

Professor Muir adequately pointed out the inconsistencies between what is known 'fact' and the ideals which every socialist would wish to pursue. The point which he fails to see however is that the reason for these inconsistencies lies not in the ideals of socialism but in what he accepts as the 'facts' of the situation. We are presented in the caveat with a picture of how an educational psychologist would go about his job in the Local Education Office. He has a job to do - i.e., he must fill a certain number of grammar school places - 'intelligence' tests have been designed to be the best predictors of success in the grammar school. It's all so simple. The public believes that his tests are measuring some fixed quantity of mental ability and recognise the fairness of his procedure. He knows that his tests measure nothing of the sort - they simply measure aptitude for grammar school education at a certain point in time - the circular nature of their validation techniques ensures this. Thus we must be convinced that the grammar school system and all it represents constitutes the ideal in education and the only means of preparation for the 'professional' occupations.

We are told that 'Equality in Education' covers up as a dirty secret the 'fact' that some children are more 'intelligent' than others. So it does - what it should have done, is to proclaim from the rooftops that the current explanation of 'intelligence' differences covers up a whole multitude of dirty secrets.

For it all depends upon what you mean by intelligence. The sort of 'intelligence' which the tests measure is as much a function of social class position as it is a reflection of the level of mental ability. In fact it seems reasonable to argue that the verbal section of an 'intelligence' test is one of the best indicators of social status position we have. As Floud and Halsey have so conclusively argued 'measured intelligence is well-known to be an acquired characteristic'. That this particular characteristic of ability to score on present intelligence tests is held to a higher degree by the middle class is due, not to statistical superiority in basic intelligence (Hebb's intelligence A - 'some quality of the central nervous system ultimately determined by genes'); but to the fact that the sampling of mental behaviours which goes to make up present tests has been from abilities which are stimulated within the middle-class culture.

One can discern forces acting upon the testing situation from two directions. From above, the circular techniques of validation (a good item is one which the 'best' pupils answer best), and the inclusion of items which test in a small range of knowledge and ability-spheres (those which the grammar school emphasise at the present time), bias the content of the tests so as to make them easier for middle-class children to answer. From below, that is, acting on the child, the social class influences upon learning stimulate different spheres of ability; similarly motivation towards the tests and work habits, are also developed differently in the social class cultures. Thus it is possible to explain the social class differences in tested intelligence very largely in terms of social class influences. There is nothing basic in this.

The basic question is how far do middle-class children tend to have better Intelligence A than the working-class. The answer, according to Halsey is that Intelligence A is likely to be near-randomly distributed

Intelligence and Education

Professor Muir's misgivings of the weakness of the arguments upon which socialist aims of education are based are not altogether misplaced. They seem decidedly thin at many points. It is very plain that if the educational system is viewed from the value standpoints which Professor Muir seems implicitly to accept as the immutable truths, there is very little chance of the socialist aims for education becoming anything more than a pipe-dream.

The weakness of much Labour writing on education seems due to the fact that the values upon which the present educational system functions are accepted, and consequently the attempt to tinker with the present system in order to achieve the aims of socialism often involves large-scale question begging and issue-avoiding.

between the social classes. This is the intelligence we should work from in formulating our blueprint for future educational development. If we accept this genetical picture of the situation the question for consideration is how far the present middle-class values, scholastic and personal, have intrinsic superiority over the working-class values, for it is the class of values which tends to force the working-class child to reject, or fail in, the educational system. Only if we can accept this superiority can we look upon the differences isolated out by the intelligence test as being real and useful.

If we are to judge mental capacity on a criterion of behaving and thinking intelligently in everyday life we have introduced a variable (i.e., social environment) which is of very great importance and which has hitherto been very largely discounted because 'environments in our own Western Civilisation are fairly standardised' (Vernon - *Recent Advances in Psychology* ... page 207). This leads to a belief on the part of test constructors that either (1) the different social classes stimulate broadly similar mental and physical abilities and/or (2) where social classes differentially stimulate development the resulting differences produced in the children are 'real' and must be taken into consideration. Hence the explanations of 'good' homes stimulating children in the 'right' directions, etc. There seems to be no appreciation that the lower working-class culture will be just as stimulating to the development of skills, mental, social and physical, in the direction of the norms which are esteemed within that particular culture.

The effects of working-class stimulation do not show up in the average performance on intelligence tests because of the presuppositions upon which the test is based. These presuppositions in turn are the products of an educational system which mirrors middle-class life. Therefore a child who is 'doing well' at school is in fact fitting himself into the middle-class norms of behaviour. Where children are incapable of doing this smoothly because of the totally different culture pattern within which they underwent their socialisation, they are misfits or unsuccessful pupils. I am not suggesting that this is an all or none process, clearly it is far from that; rather it is a tendency which militates against working-class performance to some degree.

Having argued that the social class differences in measured intelligence are the result of certain social class influences one is led to consider how they may be discounted. This is a particularly difficult thing to do because it involves a reconsideration of the whole basis of the grammar school curriculum. It is possible to argue that the grammar school by its very nature, prevents large numbers of pupils with adequate Intelligence A from entering or passing through it successfully. What then should be blamed? The grammar school, because it is unsuited to the way of life of the working-class; or the working-class, for not stimulating development in the direction which the grammar school insists are superior? One thing is certain - the two are incompatible to too large a degree for us to imagine that 'equality of opportunity' is an attainable aim given the present social class and educational systems,

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