

1973-02-14: [MOBILITY] Sociologists & hereditary principle.

When sociologists—usually given to see power as it really is, beyond mere legal definition—look back over historical forms of social stratification they quickly light upon the feudal system as a fully institutionalized & legal form of hereditary power. But when the legal aspect of hereditary power disappears in early modern times, and power passes to the bourgeoisie, they take the element of social mobility which appears as the paramount feature of social mobility, which thus appears as the paramount feature and think of hereditary transmission as an anachronistic survival. But in fact the guarantee in law of right to transfer wealth to successors is as firm a way of maintaining hereditary privilege as was feudalism.

[Linked to this]: Young, *Meritocracy*, 88: "The most rebellious knew instinctively that the fastest progress occurs anywhere when the old have to surrender their power before their span of life is complete—the essence of every social revolution is the earlier transfer of authority from one generation to the next."