation must in each separate instance bring out empirically, and without any mystification and speculation, the connection of the social and political structure with production. The social structure and the state are continually evolving out of the life process of definite individuals, but of individuals, not as they may appear in their own or other people's imagination but as they really are; i.e. as they are effective, produce materially, and are active under definite material limits, presuppositions and conditions and conditions independent of their will" (Ibid, p. 13).

Although ideas act back on the economic base as well as reflect it and only by empirical observation of a specific situation can one disentangle the forces at work and the way they interact with another, nevertheless it is correct, generally speaking, to stress the primacy of the economic base. To do otherwise could lead to the idea of history as a series of unconnected incidents.

Fromm accepts Marx's materialism but he wants to use psychology as a link between the economic base and the ideological superstructure. As man makes his own history, even if blindly, one must understand how he experiences socio-economic change to understand his reactions in the form of his religion and ideas. Talking of his book Fear of Freedom Fromm says: "Throughout this book we have dealt with the interrelation of socio-economic, psychological and ideological factors by analyzing certain historical periods like the age of the Reformation and the contemporary era" (p. 239). In this book Fromm looks at the Reformation in Europe and examines the change produced in social character by the change from feudalism to capitalism and how this was expressed by protestantism.

Within feudalism there was little concept of the individual. Production was static and there was little chance of a person increasing his wealth by individual effort. His life was a cycle of activities dictated by nature and by custom. He was born into a caste and he died in it. The Church guided him through life and taught him he was the centre of the universe, and in a sense he was. He lived in a small self-sufficient community with production for use or for small local markets.

The development of trade and the growth of cities as centres of industrial and merchant capital disrupted this social order:

"Now with the beginning of capitalism all classes of society started to move. There ceased to be a fixed place in the economic order which could be considered a natural, an unquestionable one. The individual was left alone; everything depends on his own effort, not on the security of his traditional status"(p.50).

Capital "had ceased to be a servant and become a master. Assuming a separate and independent vitality it claimed the right...to dictate economic organization in accordance with its own exacting requirements"(p.50).

Commodity production and the market replaced the self-sufficient community. Production which had once been regulated by Church and guild rules now obeyed the impersonal dictates of the market. The new class of capitalists developing in the towns demanded the right to conduct their own affairs and to make and enforce their own laws free from the interference of Church and feudal lord. The development of capitalism freed men from the bonds of tradition and from servility to their feudal lords. For the urban traders and small artisans economic freedom meant competition. An impersonal market, beyond their control, replaced the small local market. Freedom from feudal ties also meant insecurity, doubt and uncertainty. Calvin's doctrine of predestination reflected the market situation where good works in themselves were no guarantee of salvation. The traits necessary for the primitive accumulation of capital --hard work, thrift and suspicion of pleasure-- as well as hostility arising out of isolation all found their place in puritan Calvinism. These traits were a response by the urban middle class to the situation they found themselves in. By the process described they became part of the social character of the middle class.

The social character, says Fromm, "comprises only a selection of traits, the essential nucleus of a character structure of most members of a group, which has developed as the result of the basic experiences and mode of life common to that group"(p.239). This is transmitted to future generations by the family who "transmit to the child what we may call the psychological atmosphere or the spirit of a society just by being as they are --namely representatives of this very spirit. The family thus may be considered to be the psychological agent of society"(p.245). People with this social character by pursuing aims rooted in their character push society in certain directions. The new directions may reinforce the original character structure which in turn reinforces the new directions and so on.

"Behaviour is not a matter of conscious decision as to whether or not to follow the social pattern, but one of wanting to act as they have to act and at the same time finding gratification in acting according to the requirements of the culture"(The Sane Society, p.79).

This might seem a very determinist picture but no more so than Marx's. What was said about his materialist concept of history as a general picture and also the need for empirical studies of specific situations applies also to Fromm. Also, the element of functionalism in Marx and Fromm is within the framework of a conflict model of society. Aims and ideas can be changed by conflict with other conflicting aims and ideas, or individuals or groups may weave together elements from different ideas to produce a new set of beliefs. Neither Marx nor Fromm took the behaviourist view of man as a passive creature who merely responded to the stimuli of the external world. Fromm says of man: "he is not a blank sheet of paper on which culture writes its text. Needs like freedom are inherent in his nature"(The Sane Society, p.81). Marx might seem to contradict this when he says: "but the essence of man is no abstraction inherent in each separate individual. In its reality it is the ensemble of social relations"(Theses on Feuerbach). But for Fromm as well as Marx man's nature is social. All men are born into social groups and by their biological nature are dependent on the group for years after their birth. Man's beliefs are founded in his experience of the world and this is largely experience of other people, of relationships; hence his experience, and therefore what he is, is the "ensemble of his social relations".

Both Fromm and Marx use the concept of alienation. And for both of them man is alienated not only from other men, i.e. alienated from his own social nature, he is also alienated from his own productive potential. Fromm's use of the word "essence" really means potential. Fromm and Marx both want man's potential to come into existence.

Ken Young.

....."WELL, the youngsters here will be all the fresher for school when the summer gets over and they have to go back again."

"School?" he said; "yes, what do you mean by that word? I don't see how it can have anything to do with children. We talk, indeed, of a school of herring, and a school of painting, and in the former sense we might talk of a school of children-but otherwise," said he, laughing, "I must own myself beaten."

Hang it! thought I, I can't open my mouth without digging up some new complexity. I wouldn't try to set my friend right in his etymology; and I thought I had best say nothing about the boy-farms which I had been used to call schools, as I saw pretty clearly that they had disappeared; and so I said after a little fumbling, "I was using the word in the sense of a system of education."

"Education?" said he, meditatively, "I know enough Latin to know that the word must come from 'educere', to lead out; and I have heard it used; but I have never met anybody who could give me a clear explanation of what it means."

You may imagine how my new friends fell in my esteem when I heard this frank avowal; and I said, rather contemptuously, "Well, education means a system of teaching young people."

"Why not old people also?" said he with a twinkle in his eye. "But," he went on, "I can assure you our children learn, whether they go through a 'system of teaching' or not..."

This is a short extract from WILLIAM MORRIS' "News from Nowhere" which first appeared in "The Commonweal" journal of the Socialist League in 1890.
