

Class, Capital and Education in this Neoliberal and Neoconservative Period

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INTRODUCTION

The current neoliberal project, the latest stage of the capitalist project, is to reshape the public's understanding of the purposes of public institutions and apparatuses, such as schools, universities, libraries. In schools, intensive testing of pre-designed curricula (high stakes testing) and accountability schemes (such as the 'failing schools' and regular inspection regime that somehow only penalizes working class schools) are aimed at restoring schools (and further education and universities) to what dominant elites – the capitalist class – perceive to be their "traditional role" of producing passive worker/citizens with just enough skills to render themselves useful to the demands of capital.

In the US and the UK and throughout other parts of the globe (Hill, 2005b; and Hill *et al*, 2006), policy developments such as the 1988 Education Reform Act, passed by the Conservatives and extended/deepened by New Labour, and in the USA, the Bush 'No Child Left Behind Act' of 2001 have nationalized and intensified patterns of control, conformity and (increasing) hierarchy. These, and other policies such as the Patriot Act in the USA that permits secret services to spy on/access the library borrowing habits of readers, have deepened the logic and extent of neoliberal capital's hold over education reforms, over public services. They are an attempt to both intimidate and to conform critical and alternative thinking.

In the US, such reforms include: the heavy involvement of educational management organizations (EMOs) as well as the introduction of voucher plans, charter schools, and other manifestations of the drive toward the effective privatization of public education. England and Wales, meanwhile, have endured the effective elimination of much comprehensive (all-intake, all-ability), public secondary schooling. Commercialization and marketization have led to school-based budgetary control, a 'market' in new types of state schooling, and the effective 'selling off' of state schools to rich and/or religious individuals or groups via the Academies

scheme. The influence of neoliberal ideology also led to the October 2005 proposals for state schools, which have historically fallen under the purview of democratically elected local school districts, to become independent 'mini-businesses' called 'independent trust schools' (Hill, 2006). Similar attempts at change have occurred throughout developed and developing countries (Hill, 2005a; and Hill *et al*, 2006).

However, the impact of the 'New Labour' government in Britain on society and our schools and universities, and the impacts of the Bush Administration in the US make it impossible to understand the current crises in schools and in democracy solely in terms of neoliberalism. We need also to consider the impact of neoconservatism.

In this article, I want to provide an overview of how those agendas in education play themselves out in the UK, the USA and worldwide.

SOCIAL CLASS AND CAPITAL

There have been a number of changes in capitalism in this current period of neoliberal globalization. One development is the growth in service, communications and technological industries in the developed world. One 'service industry' is education. As the International Chamber of Commerce (ICC) observes, 'services are coming to dominate the economic activities of countries at virtually every stage of development' (ICC, 1999, p. 1).

Another development is the declining profitability of Capital – the crisis of capital accumulation. This crisis has resulted in intensification of competition between Capitals, between national and between transnational Capitals and corporations. There is general agreement among critical educators and Marxists that 'the pressure on nations to liberalize services at the national level can be seen, therefore, as a response to the declining profitability of manufacture' (Beckmann and Cooper, 2004). This crisis of capital accumulation, as predicted by Marx and Engels (1848) has led to the intensification of the extraction of surplus value, the progressing global immiseration of workers, and the intensification of control of populations by the ideological and repressive state apparatuses identified and analyzed by Althusser **(1)**.

Class War From Above

Neoliberal and neoconservative policies aimed at intensifying the rate of capital accumulation and extraction of surplus value comprise an intensification of 'class war from above' by the capitalist class against the working class. One major aspect of this is the fiscal policy of increasing taxes on workers and decreasing taxes on business and the rich. Of course, some people don't like trillion dollar tax handouts to the rich. These oppositionists have to be denigrated, scorned, and controlled! This is where neoconservative policies are important. On the one hand they persuade the poor to vote (right-wing Republican) for a social or religious or anti abortion or homophobic or racist agenda against their own (more Left-wing, more Democrat, or further Left) economic self-interest.

The class war from above has a neoliberal, economic element. It has also embraced a neoconservative political element to strengthen the force of the state behind it. In Andrew Gamble's words, it is *The Free Economy and the Strong State* (1999), a state strong on controlling education, strong on controlling teachers, strong on marginalizing oppositional democratic forces such as local elected democracy, trade unions, critical educators, critical students. Moreover, neoconservatism aids in the formation of a state strong on enforcing the neoliberalization of schools and society.

Despite the horizontal and vertical cleavages within the capitalist class (Dumenil and Levy, 2004), the architects of neoliberal and neoconservative policies know very well who they are. Nobody is denying capitalist class consciousness. They are rich. They are powerful. And they are transnational as well as national. They exercise (contested) control over the lives of worker-laborers and worker-subjects. If there is one class that does not lack class-consciousness, *the subjective appreciation of its common interest, and its relationship within the means of production to other social classes*, it is the capitalist class.

Members of the capitalist class do recognize that they survive in dominance *as a class* whatever their skin colour, or dreams, or multifaceted subjectivities and histories of hurt and triumph; they survive precisely because they do know they are a class. They have class consciousness, they are 'a class *for* themselves' (a class with a consciousness that they are a class), as well as a 'class *in* themselves' (a class or group of people with shared economic conditions of existence and interests). The capitalist class does not tear itself to pieces negating or suborning its class identity, its class

awareness, it's class power over issues of 'race' and gender (or, indeed, sexuality or disability). And they govern in their own interests, not just in education 'reform', but also in enriching and empowering themselves – while disempowering and impoverishing others – the (white and black and other minority, male and female) working class.

Increasingly Unequal Distribution of Wealth in the US and Britain

David Harvey (2005) argues that while the intellectual origins of neoliberalism reach back to the 1930s, its material origins stem from the crisis of capital accumulation of the late 1960s and 1970s. In his estimation, this crisis constituted both a political threat and an economic threat to economic elites and ruling classes across the advanced capitalist and the developing countries (2005, p. 15). In the US, prior to the 1970s, the wealthiest 1% of the population owned between 30% and 47% of all wealth assets (p.16). But in the 1970s it slid to just 20%. Asset values collapsed. In Harvey's phrase, "the upper classes had to move decisively if they were to protect themselves from political and economic annihilation" (p. 16). And they did, leading Harvey to conclude that we can best understand neoliberalization as a project designed to achieve the restoration of class power. Furthermore, given that by 1998 the percentage ownership of all wealth assets in the US held by the wealthiest 1% of the population had almost doubled since the mid-1970s, we should view the neoliberal project as having achieved great success.

Likewise in the UK, the wealth of the super-rich has doubled since Tony Blair came to power in 1997. According to the Office for National Statistics (2000), nearly 600,000 individuals in the top 1% of the UK wealth league owned assets worth £355bn in 1996, the last full year of Conservative rule. By 2002, that had increased to £797bn.

Increasingly Unequal Distribution of Income in the US and Britain

As for income, the ratio of the salaries of Chief Executive Officers (CEOs) to the median compensation of workers increased from just over 30 to 1 in 1970 to nearly 500 to 1 by 2000 (Harvey, 2005:17).

Korten (2004) highlights the immense increase in salaries taken by top US executives since the early 1990s. In the US, between 1990 and 1999 inflation increased by 27.5%, workers' pay by 32.3%, corporate profits by 116%, and, finally, the pay of chief executive officers by a staggering, kleptocratic 535% (Korten, 2004, p. 17; see also Brenner, 2005).

In the US, the share of the national income taken by the top 1% of income earners had been 16% in the 1930s. It fell to around 8% between the mid-1940s and mid-1970s. The neoliberal revolution restored its share of national income to 15% by the end of the twentieth century. And the Federal minimum wage, which stood on a par with the poverty level in 1980, had fallen to 30% below that in 1990: "The long decline in wage levels had begun" (Harvey, 2005, p.25). Pollin (2003) shows that, in the US the level of 'real wages' per hour dropped from \$15.72 in 1973 to \$14.15 in 2000. In the UK, the top 1% of income earners have doubled their share of the national income from 6.5% to 13% since 1982 (Harvey, 2005, pp.15-18). Tax policy has been crucial in affecting these growing inequalities.

Changing Tax Rates: Capitalist Winners and Working Class Losers

Dumenil and Levy (2004) show that in the US, those in the highest tax bracket are paying tax at a rate around half that of the 1920s, whereas the current tax rate for those in the lowest tax bracket has more than doubled over the same period. As a forerunner of George W. Bush's 'trillion dollar tax giveaway to the rich', Ronald Reagan cut the top rate of personal tax from 70% to 28%. Both the Reagan and Thatcher governments also dramatically cut taxes on business/corporations.

In Britain, too, the working class is paying more tax. The richest groups are paying a smaller proportion of their income in taxes in comparison to 1949 and to the late 1970s. These dates were both in the closing stages at the end of two periods of what might be termed 'Old Labour', or social democratic governments (in ideological contradistinction to the primarily neoliberal policies of New Labour).

As Paul Johnson and Frances Lynch reported in their 2004 article in *The Guardian*, in comparison with the late 1970s, the 'fat cats' are now paying around half as much tax (income tax and insurance contribution rate). These 'fat cats' are paying less income tax and

national insurance as a percentage of their earned income than in 1949. "As a percentage of income, middle and high earners pay less tax now than at any time in the past thirty years" (Johnson and Lynch, 2004).

In contrast, the average tax-take for 'the low paid' (allowing for inflation) is roughly double that of the early 1970s – and nearly twice as much as in 1949 (Johnson and Lynch, 2004). No wonder, then, that Johnson and Lynch titled their article: "Sponging off the Poor."

CAPITAL, CORPORATIONS AND EDUCATION

Education is now big business – "edu-business." Current worldwide spending in education is "estimated at around 2,000 billion dollars ... more than global automotive sales" (Santos, 2004, p. 17). According to Santos, "capital growth in education has been exponential, showing one of the highest earning rates of the market: £1000 invested in 1996 generated £3,405 four years later" (Santos, 2004, pp.17-18, cited in Delgado-Ramos and Saxe-Fernandez, 2005). Santos continues, 'that is an increased value of 240%, while the London Stock Change valorization rate accounted on the same period for 65%. Other 2004 data indicate that, current commercialized education, incomplete as it is, already generates around \$365 billion in profits worldwide" (idem).

Capital – national and transnational corporations along with their major shareholders – has a number of plans with respect to education. Firstly, there is "The Capitalist Plan *For* Education." This plan aims to produce and reproduce a work force and citizenry and set of consumers fit for Capital. According to this plan, schools must serve two overriding functions, an ideological function and a labour training function. These comprise socially producing labour-power for capitalist enterprises. This is people's capacity to labour – their skills and attitudes, together with their ideological compliance and suitability for Capital – as workers, citizens and consumers. In this analysis, Althusser's concepts of schools as ideological state apparatuses (ISAs) is useful here, with schools as key elements in the ideological indoctrination of new citizens and workers into thinking 'there is no alternative' to capitalism, that capitalism, and competitive individualism with gross inequalities is 'only natural' (Althusser, 1979. See also Hill, 2001, 2003 and 2004b).

Secondly, there is "The Capitalist Plan *In* Education", which entails smoothing the way for direct profit-taking/ profiteering from education). This plan is about how Capital wants to make *Direct Profits* from education. This centres on setting business 'free' in education for profit-making and profit-taking – extracting profits from privately controlled/owned schools and colleges or aspects of their functioning. Common mechanisms for such profiteering include: managing, advising, controlling and owning schools. These possibilities are widened in the UK by New Labour's Education White Paper of October 2005.

Finally, there is "Capital's Global Plan for Education Corporations." This is a series of national capitalist plans for domestically based national or multinational corporations globally. This is a plan for British, US, Australian, New Zealand and, locally (e.g. in particular states such as Brazil in Latin America) based "edu-businesses" and corporations to profit from international privatizing, franchising and marketing activities. With a worldwide education industry valued at \$2 trillion annually, "it is not surprising that many investors and "edupreneurs" are anxious to seize the opportunities to access this untapped gold mine" (Schugarensky and Davidson-Harden, 2003, p.323). It is not just national edu-businesses that are involved – it is large multi-activity national and global capitalist companies.

The restructuring of education has taken place/is taking place throughout the globe. Neoliberalisation, accompanied by neoconservative policies (Dumenil and Levy, 2004; Harvey, 2005), has proceeded apace, spurred by governments committed to developing human capital and labour power more suited to the interests of Capital and the owners of capital, the capitalist class. This restructuring is also developing and promoting their own Edubusinesses, in order to gain these service exports, the export of educational services (Hatcher, 2001; Rikowski, 2002).

Internationally, liberalisation of schooling and higher education, and other education sectors, has been taken up voluntarily, or been forced upon governments through the influence of the world regime of neo-liberal capitalist organisations such as the World Bank, the International Monetary Fund, OECD, international trade regimes such as the WTO's General Agreement on Trade in Services (GATS) and the proposed Free Trade Area of the Americas (FTAA), and regional derivatives/ government/national capital/US capital hemispheric organisations such as the Partnership for Educational Revitalization in the Americas (PREAL) in Latin America. Where world or regional organisations of capital are not successful in implementing liberalisation, then local Free Trade Agreements

(FTAs) and bilateral intergovernmental agreements are opening up 'free trade' in services such as 'education services'. (2)

NEOLIBERAL POLICIES

There are a number of common aspects of the neo-liberalisation of schooling and education services. It is possible to identify twelve aspects of neoliberal policy within states, and a further four in terms of global policy. Within states, these are as follows.

The first policy is low public expenditure. Typically there has been a regime of cuts in the post-war Welfare State, the withdrawal of state subsidies and support, and the transition towards lower public expenditure. This has involved public expenditure cuts in education. These have been driven primarily and most significantly by an economic imperative to reduce aggregate social expenditures. In developed states this has been termed 'prudence' or 'sound fiscal policy'. In developing and less developed states, this policy has been a condition of structural adjustment programs and loans (SAPs and SALs) administered by the World Bank and International Monetary Fund (IMF) (Chossudovsky, 1998) designed primarily with debt servicing obligations in mind.

Within national economies there have been the policies of controlling inflation by interest rates, preferably by an independent central bank, responsive to the needs of capital, rather than responsive to domestic political demands, and the policy of balancing budgets, and not using budgets to stimulate demand.

A salient policy development is privatization of formerly publicly owned and managed services. Variously termed 'liberalisation' (for example by the International Labour Organisation) or neo-liberalisation, this comprises transferring into private ownership, selling off, the means of production, distribution and exchange, and also, in the last two decades globally, of 'selling off' services such as education and health.

Policies which have served to 'soften up' public opinion and service provision for privatisation include the setting up of markets (or quasi-markets) in services and competition between different 'providers' such as universities and schools, competing with each other for (high potential) students/pupils.

A concomitant of marketisation is decentralisation: In general neoliberal education policies, for example in Latin America (Carnoy, 2002) and elsewhere (such as in England and Wales) have taken the shape of 'decentralization' efforts, aimed at scaling down the role of central governments in direct responsibility for different aspects of education, toward increased provincial/regional, municipal and private involvement in education).

These policies, of privatisation, fiscal 'rectitude', decentralisation and deregulation commonly result in increasingly differentiated provision of services. Within states this results in intensified hierarchical differentiation between education institutions on the basis of ('raced' and gendered) social class.

Within states, neo-liberal education policies stress selective education. Within education, whether through the development of private schools and universities, or whether through the creation of different (and hierarchically arranged) different types of schools and universities (as in Britain) the public right to education has been transformed into the creation of 'opportunity' to acquire the means of education and additional cultural capital, through selection, through a selective and hierarchically stratified schooling and education system.

There is increasing differentiation, too, globally. Neoliberalisation of schooling services, in particular higher education, has reinforced the relegation of most developing states and their populations to subordinate global labour market positions, specializing in lower skilled services and production. This global differentiation is enforced by the World Bank and other international agency prescriptions regarding what education, and at what levels, should be provided in less developed and developing states (Leher, 2004).

Schools and universities, are increasingly run in accordance with the principles of 'new public managerialism' (Mahoney and Hextall, 2000) based on a corporate managerialist model imported from the world of business. As well as the needs of Capital dictating the principal aims of education, the world of business also supplies the model of how it is to be provided and managed.

A key element of Capital's plans for education is to cut its labour costs. For this, a deregulated labour market is essential - with schools and universities able to set their own pay scales and sets of conditions - busting national trade union agreements, and, weakening union powers to protect their workforces. Thus, where neo-liberalism reigns, there is relatively untrammelled selling and

buying of labour power, for a 'flexible', poorly regulated labour market (Costello and Levidow, 2001). Some impacts on workers' rights, pay and what the International Labour Organisation calls 'securities' are spelt out below.

Internationally, neo-liberalism requires untrammelled free trade. Currently the major mechanism for this is the General Agreement on Trade in Services (GATS), though there are and have been many other mechanisms. **(3)**

One aspect is that barriers to international trade, capitalist enterprise and the extraction of profits should be removed. This applies as much to trade in services such as education and health as it does to the extraction of oil or the control of water supply.

There should also be a 'level playing field' for companies of any nationality within all sectors of national economies. Barriers such as 'most favoured nation' (MFN) clauses should be dismantled, allowing any corporation, whether domestic or foreign or transnational, to own/run/universities, teacher education, schooling in any state.

Neoliberal Capital also demands that international trade rules and regulations are necessary to underpin 'free' trade, with a system for penalising 'unfair' trade policies such as subsidies, and such as promoting/favouring national interests or of national workforces like teachers and lecturers. Certainly, according to the GATS, this 'level playing field' will be legally enforceable – under pain of financial penalties, for any state that has signed up particular education services to the GATS.

There is an exception to these free trade demands by transnational Capital. The above restrictions do not apply in all cases to the USA (or other major centres of capitalist power such as the EU). Ultimately, the USA may feel free to impose the above 'economic democracy' and 'choice' by diplomatic, economic or military means. Ultimately peoples and states can be coerced to choose, bombed to obey.

Thus, key strategies to maximise capital accumulation, and to increase the rates of profit, are global free trade and privatization within states. Hirrt (2004) summarises the 'New Economic Context' (of neo-liberalism) as having four characteristics:

- The intensification ('globalization') of economic competition
- A decrease in state financial resources for public sector provision such as school or university education
- A faster pace of change (with rapid developments in technology and in opening up new markets)
- And a 'polarization' of the labour market – with less being spent on the education of 'the masses' in particular.

Two of Hirrt's characteristics are contextual (increasing competition, and faster technology/opening up new markets). In the other two (public expenditure cuts, and increasing polarization/hierarchicalisation of education and the workforce) Hirrt identifies what he considers the salient intentions and effects of neoliberal policies.

He also draws attention to a seeming contradiction between two of these four intentions, where:

... the industrial and financial powers ask the political leaders to transform education so that it can better support the competitiveness of regional, national or European companies. But, on the other hand, the same economic powers require that the State reduce its fiscal pressure and thus reduce its expenditure, notably in the field of education (Hirrt, 2004, pp.444-445).

The contradiction is solved by polarisation. The poor (in general) are polarized to the bottom of an intellectually and materially worsening education. Why educate them expensively?

NEOCONSERVATIVE POLICIES

There are, of course resistant teachers, teacher educators, students and student teachers who seek better and more hopeful pasts, presents and futures, rooted in experiences and histories pre-dating and seeking to post-date the combined neoliberal and neoconservative storming of the ramparts of the state and the education state apparatuses - ministries, schools, vocational colleges, and universities.

Much of this paper is about how Capital, and the governments and state apparatuses serving their interests, 'get away with it', fight

the 'culture wars' and seek to attain ideological hegemony for neo-liberalism - displacing oppositional counter-hegemonic liberal-progressive, Marxist/socialist, and social democratic ideals and 'common sense'. This partly takes place through a process of a systematic denigration and humbling of publicly provided services and public sector workers as bureaucratized, slow to adapt, resistant to change, expensive, and putting their own interests above that of the service and of the 'consumers' of those services. It also takes place through conservative control of the curriculum and pedagogy that seeks to silence or discredit or marginalize counter-hegemonic ideologies.

A policy that is both neoliberal and neoconservative - partly aimed at whipping these resistant and critical students, teachers, professors in line, is employment policy. Enforcing acceptance of the neoliberal revolution and weakening opposition to it is partly carried out through the importation of 'new public managerialism' into the management of schools and colleges and education services.

Here surveillance of teachers and students, partly through the imposition of tightly monitored testing of chunks of knowledge deemed by national and state/local governments to be suitable, and sanitized, and conservative enough. Conservatism is enforced through the curriculum and the SATS (Standard Assessment Tests). Indeed, in England and Wales, Conservative Prime Minister Margaret Thatcher personally intervened on a number of occasions during the drawing up of the various subject outlines for the national curriculum of 1988 - a curriculum largely maintained by New Labour today (Hill, 2006).

There are three major aspects of neoconservatism. The first is that described above - the circumscription, the attempt to straightjacket students', teachers' and professors' practices- their curricula, their pedagogy, their use of their time in class and for homework. This is the repressive use of the local state apparatus.

The second is the degree of enforcement by the central state apparatuses. These include those of the security state. This includes blacklists, non-promotion of oppositional teachers and professors, public vilification such as the right-wing campaign against 'The Dirty Thirty' left-wing professors at UCLA (Weiner, 2006). There is not yet a resuscitation of the McCarthyite House of UnAmerican Activities Committee, but the widespread ant-terror legislation such as the so-called PATRIOT Act in the USA, including the right of the

security services to track the library borrowing habits of US residents, does serve to diminish oppositional activity.

The third aspect of neoconservatism is the ongoing 'culture wars', the use of the ideological state apparatuses (some churches, many schools, nearly all mass media) to legitimate neoliberal and neoconservative ideology, 'common-sense', practices and beliefs. Although there is the appearance of ideological choice between, for example, the major political parties in the USA and Britain, or between mass circulation television and newspapers, seriously oppositional views are erased from television programmes and party platforms. There is plenty of choice about types of coffee or muffin, not much about type of society and economic system. People who question the 'tweedledum and tweedledee' choice in politics and the media tend to be regarded in much of the USA and Britain (though not all) as suspect - and can be transferred from the ministrations of the ideological state apparatuses to the attentions of the repressive state apparatuses.

A current example in Britain is the debate about the New Labour government's October 2006 White Paper on Education (Her Majesty's Government, 2005). This is a major step on the neoliberalisation of state schooling in England and Wales in terms of marketisation and pre-privatisation (Rikowski, 2005a, b). **(4)** (which seeks to further open up schools to private and business ownership, control and sponsorship, including setting up a system of new 'Independent Trust Schools', state primary and secondary schools that can become self-governing in terms of finances, admissions, curriculum and staffing). This has occasioned vigorous debate – and fairly unprecedented opposition from within the Labour Party itself (e.g. through the pressure group, Compass) **(5)**. However, the debate is largely defensive, seeking, largely, to defend the continued role of local education authorities and opposing further marketisation and neoliberalisation of schools. It is scarcely proactive. It does not seek the reversal of the New Labour policies since 1997 on marketisation, nor the changing of the national curriculum (Hill, 2006).

Similarly with teacher education: in virtually all current discussion about the curriculum for 'teacher training' in England and Wales, there is an acceptance of the status quo, substantially introduced as part of the Thatcher-Major revolution in education. Deep critique of the 'teacher training' curriculum is rare.

NEOLIBERALISM AND NEOCONSERVATISM: GLOBAL SIMILARITIES, NATIONAL VARIATIONS

While there are global similarities in liberalizing education policy, there are national and also local variations in the type and extent of the various policies. These relate to different historical conditions and balance of forces - the relative strengths of the trade union movement, workers' trade union and political organizations on the one hand, and other forces in Civil Society- with their varying strengths of resistance to neoliberal policies, and of local Capital on the other. We are not in an era of the unimpeded march to neoliberal capitalism. Comparing three North American states, for example (Canada, the USA and Mexico) shows some similarities and some differences in context and policy. **(6)**

Nor are we in an era of the unimpeded march of neoconservatism. Western Europe in general fails to comprehend the specific religious right and radical right agenda in the USA. Such appeals go relatively unheeded, and met with incomprehension not just in social democratic Scandinavia but in the rest of Western Europe, too. In Western Europe, outside of wartime, economic issues tend to prevail in elections. A partial exception is currently in Britain, where all three parties, New Labour, Liberal Democrat and Conservative, are supporting similar versions of 'compassionate' neoliberalism and where New Labour and Conservative appear identical in their neoconservatism. However, historically in Britain, and currently in the rest of Western Europe, parties are more social class based and have economic agendas displaying far more divergence than in the USA and Britain.

THE IMPACTS SO FAR

Capital has not merely developed these plans and set them on the shelf for future reference. Many elements of these plans have already been put into action. We can already see much of the impact of these initiatives in the growing inequities they produce in the lives of students, declining levels of democratic control over schools, and worsening work conditions in the teaching and other education professions.

Impacts on Equity: Neoliberalism and Widening ('Raced' and Gendered) Class Inequalities in Education

Where there is a market in schools (where high status schools can select their intakes, whether on 'academic achievement' or other class-related criteria such as 'aptitudes'), then the result is increasing 'raced' and gendered social class differentiation. The middle classes (predominantly white) rapidly colonize the 'best' schools; the working classes (white and black) get pushed out. They don't get through the school gate. High status/high achieving middle class schools get better and better results. In a competitive market in schools, 'Sink' schools sink further, denuded of their 'brightest' intakes.

The same is true of higher education. In the US it is highly tiered – there is a hierarchy. Entry to elite schools/universities is very largely dependent on a student's ability to pay – on social class background. This is intensifying in England and Wales, too. Until the 1980s, there were no university fees in Britain – the state/ the taxpayer paid. Entry was free for students. For the last twenty year, all universities charged the same for undergrad courses. Now, the New Labour government is introducing 'variable' fees for different universities. Britain is 'going American'. This will reinforce elitism and exclude poorer groups, especially minorities, but white working class students, too.

Neoliberalization of schooling and university education is accompanied by an increase in (gendered, 'raced', linguistically differentiated) social class inequalities in educational provision, attainment and subsequent position in the labour market. For example, the movement to voucher and charter schools as well as other forms of privatized education such as chains of schools in US **(7)** have proven to be disproportionately beneficial to those segments of society who can afford to pay for better educational opportunities and experiences, leading to further social exclusion and polarization. **(8)**

Hirtt (2004) has noted the apparently contradictory education policies of Capital, 'to adapt education to the needs of business and at the same time reduce state expenditure on education" (p.446). He suggests that this contradiction is resolved by the polarization of the labour market, that from an economic point of view it is not necessary to provide high level education and of general knowledge, to all future workers. "It is now possible and even highly recommendable to have a more polarized education system ... education should not try to transmit a broad common culture to the

majority of future workers, but instead it should teach them some basic, general skills" (Hirtt, 2004, p.446).

In brief, then, manual and service workers receive a cheaper and inferior education limited to transferable skills while elite workers receive more expensive and more and internationally superior education. Not only does this signal one manifestation of the hierarchicalization of schools and the end of the comprehensive ideal it also represents a form of educational triage – with basic skills training for millions of workers, more advanced education for supervision for middle class and in some countries the brightest of the working classes, and elite education for scions of the capitalist, and other sections of the ruling classes.

Impacts on Workers' Pay, Conditions and Securities

A key element of Capital's plans for education is to cut its labour costs. For this, a deregulated labour market becomes essential – with schools and colleges able to set their own pay scales and sets of conditions – busting national trade union agreements, and, weakening the power of trade unions – such as teacher unions – to protect their workforces. As a consequence of Capital's efforts to extract higher rates of surplus value from their labour power, educational workers suffer declining pay, decreasing benefits, and deteriorating working conditions (Hill, 2005 b). There is the ongoing *casualisation* of academic labour, and the increased *proletarianisation* of the teaching profession.

By "casualization", I mean the move towards part-time and temporary employment in the education sector. Simultaneously, the "proletarianisation" of teaching results in:

- Declining wages, benefits, and professional autonomy for teachers,
- Growing intensification of teachers' labour through increases in class-sizes and levels of surveillance, and
- Mounting efforts to eliminate the influence of teachers' unions as mechanisms for promoting and defending teachers' interests.

The intensification of work is justified in different countries through campaigns of vilification against public service workers such as teachers and education officials. Siqueira (2005) reports that in Brazil, the Cardoso government of the mid-1990s launched, using the media, a renewed and stronger campaign against civil servants, unions and retired public employees.

Some of the usual terms used by his government to refer to these groups were: sluggish, negligent, agitators, old-fashioned, unpatriotic, selfish and lazy. This is part of the global neoliberal critique of public service workers for being expensive self-interested workers who have 'captured' the professions with their restrictive and expensive practices. In Britain, Stephen Ball (1990, p. 22) has called this denigration, 'a discourse of derision'. In some right-wing newspapers, such as *The Daily Mail* in Britain, it is more like a 'discourse of hate'. One need only recall former Secretary of Education Rod Paige's denigration of the National Education Association as a "terrorist organization" to find a potent example of such speech in the US.

Impacts on Democracy and on Critical Thinking

The neoconservative faces of education 'reform', indeed, of the wider marketization and commodification of humanity and society, come to play in the enforcement and policing of consent, the delegitimizing of deep dissent, and the weakening of oppositional centres and practices and thought. In eras of declining capital accumulation, an ultimately inevitable process, Capital – and the governments and parties and generals and CEOs who act at their behest – more and more nakedly ratchet up the ideological and repressive state apparatuses of control (Hill, 2001, 2003 and 2004b). Thus key working class organizations such as trade unions and democratically elected municipal governments are marginalized and their organizations, and those of other radically oppositional organizations based on race, ethnicity, religion, are attacked – through laws, rhetoric, and ultimately, sometimes, by incarceration.

In education, the combined neoliberal-neoconservative educational 'reform' has led to a radical change in what governments and most school and college managements/ leaderships themselves see as their mission. In the 1960s and 1970s (and with long prior histories), liberal-humanist or social democratic or socialist ends of education were common through the advanced capitalist (and parts of the anti-colonialist developing) worlds.

This has changed dramatically within the lifetimes of those over thirty. Now the curriculum is conservative and it is controlled. Now the hidden curriculum of pedagogy is performative processing and 'delivery' or pre-digested points. Now the overwhelming and nakedly over-riding and exclusive focus is on the production of a differentially educated, tiered ('raced and gendered) social class workforce and compliant citizenry. Differentially skilled and

socially/politically/culturally neutered and compliant human capital is now the production focus of neoliberalised education systems and institutions, hand in glove with and enforced by a neoconservative ideology and state.

RESISTANCE

But there is resistance; there are spaces, disarticulations, and contradictions. There are people who want to realize a different vision of education. There are people who want a more human and more equal society, a society where students and citizens and workers are not sacrificed on the altar of profit before all else.

And there are always, sometimes minor, sometimes major, awakenings – that the material conditions of existence, for teacher educators, teacher, students, and workers and families more widely – simply do not match or recognize the validity of neoliberal or neoconservative or other capitalist discourse and policy.

Cultural Workers as Critical Egalitarian Transformative Intellectuals and the Politics of Cultural/Educational Transformation

What influence can critical librarians, information workers, cultural workers, teachers, pedagogues, have in working towards a democratic, egalitarian society/economy/polity? **(9)**

How much autonomy from state suppression and control do/can state apparatuses and their workers - such as librarians, teachers, lecturers, youth workers, have in capitalist states such as England and Wales, or the USA? Don't they get slapped down, brought into line, controlled or sat upon when they start getting dangerous, when they start getting a constituency/having an impact? When their activities are deemed by the capitalist class and the client states and governments of/for Capital to be injurious to the interests of (national or international) Capital?

The repressive cards within the ideological state apparatuses are stacked against the possibilities of transformative change through the state apparatuses and their agents. But historically and internationally, this often has been the case. Spaces do exist for counter-hegemonic struggle – sometimes (as in the 1980s and

1990s) narrower, sometimes (as in the 1960s and 1970s and currently) broader. By itself, divorced from other arenas of progressive struggle, its success, the success of radical librarians, cultural workers, media workers, education workers, will be limited. This necessitates the development of pro-active debate both by, and within, the Radical Left. But it necessitates more than that. It calls for direct engagement with liberal, social democratic and Radical Right ideologies and programmes, including New Labour's, in all the areas of the state and of civil society, in and through all the ideological and repressive State Apparatuses, and in and through organizations and movements seeking a democratic egalitarian economy, polity and society.

It takes courage, what Gramsci called, 'civic courage'. It is often difficult. Some of our colleagues/comrades/companeras/companeras/political and organizational co-workers ain't exactly easy to get along with. Neither are most managements; especially those infected with the curse of 'new public managerialism', the authoritarian managerialist brutalist style of management and (anti-) human relations, where 'bosses know best' and 'don't you dare step outa line, buddy!'

But I want here to modify the phrase 'better to die on your feet than live on your knees'. It is of course better to live on your/our feet than live on your/our knees. And whether it is millions on the streets defending democratic and workers' rights (such as over pensions, in Britain and elsewhere, or opposing state sell-offs of publicly owned services, in France and elsewhere, or laws attacking workers' rights, in Italy and Australia and elsewhere) – all in the last two years – or in defence of popular socialist policies in Venezuela, we are able, in solidarity, and with political aims and organization, not only to stand/live on our feet, but to march with them. And to have not just an individual impact, but a mass/massive impact. We have a three way choice – to explicitly support the neoliberalisation and commodification and capitalization of society; to be complicit, through our silence and inaction, in its rapacious and anti-human/anti-social development – or to explicitly oppose it. To live on our feet and use them and our brains, words and actions to work and move with others for a more human, egalitarian, socially just, economically just, democratic, socialist society: in that way we maintain our dignity and hope.

Notes

1. See: Althusser, 1971. See also Hill, 2001, 2004b, 2005b.
2. See: Rikowski, 2002a, 2003; Leher, 2004; Shugurensky and Davidson-Harden, 2004; Hill, 2005b; and Hill et al, 2006.
3. See: Sinclair and Grieshaber-Otto, 2002; Devidal 2004; and Shugurensky and Davidson-Harden, 2004.
4. Though see Hatcher (2005, 2006a and b) for a contrasting Marxist analysis that suggests that control over the reproduction of labour power is more salient than a pre-privatisation agenda. Hatcher's argued view is that the view of British capital is that the most favourable conditions for the production of 'human capital' for the economic competitiveness of British capital are best secured by the state directly providing school education. This contrasts with the views expressed on this matter by Rikowski and by Hill.
5. See the Compass website at <http://www.compassonline.org.uk/about.asp>
6. Hursh (2005) examines differences and similarities between the neoliberal education agenda in England and Wales and the USA. And in Hill (2005b) and Hill et al (2006) I attempt to show global similarities.
7. See: Molnar, 2001 and 2005; and Molnar *et al*, 2004
8. See: Whitty *et al*, 1998; Gillborn and Youdell, 2000; Hill, Greaves and Maisuria, 2006; and Hill et al, 2006.
9. For a fuller discussion of the concept of teachers as transformative intellectuals, or as revolutionary critical intellectuals, see, for example: Giroux, 1988; Hill, 1989, 2003, 2005c; McLaren, 2000, 2005, 2006; McLaren and Farahmandpur, 2005; and McLaren and Rikowski, 2001.

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