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AUTHOR Levin, Henry M.
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ABSTRACT

The major premise underlying this presentation is that every employee has a right to economic democracy, that is, participation in those affairs that impact on his or her life. It is first argued that there is a dialectical relation between the educational system and the world of work. In this dialectic the educational system both reinforces and undermines the production of wage labor. Schools help prepare wage earners who fit into the present economic system through highly structured regulations and an atmosphere of competition and alienation. However, they also undermine the economic system by providing a surplus of overeducated workers who are frustrated by low-level jobs. This situation threatens both the educational and work processes. Although many attempts are made to remedy this situation, most, such as career education and lifelong learning, are largely ineffective. It is suggested, rather, that employers may tend to respond to the higher expectations of the more educated worker by relying increasingly on integrating workers into the work process by increasing employee participation or democratizing the workplace. Examples of several forms of economic democracy are presented. The author concludes that in response, schools may begin to emphasize cooperation, group decision-making, autonomy, and other prerequisites for economic democracy. (Author/JM)

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ECONOMIC DEMOCRACY, EDUCATION, AND SOCIAL CHANGE

Henry M. Levin*

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*The author is Director of the Institute for Research on Educational Finance and Governance and Professor of Education, Stanford University.

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ECONOMIC DEMOCRACY, EDUCATION AND SOCIAL CHANGE

Abstract

Most studies of the relation between education and work make the assumption that either the educational system exists to reinforce the needs of the workplace or that it functions irrespective of the workplace. In this paper, it is argued that the historical evidence suggests a dialectical relation in which the educational system serves to both reinforce and simultaneously undermine the reproduction of wage labor for capitalist production. Attention is devoted specifically to the current threats to both the educational and work processes and their consequences.

Although many attempts are being made to bridge these gaps such as career education and recurrent educational strategies, it is suggested that employers will tend to rely increasingly on integrating workers into the work process by increasing employee participation or democratizing the workplace. Various forms of economic democracy are presented, and their educational implications are discussed.

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ECONOMIC DEMOCRACY, EDUCATION, AND SOCIAL CHANGE

I. INTRODUCTION

Next to our jails and the military, the workplace is the least democratic institution in America. Few constitutional protections apply to a worker as any ardent practioner of free speech would quickly find out if he or she were to use the workplace to test the First Amendment. No Bill of Rights prevails in the workplace, for within a wide latitude the owners of capital and their managers make the basic decisions that affect not only our employment status, remuneration, and possibility of promotions, but also the fine detail of our working lives is determined largely by the organization of production and the nature of the work environment.[1] Although all of these matters have a crucial impact on the quality of our daily experiences and our well-being, they are not based upon a democratic process in which we participate. Rather, they are predicated on the dictates and needs of those who own and manage the workplace.[2]

But, if citizens have a right to a participatory role in the political affairs of their societies, why are they refused such a role in the workplace?[3] Most of us have never asked this question, for as the fish is the last to discover the water, so are we the last to question the basic facts of life that have dominated our experiences and formed our consciousness. The major premise underlying this presentation is that the tyranny of the workplace is not legitimate and that every employee ought to have a right as a "citizen" of a workplace to participate in those affairs that impact on his or her life. Economic democracy then, refers to the democratic participation of workers in the decisions that affect their working lives.[4] How social change might make this possible is the focus of this paper.

In the following pages, I will attempt to demonstrate the existence of a dialectical relation between the educational system and the workplace that both reinforces and -- at the same time -- undermines the structural relations between employers and employees.[5] Most major social institutions have the properties of both reinforcing the existing social order while at the same time creating the conditions for changing it. Probably in few cases is this as clear as in the historical relation between education and work. The next section provides a picture of the nature of work and of schooling and their con-

nections. Following this presentation I will describe and analyze some of the responses to the present "difficulties" of the workplace that have been raised by young and over-educated workers. Finally, I will address the prospects for economic democracy and their educational implications. The purpose of this paper is to describe a rather unconventional view of social change with respect to a concrete issue, the quest for democracy in the workplace.

II. A BRIEF SYNOPSIS OF THE RELATION BETWEEN WORK AND EDUCATION[6]

Perhaps, the most important single dimension of work for our purposes is that the vast majority (over 90 percent) of the labor force work for corporations, government agencies and other organizations in exchange for wages and salaries rather than working as their own bosses. That is, most persons are dependent for income primarily on their own labor which is purchased by those who own the facilities and tools that are needed for production. At the time of the founding of the nation, some four-fifths of the non-slave population worked as self-employed farmers, artisans, or merchants while owning the land, property or tools needed for their calling. By 1880 this proportion had been reversed with some eighty percent of the population working for firms that owned the means of production and that "hired" their labor.

A second and related aspect of work is the size and centralized nature of the workplace. Rather than the locus of small workshops, farms, and commercial establishments that characterized the late eighteenth and early nineteenth century, much of the employment became concentrated in large, bureaucratic firms by the late nineteenth century.[7] These entities have come to dominate the markets for their products on a regional or national or multi-national basis as well as the demand for labor in the areas where they operate. Thus, most individuals in the labor market do not face a large number of employment opportunities among large numbers of employers, but rather there are relatively limited employment prospects concentrated among relatively few potential employers. Further, the size of these economic entities prevents new competitors from arising, since the former dominate their markets and can practice various types of anti-competitive practices. Moreover, their cozy relationships with both the government regulatory agencies as well as such large government entities as the Pentagon enable them to utilize the power of government for ensuring their profitability.[8]

A third aspect of work is its organization. Typically the workplace is organized in a hierarchical fashion with a large number of relatively low paid workers at the bottom, a smaller number of more highly skilled and supervisory - level workers in the middle, and even fewer persons representing the various levels of management at the top. This pyramidal form of organization is based upon an extremely fragmented division of labor, where work tasks have been divided into minute and routinized functions that permit the use of relatively unskilled workers at the bottom where most of the employees are situated. Even at higher levels, there is often such a fragmentation of the productive process, that only at the very top of the organization are a few managers or executives able to relate to the entire production operation. That is, most workers, whether blue collar or white collar are required to perform repetitive and routinized activities. They are ignorant of the larger production process, and they do not experience the satisfaction of producing a whole product. Further, their activities are highly restricted and regularized by the nature of the job, and there is little opportunity to learn new skills or to make independent judgements. Thus, most workers have very little control over the process of their work activity and have little or no opportunity to express their own ideas, insights, and individuality. While workers at higher levels and managers have increasingly more independence as one moves up the organizational hierarchy, restriction of activity is characteristic even at these levels.

A fourth aspect of work that is related to the preceding ones is that given the lack of intrinsic satisfactions, most workers toil for the external rewards. Especially important in this respect is the income which is received and which can be used for consumption. Thus, most workers are forced to relinquish control over the nature of their work activities as part of the wage labor contract, and the wages and salaries become the focus of their work effort. Further, because most employees do not see any possibility of receiving satisfaction from their work activity, they place their hopes in rising levels of consumption of goods and services. Thus, work is looked at as necessary drudgery which must be carried out in order to obtain a meaningful life in the sphere of buying and consumption. That is, it is the prospect of high levels of consumption which provides the major motivation for work rather than factors internal to the work process.

It is little wonder that biographies of workers suggest that work is stultifying to personal growth, injurious to the health, and for most persons a very disappointing experience.[10] Most work lacks any intrinsic meaning that makes it worthy of doing for its own sake. While persons born into such a world must necessarily take this for granted as a requisite for a modern society that is based upon the technology that yields our high "standard of living", a number of sources of evidence argue increasingly in terms of a different interpretation. These studies argue that technology and organizational practices grew to reflect the need for domination of the workplace by its capitalist owners and for extracting profits from the workforce.[11] A highly centralized and bureaucratic workplace in which jobs are fragmented into repetitive and routinized tasks simplifies the extraction of labor from workers. Each employee need only follow a specific set of functions at a prescribed speed which will depend upon the overall rate of production set by the organization and its machinery. Supervision is simplified, since productivity can be readily observed. And the simple nature of the tasks means that workers can be easily replaced if they do not do what is expected.[12]

Thus, the internal discipline and control of the workplace by the few at the top of the organization is cemented by both the hierarchy and by the extreme division of labor. Further, the worker is set apart not only from those above and below him or her, but also from fellow workers at the same level. Under conditions of high unemployment, each worker sees himself or herself as fortunate to have a job or to have steady work. Further, the possibility of promotion up the pyramid depends on few rising, so workers are placed in a competitive and antagonistic position to each other. Not only has this mode of organization undermined the establishment of trade unions (where each worker sees his own individual possibilities of employment or promotion depending upon not getting involved in this type of activity), but it has also set groups of workers against each other. Thus, skilled workers are very jealous about maintaining their wage and other advantages over unskilled ones, and other antagonisms according to race and sex are also exploited and exacerbated as individual workers and groups are forced to compete with each other for jobs and benefits.

Perhaps, what is even more interesting are the recent studies that show that productivity would be higher (although not control of the work force and the extraction of profits through its labor) according to other modes of work organization. The recent study of Work in America carried out by a Task Force of the Secretary of Health, Education, and Welfare identified a large number of work experiments and practices that modified traditional work relations and increased productivity.[13] Studies of industrial worker cooperatives have shown similar results.[14] That is, the owners of capital have been able to organize production to meet their needs to control the workplace in behalf of maximizing the rate at which profits could be extracted. While capital accumulation on behalf of the owners of productive property has expanded at a rapid historical rate from this process, the vast majority of workers have been subject to conditions of work that do not permit a healthy personal or social development or productive work experiences.

Functions of Schools

One can best understand many of the functions of the schools by viewing their roles in terms of preparing workers for the social and skill requirements of the workplace. As the workplace became increasingly centralized and work became fragmented under the practice of scientific management, so did the schools move from a highly decentralized form of lay control to a bureaucratic and centralized institution dominated by professionals.[15] As work became increasingly sub-divided into minute tasks to be allocated to workers according to their capabilities, schools adopted practices for curriculum tracking and for testing students to assign them to tracks. The schools became highly standardized with a system of age-grading and a common set of instructional materials for each grade and curriculum. And many of the "modern" factory practices became embodied in the operations of schools.

Further, schooling became organized into an institution in which highly regularized rules and regulations dominated educational life. Students learned to work for extrinsic rewards such as grades and promotions and the avoidance of demotions or failures rather than for the intrinsic value of the educational process. And teachers, like the bosses in the workplace, determined which students were following the rules and carrying out their activities in the

manner prescribed by the curriculum and the need for maintaining order. Thus, the schools developed in a manner parallel to the workplace with similar modes of organization and values.

The process by which the socialization of the labor force by the educational system tended to follow the transformation of work under monoploy capitalist control is very complex. It has been documented--in part--by a number of researchers,[16] and it has been termed the correspondence principle. This principle can be viewed as the tendancy for the educational system to follow the organization and content of the workplace at its principle agenda. It can be shown that the inequalities of the workplace are also reproduced by the schools and that the social relationships of capitalist work in its evolving forms were soon emulated by the educational systems. Indeed, the present schools can not be fully understood without an understanding of the nature of work roles for which the young are being prepared.[17] Alternatively, educational reforms such as those of the War on Poverty that attempted to change these functions have not been successful because of their lack of correspondence with the larger society generally and the workplace specifically.[18]

Historically, the relationship of the schools can best be understood by looking at the functions of schools and those of the workplace. The alienating qualities of the work process have been strongly evident in the educational one as well. Students have little control over the proces and product of their edutational activities, and they are placed in antagonistic relations to one another in the grading and educational selection process. Since those who will do best in school will also do best in the workplace, students see themselves in competition with their fellow students in much the same way that they will experience this relation during their working lives. The concept of correspondence is a very powerful way for integrating an understanding of dominant school practices with those of the workplace.

III. THREATS TO THE EDUCATIONAL AND WORK PROCESSES

But, while correspondence between educational and work processes is very helpful in understanding the stability of each, the principle is not useful for understanding change. At the present time both the workplace and the school are threatened with disruptions to the existing modes of activity. In this section we willl develop briefly some of the dynamics of change that will tend to alter both the workplace and the educational system.

Although the logic of correspondence between education and work and the forces that sustain it are powerful, the reproduction of any social institution that is in contradiction to itself is not smooth. Both the educational system and the system of production and work are characterized by internal contradictions or stuctural antagonisms such that they operate in ways in which forces that will oppose their smooth operation will arise.[19] In the system of work that we described, the owners of the firms and the workers who are hired by the firm have opposing interests. The owners wish to maximize their profits and capital accumulation, while the worker wishes to obtain as large a wage as possible while minimizing his contribution to a labor process that is alien to his personal needs. But, maximum profits depend upon the extraction of surplus from the employee, maximizing the amount of labor obtained from him or her while paying the worker only the minimum necessary to reproduce his or her labor power.

As we noted, through the hierarchal division of labor and the development of the educational system to produce socialized workers for the capitalist mode of production, it was possible to mediate these contradictions between the opposing interests of workers and capitalists. Moreover, such conditions as high unemployment further mediate the labor-capital contradiction, for the worker realizes that he or she can be easily replaced by a presently unemployed person if he or she does not do what the capitalist owners and managers require. This is particularly true when there are no alternatives to work for survival.

But, over time the success of these mediating forces has tended to decline so that the contradictions have become manifest. In part this is due to the independent dynamics resulting from the internal contradictions in the mediating

institutions themselves. For example, the educational system has provided, traditionally, diplomas and other certificates to reward those who complete particular levels. These certificates could be used, in turn, to obtain jobs at appropriate levels in the economic system. But, as students learn to work for rewards external to themselves such as certificates rather than for the intrinsic satisfaction of learning and inquiry, the certificates become an end in themselves in which the student will tend to minimize the effort to obtain the reward. Thus, students look for easy teachers, try to guess what the teacher will ask for on exams to minimize studying, and cram for examinations to perform well in the short run while discarding the knowledge after the exam. Obviously, such students have learned a behavior which enables them to minimize work effort into the labor process and which might even provide insights into disrupting that process.

In a larger sense, the correspondence of the schools with the workplace, historically, has tended to overshadow the underlying dynamics of the educational system.[20] One of the most important of these is the present tendancy of the educational system to provide more educated persons than the economic system can absorb. An important incentive for families and individuals to emphasize more schooling for themselves and their offspring has been the expectation that with additional schooling comes greater life success. The more education that a person attains, the higher the occupational status and earnings that could be obtained. Economists even viewed this process as tantamount to an investment in human capital, where the investment return generally exceeded that for investment in physical capital.[21]

As long as the economic system expanded in the aggregate and moved from agriculture to production to the services, there was an expansion of the occupational structure at the levels that could absorb a more and more educated labor force. At each level of education it was possible for workers to view a set of occupational prospects and earnings that was better than the prospects for less-educated persons. And, in general, those with college educations were able to achieve technical, managerial, and professional positions while those with less education had to settle for lower earnings and less-prestigious careers. Thus, the training and socialization provided by the schools at each level also seemed to dovetail relatively well with the eventual demands of the workplace at the appropriate occupational level.

In recent years, though, the rate of economic growth has diminished at a time when there is an unusually large number of persons of college age and when a very high proportion of those entering the labor force have obtained at least some college-level training. The reduction in the rate of economic expansion and the maturation of the structure of the economy have resulted in an inability of the economy to absorb the increase in the number of persons with college training.[22] Instead, it appears that young persons with college training will have to accept increasingly those jobs which were filled traditionally by persons with much lower educational attainments.

What is evident is that the same incentives that stimulated the expansion of enrollments in the schools for socializing a growing labor force for capitalist and government production will continue to operate even when the opportunities to employ more educated persons do not expand at a commensurate rate. The so-called private returns on educational investment depend not only on the earnings for the additional education, but also on the earnings that would be received without further education. Even if the earnings for college graduates grow slowly over time or decline when adjusted for rises in the price level, a college education may still represent a very good investment if the opportunities for high school graduates decline at an even greater rate.[23]

Further, education represents one of the few hopes for social mobility from generation-to-generation for most families and individuals, so as the ideology of educational attainment continues to persist, the quest for more education as an instrument of status attainment will also persist. Both the existence of an ideology of education as a path of social mobility as well as the fact that even with declining opportunities for college graduates there is an even greater deterioration for high school graduates lead to the following conclusion. The educational system will continue to turn out more and more educated persons regardless of the inability of the economy to absorb them.

On the economic side, there is little on the horizon that suggests that the long run prospects for economic growth will improve much. First, problems of high energy costs and rising costs of other natural resources run counter to technologies that have been predicated on cheap and unlimited energy and other

natural resources. Second, to a large degree the government can not use either fiscal or monetary policy to increase the economic growth rate without triggering various shortages, bottlenecks in production and price increases in markets that are dominated by the monopolistic elements that characterize the economic system. Third, the costs of labor and the stability of production in many of the third world countries promises much greater profits than further investment in the U.S. Many countries in Latin America and Asia are characterized by dictatorships that promise enormous profits to foreign investors by preventing their workers from organizing and by refusing to provide child-labor laws or meaningful, minimum wage protection for the labor force. While local elites receive substantial rewards from these practices, the majority of the workers are subjected to arduous work at subsistence wages with far greater profits for investors than would be derived in the United States. Accordingly, future economic growth rates in the U.S. are not likely to approach those of the Post World War II period.

To further aggravate the situation, many existing jobs are being transformed by technology and capital investment into ones that are becoming more and more routinized and devoid of the need for human judgements and talents. Studies of automation have suggested that the critical skills and judgements that are associated with particular jobs are eliminated by greater use of technology and capital.[24] Even many traditional professions have become increasingly proleterianized in this way as the expansion of professional opportunities has shifted from self-employment to corporate and government employment. Under the latter forms of organization, the professional is given a much more specialized and routine function, rather than choosing for himself or herself the types of clients, practices, hours, and work methods that will be employed.

Thus, not only do the alternatives for the educated person seem to be deteriorating in both quality and quantity, but an analysis for the longer run suggests that the forces that are creating this deterioration will continue to prevail. Thus, young and educated persons are likely to find themselves in situations where their expectation and skills exceed those which are associated with available jobs. Since most jobs will not have the intrinsic characteristics that would keep such persons engaged, the inadequate nature of the extrinsic rewards will operate to make it more and more difficult to integrate such persons into the labor force. That is, the lack of oppoftunities for promotion and the limited wage gains in conjunction with the relatively

routinized nature of most jobs will tend to create a relatively unstable work force. It is also important to note that the availability of public assistance in the form of food stamps, medical care, and other services as well as unemployment insurance tends to cushion the impact of losing employment, so the negative impact of losing or quitting one's job is no longer as powerful a sanction for job conformance.

As the Work in America report noted, these phenomena may have rather severe repercussions for labor productivity.[25] The dissatisfactions that result from frustrated expectations with respect to the quality of work and its extrinsic rewards can create threats to productivity in a variety of ways. Most notable among these are rising absenteeism, worker turnover, wildcat strikes, alcoholism and drug usage, and deterioriation of product quality. Even rising incidences of sabotage are possible responses by young workers who feel that they are overeducated for the opportunities that have been made available to them and who do not see the possibilities of major improvements in their situations.

But, the overproduction of educated persons relative to available opportunities is not only creating disruptive potential for the workplace, it is also suggesting difficulties for the educational system as well. As the exchange value of a college degree and high school diploma have fallen, there a number of indications of a relaxation of educational standards. For example, there is considerable evidence that average grades have risen at the same time that standardized test scores in basic skill areas have fallen.[26]

While there are many possible causes for these phenomena, one of the most intriguing is that these are natural responses to the falling commodity value of education. Thus, the educational system seems to be providing higher grades for relatively poorer quality work, and students no longer seem willing to put in the effort to acquire the various cognitive skills. This explanation fits our overall framework in that to a large degree existing educational activities will be undertaken for their extrinsic values rather than for their intrinsic worthwhileness. As the extrinsic value of education falls in the marketplace, the grades given for any level of effort must rise to ensure a given performance. Moreover, the effort that a student will put in to acquiring an education will also decline as the financial and prestige rewards decline.

A further example of this type of disruptive potential of the schools is reflected in the increasing problem of discipline. To a large degree, the discipline of workers is maintained through the promise of good pay, steady work, and possible promotion for those who conform. Since the work is intrinsically without value to the worker, it is these incentives that must be used to ensure appropriate working behavior. A similar situation has existed in the school, where the fear of failure and of low grades and the attractions of promotion and high grades has helped to maintain discipline among students. These systems of extrinsic rewards have served to ensure that students see it in their best interests to "follow the rules." But, as the job situation and possibilities of social success from education have deteriorated, even the grading system is no longer adequate to hold students in check. In fact, recent Gallup Polls of problems in the schools are consistent in implicating discipline as the most important difficulty.[27]

In summary, there exist a constellation of relations between the schools and the workplace that can provide either reinforcement or disruptive potential. While historically the operations of schools can not be understood without an examination of their correspondence with the requirements of the capitalist workplace, the independent dynamic of schools and their internal contradictions also represent forces for challenging the institutions of the workplace. The result of these forces is that it is becoming more and more difficult to integrate students into either school life or working life than it has in the past. And the disruptive aspects of this situation are stimulating various responses in both the educational and work setting.

IV. WORKPLACE AND EDUCATIONAL RESPONSES

No social institution can continue to function and reproduce itself when the results of its functioning are the creation of obstacles to its further reproduction. This is the present quandary faced by both the workplace and the schools, and substantial efforts are being made in both sectors to create reforms which will avoid the present problems. While we will suggest some of the efforts that are being made in the educational sector, we will place most of our emphasis on the changes in the workplace. The reason for this is that our historical analysis suggests that while the educational system can trigger change in the workplace through the workings of its independent dynamics, the

changes in the education-work relation will first occur in the workplace. Subsequently, they will be transmitted to the schools in a new pattern of correspondence. That is, the workplace lies at the center of gravity in this interdependent system as reflected in the historical development of the schools.

This means that by looking at present educational reforms we may be observing only a reaction to present educational disruptions rather than a longer run solution. In contrast, by looking at workplace reforms of a long run and stable nature, we may be seeing the basis for structural changes in the schools that will support the new working relationships. In order to apply this interpretation, it is only necessary to review the three most prominent educational reforms for attempting to improve the articulation of schools and workplaces: career education, life-long learning or recurrent education, and "back-to-basics." Each of these can only be understood in light of the increasing difficulties in integrating young and relatively educated persons into the workplace.

Career Education

Career education represents a rather diverse set of approaches which seem to focus on integrating more closely the worlds of education and work.[28] Particular strategies include attempts to increase career guidance on the nature of and attributes of existing job positions; to improve the career content of curricula; to intersperse periods of work and schooling as part of the regular educational cycle; and to provide a more "realistic" understanding of the nature of work and available job opportunities. Obviously, an important aspect of this approach is to reduce the "unrealistically high" expectations for high-level careers and to guide students into preparing for more attainable ones. But, there is virtually no evidence that such an approach will make students more "realistic" and offset the historic quest for social mobility through the educational system. Without supportive changes in the workplace, it is unlikely that this traditional function of the educational system can be altered by the introduction of career education.

Life Long Learning and Recurrent Education

Concurrent with the press for career education has been the movement towards altering traditional educational patterns through life-long or recurrent education.[30] This effort is aimed at reducing the present high demand for formal education--particularly at the college level--by breaking the traditional educational cycle in favor of one where students can take instruction at those times in their lives that they perceive the need. It is presumed that the young will obtain jobs at existing employment levels, and they will undertake additional instruction only when there is a need to upgrade their skills or when they wish to satisfy some non-vocational curiosity or interest.

The problem with this approach is that there is a dearth of employment positions even at lower levels of educational attainment such as for high school graduates. This relative lack of productive work for young persons who leave the educational system will tend to work against their taking the recurrent educational approach seriously. Further, those jobs that are available without college training will rarely permit upward mobility into new careers that will benefit from recurrent education. More specifically, most careers require a minimum educational level for entry to higher positions.[31] College - trained executive trainees, engineers, lawyers, and other managerial and professional employees have very high probabilities of maintaining these positons and at least some probability of rising to higher levels. But high - school trained stock clerks, and so on have almost no change of rising to managerial or professional levels though recurrent education. Whatever else their merits, recurrent and lifelong education are not likely to alleviate the problem of over-education in the job market. Again, there is the shortcoming of using an educational strategy to address what is essentially a non - educational problem.

Back-to-Basics

The back-to-basics movement refers to the attempt by parents, taxpayers, and educators to focus educational institutions on the teaching of basic cognitive skills within a highly structured curriculum. In part, this trend is work-oriented in that its advocates assert that the young are unable to do well in the job-market because of a failure to learn basic skills and self-discipline.

The evidence of declining test scores and rising discipline problems is thought to give testimony to this claim. Even if the dearth of challenging jobs or employment is recognized, it is assumed that a young person with good basic skills and discipline will have an edge over persons without these attributes.

But, again, there is a problem in altering cognitive achievement and discipline through the back-to-basics movement if these problems derive from the falling value of education in job markets themselves. That is, to the degree that students and educators might be more lax with respect to both basic skills and discipline as a result of their declining importance in terms of life opportunities, it is forces more basic than school curriculum and organization that are responsible for the quandary. Thus, it is predicted that career education, recurrent education, and back-to-basics will not resolve the dilemmas of disruption and breakdown in the traditional functioning of both school and workplace. Unless there are basic alterations in labor markets and the workplace that support changes in the educational setting, the latter are not likely to make much of a difference.

Work Reforms and Economic Democracy

For these reasons, both historical evidence and its extension through our overall approach suggest that the disruptive influences of overeducation in job markets is more likely to be resolved through alterations in the workplace. In particular, the fact that the extrinsic aspects of work can no longer be made attractive enough to fulfill the higher expectations of the more educated job holder means that an emphasis must be placed upon improving the intrinsic qualities of work. The most important class of reforms for enhancing the intrinsic attractiveness of the workplace are those which increase the participation of workers in decisions that affect the work process, that is, attempts to democratize the workplace. Broadly speaking, we refer to these as the implementation of economic democracy.[32]

The democratizing of the workplace, then, represents an attempt to increase the involvement and commitment of the worker to his employer through increasing his or her participation in decision-making. That is, it is expected that by increasing involvement and commitment, the traditional rewards of wages, possibilities of promotion, and steady employment will become less important for

motivating workers. To a certain degree employees will be willing to trade - off these benefits in place of an increased level of satisfaction and participation in the workplace. There are many ways that approaches to economic democracy can be implemented.

Some of the most successful efforts have relied upon the use of work teams or autonomous work groups.[33] Instead of dividing the work into fragmented and repetitive tasks that are assigned to individuals, an entire work process or sub-assembly is assigned to a team of workers. Such a process could be the accounting function of a small firm, or the responsibility for a sub-assembly of a large piece of machinery. The work team is given responsibility for most of the work process. That is, the group must schedule the activity, assign particular team members, organize and execute the work activity, and inspect the results for quality control. Thus the team would be responsible, collectively, for its own activities, and these would be determined in a participative fashion.

These approaches have been tried in such diverse enterprises as automobile assembly (Volvo) and the manufacture of pet foods.[34] In almost all cases, the productivity of labor rises as worker turnover and absenteeism decline and product quality rises. In essense, workers relate to a community of colleagues, and they share decision-making jointly. To a large degree, the work becomes intrinsically more interesting and meaningful as the worker experiences more of an influence over his or her working life and a greater comraderie with his or her fellow workers.

While the use of work teams or autnomous work groups represents one form of industrial democracy, there are many other forms. For example, the use of a policy of co-determination in which governing boards of firms are composed of representatives of both capital and labor are prevalent in West Germany and are being considered as part of company policy for the United Kingdom and for the Common Market countries.[35] There is some question whether this particular policy will increase participation on the shop floor. A more decentralized approach is the use of worker councils of elected workers who advise management on workers' interests. These functions can also be established through trade unions as in the Swedish case. In Sweden, the workers have been given the rights in recent

years to share decision-making with respect to hiring, firing, distribution of work, and work safety.[36] That is, Swedish managers can not make these decisions without approval by the workers, and workers are entitled legally to leave their jobs if there exist safety hazards.

A more extensive version of industrial democracy is that of worker self - management itself. This mode of control can take many forms, but the Yugoslavian experience is most instructive because of its relatively long establishment in that country.[37] The Yugoslavian model is based upon workers' councils that make the major policy decisions for the firms. Among small enterprises (less than thirty employees), all of the workers are members of such councils; and among larger enterprises, the councils are elected by the workforce. The council holds all formal power, and it makes decisions regarding hiring and firing, salaries, investment, and other operations of the firm. Under this arrangement, the management is accountable to the workers. Such managers are appointed by the elected representatives of the central board of management. The personal income of the workers is dependent both upon the overall success of the enterprise as well as the contribution of the individual toward that success, although a minimum income is guaranteed to all workers.

While the Yugoslavian approach has particularly broad implications for the democratization of work in public enterprises, its counterpart in the private sector is the producer cooperative. Producer cooperatives are both owned and operated democratically by their members. In these cases, the worker-members exercise control of both the internal organization of work as well as the levels of remuneration, product planning and development, marketing, pricing, and other functions. Any surplus that is generated is allocated to investment or distributed among the members, so the workers benefit not only from a more democratic form of working life, but also from the financial success of the cooperative. In some cases, firms that might have otherwise closed their doors have been successfully transformed into producer cooperatives by their workforce.[38]

These examples of increased worker participation and democratization of work or industrial democracy all have one factor in common. By increasing the participation of workers and their intrinsic attachment to the job, it is expected

that workers will become better integrated into the workplace. This integration should result in improved productivity through lower worker turnover and absenteeism and higher quality workmanship. A fairly large number of actual cases and experiments have tended to confirm the expectation of higher productivity in the more participative setting.[39]

Educational Implications of Economic Democracy

But, if these forms of economic democracy will increasingly become evident in the workplace as a means of integrating the "new" worker, surely they will have repercussions for education. In particular, such organizational modes set out rather different educational needs, and if the pattern of correspondence between the school and workplace is to be re-established there must be changes in the schools. What are some of the new worker requirements that the schools will need to attend to?

Based upon previous analyses[40], it appears that there are at least five dimensions of economic democracy that would require changes in the educational system. These included (1) the ability to participate in group decisions; (2) capacity for increased individual decision-making; (3) minimal competencies in basic skills; (4) capacity to receive and give training to colleagues; and (5) cooperative skills.

The ability to participate in group decisions is an obvious prerequisite for the democratized work place. Educational reforms that might be consonant with this requirement include greater democracy in school organization; more emphasis on group projects and teamwork, greater integration of schools and classrooms by race, ability, and social class; heavier reliance on team teaching; and a focus on group dynamics for improving interactions among student collleagues in problem solving.

Individual decision-making is important in the economic democracy mode because of the increase in decisions that the individual must make in the workplace in comparison with the present situation. That is, a democratized workplace tends to require a greater amount of individual judgement as well as collective decision-making. An educational approach that might respond to this

need is the construction of a curriculum with greater emphasis on problem solving then that which is found at present.

Minimal competencies for all students become important as workers are presumed to have the aptitudes to rotate jobs and share in decision-making. Under existing systems of work, it is expected that workers will have widely different competencies, so that some workers will need very nominal skills and others will need very complex ones. A flattening of job hierarchies through the use of teams and autonomous work groups, especially, would necessitate much greater equality in worker skills and competencies. This requirement suggests that mastery learning types of approaches and criteria-based testing would become more important.[41]

The emphasis on collegial training, where workers train their fellow workers as members of work teams or groups, would require the ability of most workers to assist others in learning job skills. The fact that workers would need to both train others and receive training themselves suggests that new forms of instruction for the schools might emphasize the use of peer-teaching approaches to a greater extent. That is, we might expect a much greater use of students for assisting other students in learning particular skills.

Finally, most forms of industrial democracy require greater cooperative skills. The movement from a highly competitive form of work organization to a cooperative one will necessitate greater attention to cooperative forms of learning in the schools. Possible educational responses include a greater emphasis on group assignments and problem solving.[42]

While the nature of the dynamics that will push the educational system to adapt to changes in the organization of work will not be discussed here, they have been elaborated in other research that underlies this paper. Accordingly, the remainder of this paper will be devoted to the presentation of a research agenda that migh provide greater detail on the relationships between education and work generally and on the effects of economic democracy on educational reform, specifically.

V. SUMMARY

This paper started with the view that just as democratic participation is a desirable property for our political life, it is also an important goal for other areas of our social and economic existence. Indeed, as Carole Pateman has suggested, political democracy might not be fully attainable without economic democracy in work organizations. To the degree that considerable pathology in our society is created by the stressful conditions of existing work, a movement toward economic democracy can reduce the incidence of psychopathology.

But, one must be obviously wary about predictions of such profound change as the democratization of the workplace. "If wishes were horses, then beggars would ride," is a nursery rhyme that we tell our children. Most beggars lack transportation, and in a similar way we find that many of our dreams are delusions at best. Accordingly, one must leap beyond wishes and posit a view of social change that would seem to be useful for predicting the nature of future alterations of those institutions under scrutiny.

In this paper, I proposed a dialectical understanding of the change process in which the structural contradictions of capitalism initiate changes in both the workplace and the educational sector. The dynamics of this dialectic were presented, and specific forms of economic democracy and educational reform were posited which would mediate the contradictions.

The overall conclusion of the paper is the assertion that economic democracy is a very likely prospect for the future, and that it may have the effect of democratizing to a greater extent such other institutions as the school and family. For those of us who abhor the present tyranny of the workplace, our hopes are heightened by this reading of the future. However, we should acknowledge that the forces of domination have been with us for a considerable part of our history as evidenced by the following quote from a secret diary of Marcus Aurelius (C.100 BC) which was said to have guided him in his daily dealings with his fellow man:

TESTES SOURS VIRILITER APPREHENDE, DEINDE COR ET MENS SEQUENTER

Translated liberally, this means "...once you've got them by the testicles, their hearts and minds are sure to follow." This has certainly been an important assumption of the development of capitalist work organizations and state bureaucracies alike. Whether these forms of control are in their twilight years is still to be contested, but the preceding analysis gives substantial cause for optimism.

FOOTNOTES

1. For studies on the impact of work or the lack of it on physical and mental health see House 1974, Kasl 1974, and Margolis and Kroes 1974.

2. See R. Tawney 1931 for a discussion of the prerogatives of private property.

3. Carole Pateman 1970 argues that political democracy is not fully attainable without workplace democracy.

4. For illustrations and further discussion see D. Jenkins 1974; D. Zwerdling 1978; and The Annals May 1977.

5. See Ollman 1971: Chap. 5 for a discussion of dialectics.

6. This section is synthesized from research that is reported in Levin and Carnoy (forthcoming) and Levin 1978. Relevant references for the main contentions are noted to assist the reader. However, complete documentation is available in the works mentioned above.

7. For details see Daniel Nelson 1975.

8. See Baran and Sweezy 1966.

9. See R. Edwards 1978; H. Braverman 1974; and S. Marglin for an historical picture of changes in work organization.

10. See, for example, S. Terkel and the literature in U.S. Department of Health, Education, and Welfare 1973 as well as footnote 1.

11. See Marglin 1974; Gintis 1976; and Edwards 1978.

12. This "efficiency" in production is often associated with the organizational dictates of Weber (1958) and the "scientific management" of F. Taylor. An analysis of the Taylor approach is found in Haber 1964 and Edwards 1978.

13. U.S. Department of Health, Education, and Welfare 1973.

14. Carnoy and Levin 1976 and Johnson and Whyte 1977.

15. See the analyses by Tyack 1974; Katz 1971; and Bowles and Gintis 1976.

16. See Bowles and Gintis 1976; and Levin 1976.

17. An excellent ethnographic analysis of the differential socialization of the young for occupational roles is Wilcox 1977.

18. See Carnoy and Levin 1976a and Levin 1977 for details.

19. See H. Levin 1978; for an earlier and informative discussion on these points, see Carter 1976.

20. One of the chapters in Levin and Carnoy (forthcoming) is devoted to the independent dynamic of the schools.

Footnotes

21. G. Becker 1964.

22. This is the focus of the work by Freeman 1976 and Rumberger 1978. A more extensive analysis is found in Levin 1978 and Levin and Carnoy, forthcoming.

23. Evidence of this phenomenon is found in Grasso 1977. Also, see Rumberger 1980, forthcoming.

24. Braverman 1974 and Bright 1966.

25. U.S. Department of Health, Education, and Welfare 1973.

26. Evidence on declining test scores is summarized in Wirtz et al., 1977.

27. Gallup 1977.

28. K. Hoyt et al., 1972.

29. A good analysis is Grubb and Lazerson 1975.

30. S. Mushkin 1974; R. Peterson 1979.

31. See Thurow 1975 and Edwards, Reich, and Gordon 1975 for some insights on this phenomenon.

32. For discussions of economic democracy and its meaning, see Jenkins 1974; Bernstein 1976; Greenberg 1975; and Blumberg 1968.

33. Susman 1976.

34. Gyllenhammar 1977 and Walton 1975.

35. D. Jenkins 1974: Chapter 8.

36. Schiller 1977.

37. Vanek 1971.

38. Carnoy and Levin 1976; Bernstein 1976.

39. U.S. Department of Health, Education, and Welfare 1973 and Blumberg 1968.

40. See Levin 1978 and Carnoy and Levin (forthcoming).

41. See B. Bloom 1976.

42. R. Slavin 1978.

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