PAULO FREIRE

- An Exploratory Study

A Thesis

submitted in partial fulfilment

of the requirements for the Degree

of

Master of Arts in Education

in the

University of Canterbury

by

A.S. Kleinman

University of Canterbury

1978
ACKNOWLEDGEMENT

To the beautiful Carole, who made it all possible.
CONTENTS

PREFACE .................................................................................................................. 1

CHAPTER

I.  INTRODUCTION ................................................................................................. 3
    1.  Overview and Intention .............................................................................. 3
    2.  Historical Background .............................................................................. 6

II.  MAN'S ONTOLOGICAL AND HISTORICAL VOCATION ....................... 15
    1.  Existentialism ......................................................................................... 16
    2.  Marxism ................................................................................................. 21
    3.  The Open Society .................................................................................. 29

III.  CONSCIENTIZATION ....................................................................................... 35
    1.  From Domination to Liberation ............................................................. 35
    2.  Systems versus Projects ....................................................................... 40
    3.  Praxis ..................................................................................................... 43
    4.  Words and Themes ................................................................................ 49

IV.  THE BANKING CONCEPT ........................................................................... 55
    1.  The Theory of Dependency ................................................................. 57
    2.  The Preservation of Capitalism ............................................................. 64
    3.  The Radical Education Movement ....................................................... 73

V.  CONCLUSION .................................................................................................. 86
    1.  Illiteracy - The Failure of Schools ....................................................... 86
    2.  Literacy - A Turning Point ................................................................. 88

BIBLIOGRAPHY ........................................................................................................ 95
1. PREFACE

Democracy and democratic education are founded on faith in men, on the belief that they not only can but should discuss the problems of their country, of their continent, their world, their work, the problems of democracy itself.

Democracy has been one of the oldest quests of mankind. That it is desirable requires no argument. The above declaration epitomizes the political and educational essence of Professor Paulo Freire's stand, on the side of all those who are in some way oppressed. It is at once apparent that Freire's concept of democracy and how best to achieve and maintain this educationally, is at variance with our more familiar notion of democracy and democratic processes. The exact nature of democracy in the setting of the developed capitalist nations of the world is of course perplexing, and it is especially so in today's underdeveloped countries. The struggle for democracy in Freire's native country Brazil, is inseparably connected with the revolution for socialism. Thus in examining Freire's problem-posing pedagogy of the oppressed we inevitably must cast serious reflection on our own system of education and the society it serves; and as Freire forewarns his readers, I am disposed to do the same: 'Accordingly, this admittedly tentative work is for radicals'.

I thus propose in this thesis to devote attention to Freire in a way that will hopefully add clarification to what

is meant by the fact that education can never be neutral, and at the same time, to evaluate the logic and ethicality of his revolutionary philosophy. My only theory, is that all Freire has done, he has done in the name of a greater democracy, a democracy without capitalism.
CHAPTER ONE

INTRODUCTION

I. OVERVIEW AND INTENTION

Paulo Freire is best known for his adult literacy campaigns in his native Brazil, from which he was forced into exile after the military coup of 1964, and for his book *Pedagogy of the Oppressed*. His other most notable works are *Cultural Action for Freedom and Education for Critical Consciousness*. In these three works Freire has developed an educational philosophy based upon a theory of radical social change through the use of an imaginative literacy campaign devoted to raising the levels of consciousness of the mass of Brazilian peasants.

Freire tells us that Brazil is a 'massified society of adjusted and domesticated men', a society in which the people have been 'manipulated by an oppressive elite into an unthinking, manageable agglomeration'. In contrast to massification stands 'conscientização' or conscientization which is the process of achieving critical consciousness in order that the learner may prepare himself to participate in the revolution to overthrow the oppressive elites, and thereby achieve a greater measure of human freedom and dignity. In assessing then, the soundness of a scheme whereby people are led out of a state of ignorance and oppression by being equipped with the necessary intellectual skills to change
that state, we must first and foremost look to Brazil, to the historical conditions which have prevented the majority of Brazilians from participating in their own government and their own destiny, and which have in turn given rise to Paulo Freire's distinctive brand of revolution. (This I will do by way of introduction in the remainder of Chapter One.)

In Chapter Two, I will discuss Freire's conceptions of human nature and the (perfect) human society. Freire sees people as essentially free and yet capable of greater freedom once they perceive their existence other than deterministically and fatalistically. Through conscientization, man 'educating himself' to the level of critical consciousness can bring about 'with his own hands' the transformation of any part of his environment he finds 'limiting'. I wish to argue in this Chapter that Freire's level of critical consciousness is class-consciousness, i.e. Marxian, and that somewhat paradoxically, it also rests heavily on the fundamental tenets of existentialism.

Perhaps the most central educational concept developed by Freire is conscientization. In this process adult learners undergo a sort of social psychoanalysis, in which not as recipients but as active subjects, they achieve a greater awareness of their ability to make their lives more purposeful and more meaningful. Instead of examining abstract problems in an objective detached manner, the learners focus on their real problems and are enabled through a 'praxis' or unity of reflective thinking and action to effect change in their lives.
This process, it will be shown in this Chapter, bears a certain resemblance to contemporary Western theories of education but in its most important respects, it differs markedly.

In Chapter Four I shall discuss Freire's 'Banking Concept'. According to this characterization of our traditional educational practices, the values of the dominant classes in (any) society are perpetuated by the depositing of myths in the minds of the young. In contrast to education for 'liberation', education for 'domestication' or banking education divides consciousness from the world and considers consciousness as an empty space within man, which is to be filled with contents. The anti-dialogical character of education for domination, Freire writes, implies an epistemological distortion, in which to know is reduced to a mechanical dualism expressed in the transference and reception of given facts. However one can only truly know to the extent that one 'problematises' the knowable world and thereby treats all knowledge not as unconditional and static, but as an on-going dialectical unity between learner and learnt.

I wish to examine here, the ways in which the banking concept of education is an integral part of a more general ideology of domination, that is, how it fits in with a greater theory of imperialistic dependency involving a colonial power and a colony, paralleling the relationship between teacher and taught. We may also see how the
banking concept serves to preserve this state-of-affairs, and how the so-called Radical Education Movement is attempting to change it.

In the final chapter I shall conclude the thesis by discussing the significance and implications of Freire's work for the benefit of democratic and more democratic systems of education everywhere.

II. HISTORICAL BACKGROUND

In order to do full justice to the meaning of Freire's revolutionary schema we must at the outset understand its historical origin in the wretched and impoverished existence of the peasantry in Brazil (and throughout Latin America generally). In this regard we must note the role of the Ligas Camponesas (Peasant Leagues) in making the peasantry increasingly aware of their plight. More importantly we must consider the political influence of the Brazilian Catholic Church, particularly in the late 1950's and early 1960's, and its responsibility for the creation of the Movimento de Educação de Base (Basic Education Movement). Having been familiarized with this vastly different cultural heritage, the reader may accept (perhaps) more sympathetically, what this man from Brazil has to say.

The colonial powers implanted in Latin America a form of social organization which to a large extent still exists today. Although there is considerable variation from country to country, and from region to region, on the whole the social
system in rural Latin America is characterized by the lamtfundia or the hacienda system. Under this system peasants are prevented from seeing their existence objectively. The traditional structure has used a more or less consciously applied defence mechanism whereby the peasants are kept subservient. This has been done through a form of patronage in which landlords maintain the image or myth of being paternalistic. Such an apparently benevolent relationship has been created easily since the hacienda was usually the only life peasants were aware of. They were and continue to be born into it and there is practically no way of escaping. They are completely dependent on it for survival, and this dependency is strongly enforced.

In the North East of Brazil (the poorest area) peasants have traditionally paid in money, kind or services a rent which was per year almost half the commercial value of the plot of land. It was in this area in the 1940's that the Ligas Camponeses began under the guidance of the Brazilian Communist Party. However it was not until the mid 1950's that they became really effective. For example, in 1955 as

2. (fazenda in Brazil.) I refer here to Peasant Rebellion in Latin America by Gerrit Huizer (1973). My other main source of material in this introductory section is The Political Transformation of the Brazilian Catholic Church by Thomas Bruneau (1974). The reader, if interested, may also refer to For the Liberation of Brazil by Carlos Marighela (1971) and The Shadow: Latin America Faces the Seventies by Sven Lindqvist (1972).

part of the campaign to make the Leagues known and respected, mass meetings and marches were held in Recife. On one occasion three thousand peasants marched to the Legislative Assembly when a session on land reform was being held. In August of that year, the Congress for the Salvation of the North-East held in Recife and attended by sixteen hundred delegates representing labour unions, educational institutions, government, business, industry and peasants, gave wide publicity to the problems of the North-East, and the Leagues benefitted considerably. In September 1955, the Leagues again demonstrated their existence by attending the First Congress of Peasants of Pernambuco, which ended with a mass demonstration of several thousand peasants through the streets of Recife. This similarly made a deep impression on urban public opinion and according to Huizer, gave the peasants possibly for the first time, a sense of their power.\(^4\).

As the radicalizing influence of the Peasant Leagues increased, the Brazilian Catholic Church eventually decided to become active in opposition movements or organizations which also sought to promote social change.

In terms of size, the Catholic Church in Brazil is the largest in the world, with approximately 94% of the 90 million population formally declared of the faith.\(^5\). Traditionally

4. Ibid. P.87.

the Church has always supported the status quo - its overall impact has unquestionably been a conservative one, directing adherents' attention to other-worldly or external sources of control. The individual cannot affect his own destiny; it is beyond his competence - it will happen 'se Deus guiser' (if God wishes). Furthermore, this form of religion has directly supported the patron-dependent relationship whereby an elite minority are entitled to rule and the mass of the population to follow. This is not to say that the Church was unaware of poverty and did not do anything to ameliorate the plight of those who suffered. For many years the Church received state resources to act in the social field and one important part of this field has been charity. The Church assisted the poor in the best traditions of Christian charity, and many religious orders existed in Brazil for no other reason than to comfort the suffering. However charity is one thing; social change another.

To a large degree the development of Freire's thought can be related to how the Church came to replace charity with attempts to achieve social justice. The eventual active promotion of social change on the part of the Church, was preceded by the formulation by a group of bishops, of an ideology designed both to justify and necessitate such action. The formulation of this ideology was a conscious policy of Dom Helder Camara, the moving force behind the progressive sector of the Church. The following statement by Camara is indicative of the (progressive) Church's new
role as a revolutionary and disruptive force in Brazilian life:

Through our own experience, we know that the treatment received by those who work in a social field varies completely according to whether they limit themselves to simple charity or whether they feel the need to go beyond this to fight for the development of people who now vegetate in a sub-human situation... They will be suspect and accused of being extremists and 'fellow-travellers' the moment that they realize charity is not enough, and that one must struggle in order that one's brethren, now debased by poverty, may achieve a measure of humanity.6.

Surrounded then, by a group of about ten other bishops, twenty or thirty priests and about the same number of young and active laymen, Camara developed an ideology in the process of questioning the past role of the Church, the nature of Brazilian society, and the proper role that the Church should play. Out of this questioning, the Church came to realize that an underdeveloped country by definition, could not offer the conditions under which man could be more fully human. The Church now came to be interested in the human aspect, for it had somewhat belatedly admitted that man is both body and soul and not just the latter.

The most important function of the Church in the creation among the peasantry of an awareness of their basic needs and of the possibilities of demanding and struggling for the fulfillment of those needs, was carried out through the

Movimento de Educação de Base (Basic Education Movement or M.E.B.) in the North East. Beginning in 1958 with radio schools, M.E.B. grew to become the largest programme in Brazil dealing with basic education.\(^7\).

Paulo Freire, born in Recife (in 1921) and raised in the evolving climate of the Roman Catholic religion, had, at age 38, earned a doctorate at the University of Recife and had also become a Professor of the history and philosophy of education at the same university. The Serviço de Extensão Cultural (Service of Cultural Extension) which he directed there, was through its 'popular culture circles', an integral part of the M.E.B. programme and later, when the National Plan of Adult Literacy was created by the Ministry of Education and Culture, Freire was handed responsibility for its coordination. If the Plan had not been terminated by the coup in April 1964, there would have been more than twenty thousand culture circles functioning throughout the country.

Through its use of radio schools and culture circles the M.E.B. was concerned not only with literacy training, but more importantly with social mobilization or politicization

---

\(^7\) By 1963 M.E.B. was operating 59 systems, using 25 radio transmitters and reaching some 7,353 schools in 57 dioceses in 15 states. Approximately 180,000 people attended the schools and by 1966, 400,000 students had completed one or more courses and 13,771 leaders had graduated. M.E.B. Em Cinco Anos: 1961-1966. A report in 2 volumes, published by M.E.B. Rio de Janeiro, 1966. Quoted in Bruneau, P.80.
through the concept of conscientização. Basically, conscientização is an awakening of consciousness. The masses in Brazil lack an awareness of their intrinsic values as human beings, of their ability to learn and grow and of their capabilities in bringing about changes in their life-situation and those of others. M.E.B. sought to create an awareness so that people could begin to control their own destinies. If the nature of the patrimonial - paternalistic society in Brazil is recalled, one can begin to appreciate the implications of a programme such as this. The society is elitist, the masses do not participate, and illiterates cannot even vote. Basic education, which offered literacy and awareness, would undoubtedly threaten the socio-political structures of Brazilian society particularly in the rural areas.

Thus M.E.B. was a very ambitious and a very serious and sophisticated programme, and it was aimed at bringing about large-scale structural change. Up to the coup however, it was not without its difficulties:

M.E.B. was established in fifty-seven dioceses, but it is impossible to know how many of the bishops fully appreciated the revolutionary potential in the process of conscientização. Some of them wanted the movement for prestige, others for catechism, some liked its health and agriculture aspect and some were apparently in favour of its revolutionary function.

8. This concept is dealt with fully in Chapter Three.

Apart from this equivocation within the Church, in one incident in which three thousand copies of M.E.B.'s new primer *Viver e Lutar* (To Live is to Fight) were confiscated by the authorities, a further split became clear between the society and the Church regarding social change. The debate in the news media, particularly the important conservative Rio de Janeiro daily, *O Globo*, was indicative of what many thought at the time:

The primer confiscated by the Rio police in a printing shop in Lapa is further proof of the intentions and plans of the Communists and their accomplices with regard to the Communization of Brazil. (If the Church was involved) ... it would not be the first case nor unfortunately the last, in which some priest, or even some bishop, through ingenuity or through a poorly understood social zeal or any other motive, becomes an involuntary accomplice of the Communists and an instrument of their subversive plans. 10.

It was not two months after this that the Brazilian government was overthrown by the military coup d'etat. The whole situation was reversed and repression began afresh. Many M.E.B. and Church leaders were arrested and their teaching materials confiscated. The Peasant Leagues, up to this time, had just started a campaign to create a more political organization of a 'Leninist' type, to give cohesion and a more defined structure to the whole movement. These leaders were imprisoned and many tortured. Freire himself

was exiled to Chile where he became a Professor at the University of Chile and a consultant to the U.N.E.S.C.O. Institute of Research and Training in Agrarian Reform. More recently he has served as consultant to the Office of Education of the World Council of Churches in Geneva, and presently (so I believe) he is assisting President Julius Nyrere of Tanzania in building a modern socialist state.

The 'culture of repression' is increasingly being felt by the peasants in Latin America and by all the oppressed peoples of the world to be illegitimate and inhuman. The various ways in which these people experience frustration may well make them more willing to participate in radical or revolutionary movements, as has happened in the recent past. Whether or not this revolutionary potential will be utilized must depend, in some measure, on the enlightening works of Paulo Freire (and others like him). Whether Freire is merely read in the West, or whether his ideas take root and begin to flourish, the rise of the Third World will surely trigger off disturbances by the rich as we seek to protect what we have accumulated under capitalism - those interests that run counter to a better and eminently more democratic living for two-thirds of the world's people.
CHAPTER TWO

MAN'S ONTOLOGICAL AND HISTORICAL VOCATION

Before we can proceed to analyze the actual methodology of Freire's revolutionary pedagogy, we must necessarily examine his philosophical assumptions of man and the nature of the society in which he would have man live. This examination is of course vital, since any educational practice or the planning of such, must involve an input in the form of an individual, 'school', or society, and an end-product, a state of mind or expertise to be achieved, accompanied by (but often expressed implicitly) a general societal goal. These constituent aspects of Freire's educational philosophy are embedded in an eclecticism which reaches far and wide - Hegel, Jaspers, Sartre, Marx, Popper and others. In order to uncover that which is most relevant I have chosen to consider Freire's concept of 'man's ontological and historical vocation' (as he calls it) as this relates firstly, to existentialism, and secondly, to Marxism. And then lastly, I will consider Freire's stand in relation to a term popularized by Karl Popper - the 'open society'.

1. Freire himself refers to 'Sartre and Mounier; Eric Fromm and Louis Althusser, Ortega y Gasset and Mao, Martin Luther King and Che Guevara, Unamuno and Marcuse' in Pedagogy of the Oppressed. P.10.
I. EXISTENTIALISM

Existential philosophical thought is predominantly a contemporary European phenomenon which gained particular popularity during the years between the two World Wars, with the work of Heidegger and Jaspers, and in France more recently, with Jean-Paul Sartre and Maurice Merleau-Ponty. Although Freire refers to the work of the others, it is Sartre to whom we shall look, if we are to further our understanding of Freire's revolutionary philosophy. By doing this, it can be shown how Sartre's ontological concept of the 'Pour soi', developed in his magnum opus Being and Nothingness, and Freire's 'man engaged in the ontological and historical vocation of becoming more fully human', are similar in respect of their both asking "what is it to be a man?" and "to be or not to be?" and both requiring an answer, but remarkably dissimilar in that whereas the 'Pour soi' is condemned eternally to finding no 'real' answer, Freire's man is given hope in the form of a revolutionary spirit and goal. And indeed it may also be understood why Freire came to augment a metaphysical or theological interpretation of man's life on earth with a belief in Marxism (and why Sartre too, although not altogether abandoning his method, came to concur with the more constructive message of the class struggle.2)

2. Sartre now acknowledges Marxism as the dominant philosophy of the age. See Humanism and Socialism by George Novack, P.150. To compare Sartre's change of heart, as it were, see Being and Nothingness and the preface to Frantz Fanon's The Wretched of the Earth (to which Freire also refers).
In *Being and Nothingness* Sartre takes great pain to
differentiate between two realms of being: Being-in-itself
and Being-for-itself. The former manifestation of Being is
characterized by its inertness, its passivity and its fullness.
It is determined being. It is a condition we may ascribe to
that of animals and to men living in an animal state. The
latter form of Being, Being-for-itself or 'Pour soi' is an
indeterminate manifestation of Being, and says Sartre, can
best be understood as freedom. Thus freedom according to
Sartre, is not something that one has but something that one
is. Human reality, Person, Human being and Freedom are all
equivalent or synonymous terms. He writes:

> What we call freedom is impossible to distinguish from the being of "human reality". Man does not exist first in order to be free subsequently; there is no difference between the being of man and his being-free. 3.

(And) I am condemned to be free. This means that no limits to my freedom can be found except freedom itself or, if you prefer, that we are not free to cease being free. 3a.

When Sartre says then, that 'man is what he is not and
not what he is', he is attempting to describe the most concrete
manifestation of that freedom. Freedom always entails the
notion of possibility - the possibility of becoming what one
is not. Throughout his works Freire also makes many references
to the essential freedom of man (unlike an animal) to be able

---

3a. Ibid. P.439.
to choose for himself the conditions of his existence and to the fact that this is never a finalized process:

Problem-posing education affirms men as beings in the process of becoming - as unfinished, uncompleted beings in and with a likewise unfinished reality. 4.

While both Sartre and Freire affirm that 'existence' stands always for a 'possibility' rather than a fact, that existence unlike mere living is what man has it in his freedom to become, Sartre's existentialism remains idealistic, in that man's existential situation is 'given' a priori as an ontological fact. Man is and remains absolutely free even in situations of utter determinateness. Freire, on the other hand, emphatically states that 'real' freedom must be understood in its historical forms; that it must be 'acquired by conquest' in the process of reflecting and acting 'with one's comrades' on the causes that cohere to produce 'unfreedom'. An eminent Marxist writer George Novack, has elucidated this problem well:

Freedom is one of those very general social categories that can easily be empty of definite content unless it is related to concrete circumstances. The problem of freedom has to be approached not 'in a metaphysical manner', but in its actual connection with the historical process. It must be asked: How did freedom originate? In what ways has it evolved? 5.

Sartre, writing at a time when the Nazi regime was at the height of its power and when France was occupied by German

armies, asserts in Being and Nothingness, that the essential freedom of man remains the same before, during and after, his totalitarian enslavement: For freedom is the very structure of human being and cannot be annihilated even by the most adverse conditions - man is free even in the hands of the executioner.\(^6\). It is perhaps understandable that in the midst of a world of totalitarian oppression, Sartre's 'Pour soi' is established as the locus of freedom, as the one irreconcilable 'known' (the Cartesian Cogito if you like) and is therefore entirely safe from the problems of the empirical world. However, for Freire's peasant actually living in a state of oppression and exploitation, such existential metaphysical philosophy offers neither solace nor hope.

For the early Sartre then, freedom is defined as a strictly individual liberty. The ontological concept of the 'Pour soi' reduces all men - oppressors and oppressed - to an abstract universal essence, and all are free to do what they will. Against this proclamation of the absolute freedom of man, Freire believes that the human condition cannot be interpreted purely in individual and ontological terms, but must be considered in the context of specific historical forces which shape the human society. In other words, whereas Sartre's interpretation of man's nature is wholly expressed in metaphysical terms, Freire admits of a

dialectic or reciprocal relationship existing between an individual's freedom and his historical circumstance. Herbert Marcuse has summed up Sartre's neglect of history thus:

In the concrete historical reality, the freedom of the 'Pour-soi' to whose glorification Sartre devotes his entire book, is thus nothing but one of the preconditions for the possibility of freedom - it is not freedom itself. 7.

It is obvious that Freire's revolutionary solution to the liberation of mankind presupposes man's freedom to seize this solution or in other words, that man must in a certain sense be 'free' prior to his liberation. But this 'freedom of choice' can in no way be equated with the sort of freedom involved in an actual 'plan for freedom'. Sartre also (as already mentioned) has since Being and Nothingness come to understand and appreciate more fully the plight of the oppressed and the prospect for their salvation through revolution. 8. It remains now to show how Freire, having been saved from the philosophical doom of (Sartrean) existentialism, is carried into the revolutionary future by his belief in a fundamental action-oriented Marxist philosophy of man and society.

7. Ibid. P.183.

8. Novack quotes Sartre as saying:"Metaphysical anguish and like emotions are a luxury of otherwise comfortable bourgeois intellectuals; alienation of this sort carries little weight alongside poverty and misery." Novack, G. Op.cit. P.149.
II. MARXISM

Of all the influences on the development of Paulo Freire's thought, no one could be said to have had a more profound effect than Karl Marx. Although Freire's actual pedagogy is distinctively his own, Marx's influence is clearly evidenced in Freire's philosophy of man, revolution and society. Marx's writings, spanning a period of some forty years, are of course voluminous and their impact continues to be felt throughout the world in a steadily growing body of literature. In this thesis, to attempt a detailed analysis of even the most important theories of Marxism, would be beyond its purpose; and I therefore intend merely to draw on those aspects of Marxism which will further our understanding of Freire - such a procedure must necessarily be selective and to a certain extent, must render Marx's views simplistic.

Freire's fundamental faith in the goodness of man and the belief in a better world to come, are essentially an expression of the optimistic creed of modern-day Marxism. The often referred-to crisis through which the Western world is going, is increasing our awareness of some of the basic shortcomings and defects of our present systems of social organization and life. To anyone who concentrates attention on these negative aspects of mankind's progress, particularly in the Third World, Marxism offers considerable attraction. Alongside the message of inevitable doom derived from the
analysis of the capitalist economy, Marxism's othermost reason for exerting this appeal, is its humanism - the stress on all the pernicious features of modern civilization, the hostility towards all institutions and practices that oppress, degrade or exploit, and the sanguine belief in the inherent goodness of mankind, which, under favourable historical circumstances, can be liberated from its fetters. Freire has relentlessly adopted this optimism and thus his philosophy remains utopian and hopeful. In the foreword to Pedagogy of the Oppressed, Richard Shaull declares that 'the development of an educational methodology that facilitates this process... could (also) contribute to the formation of a new man and mark the beginning of a new era in Western history'.

In a number of places in his major works, Freire distinguishes man from the animals, and is thereby able to derive the 'true' character of human practice and being. This philosophical anthropology is also found in Marx (in much greater detail) and indeed their wordings in this regard are often similar. In The Economic and Philosophic Manuscripts of 1844, Marx writes:

\[
\text{The animal is immediately one with its life activity. It does not distinguish itself from it. It is its life activity. Man makes his life activity itself the object of his will and consciousness. He has a conscious life activity.}\]

At times quoting Marx, Freire also stresses man's essential freedom to reflect on his very being:

... of the uncompleted beings, man is the only one to treat not only his actions but his very self as the object of his reflection; this capacity distinguishes him from the animals, which are unable to separate themselves from their activity and thus are able to reflect upon it. In this apparently superficial distinction lie the boundaries which delimit the action of each in his life space.10.

But this is just the beginning. According to Marx, men 'begin to distinguish themselves from animals as soon as they begin to produce their means of subsistence'. It is from the labour process that the whole of human practice derives its distinctive human character (just as it is from the forces of production and the relations which people enter into in using them that human society derives its specific features.)11. Furthermore, this labour process has become alienated from man and from itself under a system of private ownership of the means of production, characteristic of capitalism. Instead of enlarging freedom, Marx tells us, the alienation of labour increases human servitude and strips men of the capacities for self-determination and self-direction.

In the following two passages, Freire's understanding of this alienation of labour is made quite explicit:


Men are fulfilled only to the extent that they create their world (which is a human world), and create it with their transforming labour. The fulfillment of men as men lies, then, in the fulfillment of the world. If for men to be in the world of work is to be totally dependent, insecure, and permanently threatened - if their work does not belong to them - men cannot be fulfilled. Work which is not free ceases to be a fulfilling pursuit and becomes an effective means of dehumanization.  

(And) In our highly technical world, mass production as an organization of human labour is possibly one of the most potent instruments of man's massification. By requiring a man to behave mechanically mass production domesticates him. By separating his activity from the total project, requiring no total critical attitude toward production, it dehumanizes him. By excessively narrowing a man's specialization, it constricts his horizons, making of him a passive, fearful, naive being.

These sorts of observations were of course carried out extensively by Marx in the 1844 Manuscripts, and throughout his life Marx worked at times fanatically, to lay the foundations of a theory which would free man from the age-old bondage of labour. Similarly, through their observations of developing capitalism, other thinkers have also drawn dismal pictures of the worker's alienation from his work. John Stuart Mill, for example, thought that this alienation would result in discontent with the existing social order. He writes:


I cannot think it probable that they will be permanently content with the condition of labouring for wages as their ultimate state. To work at the bidding and for the profit of another, without any interest in the work... is, not even when wages are high, a satisfactory state to human beings of educated intelligence who have ceased to think themselves naturally inferior to those whom they serve. 14.

Emile Durkheim, writing about the disintegrating effects of the Industrial Revolution on social organization, also expressed his concern with man's alienated condition in his well-known concept of anomie. Among other characteristics, Durkheim pointed to greed, competitiveness, status-seeking, and a lack of a sense of community with others, as being endemic to the development of industrial capitalism. It was Marx however who first gave an 'historical materialist' analysis of the origins and growth of alienation (and further presented a revolutionary programme for the working class to achieve its reduction and eventual abolition). Indeed the inspiration for much of the contemporary literature concerned with alienation is frequently traced back to Marx's early analyses of alienated labour following his observations of the proletariat in Paris. It is in The Economic and Philosophic Manuscripts (already referred to), that his interest in alienation is most clearly developed as a humanistic philosophy. In what is said to be the draft for Das Kapital, Marx (at age twenty-six) first asks:

What, then, constitutes the alienation of labour? First, the fact that labour is external to the worker, i.e., it does not belong to his essential being; that in his work, therefore, he does not affirm himself but denies himself, does not feel content but unhappy, does not develop freely his physical and mental energy but mortifies his body and ruins his mind. The worker therefore only feels himself outside his work, and in his work feels outside himself. He is at home when he is not working, and when he is working he is not at home. His labour is therefore not voluntary, but coerced; it is forced labour.15.

Marx assumes then, that the full realization of human powers and the return of man himself as a social i.e. really human being, can only take place in a world in which man is free to apply himself to whatever activity he chooses and where his activities and his way of seeing himself and other men are not dictated by a system within which he and they play specified roles. Hence, in the Communist Manifesto, Marx envisages a time in which 'the free development of each is the free development of all'.

It is obvious also that Freire implicitly subscribes to the realization of this ideal state-of-affairs. His very definition of oppression as 'any situation in which A objectively exploits B or hinders his pursuit of self-affirmation as a responsible person' must, in its negation, result in a society where all men are free from the controls of one another, and where no-one is able to buy and no-one is obliged to sell his labour in order to survive. Freedom in a

society in which the means of production are controlled by a minority capitalist class, can only be a freedom deformed and condition by the interests of that class. With the abolition of a society divided into conflicting classes - exploiting and exploited - and through the use of science and technology, Freire believes that the humanization of all men can take place. This hope is central to the philosophy of modern-day Marxism, which suggests that the freedom to which mankind aspires and is capable of, has hitherto been actualized only in its most meagre and rudimentary forms. 16. Through the proper harnessing of the potentialities latent in modern science and technology, humanity can at last assure all its members and not merely a small privileged elite, the satisfaction of their basic needs. In other words, once the compulsion to labour every day in order to fill the stomach becomes obsolescent, man's creative possibilities can be individually and collectively brought forth on a scale never-before dreamed of. Novack speaks of this time, as 'opening pathways into the unknown as unimaginable to us as television, transistors, lasers, and computers would have been to the Australian aborigines'. 17.

Nevertheless, a time is slowly but surely approaching when advanced industrial society must demand a radical subversion of the current direction and organization of progress. Like "education", "progress" is not a neutral


17. Ibid. P.5.
concept, it moves toward specific ends, and these ends should be defined by the possibilities of ameliorating the human condition. If we believe that a stage in human evolution can be reached when material production (including the necessary services) becomes automated to the extent that all our vital needs can be satisfied while necessary labour time is reduced to at least marginal time, then we must believe, as I do and as Freire does, that the only historical alternative to a world advancing on the brink of global war, is what Herbert Marcuse calls the 'pacification of existence'. Such a state is envisioned in Marx's notion of the 'abolition of labour', but is further taken to mean the development of man's struggle with man and with nature; under conditions where international and national competition and conflict are unknown. In political terms, this forces us into accepting what is known as the architectonic view of politics involving the most general levels of speculation about the common good.

According to Marxism, the only way to achieve this futuristic common good is by the abolition of capitalism in a world socialist revolution. Freire's revolutionary philosophy, based on the oppressor-oppressed 'contradiction', is inextricably related to the working-class as a non-owning exploited wealth-producing section of the population struggling against its capitalist conditions of existence. The difference between peasants and urban workers is, for Freire, inconsequential as the former 'lives in a single, compact centre of oppressive decision' and the latter 'live in an expanding context in which
the oppressive command centre is plural and complex. In both areas, indeed wherever oppression exists, its causes must be eradicated by overthrowing the oppressive class.

This then, is what is involved in Freire's attempt to awaken man to a realization of his ontological and historical vocation of becoming more fully human. We have considered its origin in the nature of man as an incomplete being, and we have seen that its ethicality is dependent upon a certain conception of freedom - namely, that the greater freedom of all men can only be attained in a classless society in which the exploitation of man by man is abolished. It remains now to examine whether Freire's vocation leads man into a more 'open' society or into his totalitarian enslavement. We can best answer this question by reference to The Open Society And Its Enemies by Sir Karl Popper.

III. THE OPEN SOCIETY

In what has been described as 'the most scrupulous and formidable criticism of the philosophical and historical


19. The reason for including Popper in this discussion, is firstly, because Freire refers to him, and secondly, because it allows us to clarify what Freire has in mind when using the concept. An interesting avenue could be explored further by studying Popper's notion of 'the open society' in connection with that of the various theories of 'open education'. In this regard, see for instance, The Philosophy of Open Education (1975), Edited by David Nyberg.
doctrines of Marxism by any living writer.\textsuperscript{20} Sir Karl Popper in \textit{The Open Society And Its Enemies}, accuses Marx of the 'devastating influence of the historicist method of thought within the ranks of those who wish to advance the cause of the open society'.\textsuperscript{21} Popper's plea for 'piecemeal' as against Utopian or holistic engineering, is effectively a demand for planning measures to combat concrete evils rather than to establish some ideal good. It would seem odd then, that Freire is able in \textit{Education for Critical Consciousness} to refer to Popper for assistance, in characterizing Brazil's transition in the 1950's and early 1960's as being from a closed to a more open form of society. Although it would be impossible here to completely analyse all the ramifications of this problem, what we can do is suggest that Freire's reference to Popper is in part misleading, and that Popper himself is misled into thinking that the open society can best be advanced under a system of capitalism.

Freire is justified in using Popper's terms (as he uses them) only up to a point. That is, in so far as Popper has in mind a political or social concept of democracy, Freire's philosophy can be said to advance the cause of the open society. However, since the open society is for Popper, only another name for capitalism, Freire is mistaken in thinking that an economic democracy can be guaranteed through Popper's piecemeal engineering. This can be explained by the


\textsuperscript{21} Popper, K. \textit{The Open Society And Its Enemies}. Vol. 2. P.82.
following argument. In one of his more useful definitions of the transition from the closed society to the open, Popper states:

The transition takes place when social institutions are first consciously recognised as man-made, and when their conscious alteration is discussed in terms of their suitability for the achievement of human aims or purposes. 22.

In fact, this transition is further described as beginning in ancient Greece in the great days of Athenian democracy, for at that time, Popper tells us:

...there rose a new faith in reason, freedom and the brotherhood of all men - the new faith, and, as I believe, the only possible faith, of the open society. 23.

It is of course true that democracy as we know it did begin in ancient Athens, however it is also true that the Athenian demos comprised solely of 'citizens' and a large population of slaves was totally excluded; Athenian democracy was 'open' to the economic exploitation of slaves and foreign subjects, (and in fact Aristotle had propounded a theory of natural slavery, according to which some groups of men were slaves by nature, others masters by nature. 24.) It is at once interesting if we liken this ancient slave population to the mass of the population in Brazil, since Brazilian colonization was based on economic exploitation of the large

landholding and on slave labour. It would seem only right then, that a 'conscious alteration' of this state-of-affairs be discussed in terms of promoting greater human happiness. Indeed, Popper even agrees that a revolution is justified in order to promote this goal. He writes, in a brief section:

'I am not in all cases and under all circumstances against a violent revolution... But I also believe that any such revolution should have as its only aim the establishment of a democracy; and by democracy I do not mean something as vague as 'the rule of the people' or 'the rule of the majority', but a set of institutions... which permit public control of the rulers and their dismissal by the ruled, and which make it possible for the ruled to obtain reforms without using violence, even against the will of the rulers. 25.'

It would seem then, that Popper must be sympathetic to Freire's revolution, if and only if a democracy is its goal. But in that Freire advocates the abolition of capitalism through a Marxist revolution in order to establish a classless society, Popper would have to accuse Freire, as he does Marx, of 'holistic system building' and totalitarianism. This, I would have to argue, must be due to Popper's near-sightedness in refusing to appreciate the possibilities inherent in the prodigious powers of modern science and technology, by which mankind could (if it so desired) secure a greater measure of economic democracy and freedom. Even though this economic prospect exists only as a theoretical ideal, to deny the possibility of it ever eventuating, is to replace hope with complacency, a love of humanity with selfishness.

To intellectuals in the advanced capitalist nations of the West, where relatively speaking, no blatant cases of oppression exist or where they are ignored due to a comfortable standard of living, et cetera, it is expected that society can only be advanced by introducing reforms within the private property system, by improving its functioning and lessening its inequalities 'piecemeal' until it spreads prosperity, justice and peace. To most of the underdeveloped and exploited countries of the Third World, it is this liberal ideology which has prevented the mass of the population from making any real progress towards a more open society. Certainly, Marxism offers the oppressed in these countries, the consolation of a prophecy. And we have seen that the 'historical method of thought' merely investigates the conditions for obtaining security and freedom for individuals, and advocates the conquest of political power in order to plan the bringing of these conditions into existence. Far from this prophecy amounting to man's totalitarian enslavement, it must, on the contrary, signify the totality of his liberation.

John Dewey (although he was basically in favour of the way American society was progressing) characterized democracy thus:

The very idea of democracy, the meaning of democracy, must be continually explored afresh; it has to be constantly discovered, and rediscovered,
remade and reorganized; while the political and economic and social institutions in which it is embodied have to be remade and reorganized to meet the changes that are going on in the development of new needs on the part of human beings and new resources for satisfying these needs. 26.

Paulo Freire's ontological and historical vocation of becoming more fully human, is dedicated to the accomplishment of this process.

CHAPTER THREE

CONSCIENTIZATION

The process of conscientização, or as it is more commonly referred to - conscientization, lies at the heart of Freire's 'pedagogy of the oppressed'. Similarly, 'cultural action for freedom' and 'education for critical consciousness' are also expressive of Freire's underlying concern for conscientization. In this process, illiterate adults are taught to read and write, while simultaneously they are encouraged to critically reflect on the world in which they live and to exercise their capacity for changing that world. This revolutionary function of conscientization is the reason why the culture circles were suddenly outlawed in Brazil in April 1964, but subsequently why the idea of conscientization still remains alive today and indeed, is beginning to flourish throughout the so-called 'underdeveloped' countries of the Third World. It is therefore, to these countries that we must look, if we are to discover the particular significance that conscientization holds for them, and also, the meaning that it holds for us.

I FROM DOMINATION TO LIBERATION

Freire's justification of conscientizing illiterate peasants is based on an analysis of the relationship between
the countries of the First and Third Worlds. This relationship is one of dependence. Thus, the problem of the Third World and how to remedy them says Freire, cannot be understood apart from this relationship. Only when the people of a dependent society break out of the 'culture of silence' imposed on them by colonial powers and perpetuated by an indigenous capitalist elite, can they become independent of exploitation and begin 'to have a voice' in controlling their own destiny. This transition can only take place when the people of a dependent society undertake a radical transformation of their economic, political and social structures. Freire writes:

There can be no 'conscientization' of the people without a radical denunciation of dehumanizing structures, accompanied by the proclamation of a new reality to be created by men.¹

Conscientization represents first and foremost then, 'the development of a critical awareness' that the peoples of the Third World are oppressed, not because of their own actions, but because their oppression is contingent on the will of others; and that only by committing themselves to changing the reality around them, and looking beyond it, can they hope to achieve their own as well as their oppressors' liberation.

¹. Freire, P. Cultural Action for Freedom. P.76.
The progression from a state of domination to a state of liberation is described by Freire according to three levels of consciousness: semi-intransitive; naive transitive; and transitive. The fundamental role of those committed to cultural action for freedom, is to assist the people in moving from the first or second levels to the critical level of transitive consciousness. Let us consider each of these levels more closely:

(i) **Semi-intransitivity**

This mode of consciousness corresponds to the ways of thinking and expression of people living in dependent or closed societies. The main characteristic of this consciousness, Freire tells us, is its 'quasi-adherence' to objective reality, or 'quasi-immersion' in reality. Men of this form of consciousness cannot look beyond the problems associated with the bare necessities of survival. Because they do not actively participate in the historical process, they are not much better off than animals, unable to gain sufficient distance from reality to objectify it in order to know it in a critical way. Many of the facts and problematical situations of daily life which could present themselves as challenges, are not perceived at all or else are perceived in a distorted way. Often magical

---

explanations are believed in, because a true knowledge of how and why things exist or happen as they do, is lacking.

(ii) Naive transitivity

When a closed society begins to break open, domination is no longer seen as necessary or inevitable, but as the result of an unjust order that can be radically changed. Societies in the historical phase of naive transitivity live in a climate of pre-revolution. According to Freire, in the particular case of Brazil, naive transitivity began with the abolition of slavery at the end of the 19th century, gained impetus during the First World War and again after the depression of 1929, and intensified during the Second World War. The movement towards transitivity continued sporadically with increasing pressure being applied to the power elite, until 1964, when the coup d'etat violently returned the whole country to silence. The consciousness corresponding to this phase of pre-revolution is predominantly naive because it is susceptible to manipulation by 'populist' leadership. It is characterized by an over-simplification of problems, a yearning for the past, and an underestimation of the common man. People have no real motivating class-consciousness but are merely fond of flocking together in crowds. The lack an active interest in investigation and are easily swayed by fanciful explanations and polemics.
(iii) **Transitivity**

In contrast to the military dictatorship presently ruling in Brazil and in contrast to silence and passivity, Freire envisages the level of transitive consciousness as being characteristic of a truly democratic form of society in which the population is free and able to engage in criticism and dialogue. In this rather more ideal state, people interpret their problems in depth, substitute true causal principles for magical explanations, test their findings by remaining open to revision, and attempt to avoid distortion when perceiving problems and to avoid preconceived notions when analyzing them. They are responsible, alert, and their arguments are well-constructed. The practice open dialogue, are receptive to the new for reasons beyond mere novelty, and they do not reject the old just because it is old but accept what is valid in both old and new.

It would be difficult not to pause for a moment here to consider a possible comparison of Freire's development of a critical transitive consciousness with the educational endeavour carried out within most democracies of a capitalist economy. It is often claimed that we try to encourage children to be responsible, autonomous, critical and open-minded towards others.\(^3\). However, to compare conscientization with our own

3. This area of discussion will be dealt with more fully in Chapter Four, in an analysis of Freire's 'Banking concept'.
efforts at education is erroneous for a number of important reasons. Firstly, conscientization is not a system of education designed to initiate individuals into an already existing society with a concomitant adaption to that society's ideals, but on the contrary, it is an ambitious movement intent on creating a new society, based on a completely different set of ideals. In other words, it does not seek to perpetuate the status quo, but to destroy it. Secondly, conscientization is intended for adult learners and not for children. A curriculum entailing various 'forms of knowledge' is not imposed on learners, but rather, the curriculum comprises wholly of the adults' 'real-life' concrete situations. And thirdly, a critical consciousness is brought about not through an intellectual effort alone, but through praxis - through the union of reflection and action on the reality to be transformed. Let us examine these important features of conscientization in the following sections.

II SYSTEMS VERSUS PROJECTS

In Pedagogy of the Oppressed Freire draws a brief but important distinction between systematic education, which can only be changed by political power, and educational projects, which are carried out with the oppressed in the process of organizing them. This distinction is made in response to the problem of how the revolution is to be

carried out, when the masses have no political power of their own. Freire unfortunately does not refer to the distinction again and thus its meaning is left somewhat vague. Indeed, because of recent criticism made against him, regarding the role of education in social transformation, Freire has had to clarify what he has meant, and has thereby managed to strengthen his position.\(^5\). He tells us correctly, that there is a more or less widespread and naive belief in the power of institutionalized education in transforming reality. This belief, he says is to attribute to the education system a power which it lacks, namely, of creating a society as if it were a larger entity than the latter. It is not systematic education which somehow is able to mould society he says, but on the contrary, society which according to its particular structures, shapes education in relation to the needs and interests of those who control the power in this society. As an example, Freire writes:

> It is not bourgeois education which created the bourgeoisie.... a bourgeois system of education could never have been established if the bourgeoisie had not been in power. In other words, a radical transformation of the educational system is contingent upon the radical transformation of society. Education is both an expression and an instrument of society. But since social transformations are not mechanical, but historical facts, which constitute human situations, they involve practical actions which require a certain level of education.\(^6\).

This level of education is attained for Freire through conscientization, but because its purpose is to liberate men


6. Ibid. P.68.
from an unjust form of social control, rather than to act as an agency of its enforcement, it can only take place outside the institutionalized systems of education, which have been established to preserve that society. Indeed, Freire comments once, that the process of critical and liberating dialogue cannot take place in the open, for this would be seen as a threat to the oppressors' power, and only lead to greater repression.  

Despite many years of financial and technical assistance to the educational systems of the countries of the Third World, generally speaking, little progress has been made towards their development. The rich nations continue to get richer, whilst the poor nations get poorer. For example, nowhere in Latin America do 27% of any age group get beyond the sixth grade, nor do more than 1% graduate from a university.  

And in Brazil, from 1900 to 1950, the number of illiterates over fifteen years of age, had not decreased but increased from about six million to about fifteen million. Freire's decision to work outside these systems of education is supported by the view of Adam Curle, who, for half his life has worked in the field of education in developing countries. Curle now expresses his concern with the power of education in the context of the 'system'. He begins:

Education enslaves: men and women become free through their own efforts.

(And further) My disillusionment with education was gradual. The first stage was the recognition that, in the Third World, it was far from mobilizing the spirit of the masses. On the contrary it tended to establish a new elite alienated from and frequently prepared to exploit those masses: those who had the luck or influence to go to the better schools and on to the universities became rich but the condition of the majority, if anything, became worse - there are more hungry people in the world today, even proportionately, than twenty years ago. This linked up with the second stage of my awakening: the realization that, despite all apparent efforts, economic development was not - except in a few places where perhaps oil had been found - being achieved.10.

Freire is also cognizant of the power and past performance of institutionalized systems of education in ameliorating the plight of the masses and bringing about economic advancement - particularly in Brazil. As an alternative to the established education system, conscientization enables the masses who have been excluded from this system, to discover for themselves the actual political causes of their problems, to get to the heart of their oppression. And, because conscientization involves learners in carrying out certain tasks or practical actions, i.e. praxis, the process can only take place somewhat 'behind closed doors'.

III PRAXIS

The concept of praxis is the key to understanding both the viability and the vitality of the process of conscientization.

Originally, "praxis" was a term used by the Greeks, and it had an ordinary meaning that roughly corresponds to the ways in which we now speak of "action" or "doing" or "practice". For Marx, praxis as human activity or practice was the most basic and distinctive characteristic of man. We have already seen how Freire incorporates this philosophy, when he writes, for instance:

...men, as beings of praxis, differ from animals, which are beings of pure activity. Animals do not consider the world; they are immersed in it. In contrast, men emerge from the world, objectify it, and in so doing can understand and transform it with their labour.

Although Marx never developed a complete 'philosophy of practice', his most notable exposition is to be found in the eleven Theses on the materialist philosopher Ludwig Feuerbach, noted down in 1845. In the Theses on Feuerbach, (in The German Ideology) Marx argued against the shortcomings of previous materialist philosophy which had overlooked the active side of man and ignored human practice or praxis

11. We may care to note that for Aristotle, "praxis" had a distinctive and quasi-technical meaning, in that it was used in contrast with "theoria" - whereas praxis referred to the activities characteristic of man's ethical and political life, theoria was concerned with knowing for its own sake. See Bernstein, R.J. Praxis and Action. P. ix. While Freire would implicitly deny the usefulness of "theoria" unless it is related to "praxis", in the Aristotelian sense, his own use of the term is based entirely on the interpretation made by Marx, in his early philosophical writings.

as the essential force of historical change. The third and eleventh theses are the most relevant to our understanding of conscientization:

(3)

The materialist doctrine concerning the change of circumstances and education forgets that circumstances are changed by men and that the educator must himself be educated. Hence this doctrine must divide society into two parts — one of which towers above. The coincidence of the change of circumstances and of human activity or self-change can be comprehended and rationally understood only as revolutionary practice.

(11)

The philosophers have only interpreted the world in various ways; the point is, to change it.

Through 'revolutionary practice', man's circumstances are changed, while man is changed in the process. Man is not only an object of history, but also its subject: he is an object capable, by subjective activity, of becoming a subject and of changing existing circumstances. Freire is deeply aware of this, and one of his constant themes is that man's 'humanization or dehumanization' is dependent on his 'affirmation as a subject or his reduction as an object'.

13. Marx himself was a dialectical materialist, in contrast to mechanistic (or vulgar) materialism, which stressed only one side of the interactional relationship of man and his environment, namely the latter. A more detailed analysis of these viewpoints, as they relate to Freire is given, for example, in "Educational Praxis" by R. Small (Monash University) Unpublished paper, May 1976.

The principal task of the revolutionary leaders - 'the educators who must be educated' - was for Marx as it is for Freire, to arouse and develop the consciousness of the basic dehumanized condition of the exploited and oppressed; the objective being, not merely to analyze this oppression, but to eliminate it. In a letter to Ruge,\(^{15}\) written shortly before the Theses, Marx had written:

The reform of consciousness exists merely in the fact that one makes the world aware of its consciousness, that one awakens the world out of its own dream, that one explains to the world its own acts.\(^{16}\)

This process is achieved in the first instance for Marx, not by fruitless speculation about the future, but by a relentless criticism of all existing institutions. Similarly, for Freire, the awakening of consciousness is achieved through conscientization - 'through a critical analysis of the social framework in which men exist'. It is obvious of course, that even a correct analysis of man's circumstances, cannot per se lead to its transformation. And it is here that the decisive meaning of praxis comes to the fore. Marx explains:

\(^{15}\) The letters to Ruge were published in 1844. Ruge, who for a time had served as Marx's mentor, had expressed his deep pessimism about the prospects of a revolution in Germany.

\(^{16}\) Bernstein, R.J. Praxis and Action, P.49.
Theory is actualized in a people only insofar as it actualizes their needs. 17.

Thus, similarly for Freire, praxis entails 'both reflection and action' upon the world in order to change it, because it speaks to man's needs, to the actual problems encountered in the struggle for attaining a greater human freedom and dignity. Marx believed that men are not motivated primarily by conscious rational considerations, but by their passions. Indeed, all of history was 'the playing out of men's deepest passions'. The reason why Freire's level of critical transitive consciousness can achieve its purpose is because it speaks directly to these heart-felt passions. By 'participating in the examination of common problems' criticism can reveal to men an understanding of what they are suffering - by praxis, they can overcome it.

It should be clear then, that even though conscientization is a 'learning' process (as we are familiar with the term), it is designed not merely to interpret the world, but to change it by the exercise of praxis. It cannot therefore, be likened to education within the schooling process, nor can it be compared to a philosophy which attempts to 'idealize' the concept of education operating within institutionalized systems, or divorces this theory from the wider economic and political context. 18.

17. Ibid. P. 53.
18. I have in mind here, particularly John Dewey, whose Reconstructionism verged on praxis, but did not seek to alter the structure of American capitalism; and R.S. Peters' conservative philosophy of the existent social order.
In the field of education, and in the social sciences generally, it is customary when thinking about human problems, to make no reference to the feelings related to these problems. It is assumed that scientific objectivity demands that thought and language concerning man, be devoid of emotional subjectivity. For this reason, conscientization is more appropriately described as a process of social-psychoanalysis leading to revolution, rather than education or socialization into a traditional social order. Erich Fromm, another writer to whom Freire devotes considerable attention, has for many years been radically concerning with trying to overcome the 'false consciousness' which throughout man's history has justified his domination and submission. As one of the world's leading exponents of psychoanalysis, Fromm in *The Revolution of Hope*, for example, discusses the split between thought and feeling, between pure intellectualization and effective emotional experience:

Logical thought is not rational if it is merely logical and not guided by the concern for life, and by the inquiry into the total process of living in all its concreteness and with all its contradictions.19.

Obviously, if we were to accept this description as being relevant to the ways in which we should raise our younger generations, the educational enterprise would be vastly different from the process we are presently familiar with,

and ultimately implies that it would serve a radically different society. This is the meaning of conscientization - let us now look at its programme content.

IV WORDS AND THEMES

In examining the content and methods employed in conscientization, it is necessary to distinguish between the literacy programme, that is, teaching illiterates how to read and write, and the rather more politically oriented phase of this programme, of teaching adults to critically perceive their state of oppression and encouraging them to do something about it. Whereas the literacy programme had been tried in practice and had proved remarkably successful, the latter phase had not had sufficient time to be put into large-scale operation, due to the military coup terminating the entire process. Freire defines the two phases as a literacy phase and a post-literacy phase. During the former stage, concentration is focused on the generative word; in the post-literacy stage, the generative theme is studied. Although conscientization is carried out during both these stages, gaining of course, particular momentum during the latter stage, each programme has a different curriculum.

In the literacy phase, the language of the future learners, or what Freire calls their 'linguistic or vocabular universe' is researched by specialized educators, and certain 'generative words' are chosen for their capacity to generate
new words. Portugese is a syllabic language, and Freire tells us that approximately seventeen words are sufficient to present the basic phoemes which make up that language. These generative words are placed in codifications which represent local situations familiar to the learners. They take the form of slides, photographs, posters or filmstrips. The role of the educator is to use the codifications as challenges or problems, so that in learning to read and write, the learners also become increasingly aware of their life-situations. Once the group has completed the analysis or decoding of the codification, the generative word is broken down into syllables and through recombination of the phonemic family, new words are created. The process is described as follows:20.

(a) A slide of a slum or favela is shown with the actual word "favela" seen in the situation. After a discussion of the related problems of housing, food, clothing, health, and education, another slide appears showing only the word:

(b) FAVELA
This word is then separated into syllables:

(c) FA - VE - LA
Then the phonemic family of the first syllable is shown on another slide:

(d) FA - FE - FI - FO - FU

Then the family of the second syllable:

(e) VA - VE - VI - VO - VU

The third syllable:

(f) LA - LE - LI - LO - LU

The three families are then shown together on what is called the 'slide of discovery':

(g) FA - FE - FI - FO - FU
   VA - VE - VI - VO - VU
   LA - LE - LI - LO - LU

By putting the syllables together in a variety of combinations, learners discover how the words of their language are written:

(h) E.g. FAVO, FIVELA, LUVA, VIVÊ.

(i) The process continues with the second generative words, not only combining these syllables, but also combining them with the syllables of the first word, and so on. By concentrating on such other words as land (terreno); food (comida); work (trabalho); salary (salário); government (governo); and wealth (riqueza), and discussing the various problems related to these words, the learning groups are led toward a more critical consciousness at the same time that their vocabulary and their capacity for expression is expanded.

In the post-literacy phase, education is concerned with the 'generative theme'. These themes are found in the ways
men think about and relate to the world around them. Whereas the literacy phase took place in culture circles, a study of generative themes takes place firstly in 'thematic investigation circles' and then once the material has been prepared in suitable teaching form, it can be presented to culture circles (perhaps) as a continuation of their former literacy work. Once again, a team of investigators assisted by local volunteers, carries out a thorough preliminary observation of the life of the area, in various social settings, noting for example, the way the people talk, their life-styles, behaviour, expressions and vocabulary. This information is collated, whereupon certain 'nuclei of contradictions' can be determined. Some of these contradictions are then developed in codifications (sketches, photographs or words) which are best organized, says Freire, as a 'thematic fan', opening up in the direction of other themes. In other words, only by arranging the codifications in the form of a whole or totality, can a partial or 'focalized' view of reality be avoided, and the inherent contradictions come to be perceived. When decodification or decoding dialogue takes place in the investigations circles, the discussion is taped, and these tapes as well as notes taken by a psychologist and a sociologist, are further analyzed. It is then that the

21. These contradictions denote the dialectical conflict between opposing social forces. (Pedagogy of the Oppressed, P.22. fn.3.) - in them are contained the 'meaningful thematics' or 'thematic universe'.
investigators can begin to list the themes generated in the decoding dialogue. Once these themes have been 'broken down' or organized into learning units, they are codified into the actual teaching materials, for example, photographs, slides, films, posters or books. They can then be used in culture circles for more intensified discussion and involvement.

In both phases of conscientization, problems concerning situations in the daily lives of the learners are posed, and through dialogue, efforts are made to overcome the obstacles or 'limit-situations' preventing these people from having a voice in their own destiny. In the initial phase, the limitation of not being able to read and write is dealt with. However, learners are not required to know in a mechanical fashion, the meaning of (for instance), "Eve saw the vineyard", but to know what position Eve occupies in the social context, who works in the vineyard, and who profits from this work. In the following phase of conscientization, the limitation of a narrow vision of reality is replaced with a more comprehensive vision. The themes in the lives of the learners are studied and fostered - the major theme being, of course, liberation. And, as Marx had insisted that 'history was the playing out of men's deepest passions', Freire's appeal is to the aspirations and values of

22. Freire, P. "Literacy and the possible dream" in Prospects, P. 71.
the people, in order to motivate them into action, and in so doing effect an important transition from one epoch in the history of man, to another. In Latin America and the Third World generally, the revolutionist process has only just begun. 23.

23. For further information on this historical movement see Revolutionism by Said, Abdul A. and Collier, Daniel M. 1971.
CHAPTER FOUR

THE BANKING CONCEPT

The reason for Freire's popularity is attributable not only to the revolutionary educational method of conscientization, but also to the analysis he makes of the oppressive nature of systems of education in the Third World and throughout the capitalist world generally. At the heart of his condemnation, lies the banking concept. Freire first introduces this concept in Chapter Two of Pedagogy of the Oppressed, (and) which, as he defines it here, is ... a certain method of education whereby the teacher 'makes deposits which students patiently receive, memorize and repeat'. The comparison of education with banking procedures - the teacher depositing knowledge and the students accepting this knowledge, filing and storing it - is not, strictly speaking, entirely correct. For example, students could not be thought of as providing a service for their teachers, in the same way that banks and bank clerks provide a service for their customers. However, the analogy with banking is intended to signify that in relation to the role expected of students, the teacher's role is an active one, in that it is he who is responsible for what information is to be deposited and how this is to be done, whereas students must passively receive what they are given. The fact that teachers must actually also follow
a curriculum and examination system prescribed by a governmental body, does not invalidate the fact that students are the recipients of an education not of their own choosing. Teachers voluntarily decide to pursue their occupations and thus to act as formal agents in the preservation of the status quo, whereas students are compulsorily schooled into unquestioning conformity to the existing order. Where this order is characterized by a considerable disparity in wealth between rich and poor, as in developing countries, the oppressive nature of schooling is blatantly apparent. In developed capitalist countries, the myth of 'equality of educational opportunity', the benevolence of the welfare state, and a relatively safe assurance amongst the lower classes that they will be able to secure the minimum necessities for daily living, even without an extended period of education, all serve to legitimate the function of school systems as depositors of a pre-existing capitalist order in the minds of the young.

While the banking concept remains the central reference point for our analysis, it must firstly be seen historically, in the context from which it is derived. That is, while the banking method denotes a particular activity that takes place in the classroom between teacher and taught, the more general and more important meaning of Freire's banking concept is to be found in the relationship between the industrially advanced countries of the world (the teachers)
and the exploited poor (the students). I wish to argue here that Freire's banking concept is an accurate description of how, educationally, certain countries have managed to maintain a basic economic domination over others. Furthermore, I contend that within both developing and developed capitalist countries, banking education is instrumental in preserving a class-structured social organization necessary to a capitalist system of production. From this point of view, what is generally referred to as "the radical education movement", particularly as this has developed in the United States in the last decade, may be seen as an attempt to counteract the banking method of education, and thus to resist, in one form or another, the traditional function of school systems in serving highly competitive, individualistic, stratified and unjust societies.

I THE THEORY OF DEPENDENCY

While the banking concept refers to an act of domination in the classroom, it also is a reflection of an overall ideology of domination. Freire's concern is with helping individuals and countries help themselves in an autonomous manner, rather than relying on the assistance of others. In Latin America, this 'assistance' is termed assistencialism, and is used to describe financial or social policies which treat men as ignorant and passive, and in need of deposits of expert 'help'. The decision on the part of the
developing country, to accept technical expertise or agricultural knowledge, is not a free choice but merely represents the aims and expectations of the donor. Thus Freire writes:

One of the basic elements of the relationship between oppressor and oppressed is prescription. Every prescription represents the imposition of one man's choice upon another, transforming the consciousness of the man prescribed to into one that conforms to the prescriber's consciousness.  

Similarly, the Brazilian tradition in education, has been the prescription of a system designed to conform to the expectations of others. Through banking education, an alien culture has been imposed to which students have had to accommodate. The reason for the development of banking education, it is therefore argued, must be seen as the result of imperialist domination: the dominant classes in the imperial powers have attempted through schooling, to train the colonized for economic, political, and social roles that have suited the colonizer.

In one of the most important works on capitalism and imperialism, Lenin in *Imperialism: the Highest State of Capitalism*, maintained that there are certain imperative economic forces which promote the domination of some people by others. Unlike the initial period of imperialism when advanced countries needed raw materials and markets for

for their domestic industries, in the financial period of imperialism that Lenin discusses, domination was shaped by the struggle among financial oligarchies in several industrially advanced countries to seek outlets for the vast accumulation of capital accruing from a capitalist form of production. This resulted in the establishment and promotion, outside the advanced countries, of industrialization. Since this development was capitalistic, it defined certain hierarchical social relations in production and consumption among those who participated even marginally in this development. The most important purpose of schooling, as an extension of Lenin's theory, has been to incorporate people outside the advanced countries into the sphere of influence and control of these countries and their monopolies. Furthermore, the function of schooling has been to bring people into a social and economic structure in which they can be more effectively exploited.

Recently, Johan Galtung, building on the work of Lenin, defines imperialism as a relation between a Centre and a Periphery nation so that there is a harmony of interest between the centre or dominant groups in the Centre nation and the centre in the Periphery nation. The centre of the advanced capitalist nation maintains the dependent position of the centre in the Periphery nation with military aid, technical assistance, and government to government

'development' loans. The dominant group in the periphery profits from this relationship much more than the average member of the periphery society. Thus improvement of the human condition in the dependent countries through the formal schooling process, must be largely limited to the dominant group.

Dependency also creates a cultural alienation which is manifested in the need to copy everything in the developed countries. Desired values and norms are taken from the centre nations, not from local experience. School systems are copies of centre school systems and serve copies of centre economic structures. As the modern economic structures in the dependent society serve only a small proportion of the population, schools are reduced to being largely selectors and socializers, rather than being the means through which individuals fulfill their potential.

The imperialist relationship that Europe and the United States have had with Latin America has been based on this model since Latin America gained independence from Spain and Portugal in the 1820's. Unlike the direct colonization of Asia and Africa, Latin American dependence on Europe and the United States was and is 'voluntary'; that is, a powerful group within each Latin American country maintains a close commercial and cultural relationship with the centre nation, structuring the periphery economy to suit the needs of the international capitalist system. When Brazil began to industrialize in the late 19th Century, a differentiated
labour force was required as was the need for social control. Schooling served both these objectives: it produced the skills necessary to function in the new structure of production - responsiveness to increased economic rewards, punctuality, the right blend of self-discipline, docility and initiative corresponding to occupational level in the hierarchy, and it also legitimized the capitalist class structure. The rapid expansion of primary schooling as the result of industrialization, was however, limited to a relatively small percentage of the school-age population. By 1920, for example, only 10% of the school-age group were effectively enrolled in primary school, and by 1949, only 31% of children went to primary school.\(^3\) This limitation must be seen as a function of Brazil's dependent economy. Brazil was neither willing nor able to mobilize its masses for development because economic growth was conditioned by growth of the export sector, and by an economic system organized to supply the needs of a small group in the cities and the centre nation. Secondary and higher education thus remained enclaves of the well-to-do.

Even before industrialization, the Brazilian school system had been designed to teach two kinds of students: children of the white ruling class and children that this ruling class needed to incorporate into the lower levels of its economic and political structure. The elite part

of the educational system formed administrators and professionals to service the colonial bureaucracy and military. Control of the academic secondary schools was in private hands, acting as a ruling class screen for university eligibility. And then, with the advent of industrialization, primary schooling, normal schools to service primary schools with teachers, and non-academic secondary training were expanded, but academic secondary and university education which gave access to the professions, were severely restricted. Also, most educational expansion was largely a southern phenomenon, connected with the growth of manufacturing in the South.

After the 1920's, the contribution of the United States to Brazilian education became more apparent, when several Brazilian educators began to apply United States doctrines in educational reforms. Although United States educational philosophy and psychology have been important influences on teaching methodology since the 1920's, it has only been since the Brazilian economy became increasingly tied to the United States after World War II and particularly after 1964, that Brazil has begun to adopt United States schooling structures, teaching techniques, and the training of teaching personnel. With the destruction of Europe during World War II, the United States was able to become the uncontested leader of the capitalist world. In Latin America, the United States came to have a virtual monopoly on Latin American trade and investment. Thus, the development of the
Brazilian education system, taking place concurrently with an influx of United States technology and investment in manufacturing, has served to complement a capitalist organization of production. Emphasis is on bourgeois control of the economy and on making the inequitable structure more efficient. Schools function to control social change, that is, to maintain order, to produce better, more efficient manpower for increased material output, and to change individuals into competitive men and women who believe in the legitimacy of the capitalist system.

The concept of banking education that Freire has recently popularized, could be said then to encompass the manner in which education systems have developed wherever capitalist imperialism has taken place. Like any social organization, capitalism has produced institutions that support capitalist structures, and schools have played a major role in reinforcing these structures. The vague expression 'cultural preservation', Freire tells us correctly, 'can be explained with exactness as the perpetuation of the values of the dominating classes who organize education and determine its aims'. Freire's emphasis on other concepts such as 'prescription', 'narration', and 'assistencialism', as these relate to education, all denote a unidirectional or non-reciprocal relationship in which capitalist development has benefitted a small oppressor class both in the centre and periphery country, and has led
to the domination of the mass of the population. He writes:

... the banking concept of education regards men as adaptable, manageable beings. The more students work at storing the deposits entrusted to them, the less they develop the critical consciousness which would result from their intervention in the world as transformers of that world. The more completely they accept the passive role imposed on them, the more they tend simply to adapt to the world as it is and to the fragmented view of reality deposited in them. 4.

In contrast to this form of education, conscientization is based on a reciprocal relationship between teachers and taught, in which an alien curriculum is not used as a selection mechanism for economic roles in a competitive hierarchy, nor as a means of social control. Instead, education for liberation is a means by which teachers and taught share their mutual concern in studying the problems associated with living in an exploited, dependent society. Instead of examination success, the successfully conscientized individual, is one who has realized the implications of dependency, and has committed himself to radically altering this state-of-affairs.

II THE PRESERVATION OF CAPITALISM

With the demise of feudalism in Europe and the advent of a capitalist organization of production, the need for a new

kind of society was created - a society based predominantly on a factory system, but still one in which the mass of the population worked under the 'tutelage' of a dominant elite. Schooling as it was spread by the Europeans and as we now know it today, continues to be part of this capitalist system. Much traditional thought on the role of education within this system has viewed formal schooling as having provided and continuing to provide the means for individual and societal 'liberation'. Children are transformed from being ignorant, unskilled individuals, to being knowledgeable, skilled and functional ones. Parents and eventually their children regard schooling as the most important key to social mobility; to higher incomes, status and thus success. On a national level, schooling is seen as equipping youth with the necessities for functioning in an increasingly complex economy, in order to maintain national economic growth and improvement, and thereby ensure the nation's status and well-being in international trade. In the Third World particularly, these liberating effects of schooling have been stressed as a way of bringing people out of their ignorance and underdevelopment into a condition of enlightenment and civilization.

If however, we define 'liberation' in a manner that Freire would approve of, namely the freedom to control one's own life economically, socially, and politically, on the part of all citizens, and the freedom of nations to control their own destiny, it becomes open to serious
question whether in fact schooling is a process of liberation as it is organized in societies based on capitalism. We have seen how according to the dependency theory in the Third World, the transformation that takes place in school cannot be liberating since a person is simply changed from one role in a dependent society to a different role in the same society. I propose in the remainder of this section, to point out some of the ways in which banking education is instrumental in preserving the capitalist system in the industrially advanced countries of the First World. We can then examine the extent to which banking education can be avoided in these countries, if it can be at all.

Recent work by Ralph Turner in the sociology of education, has considered the problem of how societies maintain loyalty to their social systems. 'The most conspicuous control problem', he tells us, 'is that of ensuring loyalty in the disadvantaged classes toward a system in which their members receive less than a proportional share of society's goods'. Translated into Marxist terms, this means that the capitalist class must seek to maintain the loyalty of the working class to the social system under which it is exploited. The most important means for ensuring this loyalty is a function of the education system. Schools carry out a major political role in that they must help convince

or reinforce children in believing that the system is basically just and that the role they are allocated is the proper one for them to play. However, on the whole, schools reward those who are, in capitalist societies, most desirable from the standpoint of capitalist economic, social and political institutions. Martin Carnoy expresses this well:

Schools demand the most passive response from those groups in society who are the most oppressed by the economic and political system, and allow the most active participation and learning from those who are least likely to want change. 6.

The most important determinant of future social roles in society is the examination system, even if what is measured has little applicability to future employment. While it is often claimed that schools are dedicated to the ideals of human growth, creativity, freedom, rationality or whatever, examinations are a pivotal part of an education system designed to supply a differentiated labour force compatible with a capitalist organization of production. Thus they are a means whereby hierarchic stratification and social inequality are perpetuated. Testing, which is usually on ability in academic course-work, determines which children will receive more education and eventually better jobs and salaries, and which children are to be branded as failures, destined for jobs which require little skill and originality. Those that are deemed "bright and capable"

are permitted access to positions of leadership and power, and those that are deemed "stupid and incompetent" are compelled to accept more limited opportunities. Furthermore, the 'myth' of examinations measuring pupil performance objectively, ignores a host of factors outside the school which are instrumental in predicting school success - the home environment, parents' reinforcement in schoolwork, parents' expectations, care, and the family's ability to afford to keep children in school rather than earning an income. All these factors reinforce the cycle of class-structured society, in which the lower classes are forced to sell their labour on the bottom echelons of industrial production.

By the use of a set curriculum and an examination system designed to test the ability of students to remember the contents of this curriculum - often pejoratively referred to as "cramming" - individuals are slotted into pre-existing and uncriticized economic and social roles. Another important achievement of examinations, which is particularly supportive of Freire's banking model, is the effect that testing has on the relation between teachers and taught. The teacher's role as assessor cannot but place a strain on the relationship between him or her and the student. As long as the teacher has the authority to award marks and grade pupil performance, the teacher-learner relationship cannot be equalized. Thus all learning must take place in a somewhat threatening or alienating environment. While the student is dominated by an interest
in being favourably assessed, the teacher is forced into a totally false sense of authoritateness which his teachings and other actions gain as the result of his power as an examiner. Thus critical interaction between minds, or in Freire's terminology, dialogue between Subjects, is made impossible.

As well as the function that examinations are designed to perform, and the effects that they have on the learning environment, the actual nature of what is taught, and moreover what is not taught, also serves to socialize children into support of the status quo. Among other things, pupils learn to respect adult authority, to carry out work not of their own choosing, to be punctual and disciplined, to work for extrinsic rewards, and to repress hostility. Use of the classroom as a medium for the discussion of controversial subjects like race relations, social class, sex, religion and morality, is generally avoided. Teachers find their lives much less complicated and their classes easier to manage if the structure of authority is not challenged. This not only relates to the potential for trouble within the classroom, but also to the potential for trouble within the community. Rarely do teachers assume the role of social critics, nor do they tolerate much criticism of themselves or their countries. While it is often asserted that schools should encourage students to think critically, in practice, critical thinking is severely restricted. This must result, as John Davies explains, in a lowering of self-esteem and self-confidence
and a consequent failure of nerve. Davies argues rightly, I think, that:

this (in turn) leads to a refusal - or inability - to risk oneself in ventures into public argument and debate, to the internalization of a sense of impotence and inadequacy and to the acceptance of the dichotomy of the world into 'the public sector', in which, both in in the education system and later on at work, one accepts frustration and manipulation by others, and 'the private sector', the source of satisfaction and fulfilment to be sure, but a devalued fulfilment because it is a refuge from the endless humiliation in the public sector rather than a decent and autonomous pleasure in its own right. 7.

I have argued to date that banking education is instrumental in preserving a capitalist organization of production. It must be remembered however, that Freire stresses the fact that all systems of education serve to maintain their societies intact. In agreeing with him, this then must be just as true for education systems in societies based on a collective or socialist organization of production. In the U.S.S.R. for example, education is used as a means of bringing up the so-called "New Soviet Man". 8. The duty of the school is to educate individuals in the framework of Soviet patriotism and obedience to the rules of the Party. The Ministry of Education provides all details of curriculum requirements as well as very detailed


plans for teaching all subject-matter. A teacher has no say in the teaching methods he uses and there is little student participation in the administration of the school. Similarly, in China, one of the most important goals of the late Mao Tse-tung's Cultural Revolution has been to educate a "New Chinese Man", and a man who will follow the orders and decisions of the party without question.

While banking education is a feature of capitalist countries, it is also then, characteristic of socialist countries. Freire can perhaps be pardoned from his apparent one-sidedness because his overriding concern is with how Brazilian social, economic and political structures have been determined by capitalistic imperialism. Freire however is open to a more serious criticism in that he has concentrated his efforts in outlining a liberating education, one in which the people are moved to overthrow the status quo by revolution, and one in which a banking approach would be antithetical to this revolution, but he has said little about how banking education can be avoided once the revolution has taken place and a new society established. If Brazil were to remain undeveloped and based predominantly on an agricultural economy following a revolution, it is possible that a system of education could be maintained based on the principles of dialogue and reciprocity between teachers and taught, as Freire writes about in for example, Extension or Communication. But in advanced, highly technological and complex societies,
requiring a vast array of specialized skills, the problems of avoiding situations in which 'the educator fills the educatee with knowledge' are, even to some minimal extent, always present and are often most difficult to resolve. Freire consequently treats the important question of mankind's technological advancement cursorily and simplistically. In the last few pages of Cultural Action for Freedom, he writes:

Critically viewed, technology is nothing more nor less than a natural phase of the creative process which engaged man from the moment he forged his first tool and began to transform the world for its humanization.

While this is true, and while Freire considers that technology has been part of man's natural development, he then goes on to pose the rather vague question for revolutionaries to answer - "How to avoid technology's mythical deviations?" Unfortunately he does not answer this question himself, but merely says - "We insist on cultural action for freedom", and says nothing further on the matter. The reason for this neglect can best be explained by Freire's propensity to dichotomize the world of domination and the world of liberation, and all that this dichotomy entails. Freire's philosophy is one of continually becoming - 'one must become in order to be' - but having achieved a state of liberated being, the problem of how to preserve that condition without reverting

back into domination or oppression still remains. Once again, Freire's standpoint it would seem, must rely on the futuristic Marxian principle that until man is the owner of his own labour, until technology truly becomes a tool in the hands of man, and children are no longer transformed into simple articles of commerce and instruments of labour, the banking method of education remains a means of ensuring an orderly, skilled, and adapted workforce. As Freire would say:

The 'humanism' of the banking approach masks the effort to turn men into automatons - the very negation of their ontological vocation to be more fully human.¹⁰

III THE RADICAL EDUCATION MOVEMENT

Over the last decade a fairly widespread educational movement has developed throughout the Western world in an attempt to establish in one form or another, alternatives to traditional schooling practices. This movement, encompassing the free-schoolers, the open classroom, and the de-schoolers, has been referred to generally as "the radical education movement". Although Paulo Freire has worked mainly in the field of adult illiteracy, his critique of the banking concept in education, must undoubtedly rank him as one of the movement's most influential proponents. In this section, I wish to

examine a few important areas in which Freire's critique supports the work of or shares the same sentiments as other theorists. Finally, by drawing on the work of Ivan Illich, we may ask whether or not the banking method of education can be eliminated in a de-schooled society.

The mark of a successful educator, Freire states, is the ability to dialogue with educatees in a mode of reciprocity. The method based on dialogue is not a vertical, but a horizontal relationship between persons involving love, humility, hope, faith and trust. Although Freire recognizes that the teacher's role is important, it is not for him, says Freire, merely to discourse on the contents of a curriculum which he himself has elected to present, but rather to discuss with students those things about which they want to know more. Freire writes:

Education is an act of love, and thus an act of courage. It cannot fear the analysis of reality or, under pain of revealing itself as a farce, avoid creative discussion.11.

Freire's emphasis on the necessity for co-operative dialogue in education is in sympathy with the views of many others. Herbert Kohl for instance, in *The Open Classroom* (1970), stresses that the role of the teacher should not be to control his pupils, but rather, to enable them to make choices and pursue what interests them. Carl Rogers, in *Freedom to Learn* (1969), believes that students are

11. Freire, P. *Education as the Practice of Freedom*. P.38.
basically self-motivated and can exercise freedom and choice in a responsible manner. The teacher's attitude to the learners is thus characterized by trust. He writes:

If I distrust the human being then I must cram him with information of my choosing, lest he go his own mistaken way. But if I trust the capacity of the human individual for developing his own potentiality, then I can provide him with many opportunities and permit him to choose his own way and his own direction in his learning... It is a basic trust - a belief that this other person is somehow fundamentally trustworthy.  

John Holt, in Freedom and Beyond (1972), discusses the problem of choice:

…it doesn't take much sense to talk of "giving freedom" to people. The most we can do is to put within reach certain choices, and remove certain coercions and constraints. Whether doing this creates for other people something they sense as release, liberation, opportunity, freedom, or whether it just puts them in a more painful spot than ever, is very much up to them and how they see things. There isn't much we can do to control it. We have to assume, or at least I choose to, that in the long run more choices and fewer constraints, less coercion, less fear, is good for most people - if only because it gives them a chance to look for and maybe find something that they really want.

In the case of the poor uneducated Latin American peasant, it is obvious that what is wanted, is a political and economic liberation from the tutelage of the hacienda system. In the case of the child born into a Western democracy, the problems


of ensuring a better, richer and more meaningful life are more complex and harder to resolve. Of this however we can be certain: unless our schools at some time in the future become drastically reorganized along more 'dialogical', more democratic lines, with students choosing and actively participating in their own learning, the possibility of maintaining democratic institutions in the wider society remains ill-fated. Only by experiencing democracy in childhood, can democracy be respected and enjoyed in adulthood.

As well as the stress on the non-communicative aspects of traditional schools, Freire also criticizes the curriculum's neglect of problems, particularly problems concerned with students' own experiences. Reality, he says, is discussed by the teacher as if it were motionless, compartmentalized, and predictable, or else it is divorced from the students' own existential experiences. With regard to Freire's criticism, we may ask ourselves an important question: "To what extent should education be concerned with developing an awareness of the social-economic-political reality which shapes students' lives?". If we agree that this should be the primary concern around which to base our curricula, and that the existing crisis in society does merit more attention and interest in schools than has been the case, it would seem that Freire's problem-posing principles are very much appropriate to our educational needs. Indeed, is not Freire here merely restating the advice given some time ago by John Dewey -
that the role of the teacher should be to help the child learn the values of democratic participation not by imparting information, but by the critical inquiry into problematical situations.

More recently, from within the ranks of the radical education movement Postman and Weingartner have, at times, very closely echoed Freire's call for a problem-posing pedagogy. In *Teaching as a Subversive Activity* (1971), the authors state that 'the schools must serve as the principal medium for developing in youth the attitudes and skills of social, political and cultural criticism'.

In redesigning the structure of the classroom by what is called the 'inquiry method' of teaching and learning, Postman and Weingartner have attempted to revive what they feel to be the most important intellectual ability man has yet developed - the art and science of asking questions:

> Knowledge is produced in response to questions. And new knowledge results from the asking of new questions; quite often new questions about old questions. Here is the point: once you have learned how to ask questions - relevant and appropriate and substantial questions - you have learned how to learn and no one can keep you from learning whatever you want or need to know.

14. See Postman, N. and Weingartner, C. *Teaching as a Subversive Activity*, 1971, P.16. (It is noteworthy that the educational philosophy outlined in this work, is (to my knowledge) the most closely comparable to the work of Freire.)

In this, the inquiry method of education, the teacher rarely tells the students what he thinks they ought to know; his lesson develop from the responses of students and not from a predetermined structure; and he encourages student-student interaction rather than student-teacher interaction. Generally, each of his lessons poses a problem for students. His questions, proposed activities and assignments are aimed at having his students clarify a problem, make observations relevant to the solution of the problem, and make generalizations based on their observations. His goal is to engage students in those activities which produce knowledge: defining, questioning, observing, classifying, generalizing, verifying, applying.\textsuperscript{16} Expressed in rather more emotive language, Freire's goal is the same...

Knowledge emerges only through invention and re-invention, through the restless, impatient, continuing, hopeful inquiry men pursue in the world, with the world, and with each other.\textsuperscript{17}

Of all the contributors to the radical education movement, the best known is Ivan Illich. In the introduction to his most notable work, \textit{Deschooling Society} (1971), Illich acknowledges the influence of Freire's ideas, and although there are many obvious differences between the two writers, there are also many similarities, particularly as these

\textsuperscript{16} Ibid. P's 45-6.

\textsuperscript{17} Freire, P. \textit{Pedagogy of the Oppressed}. P.46.
converge on the noted banking concept. For example, whereas Freire has concentrated his analysis on the condition of oppression in the poor, Illich's critique of schooling is related to international consumerism among the middle and upper classes. Both writers however, owe allegiance to the same background. Rowan Ireland, writing in Freire's home city of Recife, expresses this well:

The pedagogies of Freire and Illich are responses to cultural poverty based on dramatic inequalities in Latin American societies. In these societies, the poor and the comparatively well-off are immensely distant from one another. There are two worlds. In the world of the poor, men are submerged in their daily struggle to survive, unable to discover the sources of their misery, repressed by the patronage that is the only source of security and by their own responses to the indignities of dependence. In the world of the haves, men are submerged in the exigencies of conspicuous consumption, blinded and restricted in their responses to social reality by the formalism of their education, bound as dependants to the state and to world markets. 18.

In Deschooling Society, Illich vehemently criticizes our increasing reliance on institutions, with its resultant sense of psychological impotence in the individual, and our absorption into a style of life dominated by patterns of consumption. As an integral part of this institutionalized consumerism, Illich sees schooling as an oppressive and

dehumanizing force in modern society. The school-teacher is likened to a distributor who merely delivers a pre-packaged commodity, that is, knowledge, to the student or consumer. In what he calls the ritual of the 'hidden curriculum' of schooling, students are blinded from realizing the contradictions between the myth of an egalitarian society and the class-conscious reality it certifies. Instead, students learn that education is valuable when it is acquired in school through a graded process of consumption; that the degree of success enjoyed in society depends on the amount of learning consumed; and that learning about the world is more valuable than learning from the world. 19.

With varying degrees of emphasis, the above statements (all of which I believe to be correct) are paralleled in the works of Freire. Both Illich and Freire have a deep-rooted faith in the individual and his potential for self-realization, and consequently both make passionate pleas for increases in personal freedom and dignity. With regard to the depositing of an 'alien and alienating' curriculum in the minds of students, Illich has this to say:

I believe that only actual participation constitutes socially valuable learning, a participation by the learner in every stage of the learning process, including not only a free choice of what is to be learned and how it is to be learned but also a free

determination by each learner of his own reason for living and learning - the part that his knowledge is to play in his life. 20.

The way to accomplish this educational philosophy, Illich tells us, would be through a deschooled society. No longer would there be an 'educational system' as we at present understand it, for education would be taken away from specifically educational institutions and diffused into many other sectors of society. Compulsory education, schools, and teachers would be abolished. Instead, four kinds of networks would be established, providing learners with access to an environment of 'fellow learners, skill models, educational leaders, and educational objects'. Instead of teachers, 'educational administrators' would create and operate the learning networks, and 'pedagogical counsellors' would guide students and parents in the use of these networks. Only then would each person be able to 'transform each moment of his living into one of learning, sharing, and caring'.

It is beyond the purpose of this thesis to attempt a full description or evaluation of Illich's proposals. However, what we may more pertinently consider, is whether or not Freire's banking concept of education could be eliminated by the establishment of deschooled society. This, hopefully, may afford us a more fruitful examination.

It would seem at first, that the central feature of the banking concept, that is, a situation which the educator fills the educatee with knowledge, could be avoided if the compulsory authority structure of the classroom were abandoned altogether, in favour of a free determination and participation by learners in the learning process. This would satisfy Freire's dialogical criterion, would cure his 'narration sickness', and would also alleviate the problem of prescription. By the contents of learning becoming completely a matter of personal need drawn from students' own life activities, knowledge would no longer be detached from reality and words no longer emptied of their concreteness. 21.

Nevertheless, in spite of the above, a number of difficulties exist which prevent a compatible or practicable solution. The most formidable of these difficulties concerns the fact that Freire views the banking concept as being characteristic of a more general (and more radical) ideology of domination and oppression. That is, in capitalist countries individuals are socialized into passive acceptance of the capitalist system, and unequally schooled into a labour force necessary to a capitalist mode of production. Illich on the other hand, makes a distinction between school, which is said to be destructive of human freedom and creativity, and the world outside, which is said to offer valuable educative experience. This however

is grossly misleading in that the world outside, if it is capitalistic, must also be exploitative and hierarchical.\textsuperscript{22} In a deschooled society, it would seem that the social, economic and political systems are to remain intact—quite the opposite to Freire's revolutionary goal! This is exemplified by the fact that Illich maintains that each of us is responsible for his or her own deschooling, whereas Freire insists that the pursuit of a fuller humanity can only be carried out in fellowship and solidarity.

Other major objections to the elimination of the banking concept in a deschooled society concern (of course) the viability of a society without schools. Indeed, Illich's schema can be faulted on many grounds. For instance, there is no guarantee that the networks or learning webs would not become formalized and structured so that they would become, in effect, as institutionalized as schools, and so defeat the purpose they were intended to serve. Instead of teachers, Illich proposes administrators and pedagogical counsellors. But would not these individuals have to be systemmatically trained? Also, consider for example that a particular professor or trade were to become immensely popular—would this not mean a return to our present specialized schools with their restrictive entrance requirements and scheduled training programmes.

\textsuperscript{22} Herbert Gintis in "Towards a political economy of education: a radical critique of Ivan Illich's Deschooling Society" in Deschooling. Edited by Lister, T. 1974, gives an excellent account of Illich's failure to understand fully how the existing educational system serves the capitalist economy.
Illich's solution to the problem of socialization into the existing order, is no socialization at all. However it would seem that this sort of laissez-faire education could only result in social chaos. If the schools were to shut down, oppression and inequality would increase, as the wealthy and motivated would accumulate more and more power and those less fortunate would be even more oppressed. Furthermore, we have come to regard education as a basic human right. This right however, can only be guaranteed within an institutionalized structure.

It should seem clear then, that while Illich's deschooling philosophy could ameliorate certain features associated with the banking concept, it by no means could entirely eliminate this method of education. Similarly, Freire, while accurately outlining the pernicious features of our systems of education, has to offer in their place, not a system of education, but a permanent revolutionary movement.

Granted however, that some sort of systematic education is necessary to an advanced technological society, that we must concern ourselves with such questions as educational planning and manpower requirements, although this of course, need not necessarily be geared to a capitalist economy, Freire's call for more participation, and more relevance
in education, deserves our continued attention. While some sort of institutionalized structure - that is, schools - must provide a common educational core to sustain the fundamental universal elements such as values, sentiments, knowledge and skills which provide society with stability and vitality, there is no reason why this curriculum cannot be structured in terms of broad social problems and themes of social living, as Freire suggests. Children and youth of today must begin to look critically at the social situation in which they find themselves. They must be equipped, through a process of education, to know and to respond to the multifarious complexities that modern-day living has to offer.
CHAPTER FIVE

CONCLUSION

I ILLITERACY - THE FAILURE OF SCHOOLS

The principle of equality of educational opportunity has a powerful and persistent appeal. Its meaning is found in the moral claim - the right of the individual to be given the opportunity to attain his full human status. To the powerless, the oppressed, the 'wretched of the earth', the principle forms a ready expression of their aspirations. To those who hold power of privilege - the dominant elite, the bourgeoisie - the principle connotes a formidable threat. In the West, and to a greater extent, in the Third World, the ideal of equality in such matters, is becoming increasingly realized for what it is - an egalitarian myth that can only be 'demythicized' by radical reform or revolution.

In Latin America, all countries are in the process of expanding their school systems. No country now spends less than 18% of tax-derived public income on schools, and many spend more than 30%. And yet, as has been already pointed out, nowhere in Latin America do 27% of any age group get beyond the 6th grade, nor do more than 1% graduate from a university.\(^1\). As in colonial times,

\(^1\) Illich, I. Celebration of Awareness. P's 95-6.
when the schools inculcated the dominant classes with the values of the imperial power and confirmed in the masses their sense of inferiority to this schooled elite, expenditure on Latin American schools today, continues to result in a steep hierarchical educational pyramid, with its corresponding levels of social status, Ivan Illich best explains:

Each dollar spent on schooling means more privileges for the few at the cost of the many: at best it increases the number of those who before dropping out, have been taught that those who stay longer have earned the right to more power, wealth and prestige. What such schooling does is to teach the schooled the superiority of the better schooled. 2.

Rather than contribute to the continuance and improvement of this system of schooling, Paulo Freire and Ivan Illich have questioned the assumptions on which the entire education system itself is based. In the place of this tradition, both men, according to their own fashions, argue in favour of the possibility that the underdeveloped countries of the world cannot be schooled, that schooling is not a viable answer to their need for universal education. Freire, as a remedy for the gross failure of schools in Brazil (and in Chile), consequently, concentrated his efforts in the field of adult education. At a cost comparable to a fraction of one school year for one child, Freire has shown that about

2. Ibid. P.134.
15% of the illiterate adult population of any village, can be taught to read and write in about six weeks and that an additional 15% can learn the same but over a longer period.³.

In the case of adult education, there is an immediate return on the investment, whether the most important feature of an adult's learning is seen as new insight, political awareness, and willingness to assume responsibility for the family's size and future, or whether increased productivity is the main emphasis. There is also another return in the case of the adult, because not only can he assist the education of his children, but he can also contribute to the education of other adults. In spite of these advantages, adult literacy programmes have little or not support in Latin America, where the main educational expenditure is on schooling of children and youth. Freire's programme, it will be remembered of course, was ruthlessly suppressed in 1964, and Freire himself, forced into exile. Today, in most parts of the world, although adult education continues to be conceived mainly as a device to give the 'underprivileged' a palliative for the schooling he lacks, there are certain indications that things are changing.

II LITERACY - A TURNING POINT

In September 1975, the International Symposium for Literacy was held at Persepolis in Iran. Convened on the

3. Ibid. P.127.
occasion of the tenth anniversary of the World Congress of the Ministers of Education on the Eradication of Illiteracy, the purpose of the meeting was to reflect on the progress of adult literacy work during the last ten years, and to suggest favourable strategies for strengthening these activities in the future. On the basis of about a dozen background papers, the participants in the symposium, (including Paulo Freire), discussed different ideas and experiences. A declaration was also adopted, and which, to my mind, more than any other single document, pays tribute to the tremendous significance that Paulo Freire has had. 4. For this reason, it is presented here in some detail. It reads (in part):

4. Other papers presented by participants at the Symposium, include the following:

**Literacy: to read the word or the world?** by Majid Rahnema. (Iranian Ambassador-at-large and Special Advisor to the Prime Minister.)

**Functionalities of literacy** by Malcolm S. Adiseshiah. (India. Former Deputy Director-General of U.N.E.S.C.O.. Director, Madras Institute of Development Studies. President of the International Council for Adult Education.)

**ALFIN, an experiment in adult literacy training in a society in transition** by Alfonso E. Lizarzaburu. (Peru. Member of the Educational Reform Commission and the Adult Education Commission of Peru.)

**Literacy training and revolution: the Vietnamese experience** by Le Thanh Khoi. (Democratic Republic of Vietnam. Professor at the universities of Paris V and Paris I. Active in Unesco and I.L.O. work.)

In adopting this Declaration, the Symposium considered literacy to be not just the process of learning the skills of reading, writing and arithmetic, but a contribution to the liberation of man and to his full development. Thus conceived, literacy creates the conditions for the acquisition of a critical consciousness of the contradictions of society in which man lives and of its aims... Literacy is not an end in itself. It is a fundamental human right...

Literacy work, like education in general, is a political act. It is not neutral, for the act of revealing social reality in order to transform it, or of concealing it in order to preserve it, is political.

Consequently, there are economic, social, political and administrative structures that favour the accomplishment of literacy projects, others that hinder them.

The most favourable structures would be:

Those that, from the political point of view, aim at an endogenous and harmonious development of society and not at blind and dependent growth.

Those that from the social point of view, do not result in making education a class privilege and a means of reproducing established hierarchies and orders... Experience has shown that literacy can bring about the alienation of the individual by integrating him in an order established without his consent. It can integrate him, without his participation, in a foreign development model or, on the contrary, help to expand his critical awareness and creative imagination, thereby enabling every man to participate, as a responsible agent, in all the decisions affecting his destiny...

Literacy is therefore inseparable from participation, which is at once its purpose and its condition. The illiterate should not be the object but the subject of the process whereby he becomes literate. A far-reaching mobilization of human resource implies the commitment of literacy students and teachers alike...

Literacy work of this kind would constitute the first stage of basic education designed to bring about the individual development of men and women through continual training and to improve the environment, as a whole. It would permit the development of non-formal education for the benefit of all those who are excluded by the present system or are unable to take advantage of it. Finally, it will imply a radical reform of the structures of the education system as a whole...5.

5. Ibid. P's 65-6.
There is absolutely no need to explain the many ways in which an article such as this Declaration, is intricately woven on Freire's philosophical pattern. The so-called turning point in adult literacy work, owes much to the manner in which Freire has made public the political nature of education and all that this implies, and in so doing, is effecting a revolution in thinking across a large part of the globe.

In New Zealand, following a brief visit in May of 1974, a wave of interest was created within educational circles, around "The Messiah from Geneva". Margaret Reid, in a journal published by the National Council for Adult Education⁶, expresses her sympathy for our own oppressed peoples - Maoris, Polynesians, Indians and Chinese, who, as minority groups, do not feel accepted as an important part of New Zealand society; women, who are educated into a male-dominated workforce; and a growing number of pupils who complain they are not being schooled in their best interests. Because Freire not only calls into question all of our educational practices, but also the foundations of western capitalist society, Reid, at the same time realizes that most of us will not risk or bother struggling to put right the wrongs.

In another perspective on the relevance of Freire for New Zealand adult education, Bruce Barnes and Roger Boshier

introduce their study with a short discussion of the term "andragogy" in regard to its appropriateness as a more suitable word than "pedagogy" to describe methods and techniques befitting the education of adults. The reason for re-entitling Freire's work, 'the andragogy of the oppressed', is congruent with their concern for differentiating between the more didactic, pedagogical nature of traditional child education, and the more self-directed and socially co-operative methods which should be employed in adult education. In this way, Freire's educational prescriptions for adults can (theoretically at least), encompass individuals becoming more politically aware and involved as well. The authors' rightful claim that Freire's analysis supports certain forces seeking to restore social, economic, educational and political "power to the people", thus allows the traditional 'curriculum' of adult education to be extended and enhanced by the inclusion of such 'subjects' as: the development of citizen self-help groups; food co-operatives; community access to media; and citizen control of local government and planning. As Freire would say - 'giving the people tasks that they may carry out'.

If for western capitalist countries such as New Zealand, the turning point in adult education is to be marked by a

more realistic, politically-orientated programme in which man's socially co-operative needs and spirit are catered for, then I would hope that this may act as a further catalyst in promoting the democratization of the various others levels of our educational systems. Adult education, or as it has more recently been called - continuing education - because it is contiguous with secondary education, may just be able to spread its enthusiasm through into the schools. Indeed, the term "andragogy" is becoming more widely defined now, not as the education of adults, as opposed to the education of children and youth, but as the art and science of helping people learn. 8 Although it is only a replacement word, it does denote a definite change of attitude and approach. It is interesting to surmise whether "Andragogy" will best characterize the heritage that Paulo Freire will leave with us.

In the meantime, for the purposes of the conclusion to this thesis, I would like to leave the reader with an appreciative evaluation, not of my own opinion, but that of a Latin American colleague of both Freire's and Illich's:

Paulo Freire's philosophy and method is, in my opinion, the most completely worked out and generally most satisfactory approach to education in the modern world. While I try

8. For further information on the meaning and use of the term, see "Andragogy" a conversation with Malcolm Knowles by Roger Boshier in Continuing Education in New Zealand. Ibid. P's 20-26.
to incorporate it into my own proposals I feel that this incorporation does Freire less than full justice. My reason for going beyond his ideas at all is that in today's world these ideas may have only limited political possibilities.9.

To Paulo Freire - humanitarian, educator, activist, philosopher and prophet - I would like to say thank you.

BIBLIOGRAPHY


