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IS NON-FORMAL EDUCATION ANY BETTER?*

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I. Colonialism: the Many Uses of a Concept

Most of my time could be taken up by a discussion of the widely varying uses of the word 'colonialism' and the associated meanings that might be given to the statement that "education is a form of colonialism". I don't feel that would make me terribly popular. But it would also be wrong to assume that I shall be clearly understood if I launch into the substance of the discussion without further ado. So I cannot escape from the necessity of a brief conceptual discussion, and of giving some indication of where I intend to place myself in the debates.

'Colonialism' has become one of those words that mean all things to all people - even though originally it had a quite precise significance, firmly anchored in the specific historical experiences of certain colonizing nations and the peoples and lands they colonized. Today, however, it is used much more loosely to refer to all kinds of phenomena other than those of 'classical' or direct colonialism. At the very least it seeks to remind us of the fact that economic, social, cultural and even political relationships reminiscent of direct colonialism can and do continue between ex-colonies and ex-colonial powers. This is often called 'neo-colonialism':

> "la création (ou le maintien) à l'intérieur des Etats concernés, d'un rapport de dépendance structurelle au niveau économique et son influence directe au niveau politique sur les processus de décision" (Preiswerk, 1975:63).

Preiswerk also reminds us of the considerable body of literature that examines the psychological aspects of (neo-)colonialism (e.g. Fanon, 1967), and the extent to which the colonized engage in 'auto-colonization' by an apparently voluntary acceptance of the values and institutions imposed from outside (ibid.:64).

Nowadays, colonialism is also often used in a sense more or less interchangeable with 'imperialism', and there is a good deal of fuzziness as between the two concepts. For example, Martin Carnoy's book, extensively quoted below, is called Education as Cultural Imperialism - but imperialism appears very little in the book, whereas colonialism is used throughout.

Since the mid-sixties colonialism has also come to be used as a term to describe relationships of exploitation or domination that exist within societies: González Casanova's internal colonialism, for example (González Casanova, 1965), or André Gunder Frank's metropolis-satellite model, applied by means of a suggestive but imprecise analogy to the world capitalist system as much as to the landowner-peasant nexus.[1/]

Even more recently a third term has made its appearance, covering the external aspects derived from the 'classical' use of the word, as well as the internal aspects described by González Casanova. That term is dependence. I have no need, I assume, in this particular forum to spell out in detail the ideas of the dependency school - so home-grown a Latin American phenomenon. But precisely because it is such a widely used concept, I feel that I must dwell on it at least for a moment. Despite minor variations among its proponents, the central argument is that the extent and direction of development in the periphery countries is dictated by the

1/ This was first presented in his Capitalism and Underdevelopment in Latin America (Frank, 1967) and has been extensively elaborated - but to my mind not much improved - since. For a sympathetic critical appraisal see Booth, 1975.

workings of international capitalism, which - in the phrase of Dos Santos (1969) - provides the "conditioning situation" of economy and society in the less developed world. Dependence is seen to create locally, in the dependent society, a structure of interests which divides those integrated in this "dependent development" (Cardoso & Faletto, 1970) from those left out of it. Dominant capitalist structures, institutions and cultural forms exist - a "transnational culture" as it has been called by Sunkel and Fuenzalida (1974) - which bind capitalists, managers and workers in the 'modern' sector of a dependent country to their counterparts in the modern sector of the central countries. Side by side, peripheral sectors exist both in the central and in the dependent nations, and class relations (especially in the periphery) are complicated by the development of fractions characterized by their inclusion in or exclusion from the transnational system.[2/] The lower class peripheral groups in the dependent countries, who usually constitute the majority of the population, and often the vast majority, suffer most from the system, which is only incidentally concerned with their needs. This is seen to be so because the system is dominated by transnational corporations whose products cater for the mass consumption tastes set in the rich countries, tastes to which the average unskilled worker or peasant in the dependent country cannot aspire for a long while yet.

There is no doubt that the 'dependency school' has provided an important and relevant perspective on the economic and social reality of the poor countries of the world (a kind of inversion of the classic perspective of imperialism which dealt

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2/ See Sunkel (1973). Galtung (1971) has a similar theoretical approach.

with these problems from the point of view of the dominant nations). In the words of Philip O'Brien, at the conclusion of his incisive but not unfriendly critique:

> "The basic point it makes - that the interplay between the internal Latin American structures and international structures is the critical starting point for an understanding of the process of development in Latin America - is of vital importance."
> (O'Brien, 1975:25)

And yet, lingering doubts about the actual analysis are not easily dispelled. There is so much argument by analogy, so much blank assertion, so much that sounds plausible but isn't really proved; there are so many unanswered questions. To give only two examples: is the State really as powerless, vis-à-vis those foreign monopolies and international companies, as Dos Santos asserts (1969:68)?[3/] And is it really true that "the majority of the population exhibits deep psychic disturbances, resulting from the simultaneous coexistence of transnational, national and local need-dispositions", as Sunkel and Fuenzalida (1974:13) argue from a (transnational?) Parsonian perspective? How, precisely, does it all work? And could the system possibly be made to work better - better, that is, for the majorities who have so far indeed been left out and who have continued to suffer? Again, how?

Perhaps it is too early to judge; perhaps research is now being undertaken to refine and test the propositions contained in the "many millions of words" (O'Brien, 1975:25) that have been written around the dependency paradigm - of which I must confess to not having read more than a fraction. But so far, however suggestive and important the perspective, I do not

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3/ An examination of the industrial policy of the Peruvian government suggests that the State (as embodied in its officials) can have considerable leeway - even though the structure of production does place limits on its policies. See Ferner (forthcoming).

have the impression that it really replaces (rather than complements) the more well tried procedures of, for example, class analysis, nor that it has really been interested in searching out such 'uncomfortable' facts as might challenge some of its more sweeping assertions.

II. Colonialism as External Influence

In all the paradigms and approaches which are 'associated' with the concept of colonialism, at least passing reference is made to the fact that education has been affected by the 'colonial' (etc.) situation. It is, frankly, a bewildering landscape. Fortunately, Martin Carnoy has found his way through it before I came on the scene. His book, Education as Cultural Imperialism (1974) has fulfilled, for me, the same kinds of functions which the Baedecker or Guide Bleue fulfilled in more classically 'colonial' times for the not so adventurous traveller: it brought order (admittedly the guide's order!) to a bewildering variety of offerings, and it ultimately tipped the balance between daring to travel and staying at home. So here I am, in Brazil, in quest of the contemporary meaning of 'education as a form of colonialism'.4/

Let me begin with the easier metaphorical use of colonialism in this connection, that which asserts that in a less developed country the structure of the educational system, and/or the context of what it conveys, is influenced by foreign ('metropolitan') models which are presumed to be not adequate to the needs of the country and the majority of its

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4/ I stress contemporary - for I do not intend to follow Carnoy's own example and dip into the past to analyze some of the historical examples of this relationship.

inhabitants. It needs to be stressed, before we proceed, that this presumption of inadequacy and irrelevance gives little credit to the actual superiority of Western science and technology as instruments to 'master' the physical world, instruments which, without Western-type education, can be neither understood nor used. Japan, of course, is the classical example of their voluntary adoption.[5/] But the imposition of the Western models, the destruction of indigenous cultures, and (as we shall see) the social and political characteristics of the (oppressive) colonial order have totally overshadowed in these discussions the possible usefulness of Western science and technology.

There is quite a body of literature on the theme of colonial imposition for Africa - not least because the Francophone territories are, on the whole, still in the very tight embrace of France.[6/] For France (that is to say, for French governments and civil servants) the superiority of French culture, and hence the desirability of 'making this available' in the (ex-) colonial territories, has always been a self-evident truth - after all, the 'natives' would benefit from la civilisation française. The result has been a strictly controlled intake into the school system, on achievement criteria set by central authorities. This was inevitably disadvantageous to African children, and kept down the numbers reaching secondary and higher educational institutions. There was a kind of perverse justification behind this, one genuinely believed by Frenchmen,

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5/ The earliest beginnings of this already occurred in the 18th century. See Dore (1965).

6/ For example, Foster (1965) and Moumouni (1968).

stemming from a supposed:

> "French tradition of 'equity' in education, which meant that students were to be treated and judged equally, whether they were French or African, whether they were from one tribe or another. All Africans going to school were therefore educated to become 'black Frenchmen'."
> (Carnoy, 1974:139)

And the lucky few who made it have, indeed, been accepted into French society in a way that their counterparts in British-dominated Africa never were - that is, as equals. Nevertheless, whatever the advantages to the few, the arrangements in the educational sphere are seen by critics as fitting closely into a truly imperialist or neo-colonialist system maintained by France for the benefit of the French state and its civil servants, and of French capitalism and its corporations.7/

The French policy was called 'assimilation'. The British approach, at least in Africa, was less centralized and culturally self-assured, and made more concessions to local differences and background. In French Africa, for example, children were taught in a foreign language (French) right from the start of primary school - this in contrast to the English colonies, where the vernacular was used at least during the first few years of primary education (Mazrui, forthcoming). But nowhere did educational systems really take account of indigenous African culture, nor did they build on the social values embodied in African societies (for example the sense of community, as opposed to Western competitive

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7/ Moumouni (ibid.).

individualism).[8/] What they did in many places, especially since the 1930s, was to set up special rural schools for African school-children, so that they would become 'hewers of wood and drawers of water' with a 'proper' place within the new social order imposed from outside.[9/]

Dominance of outside models was even stronger in secondary and above all in university education. In most of Africa institutions of higher education started as offshoots of European universities - their curricula imported, their examinations set abroad, many of their teachers expatriates. But in this sphere, too, the continuing domination of the universities of ex-French colonies does contrast with the change that has by now taken place in ex-British colonies, even though the criteria used by (UK) graduate schools to decide on the 'acceptability' of students have obviously had a continuing impact on African curricula and syllabuses.[10/] Preiswerk (1975:68), for example, notes that in the latter the teaching staff is now overwhelmingly African (he quotes a figure of 80% for Ghana and Nigeria in 1971), while in Francophone Africa this is far from the case - also because aspiring university teachers there have to fulfil certain requirements imposed by the French university system before

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8/ See the papers by Carlon, Sifuna and Majasan in Présence Africaine, No.95 (1975).

9/ See Foster (1965) for Ghana, and King (1974) for Kenya. An Asian perspective on this problem is given in Jayasuriya's book on Ceylon (1969).

10/ In a recent paper Ali Mazrui argues that even after the historically determined links had been largely broken, curricula still did not reflect the needs of African societies, or give proper recognition to their specific cultural contributions to mankind. Interesting is his observation, for example, that as yet little progress has been made in the development of methods of data collection or research appropriate to the historiography of ex-colonial peoples. See Mazrui (forthcoming).

they can be appointed to a post.

I have concentrated here on some African examples, which are likely to be less well-known in Latin America. Latin America presents similar, and yet significantly different problems: the mechanisms linking its educational systems to those of the rich countries have been very much more varied, subtle, and also weaker. There is, after all, a distinctive Latin American (élite) culture which has found expression in the schools and universities of the continent for over a century - and foreign (i.e. especially North American) influences have been noted and deplored specifically in the context of attempts at 'modernizing' the educational system in order to make it contribute to a 'modernization' of society and economy. That modernization concentrated on post-primary education, supposedly making it less academic and more relevant to the needs of a technologically advancing society,[11/] and there have been many comments on the role of United States educational experts, funded by USAID, in helping to re-mould the schools and universities of Latin American countries in the image of North America. Carnoy, for example, writes of American assistance, apparently designed to promote economic growth, that:

> "the aim is to build institutions that complement a capitalist organization of production - an economic organization that channels a high percentage of the increment of output into the hands of a relatively few people and that accepts and even requires foreign investment - and a policy which serves this type of hierarchical structure and US military interests." (Carnoy, 1974:311)[12/]

11/ cf. my earlier comments on science and technology, p.6 above.

12/ He also has some rather vague comments on US Missions to Brazil in the post-1964 period (1974:186/7).

Table 1. Enrolments by levels, 1960 and 1970, and percentage increase over the decade

	WORLD[1]			LATIN AMERICA[1]			BRAZIL[2]		
	1960 Students (millions)	1970 Students (millions)	% Increase	1960 Students (millions)	1970 Students (millions)	% Increase	1960 Students (millions)	1970 Students (millions)	% Increase
1st level	118.9	201.4	69	26.9	43.3	61	7.46	12.81	72
2nd level	18.2	42.4	133	3.9	10.3	164	1.78	4.09	247
3rd level	2.1	5.5	162	0.6	1.5	150	0.09	0.43	357

Sources: 1) World Bank (1974), Annex 1

2) UNESCO (1975, Table 1)

No precise evidence is offered by Carnoy to underpin the different elements of this sweeping indictment, but such a view of American official policy is in any case dated. USAID as well as the World Bank nowadays deplore the situation which they themselves have helped to bring about with advice and the injection of resources. They do now advocate different and less 'colonialist' policies. Listen to the World Bank's analysis:

> "Education systems have been irrelevant to the needs of developing countries during the last two decades because education policies were often keeping company with overall development strategies which were themselves irrelevant to the societies and conditions of developing countries. Emphasis on the development of the modern economic sector, providing employment to a small and intensively trained elite, leads to the neglect of the 60-80% of the population living in sectors characterized by traditionally lower productivity."
> (World Bank, 1974:3)

But the result of those now condemned policies of the past has been that whatever the growth of enrolments at the primary level,[13/] there has been a much more dynamic and rapid expansion of post-primary schooling (an essentially urban phenomenon). This has been true everywhere in the less developed world. It has been especially true in Latin America, with the Brazilian case being extreme in its post-primary bias. Table 1 gives the figures for the decades 1960-1970.

13/ Enrolment figures, of course, only tell us half the miserable story of neglect - the other half being told by drop-out and repetition rates which show that most children (especially in rural areas) never come near to being schooled, let alone educated. (cf. UNESCO/IBE, 1972; UNESCO, 1975.)

III. Colonialism as (Class) Domination

This issue of the inflated growth of the secondary and tertiary levels of education leads us to the second broad usage of the term colonialism in this context. That usage does not merely refer to direct external influences, but typifies certain internal features of a society as 'colonial'. It considers education to be a form of colonialism where it perpetuates - and is in turn determined by - certain structural characteristics of a society, specifically those which negatively affect the life-chances of numerically important population groups who are 'exploited' by those who dominate the society's institutions.

The dependency school is characterized by this approach, even though the actual term 'colonial' is little used. However, and this is in line with my earlier general remarks, I am not aware that the perspective has yielded, in the field of education, anything that goes beyond generally plausible, semi-empirical statements.[14/] Not even Carnoy has much to offer beyond mere assertions about the operation of trans-national mechanisms in the contemporary world.[15/] But then, he does not define colonialism essentially in a trans- or international way. His conception is more akin to González

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14/ Richard Stanton, who helped me prepare this paper, graphically described the state of affairs in a personal communication: "Much variation in the level of analysis; fragmentary, picking at scattered and often small bits of 'cultural life'; nonchalant in many cases - remarks jotted down for the sake of stirring up debate, with no attempt to push the analysis very far."

15/ He does, of course, devote close attention to the historical study of the educational systems of a number of 'colonial' countries (including Brazil) before the emergence of the dependence theorists' transnational system. A more recent, useful (but still quite broadly sketched) dependency-oriented piece on Brazil is Heimer (1975).

Casanova's "internal colonialism".[16/] In this sense, colonialism becomes the equivalent of domination, or rather, exploitation; and a child's passage through the educational system - or, for that matter, as in most of rural Latin America, the fact that he has only the most ephemeral and cursory contact, or no contact at all, with the school - prepares him for his 'proper' role in an exploitative society: to be privileged or to be oppressed.

> "The colonial element in schooling is its attempt to silence, to rationalize the irrational, and to gain acceptance for structures which are oppressive. Such colonization does not require imperialism ... since one class can colonize others, men can colonize women, whites can colonize blacks... "
> (Carnoy, 1974:19)

I was tempted to add to Carnoy's list: "teachers can colonize their students, parents can colonize their children", and though we broadly speaking understand even those statements, there surely must be limits to the acceptability of using any <u>one</u> term to cover such a great variety of relationships.

This kind of usage of colonialism takes us well away from its historically limited sense. The core that can be rescued is, perhaps, its emphasis on structurally generated and perpetuated

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16/ González Casanova formulated his ideas under the impact of his observation of Mexican society and the ethnic and cultural overtones given to the economic and political domination there of the rural/poor/Indian population. He saw clear parallels with the typical situation of economic exploitation in the 'classical' colonial territories, with monopolization being "extended to mass culture and the sources of information." (González Casanova, 1965:29.) Carnoy's analysis of the education of American Blacks from the second half of the nineteenth century to 1930 comes closest to using this particular conception of internal colonialism.

oppression. There is the suggestion that this usually expresses itself in economic terms and arises out of the economic structure (Carnoy is, after all, essentially concerned with capitalism), but it does seem strange that such a blanket concept should reappear on the scene more than half a century after Max Weber tried to show the need for proper analytical distinctions in the discussion of hierarchy and exploitation. Weber, remember, spent a good deal of his life in showing that Marx's conflation of class, status and power differences hindered rather than helped us to understand inequalities (Gerth & Mills, 1948). Similarly one can argue that Carnoy - though aware of the distinction between, say, sex discrimination, racial segregation and class perpetuation - confuses the issues by calling all of them forms of colonialism. But Marx has the edge on Weber (and Carnoy places himself in the same Marxian tradition) by concentrating more clearly on the relationships embodied in the inegalitarian structure. He focussed not merely on differential life chances, but - beyond those - on the manner in which such differences are perpetuated to the benefit of some, and on the thus created oppressive or exploitative structures.[17/]

Schools play their part in these mechanisms which uphold the unequal society, and in modern societies where class predominates they underpin the class system. Modern class systems are characterized by meritocratic ideologies: the best people will reach the best positions, regardless of their family background. Those ideologies gloss over the structural

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17/ In this respect, too, Carnoy approximates the approach of González Casanova (though he is never mentioned in Carnoy's book), whose monograph Sociología de la Explotación (1969) deals with relations rather than inequalities.

advantages inherent in coming from the 'right' background - be it the middle class or bourgeoisie under capitalism, or the Party in the Soviet Union (Bottomore, 1971:262-6). Schools supposedly exist to help in this process of meritocratic selection, while in reality even in 'advanced' and 'open' capitalist societies most of the difference in school achievement can be explained by class background rather than by intelligence.

> "Equalization of educational opportunities does not automatically generate significant changes in income distribution and social mobility. The impact of education on mobility appears to be determined essentially by the pattern of stratification and the socio-economic system of rewards in each society." (World Bank, 1974:35/6)

In Carnoy's worlds, class background "is still the most important variable in predicting how far a person gets in school." (Carnoy, 1974:323 - itals. in original), and this is true as much for Britain as it is for Brazil.[18/]

In Britain children go to school until they are fifteen, but at the end of it all some go to the more skilled, more stable, and (in the long run) better paying occupations, while others must accept the tougher, unskilled and ultimately 'dead end' jobs. There is abundant evidence that the latter, on the whole, go to those who come from working class backgrounds, and unskilled ones at that. This results from a vicious circle, where poor children do generally badly in school, and are typified as 'failures' early in life because they were unable to succeed at the tests and exercises which the school uses as gateways to selection. In fact, "from a fairly

18/ How different this sounds from the views that were dominant fifteen or twenty years ago. Many of the confident assertions that modern industrial societies, through the school system, allocate social positions mainly according to talent can be found in Halsey et al. (1961).

early age low status /children/ are taught to narrow their social horizons", and in the schools the children come to believe that "the system is basically sound and the role they are allocated is the proper one for them to play."[19/] There is some evidence that, in Britain at least, adolescents from unskilled, working-class backgrounds contribute to this process themselves, by setting up a 'rough' sub-culture in the school which helps to prepare them for the acceptance of their 'place in life' and the less desirable jobs at the centre of it (Willis, 1976).[20/]

In a country such as Brazil, on the other hand, the mechanisms are both more directly visible and more complex. The allocation of resources which made possible the unparalleled expansion of secondary and especially higher education (see Table 1, above) happened to the detriment of primary education in the first place - so that by this means the vast majority of children were a priori excluded from participating in the race for individual betterment. For while official figures indicate that the rates of school attendance at the end of that decade of phenomenal expansion in post-primary education (1970) were 44% for the age-group 5 to 9 years, and 69% for the age-group 10 to 14 years, they also show that in the urban areas 60% of the entire primary school population (Grades 1-6) were to be found in the first two grades - a proportion that rises to 79% in the rural areas. In contrast, the percentage of all primary school children found in the last two grades (which have to be

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19/ Respectively from Parkin (1972:64) and Carnoy (1974:13). In both cases italics in original.

20/ Over the past 15 years Bernstein has assembled an impressive body of evidence from Britain to show the importance to the perpetuation of class differences of the fundamentally different 'types' of language learned and used by children from working or middle class homes ('restricted'-v-'elaborated' codes). Schools tend to reinforce those differences. See Bernstein (1973).

completed before secondary school can be started) were respectively a mere 6% and 2% for the urban and rural schools (UNESCO, 1975:Tables 2 & 3). No wonder the absolute number of illiterates increased in Brazil between 1960 and 1970.[21/] For the Brazil of the boom conditions of the early seventies this situation was neither 'functional' nor 'efficient'. That, at least, seems to have been the conclusion of the Brazilian Government when it launched the massive remedial effort at literacy training embodied in MOBRAL (see below). But it is significant that this effort - as well as others in similar circumstances - displays the same meritocratic ethos, the same individualistic emphasis on equalizing opportunities for the attainment of qualifications that should lead to the desirable jobs, which has demonstrated its limitations in the industrialized countries and has proved to be a chimera in most societies of the Third World. Because both there and in industrialized societies the stress on individual merit masks the structural characteristics of the system which are the very reasons why success is only given to the few - even where, as in Brazil since the end of the sixties, the few have obviously been expanding considerably.

It is precisely those structural characteristics which must lead to rather pessimistic conclusions on the chances for change. The educational system not only transmits the skills needed for different occupational positions, but is also one

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21/ The census figures show almost 16 m. illiterates in 1960 and 18 m. in 1970. They constituted respectively 39% and 33% of the population aged 15 and over (UNESCO. 1975: Table 5). I have not been able to find a discussion of these figures, but they seem to me prima facie incompatible with the data on the primary school population quoted above (especially the very high proportion of rural children in Grades 1 and 2).

of the most important mechanisms for the reproduction - or the strictly controlled change - of the social order. To some extent schools help to limit the number of aspirants for the better paying positions, as previous paragraphs have shown. But increasingly they are given the role of selecting those who will have a chance to get the more desirable jobs and higher incomes. Where those desirable jobs are relatively few (e.g. in an economy with limited and only slowly growing modern sector employment), and/or where the reward structure is very unequal, the competition will be fierce - and failure widespread. But who can blame a child from a poor rural family for aspiring to an urban job, if he knows that the urban bias in his society (Lipton, forthcoming) condemns a peasant to life-time poverty while there are well-paying jobs in town, and genuinely believes that he has a chance of landing one of those jobs if only he gets a school-leaving certificate?

This selection function of the schools interferes with their supposed educational functions, through the 'back-wash' effects of exam orientation on curricula and on teaching methods, and through the gradual pushing up of minimum diploma requirements for any particular job ('qualification escalation').[22/] If only schools would no longer be expected to select children (by means of achievement tests) for occupational roles, a central 'conservative' function of the educational system with respect to the reproduction of the social order would be eliminated. This is the kernel of certain recent proposals for educational (and, by implication, social) reform.[23/]

22/ Discussed extensively in Dore (forthcoming) and, more briefly, in Dore (1974).

23/ (ibid.) See, for an early statement of this proposal, Schelsky (1961:418f.).

It is doubtful that such proposals will be taken up in the absence of a much broader commitment to social change. The operation of any alternative system of selection (by quotas, for example, or by strict aptitude testing) usually presupposes a simultaneous reduction in reward differentials, at the very least in the early years of people's occupational careers (ILO, 1971). And as the reward structure is at the very heart of the existing social order, it is strongly defended by those who benefit from it. It is, therefore, not fortuitous that it has exercised such a predominant influence on the educational system. Were the reward structure to be changed, educational reform could easily follow suit. It is much more difficult to imagine that a push for greater equality can start, or rather will be allowed to start, from the schools.

IV. De-school Society?

The conclusion of the last section points to one of the fatal flaws in the proposals of Ivan Illich (1971), who wishes to 'de-school society'. But his scheme is objectionable for reasons other than the fact that it appears to believe in the possibility of a frontal attack on the social order through changes in the educational system. Illich and his followers[24/] attack schools for a lot of good reasons, many of them closely related to the arguments presented above. But their whole conception is based on an alternative blueprint, which just might in part have some remote relevance to (and chance of implementation in) the richest countries of the world, but which is as impractical for the less developed nations as it is irrelevant to their poor inhabitants. In its application

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24/ See especially Reimer (1971).

of inappropriate (as well as blatantly and dangerously utopic)[25/] views developed with reference to Western industrialized nations, the Illich prescription is in a sense itself an expression of colonialism, and an imposition on dependent societies. This is all the more ironic as it is assumed, in good free-enterprise style, that the aggregate outcome of the individual choices of all de-schooled learners will be socially desirable and that, left alone, children will somehow discover the social values which man has striven through ages of painful experience - not very brilliantly, perhaps, but at least with a measure of success - to incorporate into civilization. My colleague, Ronald Dore, has dealt with the Illich arguments in extenso. Even though he announces his paper as a "malicious little piece written under the influence of post-lectoral depression induced by the books discussed" (Dore, 1972:cover), and indeed occasionally allows his enthusiasm to run away with him, it is compulsory reading for anyone seriously tempted by the school of de-schoolers.

For, as both Carnoy and Dore point out, whatever the drawbacks of class-biased schooling, however much the educational system serves to keep most people 'in their place', abolishing schools rather than improving them will be most detrimental precisely to children from poor (or 'colonized') backgrounds. Some form of schooling, organized with at least a modicum of centralization and lasting the fairly lengthy period necessary for children to develop their mental capacity at an appropriate pace, is still the best hope for them to acquire the tools of reasoning and understanding without which they will have no chance at all of a sustained improvement in living standards.

25/ See de Kadt (1970:64n) for a discussion of the distinction between utopian and utopic views; the term 'utopics' refers to the belief that it is actually possible to construct the ideal society, free from domination, 'evil', contradictions, etc.

This is not to deny the weight of the structural factors discussed in the previous section. But no society has water-tight mechanisms of social control and perpetuation, none is free from 'contradictions', nowhere can social prediction pretend to be more than probabilistic.[26/] Although less everywhere than the meritocratic promise would have us believe, schools have enabled individuals from humble backgrounds to be socially mobile, and schools can help and have helped to create an awareness of the social and economic processes of iniquitous ('colonial') societies - despite the fact that they were not "programmed" to do so (Carnoy, 1974:58).

Those looser kinds of alternative arrangements proposed by the de-schoolers will, if they work for anyone at all, work for the children of the rich and the middle class. It is preposterous to see them as suited to the circumstances of the children of the poor and the oppressed. I leave it to my audience to imagine what a peasant's child would make of 'skill-models', and how he would engage in 'peer matching' and the other even fancier school-replacing devices in the real world in which he is unfortunately forced to live.

V. Non-Formal Education: What Kinds of Programmes and Who Benefits?

The picture, then, is far from pretty. Schools have clearly done an awful job. The children of the Latin American rural poor have been allowed to fall by the wayside. In the urban areas the problems of schooling for qualifications (diplomas), as opposed to schooling for jobs (let alone for education), are increasingly making themselves felt. Partly as a result of

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26/ This was heavily emphasized by Max Weber. Cf. his discussion of life chances (Gerth & Mills, 1948, Ch.7, 'Class, Status and Party').

these problems, increasing attention has been paid in recent years to various programmes of so-called non-formal education, not so much to replace the schools (à la Illich) but to complement them and to pick up the pieces where the schools have failed. I now want to turn to those programmes which (in contrast to schools) are mainly directed at adults, and ask whether they have operated in a less 'colonial' way than has been imputed to the schools.

We could spend a long time discussing to what extent the very term 'non-formal education' refers at all clearly to a particular set of educational programmes. In many ways it doesn't, for the projects that are usually grouped together under this label are of an extremely diverse nature. But however much we might wish to argue that the distinction between formal and non-formal education leads us into something of a methodological (and practical) cul-de-sac,[27/] the term is clearly here to stay. It may be fuzzy at the edges, but no more so than 'colonialism'. Coombs & Ahmed (1974:8) define non-formal education as:

> ".. any organized, systematic, educational activity carried on outside the framework of the formal system to provide selected types of learning to particular subgroups in the population, adults as well as children. Thus defined, nonformal education includes, for example, agricultural extension and farmer training programs, adult literacy programs, occupational skill training given outside the formal system, youth clubs with substantial educational purposes, and various community programs of instruction in health, nutrition, family planning, cooperatives, and the like."[28/]

27/ This is argued in greater detail in an earlier paper, written jointly with John Oxenham (de Kadt & Oxenham, 1975). The following discussion draws in part upon that paper.

28/ I am not, in this paper, discussing informal education, the life-long process of socialization and learning that takes place at home, at work, in play and leisure, without being specifically organized for the purposes of learning.

Apart from general literacy (or basic education) programmes, most non-formal education projects address themselves to limited problems and limited audiences. Consequently, they can be approached as much from the educational perspective (and hence form part of discussions on educational alternatives) as they can be from the 'sectoral' angle (and so relate to much wider discussions of development problems). So the interconnections between educational issues and wider socio-economic or even political processes spring to the fore much more directly than was true for the case of schooling.

Agricultural extension services have engaged in non-formal education for decades before the term was ever invented. Where they have failed in whole or in part, such failures have generally not been blamed on their educational methods, but on their lack of relevance and adequacy to the needs of farmers, and on the limitations imposed upon them by structural conditions beyond their control and beyond the reach of the extension services (Coombs & Ahmed, 1974:passim). A course in land improvement can have little appeal for tenant farmers with no security of lease; a course teaching better production methods has little attraction for sharecroppers who must hand over a high proportion of their crop to landlords. In both cases land reform or the reform of tenancy arrangements depend upon political decisions and the will and capacity to implement them. Similarly, health services have, at least in theory, engaged in health education. But what good are courses in child nutrition in circumstances where subsistence plots are simply too small or wages simply too low to allow for adequate food consumption of the household? For a final example we can turn to family planning programmes - projects of non-formal education if ever there were any. The unholy alliance of conservative Catholics and radical anti-imperialists has

produced a considerable ideological smokescreen around the issue of birth-control, but it is undeniable that in many places family planning programmes have not been notoriously successful. It can hardly be argued that this was mainly due to deficiencies in their educational approach: too much evidence exists by now that the main causes of high fertility lie in the complex of economic and social conditions of poverty (including high infant mortality), and that the birth rate will fall when living standards improve rather than vice versa (cf. Cassen, forthcoming).

Rather similar remarks can be made with respect to most (adult) literacy and basic education programmes. The history of attempts at eliminating illiteracy tells of few success stories (Cuba is the best known, perhaps) and has a monotonous refrain of failures. The limited resources available in most cases may have something to do with it (and this may conversely explain at least part of the success claimed for MOBRAL, to which I shall return below). But even where considerable financial, material and technical assistance was given by international organizations, as in the UNESCO sponsored Experimental World Literacy Programme (EWLP), almost everywhere the results were frankly meagre (UNESCO/UNDP 1976:174). It is now increasingly recognized[29/] that there can be little incentive to learn how to read and write if those skills lead nowhere in particular, if the claims of a basic education movement to help the peasantry to "learn how to eat well, how to protect his health and how to maintain good relations with his fellow men" are frustrated by the social and economic

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29/ See, for example, Meister's perhaps somewhat long-winded but useful discussion (Meister, 1973).

circumstances which brought about ignorance in the first place.[30/] Non-formal education programmes can no more circumvent or subvert the society's reward system, and the inequalities institutionalized through it, than can the formal education system discussed above. 'Learners' have, on the whole, not been slow to notice this.

Even so, people did participate, and it is relevant to ask whether some groups benefited more than others. The answer is clearly affirmative. There is a great deal of evidence that it has been the better-off, whether a project was originally conceived of as an effort in development (rural development, community development, co-operative development, or what have you), or in education.

There is a vast literature on the so-called Green Revolution in Asia - the introduction of high-yielding varieties of rice and cereals, together with fertilizer, pesticides, and agricultural extension/farmer education services. The results are beyond doubt: it has helped the middle peasants to become rich peasants, and has led to widening income differentials, and to at best very modest absolute gains in living standards

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30/ The quote is from the first public statement of the aims of MEB, the Brazilian church-sponsored basic education movement started in the beginning of the 'sixties (de Kadt, 1970:150). I traced the decreasing effectiveness of MEB after 1964 in Catholic Radicals in Brazil and linked it specifically with the decreasing relevance of literacy or basic education to a peasantry which had no chance to 'use' the offered knowledge because of economic, social and political repression. Similarly there are good reasons to doubt the efficacy of ACPO in Colombia, that other church-related rural education organization, which is run as a major (commercial) enterprise. Its public relations are very good, and long catalogues of "statistically impressive accomplishments" (Coombs & Ahmed, 1974:78) are frequently quoted: But even Coombs & Ahmed allow us to surmise that reality is not so impressive: the actual impact of those projects "is, of course, extremely difficult to evaluate." (ibid.)

for the vast majority.[31/] Co-operatives in Latin America have been examined by Fals Borda (1971). The same story repeats itself: the larger farmers often take over, get most of the benefits, and are finally responsible for the break-up of the co-operative. ACPO in Colombia is said to have had very little effect on the landless peasants (Coombs & Ahmed, 1974:79). The fizzling out of the Indian Community Development programme and of Animation Rurale in Senegal has apparently also been caused by the way in which their egalitarian pretensions clashed with unequal local social structures (much more unequal in India, of course, than in Senegal), structures which have not been significantly altered as a result of the programmes (ibid.:68-74). And the EWLP projects are said to have shown "more than occasional preference for the most favoured of the impoverished", to the neglect of "the truly disinherited, often the majority of a nation's population" (UNESCO/UNDP, 1976:162).[32/]

Another, but related, issue was raised in the unusually frank and hence unusually valuable evaluation published by the sponsors of EWLP: some of the projects have also had discriminatory effects of a cultural (or ethnic) kind. The spoken, workaday language of the participants in the programme was sometimes a different one from that which was being used nationally:

> "In more than one country, the programme was used to spread (or impose) a dominant language among minorities who, in addition to being illiterate, did not speak that language. To some degree it played a part similar

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31/ See, for example, UNRISD (1972).

32/ How one wishes that this issue had been faced in the evaluation of MOBRAL (UNESCO, 1975). But then that was hardly an objective, let alone a critical, evaluation - but more a public relations job.

> to that of the European or North American primary school fifty or a hundred years ago, in the construction of a centralized state through the assimilation of ethnic or cultural minorities." (ibid.:169, italics added.)

Now, is this internal colonialism, or legitimate nation-building?

VI. Non-Formal Programmes: the Nature of External Influence

Before we take up again that conception of 'colonialism' which really focusses mainly on internal class relations, let us see how far the narrower issue of external influence is relevant to these non-formal education programmes. A good starting point is the observation of Coombs & Ahmed (1974:179ff.) that the vast majority of projects and programmes examined in their extensive review were heavily dependent upon financial inputs from abroad - mainly from rich country donor agencies or international organizations. Some of the irrelevancies remarked upon above may have resulted from this external influence, which usually also expressed itself through the presence of foreign advisors. For example, especially in Latin America but also in Asia, the agricultural extension programmes drew their inspiration very largely from North American experience. The theories developed there in the so-called land grant colleges (in close collaboration with the actual extension services) were transplanted by experts financed under US technical assistance, and the schemes they then set up abroad were often supported from the US aid budget (ibid.:27). Even better known is the case of family planning, for which well-nigh unlimited resources and expertise were made available to the less developed countries of the world by AID, the World Bank, and - latterly - UNFPA.

Literacy programmes, too, were inspired from abroad - even UNESCO's EWLP. There is considerable discussion of this fact in the programme's published evaluation. A standard 'package' was developed and adopted, with minor variations, by all participating countries (eleven in all), in part to make cross-national comparative evaluation possible. The limited adaptation to local conditions, and the tensions this occasioned, at least in some of the countries, between national staff with locally developed views and international experts, is reminiscent of the earlier arguments about imposed colonial(ist) education systems (UNESCO/UNDP, 1976:125 ff.). At the grass roots the system was "doubly dependent" for supplies and equipment - first on national headquarters and, at one remove, on foreign sources (ibid.:143). The materials used in the EWLP are said to have been "doubly foreign", even after translation, because they carried an "imported technical rationality" which took too little account of the technical rationality of the learners' milieu, as well as "inevitably alien value patterns" (ibid.). On the other hand, the programme helped some countries, notably Mali, to move away from the hitherto dominant language of the ex-colonial power.

This quick survey leaves us with an almost totally negative picture of external influence on non-formal education programmes, a picture that seems to fit rather closely with the general deprecation of aid that was so prominent only a few years ago (Hayter, 1971). In this context I must mention, at least in passing, that most of the major aid donors (e.g. the World Bank, USAID, the United Kingdom's ODM, Swedish SIDA, Canadian CIDA, or The Netherlands' Department of Technical Cooperation) are now proclaiming their intention to provide aid mainly to the poorest countries, and to the poorest

population groups within countries. Reality does not always measure up to these intentions, but of their sincerity there can be little doubt.[33/] Many statements could be quoted. For example, the World Bank's Sector working paper on education states that the Bank's overall policies:

> "include an increasing concern with the problems and needs of low-income countries and the promotion of development strategies to improve the well-being of the lower 40% of the population through increased productivity and employment and improved income distribution."
> (World Bank, 1974:6)

So, in education the Bank (and other donors, notably USAID) proposes to aid such projects, of a formal or non-formal kind, which will correct the outcome of past errors: the failure of mass participation, the practice of discrimination in selection and promotion through an elitist bias, and the favouring of "urban upper- and middle-income groups at the expense of the rural and urban poor" (ibid.:33).

Such views do not really fall on fertile ground in the government offices of most recipient countries. In fact, nowadays aid donors seem more often than not to be cajoling reluctant and hardly progressive governments into caring about their oppressed majorities. They do so with a dose of realism about the likely effect - "experience suggests

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33/ This does not mean, of course, that other government departments in the same countries do not pursue policies which contradict this new 'poverty focus' - and this is especially true for those ministries concerned with the promotion of trade and the well-being of the transnational corporations based in their country.

that relatively few countries will undertake the radical changes which many consider necessary" (ibid.:8) - but believe that a few properly displayed financial carrots might have at least some effect.

Some will, no doubt, argue that this is only the old imperialism in disguise, that the new policies merely promote the interests of the rich countries, for whom a continued aggravation of the situation of the world's poor could bring increasingly dangerous consequences. While refusing to contemplate a "New International Economic Order", they propose a few palliatives for the worst effects of the Old.

There is, I am sure, something in this viewpoint. The new poverty-focus of aid donors does arise in part from perceived self-interest. But there is also an element of enlightenment and moral concern in the new position.[34/] Whatever the balance between these two, it seems more pertinent to note that the alternative projects or programmes, which are so eagerly sought out by aid donors, will at best have a limited impact, especially in those societies where the distribution of wealth and income remain profoundly inegalitarian. Non-formal education for poor peasants means virtually nothing where land is monopolized in large holdings, or where agricultural wages are desperately low. Even development projects can hope to achieve little in such circumstances. I must repeat again: from all our evidence the conclusion must be that the key lies in the reward structures. Projects 'at the margin' cannot fundamentally transform these.

34/ The other side of the coin is that there is no guarantee whatever that the NIEO will necessarily benefit the world's poor, as opposed to the dominant groups in some poorer countries (and some very much richer ones, too!).

VII Projects for Class Societies?

But that is not all. Most of the new non-formal education projects for 'the poor' in a fundamental sense support those maldistributive reward structures, because they are based on the conception that the hope for individual betterment (in the existing competitive market situation) will be the learners' main motivating force. This is not necessarily so - for example, the whole thrust of Tanzania's educational policy, in formal as well as non-formal education, has been to steer children and adults away from competitiveness and towards cooperation, egalitarianism and participation.[35/] But, such exceptions apart, in general people participate in programmes, and programmes are provided, because there is a chance of getting a 'credential' (a certificate or diploma) which is seen as giving access to new opportunities, because there is a direct link between what is taught and an improvement in pay and prospects, or because supposedly the programme leads to higher incomes from self-employment.[36/] For example, in urban Brazil during the boom conditions of the early 'seventies, many adult males gave "the wish to be able to change their jobs and improve their way of life" as the reason for their participation in MOBRAL (UNESCO, 1975:34). Apparently, 'qualification-escalation' was occurring, and a MOBRAL certificate was becoming a pre-requisite (or a selection device!) for jobs which had previously been held by illiterates (ibid.:35).

I do not want to suggest that the motive of individual betterment is, in some general sense, morally or socially reprehensible. But in the circumstances prevalent in most developing countries, and certainly in those of contemporary Brazil, such an

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35/ See the clear, realistic, and (to me) politically and morally attractive statement by Tanzania's President, Education for Self-Reliance (Nyerere, 1967). Also, Gillette (1975) and, for the non-formal education sector, Hall (1975).

36/ The closer the link between the learning programme and the improved opportunities, the more likely it is that people will persevere. For example, of a large number of correspondence courses surveyed in Africa, the most successful was a teacher training course which awarded an immediate increment in salary to its graduates upon receiving the certificate. A similar situation obtains with respect to school teachers obtaining a degree from Britain's Open University. For a more detailed discussion see de Kadt & Oxenham, 1975.

orientation to individual improvement is open to attack on two grounds. In the first place, for the same reasons given above with respect to the meritocratic ethic of school systems: if society in reality does not provide to significant sections of its population the chances for individual advancement which are promised to the participants in non-formal education programmes, then their aims are at best unrealistic, and at worst a smokescreen which hides the structural impediments to success (internal colonialism, the class structure, dependent development, or what have you) for those who most want and need it.

In the second place, and more fundamentally, it can be argued that even where (temporarily?) success is not blocked (urban Brazil in the early 'seventies, for example) this will change none of the basic characteristics of inequality as anchored in the class structure. This line of argument can go on to suggest that the achievement of better living standards, or educational and other social and cultural improvements, are somehow not worth striving for within a class society. That particular ideological orientation I emphatically reject, and I therefore relay this second viewpoint presently with the strict qualification that (to me) any improvement is better than none. The point made is that the working class school leavers in England, who are prepared by the educational system, by their families, and by their peer groups for the jobs that go to the "failures", are analytically no different from the children of the urban poor in Sao Paulo.[37/] Both are victims of "colonialism" or class domination, both live in morally undesirable societies.

There is an echo of this viewpoint in the EWLP evaluation: the conception of modernization implicit in its projects (the "alien value patterns" mentioned earlier) appears "to correspond rather closely to a model of development embraced and propagated by industrial nations (perhaps particularly those of Western Europe and North America)" (UNESCO/UNDP, 1976:179). And particular attention is drawn to the fact that

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37/ Carnoy's concluding chapter broadly takes such a line (Carnoy, 1974:Ch.8).

all the criteria used to measure 'success' were individualistic ones - including the acquisition of relatively luxurious durable consumer goods - with a total disregard for the efforts that communities might have undertaken jointly and cooperatively to transform their milieu and their communal living conditions (ibid.:153). Although I have no first hand knowledge of MOBRAL, it is my impression that such questions (about the nature of the society for which it gives preparation) are also very pertinent in the present Brazilian context. The aims of the programme are, it seems to me, phrased in total coherence with the values of an inegalitarian, hierarchical, aggressively capitalist society, where it is important to understand "orders", to have proper "working habits" and to develop the kind of "creativity" which never asks any questions about the balance between "rights and duties" or about the constraints on the availability of "resources to improve living conditions" among those whose living conditions are the worst.[38/]

VIII Projects for Liberation?

Again we seem to be left with a bag full of troubles. But it would be wrong to suggest that there is no way in which education can try to serve the needs of the poor and the oppressed, that it must always function in subservience to the 'powers that be', always transmit their "dominant meaning system" (Parkin, 1972), always assume that the social, economic and political context is a given and provides a set of immutable constraints.

There is a fundamentally different 'strain' of programmes in this field, usually sponsored not by the authorities who represent the existing social order, but by a variety of voluntary agencies, community-oriented groups, etc. These lay great stress on self-discovery and self-definition, on the

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38/ I admit that this selective presentation leaves out a number of less 'objectionable' aims, about health, the home, the community, etc. (For the full list, see UNESCO 1975:39.) It may be that greater familiarity with the realities of MOBRAL's operation would lead me to make different inferences. If that were so, I would be delighted - but frankly very surprised, too.

joint nature of the enterprise shared by teachers (now called monitors, coordinators, or 'animateurs') and learners, and on transformation of the learner as well as of his milieu. We associate this view perhaps primarily with the name of Paulo Freire and his concept of the pedagogy of the oppressed (Freire, 1967 and 1972). One can argue that this approach is the very antithesis of 'education as a form of colonialism'.

Freire, as well as others who developed their ideas side by side with him during the turbulent years at the beginning of the 'sixties in Brazil,[39/] argues that education for the poor, the neglected, or the exploited groups in society had to be in the first place conscientisação. Such groups have to be helped to see their own position in a wider perspective, understand more clearly the social and economic forces to which they are subjected, and learn what kinds of changes (transformation) may be essential to bring about improvement in their situation. For Freire, the world of oppression has to be unveiled, and the oppressed must commit themselves to its transformation (Freire, 1972:31), so that they can be liberated.

There is one objection that needs to be considered as regards his otherwise creative and stimulating ideas: Freire's is a pedagogy and philosophy mainly geared to the circumstances of revolutionary transformation. But his elaborate analysis doesn't really take account of the fact that such circumstances are, in today's world, to say the least unusual. At times he forgets that knowledge does not necessarily lead to militancy: this depends on a person's life situation, and the tensions inherent in it (Meister, 1971:41). Nor is it true that transformational action (or 'praxis') necessarily leads to success. In many societies it may seem to the oppressed as though the only hope of improvement lies, indeed, in a revolution. And yet, to ignore the existing constellation of forces is wise neither from a political nor really from a pedagogical point of view - a fact which the proponents of conscientisação (and especially Freire himself) have not always sufficiently

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39/ The specific historical circumstances in which Freire and his ideas rose to prominence are examined in de Kadt (1970).

remembered, and ought indeed to have learned from Marx.[40/]

The humanist and egalitarian emphasis in Freire's pedagogy is, without a doubt, an important counter-weight to the elitist, we-know-best approach taken by so many 'educators' in non-formal programmes. There may be a great deal peasants do have to 'learn', but that does not mean they just have to be taught and brought the benefits of modern civilization. On the contrary: that 'civilization' is usually heavily loaded against their long term interests, and it is of prime importance that they achieve a fuller understanding of their social milieu and the economic forces to which they are 'subjected'. Freire insists that such understanding can be brought about only if the starting point of learning is the peasants' own set of perceptions, values and behaviour patterns. So, whoever goes out to teach also has a great deal to learn, and those who see in this symmetrical relationship, and in the disappearance of the distinction between "he-who-knows and he-who-doesn't-know", the essence of a humanistic "andragogy" (Furter, 1975:131), have certainly emphasized a fundamental issue in the debate with which we are here concerned.

The proponents of community development can be regarded in some respects as precursors of Freire, as they have long emphasized the importance of 'non-directiveness' and the acceptance of the community's own 'felt needs'.[41/] In a recent reflection on that perspective, Batten (1974) does note some of the practical disadvantages of non-directiveness, but in the end comes down firmly on the side of the community development movement's long established belief that the community knows best. This leaves one wondering about issues of efficiency, coordination (between

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40/ A more trenchant criticism is made by Griffith (1972), who points out that Freire rejects dialogue with those who do not join or who oppose the revolution, as the revolution is seen as unquestionably self-justifying. Griffith in fact argues that, on a close reading, Freire is not really the tolerant humanist he seems at first blush. See especially pp. 71-76. For a somewhat milder critique see Stanley (1972), in the same volume.

41/ See de Kadt (1974:Chs 11-13), for a discussion of the importance of non-directiveness to the operation of MEB in Brazil.

different communities all pursuing their own felt needs), and mobilization and planning for development, issues that are very difficult to handle, given the assumptions about social interaction and social organization which community developers share with the 'andragogues' and others who propound similar fundamentalist 'anti-colonial' notions of education.

In a world where so much is manipulation, hierarchy and domination, I am sure that it is right to emphasize the antitheses of these phenomena. But while the conventional wisdom that defended and promoted 'colonial' type education needed to be challenged, there are dangers in the emergence of a kind of counter conventional wisdom, which takes an equally unbalanced approach to man, men, and institutions. For all the 'dialogue' in the world, a sine qua non of any educational activity is that the educator perceives - according to his own understanding and on his own terms - a need for 'educating'. He may respond to the learners, but still, however much he, too, is prepared to learn, he must ultimately feel that he has something to transmit. This seems to me unquestionable with regard to children and adolescents, where asymmetrical teaching is both unavoidable and quite effective. 42/

In the wider field of non-formal education and associated development projects, it has to be emphasized that not all modern technical expertise is somehow technocratic. Correspondingly it needs to be stressed that not all traditional knowledge is worth preserving. For example, modern health care, with a proper concern for the real problems of rural people, may usefully work with indigenous practitioners, but not all their practices are equally worth incorporating and some of them are positively harmful. Not all 'felt needs' of rural communities are necessarily desirable - and if anyone thinks this is merely because under capitalism people have

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42/ There seems to be no proof at all that the more extreme views of intra-school permissiveness have been particularly beneficial where the education of the young is concerned. In Britain there has recently been a renewed interest in the merits and demerits of 'progressive' education, after the publication of Bennett et al. (1976), reporting research by a team at Lancaster University.

been manipulated to want the wrong kind of things, they should ask themselves why so much inducement of needs and manipulation of opinions seem necessary in the People's Republic of China.

In retreating from oppression, we must not retreat into utopics. Egalitarianism or 'anti-colonialism' à l'outrance refuses to face up to the need for compromise, and cannot come to terms with those human and social differences which no wishing can wish away.[43/] It leads easily to the total rejection (à la Illich) of all large-scale modern institutions. But, more subtly, it can also lead to a belief that all our evils derive from bad social and political institutions and systems (such as those of capitalism), and have nothing to do with those aspects of human nature which psychoanalysts regard as part of the 'instinctual drives', bundled in the Id, and which Christians put down to 'original sin': the considerable dose of aggression, selfishness and wickedness inherent in all of us, which somehow needs to be tamed, and which never is tamed completely. More than thirty years ago Reinhold Niebuhr wrote an exceptionally wise and insightful book about this.[44/]

IX. A Few Concluding Remarks

I started to try and say something about the different uses of the word 'colonialism', and its relation with education. In surveying the field, I increasingly came to feel that 'old-fashioned' class analysis was still the most helpful approach to the basic problems of domination and structural inequality which lie at the root of the educational institutions in developing countries. 'Dependency' added, indeed, the critical dimension of the interplay between internal and international structures, but in the field of education it still appears an empirically weak analytical tool.

43/ See Dore (1974) for a sensitive discussion of this issue.

44/ His The Children of Light and the Children of Darkness (1944).

Foreign influence has been widespread, especially on formal school systems, and the use of educational institutions to serve the political, social and economic aims of colonial powers has been well-established. More subtle are the issues of 'auto-colonization', not least because they cannot be divorced from the scientific and technological superiority of Western capitalist nations. The values and orientations of advanced societies have also been transmitted to developing countries through non-formal programmes - with the result that projects have often been irrelevant and inadequate, yielding very few practical results for the people they were aimed at.

I traced this inadequacy, in the final analysis, to the fact that educational institutions and programmes were subordinate to and 'in the service of' the dominant social order. While they may make a difference at the margin, they can never counter the basic forces that emanate from a society's reward structure, and the institutions that govern the distribution of wealth and resources. This is true for schools as well as for non-formal projects. Most of the latter have benefited better-off groups. The new poverty-focus of aid donors, though welcome, will not change those basic facts in inegalitarian societies.

As for education for liberation, of the Paulo Freire variety, it certainly holds out greater hopes, because it starts from a position which is politically and socially opposed to the oppressive structures of class society. There is a streak of utopics in this, however, especially since some of its proponents appear to believe in the possibility of achieving perfect social and political institutions through liberating education, based on dialogue in full equality. I conclude in the most tentative way that this kind of activity can help us move away (somewhat) from oppressive class-based 'domestication'. As long as we don't make too formidable claims for it.

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