

Further Thoughts on Class and Class Stand

Confusion as to who is working class.

Confusion as to what makes you a member of the working class.

What are the classes based on and what is the basis for class.

Contradiction between wanting children to move beyond you (change class) and resenting children moving into another class and rejecting your class (class contempt).

Contradiction between your own drive to move beyond your class and sense of guilt for changing class.

Acting for the sake of the class, that is, the working class, faces difficulties caused by a number of confusions we face in our society. Some times these seem self-induced and can hold people back from acting for the class. Often they seem to be confusions more or less intentionally laid on people as methods of control. Much of the education many of us received seemed aimed at getting us to move to a highr class.

I start with my family, my string of cousins. They never call themselves working class and don't even seem to use the term "working class" in their political discussions (of which they have many). We are all "middle class." What we aren't is "lower class," people who don't work, people who are welfare chislrs. Yet they live in fear of losing what they have and becoming wards of the state.

At the same time there is often a contradiction between moving forward and doing better then your parents and rejecting where you come from and even looking down on your family.

I felt this contradion al lmy years of growing and going to school. I was told to value education and not to let anything get in the way of getting education at the same time as being told I was acting as though I was better than my own family.

A particular form this contradiction took was to be told that the people I was becoming like and was emulating were "non-productive," people who didn't produce anything. At the same time I was told told not to get stuck, not to go through the economic problems our families, and education was the way out.

In my own case I have to say that what was dominant was the theme of getting out and education was the way out. Get all you can.

Another source of confusion is around what are the classes, how many are there, an which one of the many do you really belong to.

For all the political talk, for all the discussion of “haves” and “have-nots,” no one around me seem to talk about the ruling class. But there was talk about the contradiction between the haves and the have-nots. The hints of a class struggle were muted or softened by the belief that one could get out of one’s conditions. This came close to saying that we could move to a higher class.

But somehow there were multiple classes - welfare class, lower middle class, upper middle class, and of course the “middle class” - which was really the working class.