

THEMATIC SECTION:
CAPITALISM, STATE, AND EDUCATION:
THE LIMITS OF THE CAPITAL



Neo-Fascism, Capitalism and Marxist Educators

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ABSTRACT – Neo-Fascism, Capitalism and Marxist Educators. I focus in this chapter on Revolutionary Marxist education, distinguishing it, in particular, from both *Centrist*, and Left versions of social democracy/revisionism. Accordingly, I set out what I consider to be five key aspects Marxists critique about education policy, and make proposals and seek to enact, relating to: (i) Curriculum and Assessment, (ii) Pedagogy, (iii) The Organisational Culture within the School/ Institution, (iv) Organisation of The Education System and of Students, that is, comprehensive schooling or selective schooling, and (v) Ownership and Control of Schools, Colleges and Universities. The conclusion sets out what is specifically Marxist about the proposals set out.

Keywords: Revolutionary Marxist Education. Counter-Hegemonic Education. Marxist Teachers. Education and Social Class.

RESUMO – Neo-Fascismo, Capitalismo e Educadores Marxistas. Meu foco neste artigo está na educação marxista revolucionária, distinguindo-a, em particular, das versões *centrista* e de esquerda da socialdemocracia/revisionismo. Nesse sentido, apresento o que considero serem cinco aspectos-chave da crítica dos marxistas sobre a política educacional e apresento propostas, e busco cumprir, relacionadas a: (i) Currículo e Avaliação, (ii) Pedagogia, (iii) A Cultura Organizacional dentro da Escola / Instituição, (iv) Organização do Sistema de Ensino e dos Alunos, ou seja, escolaridade integral ou seletiva, e (v) Propriedade e Controle de Escolas, Faculdades e Universidades. A conclusão expõe o que há de especificamente marxista nas propostas apresentadas.

Palavras-chave: Educação Marxista Revolucionária. Educação Contra-Hegemônica. Professores Marxistas. Educação e Classe Social.

Introduction

In this chapter, writing from a Revolutionary Marxist and a Classical Marxist perspective, I identify and critique three types of social democratic/ *centrist* socialist/ Marxist analysis and activism. These are, (i) social democratic, (ii) democratic socialist/Left social democratic/revisionist/reformist, and (iii) Revolutionary Marxist. I focus in this chapter on Revolutionary Marxist education, distinguishing it, in particular, from both *Centrist*, and Left versions of social democracy/revisionism. Each of these three types, or degrees, of socialist/Marxist critical education is associated with specific key education policies, deriving from particular ideological/theoretical analyses. For example, Left Revisionist/ Reformist analysis and programme is exemplified by Michael W. Apple and by, at various times in various places, social democratic and democratic socialist political parties and personalities as Jeremy Corbyn and Bernie Sanders. It is also represented by the *non-revolutionary*, Critical Pedagogy of writers such as Henry Giroux, and also by millions of *social justice* educators worldwide. In contrast, Revolutionary Marxist Education, or Communist Education, is associated with historical (such as early Soviet) and contemporary Communist educators worldwide, and by the Revolutionary Critical Pedagogy of Peter McLaren, which derives from Revolutionary Marxist analysis/ theory as well as (in McLaren's case) from Paolo Freire/ Freireanism. Critical Education is not restricted to questions of pedagogy and curriculum, although this is the focus of many critical educators, and much of Critical Pedagogy. Analysis, proposals and activism have to address wider societal questions of power and control. Accordingly, I set out what I consider to be five key aspects Marxists critique about education policy, and make proposals and seek to enact, relating to: (i) Curriculum and Assessment, (ii) Pedagogy, (iii) The Organisational Culture within the School/ Institution, (iv) Organisation of The Education System and of Students, that is, comprehensive schooling or selective schooling, and (v) Ownership and Control of Schools, Colleges and Universities. The conclusion sets out what is specifically Marxist about the proposals set out. These are: (i) reforms, such as social democratic or democratic socialist reforms, are not sustainable under capitalism; (ii) underlying the analysis of capitalist education and society, and socialist/communist education (and social/ economic) proposals is the salience of (gendered and *raced*) social class and social class analysis, the Capital-Labour Relation; and, (iii) Marxist educators should be activist and revolutionary inside and outside formal education systems in seeking to replace capitalism by socialism, with democratic Marxism.

Creeping Fascism: critical, socialist and marxist education and educators under attack

Critical Education, questioning power relationships throughout society, and proposing/working for egalitarian alternatives, is under

global assault in this current era of neoconservative/ neoliberal/ neo-fascist right-wing authoritarianism. Capitalist individuals, think tanks, organisations and governments are seeking to dilute, expel or criminalise socialist, Marxist, anti-nationalist education, particularly in schools' and universities' curricula- and activity. This is not new. They have, for centuries. Currently and historically the neo – conservative and neo-/ actual Fascist also target LGBT, feminist and anti-racist writing, teaching- and thought (Faulkner et al. 2019; 2021; Hill, 2019a).

However, in this current, early twenty-first century era, critical education, questioning power relationships throughout society, and proposing / working for egalitarian alternatives, is under spectacular assault in this current era of neoconservative/ neoliberal/ neofascist right-wing authoritarianism. This is so from Trump's USA, and, in many states of the USA, in post-Trump USA, to Johnson's England and Wales, to Bolsonaro's Brazil, to Erdogan's Turkey, to the Law and Justice Party government in Poland, to Modi's India, to Orban's Hungary and to the Ukraine. In each, powerful forces are seeking to dilute, expel or criminalise socialist, Marxist, anti-nationalist education – particularly in the schools' and universities' curricula- and activity. One of the most notable is the policy of the Bolsonaro quasi-/ would-be Fascist government in Brazil, promising during his 2018 election campaign to “[...] enter the education ministry with a flamethrower to remove Paulo Freire” (Woods, 2020, n.p.). Since his election in 2019, his political party campaigned to encourage university and high school students to covertly film their teachers and denounce them for *ideological indoctrination* (Buarque et al., 2020), not a new anti-Left tactic – Peter McLaren was top of the *Dirty Thirty* blacklist of progressive educators at UCLA (USA) – students were to be paid to send tape recordings of his lectures to a right-wing organisation. Referring to this, McLaren is one of many, across different countries and continents to warn against and expose ‘the war on critical thought’ (Fassbinder; McLaren, 2006), a warning regularly broadcast by radicals such as Henry Giroux, Paul Street, David Graeber, Noam Chomsky and Peter McLaren.

The iron fist of Capital and its structures severely limit resistant *agency*, punishing, restricting, illegalising, dismissing for example, trade union and Left political activists, and, their Left, anti-capitalist beliefs. As one example, In September 2020, schools in England were told by the Department (Ministry) for Education not to use material from anti-capitalist groups, with anti-capitalism categorised as an ‘extreme political stance’ equivalent to endorsing illegal activity (Busby, 2020). As left-wing Labour MP John McDonnell responded: “On this basis it will be illegal to refer to large tracts of British history and politics including the history of British socialism, the Labour Party and trade unionism, all of which have at different times advocated the abolition of capitalism” (Busby, 2020, n.p.). It is an attempt at extending, intensifying, thought control. As another example, in Poland the possession of Marx's *Capital* is punishable with three-year imprisonment (Stańczyk, 2021). In Turkey, many leftists and Marxist educators were dismissed

and lost social and public rights, including their passports, following the failed July 2016 coup (in which they were not involved) against President Erdogan, and currently, in Spring 2021 governments in both Greece and Turkey are attempting to assert further control over universities.

While it is true that the ideological apparatuses of the state (Althusser, 1971) (such as Ministries of Education and school and university governing bodies) have, in their ideological and their repressive functions, to varying degrees, sought to marginalise, contain, vilify, destroy Marxist (and, indeed Left social democratic) programmes such as those of Jeremy Corbyn and Bernie Sanders) at this current juncture we are witnessing, suffering from an intensification of ideological repression. And while the physical repression, the mass murder, the elimination of leftists in trade unions, community organisations and educational apparatuses is not yet on the scale of the anti-communist massacres at the hands of either or CIA backed state forces of Indonesia, and the CIA backed *contras* in states throughout Latin America such as Chile, Brazil, Argentina, Nicaragua, Guatemala, the harassment and dismissals of Marxist educators and activists is ratcheting up in country after country. Currently,

We can identify four main components of contemporary fascism: the role of far-right parties in building a mass reactionary electoral bloc; the role of the internet in disseminating far-right propaganda and in creating, consolidating, and mobilising the fascist core; the role of the bourgeois state, especially increasingly militarised police, in the implementation of authoritarian and nationalist-racist policies, and in the repression of popular movements; and the role of fascist militias and mobs as auxiliaries (Faulkner et al., 2021, n.p.).

These are particularly dangerous times – the widespread demise and delegitimation of neoliberalism and austerity economics and politics – for Marxists, Left radical teachers and educators, critical thinkers, and activists. The only type of critical thinking deemed desirable by such right-wing authoritarians is a decontextualised, depoliticised conservative technicist questioning – which leaves the comfortable comfortably unchallenged and in place. And the enemies of Fascism dead in the streets and prison cells. These are the times of *Creeping Fascism* (Faulkner et al., 2019; 2021). This chapter is one small part of building anti-capitalist and anti-Fascist resistance in minds and in the streets, of building Revolutionary Marxism inside the classroom, in the workplace, in the social movement, and on the streets.

Three Types of Socialist Education, Three Types of Critical Education

In this chapter, I am not discussing conservative- technicist or liberal pluralist/*neutrality in the classroom* versions of critical education. Instead, I critically analyse three types of Left critical education.

Centrist social democrats want to *reform* education (to make it a bit fairer, more meritocratic, with some positive discrimination).

More Left, democratic socialists, or *left social democrats/left reformists*, such as Jeremy Corbyn and Bernie Sanders, also want to reform education to make education fairer – but to make it *much* fairer, with pronounced positive discrimination to help *under-achieving groups*.

Revolutionary Marxists, that is to say, Marxists who wish to replace Capitalism with socialism, want an education critical of Capitalism, an education for social, political and economic *transformation*, into a socialist economy and society. My own writing, much of which is online¹, is from a Revolutionary Marxist and a Classical Marxist perspective, I argue for a Marxist education policy (e.g. Hill, 2010; 2015; 2019a; 2019b; 2019c; Rasinski; Hill; Skordoulis, 2018; Edwards; Hill; Boxley, 2018; Gonzalez; Rikowski, 2019). I focus on Marxist education, differentiating it from *centrist* social democratic and left social democratic, *democratic socialist* education policy, including liberal and social democratic/ democratic socialist versions of Critical Pedagogy.

'Centrist' Social Democrats and Left Social Democrats/ Democratic Socialists and Education

Social democrats have advanced policies intended to make the system more *meritocratic*. With *equal opportunities* policies involving positive discrimination for under-represented groups (in particular, the poorer sections of the working class and particular ethnic groups). With academic and scholastic advancement and future positions in the labour market resulting from *effort plus ability*, that is, merit. For entry into what is a grossly unequal society.

Traditional social democratic education systems are those such as in Sweden and Finland, and the reforms of the Wilson Labour government in England and Wales in the 1960s and 70s. Wilson widely (if not universally in the state system- private schools remained outside the state system) established comprehensive/ common schooling, and grants to help children from poorer families (such as me) stay on at school, and grants (*Education Maintenance Grants*) to go to university, in an attempt at *Compensatory Education*. Policies such as smaller class sizes for the lower attainers, and residential education centres, and *cultural trips* were widespread, from all of which I benefited and recall, as a school student, a teacher, and as a local Councillor. At the post-school level, free adult education was ubiquitous for leisure as well as vocational *further education*, and the Open University was set up whereby people from working class backgrounds who had left school at the minimum school-leaving age, or at the age of 18/19, could study for a degree (primarily by distance learning), free of fees, while still at work.

And at various stages in various countries all types of socialists attempted, at various times, to make the schooling curriculum more inclusive, and *relevant* to different communities and classes. The Com-

munity Schools movement, particularly strong in England between the 1970s and the 1990s, attempted to make schools more central to local communities, by developing Community Schools- to *lessen the distance* between schools and their working-class communities. The *Community Schools Movement*, “[...] seeks to obliterate the boundary between school and community, to turn the community into a school and the school into a community” (Halsey, 1972, p. 79). As did the much overlooked *Hargreaves Report* into secondary education in the Inner London Education Authority (ILEA, 1984, summarised in Doe, 1984).

However, sociologists of education over the last 70 years, and communists and socialists since before then see Simon (1965; 1978); Floud, Halsey and Martin (1957); Halsey, Heath and Ridge (1980), and, more recently, Stephen Ball (2003), Jean Anyon (2011) and Diane Reay (2018), have pointed out the enduring myth of meritocracy in schooling systems. And Marxist reproduction theorists from early Soviet writers Bukharin and Preobrazensky (1922/1969) to contemporary Marxist theorists such as Glenn Rikowski (*passim*) and Dave Hill (*passim*) drawing to an extent on Bowles and Gintis (1976) Bourdieu and Passeron, (e.g. 1977), Anyon (e.g. 2011), have for many decades pointed out that the education system is purposefully and intentionally rigged in favour of the elite capitalist class, in favour of class reproduction.

Marxist theorists (and activists), together with social democratic theorists and activists also agree that within the working class, the *middle class* strata secure *positional advantage* – the *better schools and universities* (better grades/ exam results), compared to the *working class*, the less advantaged, poorer strata of the working class, within which particular racialized ethnic and gendered groups achieve less than others and are subjected to far greater levels of oppression- racism, sexism, homophobia- than other groups.

Such social democratic reforms, though usually focussing on pedagogy and curriculum, were advanced by very many Critical Pedagogues, such as Henry Giroux (e.g. 1983; 2001), and also by *Marxian* educators such as the very influential Michael W. Apple (e.g. 2006), and his co-thinkers such as Ken Saltman (e.g. 2010), Ken McGrew (e.g. 2011). These can be considered to be democratic socialist, wishing teachers to be committed to anti-racist, social justice teaching, and to developing teachers as *transformative intellectuals* seeking a fairer society. Such Left social democrats, or democratic socialists, want *substantial* reform (of the wider economic, penal, political, welfare systems, and in education, more equal chances (provision, funding, attainment).

Foley et al. (2015, p. 110) point out that “[...] critical pedagogy has entered the mainstream in the United States, with over 7,000 titles alone which address the topic offered on the major book retailer Amazon.com”. Drawing from Gramsci and the Frankfurt School, and seeking to apply Freire, critical pedagogues seek to transform consciousness. As compared with more structuralist Marxists, Culturalist neo-Marxists, such as proponents and writers on Critical Pedagogy see greater space

for the autonomy of individuals, groups and institutions/ organisation (such as schools) to engage in resistant practices, anti-hegemonic praxis. Critical Pedagogy has been praised and practiced and also criticised widely.

However, McLaren, for example (2000; 2021) notes that Critical Pedagogy, (as opposed to his own Revolutionary- that is, Marxist- Critical Pedagogy) –

[...] at least in classrooms throughout the United States) (is) little more than liberalism refurbished with some lexical help from Freire (as in words like *praxis* and *dialogue*) and basically is used to camouflage existing capitalist social relations under a plethora of eirenic proclamations and classroom strategies. (McLaren, 2000, p. xxv). For similar critique, see also (Gibson, 2008; McLaren 2016; 2021; Au, 2017; Stańczyk, 2021).

This is not at all, to demean the efforts of those teachers and educators attempting to work for a critical citizenry and for social justice in classrooms and seminar rooms/lecture theatres and online, nor the compilers of the various compendia / edited collections on Critical pedagogy. What they do *not* want is Marxist revolution, the replacement of Capitalism and Capitalist education by socialism². Anyon (2011) labels Revolutionary Marxists as *traditional Marxist* and left social democrats such as Michael W. Apple as *neo-Marxist*.

Classical Marxists critique neo-Marxism, though like Marx, Lenin, Luxemburg, welcome reforms, without being reformist. To return to an earlier – and important – argument, it is not just the Capitalist state apparatuses (and those apparatuses supporting the capitalist state, such as the media) that discipline the working class – it is also the economic warfare, the brute force and power of the Capitalist Class in the domain of labour, employment, wage suppression and repression, immiseration. This is one instance of where Classical Marxist analysis is in disagreement with neo-Marxist analyses. Where the barrel of the gun ordered by the capitalist class crushes the relative autonomy of resistance. Where Overdetermination is trumped by Economic Determination.

My critique of the neo-Marxist Althusser (Hill, 2001; 2005) was of Althusser's formulation that *Economic Determination in the Last Instance* means, "[...] in the last 'overdetermined'" analysis (Althusser, 1962). Although Althusser did admit "economic determination in the last instance", he added the important – and in my view, negating, qualification that, in overdetermined form, *its bell never tolled*.

Five Aspects of Marxist Education

Revolutionary Marxists, that is, Marxists who are anti-capitalist and wish to see Capitalism replaced by socialism, want an education system that is not only *free* (from fees) from early childhood through

life, but is a system with well-trained/educated teachers who are well-paid and valued in society, with a Marxist school and higher/ university education curriculum that exposes capitalism and inequalities, argues for socialism, and values solidaristic as opposed to competitive individualistic school activities. In a Marxist education system all schools and universities, including private ones, would be brought under local accountable democratic control. There would be no private schools or colleges/universities.

The Questions Marxist Educators Ask

In schools, colleges, universities, many radical and Marxist critical educators try, in addition to seeking dramatic increases in funding, to affect five aspects of learning and teaching, asking questions about (at least) five aspects of education. These relate to: (i) Curriculum and Assessment, (ii) Pedagogy, (iii) The Organisational Culture within the School/ Institution, (iv) Organisation of The Education System and of Students, that is, comprehensive schooling or selective schooling, and (v) Ownership and Control of Schools, Colleges and Universities.

These questions are common to many types of radical educator, from liberals to social democrats and democratic socialists, not simply Marxists. Below, therefore, I add what is *specifically Marxist* about these five aspects of education policy and praxis (see Hill, 2019a; 2019b; 2019c).

(i) Curriculum and Assessment

A first question Marxist and other critical educators ask is what should be in the *curriculum*? A related question is, *who should decide*?. Should the curriculum be a curriculum for conformity – to create conformist and dutiful workers and citizens, devoid of *deep critique* (of existing society for example). Should it be a *white, male, middle class curriculum*, uninfluenced by decolonisation theory, Black Lives Matter, feminisms such as Titi Bhattacharya's (2017) *Social Reproduction Theory*? Or, as Marxists propose and practice, should it be a curriculum for reform and revolution, where curriculum areas/ subjects (or cross-disciplinary projects/ themes) focus on inequalities, resistance, transformation, the collective good, not individualistic consumerism, environmentalism not capitalist ecocide. Thus, geography would include a focus on social geography, science on the social implications of science, and history and literature and the arts would encompass (white/ black, male/ female) working class history and novels/ plays exposing (*race*, gender, social class, for example) injustice and promoting socialism and communism. The curriculum would be decolonized and revolutionized. It would be anti-racist, anti-sexist, environmentalist, Marxist. (It would also develop subject specific concepts, skills, knowledge).

Marxist educators, indeed critical educators in general, can, with students, look at the curriculum and ask, *What do you/ we think should*

be in the curriculum that is currently absent? Who do you think benefits and who loses from this curriculum? Is there a different version or view of the past, the present, or the future? What messages come from this curriculum, about, for example, power, protest, individualism, collectivity/collectivism, Black Lives Matter, Generation X and environmentalism, sexism and misogyny, sexuality, and class oppression and exploitation. Where Marxists and Revolutionary Critical Educators (McLaren, 2010; 2013) differ from more social democratic, democratic socialist and liberal critical educators is in the emphasis placed on resistance, activism, and socialist transformation – and on social class analysis.

Regarding Assessment, what is assessed is usually what teachers focus on. It can be restricted to subject knowledge and skills, or it can go more widely. The (social democratic) Hargreaves Report about schooling in the left-dominated Inner London Education Authority (ILEA, 1984; Doe, 1984) for example, proposed that indices of pupil achievement include not only exam results but also pupils' achievements in areas such as problem-solving, personal and social skills, and motivation and commitment. Furthermore, it recommended that pupils/ students be given a real say in school policies such as the curriculum and exams.

Elsewhere (for example, Edwards, Hill and Boxley, 2018) I set out a Manifesto for Education, partly drawing on an attempt at a Marxist teacher education course. Many of these proposals are supported by other reform and social justice groups. But taken together, they offer a sustained challenge to neoliberal/neo-conservative, pre-/proto/quasi fascist capitalism.

(ii) Pedagogy

Many Marxist (and other critical) educators question the overwhelming teacher-centred *pedagogy*, the pattern of teaching and learning relationships and interaction, what Freire termed *the banking model* of education. Instead, using Freirean perspectives and praxis they try to use democratic participative pedagogy which can break down, to some extent, patterns of domination and submission, and is a pedagogy that listens to children's, students' and local communities' voices. This is a pedagogy that bases teaching and learning on the concerns and issues in everyday life. Furthermore, it is a collaboration between teachers and students, teachers and pupils. Here, learning is collaborative, not individualistic and competitive. It is a pedagogic system – pattern of learning and teaching relationships – that is collective, collaborative, mutually supportive.

In addition to *democratic participative collaborative pedagogy*, Critical Marxist educators use different types of pedagogy in teaching, to engage in non-hierarchical, democratic, participative, teaching and research. Vygotsky (e.g. 1934), as a Marxist, was inspired by Marx's *dialectic* in that he rejected top-down and bottom-up accounts of the learning process – these unidirectional models originate in class-based societal relations which Marxists reject.

In England, pedagogy in primary (elementary) school teaching has become removed, to an extent, from the control of teachers. Following the 1998 National Literacy Strategy (NLS) (DfEE, 1998) a specific teaching and learning strategy was advised- and was surveilled and inspected for more than a decade, its prescriptions still felt. Across the subject curriculum, lessons followed a standard four-part pattern- introduction, lecture/ explanation/ teacher teaching, pupil/ student discussion/ work, plenary. No room for Freirean, Vygotskian, or liberal-progressive child-centred teaching and learning, no room for the *dead cat flying through the window* syndrome, whereby teachers and pupils/ students could seize upon a happening event, to explore. And no room for extended group interdisciplinary focus and analysis of a particular problem or social event, the type of school-teaching and teaching as a teacher educator that I engaged in between the late 1960s and the late 1980s. Instead, *there is no time* – the curriculum is full (of content designed by conservative think-tanks, advisers and Ministers (Jones, 1989; 2003; Hill, 1994; 1997).

To return to questions of pedagogy, of course, critiques of over-dominant teacher-centred pedagogy are not restricted to Marxist educators. They are also made by liberal-progressive, child/ student-centred educators, anarchist educators, and by some conservative educators, concerned about teaching effectiveness and preparation for the workplace. And, following Gramsci, Marxist teachers, by virtue of their social and ideological *role* in actually teaching, in actually carrying out the role of teacher, should maintain an authoritative stance where appropriate. There is room for class teaching and lectures as well as dialogic and discussion-based learning, and learning based on an individual's or a community's needs.

Marxist educators differ between themselves (as do conservative educators) on the degree to which education is or should be proselytising, for example praising *the revolution*, and the degree to which it is / should be *critical* – (including *auto-critique*) criticising/critiquing not just capitalism and inequality, but also the current and alternative ideologies, policies and praxis. There is a spectrum across different times and places from authoritarian to democratic pedagogy, from some Communist states in particular periods, to some insurgent movements.

My own Classical Marxist theoretical analysis and Revolutionary Marxist praxis, developing from a huge personal and theorised awareness of class inequality and resistance, attempts a synthesis of Vygotskian, Freirean and Gramscian pedagogy. My own early praxis as a young schoolteacher (at Stockwell Manor Comprehensive School in Brixton in Inner London), took place during the relatively liberal-progressive, child-centred period of education in England of the late 1960s and early 1970s – before Labour Prime Minister James Callaghan's Ruskin College speech of 1976 started the process of yanking back education into fulfilling primarily economic and vocational aims, a process carried out to fruition and completion following the Thatcher and Major governments of 1979-87. This was also a time of socialist teaching and curriculum de-

velopment in some state schools, at a time when there was no national curriculum, schools and teachers were able to develop their/ our own curricula. The sheer hatred of both liberal-progressive and attempts at socialist egalitarian critical education is described in books by Ken Jones, (1989; 2003), and in my own writing, such as Hill, 1997; Hill; Cole; Williams, 1997), which detail Conservative politicians' reactions to and sheer venom directed at liberal child-progressive as well as at social democratic and socialist education and determination to crush them all. As stated above, Conservative legislation- the 1988 Education Reform Act, and its introduction of a compulsory and rigidly surveilled/ inspected National Curriculum for schools, and the equally controlling and conservative national curriculum for teacher training of 1991/1992 saw the removal of many left teachers and teacher educators from their posts. I was one of those dismissed, 'made redundant' (see Hill, 2004).

(iii) The Organisational Culture within the School/ University Institution

A third question for education relates to the social relations and power relations between management and shop-floor education workers, that is, between the school/ university head, principal, director – and the teachers and lecturers (and ancillary staff). It also concerns the *hidden curriculum* of headteacher-teacher-pupil/student relationships, demands and expectations.

Is the school culture democratic and collegiate, or is it dictatorial and authoritarian? This also relates to the pay differences between those at the top and those in the classroom. Prior to the diversification of state education in England and Wales into City Technology Colleges, Academies, teachers and headteachers were employed by local education authorities, the democratically elected local Councils. There were *national* pay scales, no individual pay bargaining and seeking Performance Related Pay, and no headteachers earning far more than the Prime Minister, as is the case with some headteachers of Academies and Directors of Academy Chains. As with other sectors of the quasi and part-state provision, with New Public Managerialism, the difference in pay and emoluments between those at the top and the shop-floor workers such as teacher and lecturers has ballooned.

Globally, and in the UK, where neoliberalism has triumphed in education, common results have been increased casualization of academic labour, increased proletarianization, increased pay and conditions differentials within education sectors, cuts in the wages/salaries (and also in *the social wage* of state benefits and rights), payment by results/ performance-related pay, cuts to school and further and higher education budgets, increased intensification of labour, with larger classes, decreased autonomy for school and college teachers over curriculum and pedagogy, being subject to the surveillance and rigors of *new public managerialism*, increased levels of monitoring and report-writing, and accompanying increased levels of stress, increased con-

cern with timekeeping, and tighter and more punitive discipline codes. The terror of the *teaching walks* by Principals/Head Teachers and members of the SMTs, Senior Management Teams, able to walk in any lesson and observe for as long as they wanted. There is also the curtailment of trade union rights and attacks on trade unions as organizations that defend and promote working-class interests.

This is a far cry from the occasional more collegiate approach to school democracy and management of the more *progressive*, and in some schools, more socialist management. In my own experience of a First/Infant school of the mid-1980s, the whole teaching staff would sit round to discuss school policy, such as reading schemes, the head teacher would act more as a chairperson than a dictator.

In Portugal, under neoliberalism, the tradition and legally instituted collegial and democratic management of schools, whereby school staffs elected their headteachers, *president of the directive council* (Castanheira; Costa, 2011) (with candidates for headteacher, often running on party tickets), lasted until 2008, when the Portuguese government *recognised* “[...] the need to develop strong leadership in the management body of a school by replacing the collegial body executive council for a single person body – a director” (Castanheira; Costa, 2011, p. 210).

The managerialist school culture is also a far cry from a key feature of the Hargreaves Report for London’s schools, (ILEA, 1984) which was to give pupils a say in the running of the school, with for example, school councils (made up of elected representatives from the student body, plus a degree of teacher involvement) having powers not just over trivia, such as lavatories, food and litter, but also on issues such as school hours, extra-curricular activities, as well as (as previously mentioned) in relation to the curriculum and assessment, the curriculum and exams, to give pupils/ students experience of democratic procedures.

Part of the ongoing de-critiquing and de-professionalisation of teachers, and their reducing levels of pay, is the proletarianization of teachers – and, increasingly of the burgeoning precariat teaching in universities – has been an increased level of identification by teachers and their main unions such as the National Education Union in England and Wales, and *education professionals* with the working-class movement, workers’ struggle, and industrial action. That is, by increased working-class consciousness. The National Education Union (NEU), and the Universities and Colleges Union (UCU) have been two unions fighting the Conservative government(s) most successfully over various issues, such as not opening schools until safer from Covid.

(iv) Organisation of Students and of the Education System

A fourth question in education that critical and Marxist educators can and should ask is about *organization of the students*. How should children of different social classes, gender, and ethnic backgrounds be organized within classrooms, within institutions such as schools and universities, and within national education systems?

Marxists prefer and work for what in Britain is called *comprehensive school* and in India *the common school*. Socialists of various types argue that school should be a microcosm of society, that each school should contain a mixture of children/students from the different social classes and social class strata, and a mix of attainment levels. That is, children/ students should not be divided by selection into *high achievers* and *low achievers*, or by social class. Furthermore, they should not be divided by wealth/ income- so there should be no private schools or universities, as noted below. No moneyed or relatively well-off sections of the population should be able to buy educational advantage, and thereby disadvantage others. It costs as much per week to put a child through Eton (Maisuria, 2020) as many families have to live on in a week.

Under the academic results based *league table* competitive marketisation of schools, children/ students as young as four years old are *ability grouped* by able or by *stream/ class*. This is very different from the mixed ability organisation of many schools in the 1960s to 1980s, and very different from the proposals of the Hargreaves and the Thomas Reports into Primary and Secondary Education in the Inner London Education Authority (ILEA, 1984; Thomas, 1985, summarised, respectively, in Doe, 1984; 1985).

(v) Ownership, Control and Management of Schools and Colleges and Universities

A fifth question Revolutionary Marxists pose is who should own, control, and govern schools, further education (vocational) colleges and universities? Should it be *the people*? Local councils/ municipalities? Speculators and Hedge Funds? Churches and Mosques?

Revolutionary Marxist educators (and others, of course) believe that schools, colleges and universities should be run democratically, with education workers and students, as well as elected representatives of local communities, having powers in and over those education institutions, within a secular, democratic national framework. There should be no private control of schools, colleges or universities, either by private companies/ shareholders, religious organisations, or private individuals. Commodification and marketization in education must end (Rikowski, 2019). Thus, there should be no *Academies* in England, no *Charter Schools*, whether *not-for-profit* or *for profit* in the USA. (For attempts to address these various aspects of education, in developing a socialist policy for education, see, Hill, 2010; 2013; 2015; 2019; Ford, 2016; Edwards; Hill; Boxley, 2018).

What is Specifically Marxist about these Policy Proposals?

What defines Marxists is *firstly*, the belief that *reforms are not sustainable under capitalism*, they are stripped away when there are the

(recurrent and systemic) crises of capital, such as the 1930s, 1970s, and currently, post 2008, and as they are likely to be post-Covid-19 (for example with pay cuts, union rights, social budgets under renewed threat).

The *second* difference is an understanding of the *salience of class* as compared with other forms of structural oppression and discrimination and inequality. Marxists go further than criticizing (and acting against) social discrimination, oppressions, for example of sexism, homophobia, racism, into economic rights, and into the recognition that full economic rights cannot be achieved under a capitalist economic system, but only under a socialist or communist system. Formal and informal curricula should teach Marxist analysis of society, its class – based nature – in theoretical terms, the Labour-Capital Relation. The aim is to develop class consciousness, or, as Marx put it, the working class as a *class for itself*, not simply a *class in itself* (Marx, 1852/1999). What Gramsci called *good sense*, as opposed to *common sense* (Gramsci, 1971/2000).

The *third* point of difference between Marxist and non-Marxist socialists is that in order to replace capitalism, Marxists have to actually work to organize for that movement, for that action. Thus, a duty as a Revolutionary Marxist teacher is as an *activist*, and a recognition that political organization, programme development, intervention are necessary. *What is needed is a revolution* to replace, to get rid of, the capitalist economic system.

These are three points of difference between Marxists and other socialists, between what is Marxist and what is not (Hill, 2018; 2019a; 2019b; 2019c).

The Task and Role of Marxist Educators

The role of organic Marxist public intellectuals is crucial. Marxist public intellectuals – such as the *political* shop steward, or union organizer, the member of a socialist/ Marxist party or group, the teacher, the teacher educator, the youth worker – intellectualise social, political, cultural, economic matters from the standpoint of what Gramsci (1971/ 2000) termed *good sense*, from a class – conscious perspective, or, to refer to a Classical Marxist injunction from *The Communist Manifesto* (Marx; Engels 1848/ 2010, p. 22), that the key political task facing communists is “[...] the formation of the proletariat into a class”, that is, a *class for itself*, a class aware of itself as a class in the Capital – Labour relation (Marx, 1847/1999). Herein lies Marxists’ pedagogical importance, of party, organization, leaflets, newspapers, booklets, books and social media; here, as well as in the classroom in conversation and in rhetorical speeches, we carry out the role of socialist analysis, of revolutionary pedagogy, of connecting the here and now of a rent strike, a pro-immigrant rally, an anti-austerity march, a picket line of a zero-hours contract employer, an occupation of a tax avoiding multinational company owned shop: here is essential Marxist pedagogy.

Marxists are necessary, necessary in leading and developing changes in consciousness, a change in class consciousness, and in playing a contributory role organizing to replace capitalism.

To conclude: the task of democratic Marxist/Socialist teachers, and of resistant egalitarian Socialist and Marxist counter-hegemonic and teachers, students, cultural workers, policy makers and activists, is:

1. to expose and contest the ways and extent to which the capitalist class itself, through its economic power, and through its power over fiscal and economic policy of the governments that serve them, suppresses and represses both the direct wage as wage instead of capitalist profit for example as the proportion of national income, and *scaling back/* underfunding/ cutting the social wage (welfare and social support systems and public health and education and social care)- and through its brute power to suppress trade unions and to dismiss workers;

2. Further than this, to explain and develop consciousness, critical Marxist understanding, of the Labour-Capital Relation- that Capitalism is the exploitation of the labour power of workers through the theft of the surplus value produced by workers, stolen from them by capitalists (and by the capitalist state organisations) in the form of profit;

3. to expose and organise and teach against the actual and the symbolic violence by the capitalist state and class against the (*raced* and gendered) working class;

4. to expose and contest the ways and extent to which the capitalist state and its apparatuses perpetuate and reproduce their power, that of their class, through the ideological and repressive apparatuses of the state (such as the media, the schooling, further education and university systems, the electoralist parliamentary system);

5. in particular the way they do this through demeaning and deriding the *cultural capital* and knowledges of the (*raced* and gendered) working class through what Pierre Bourdieu termed *cultural arbitrary* and *symbolic violence* – the way working class school students are largely taught they are relatively worthless, and upper – class school students are taught they will control and inherit the earth, and some middle – class school students are taught how to manage it for them;

6. argue for, propagate, organise, agitate for, and implement democratic Marxist egalitarian change and policy in the wider society and economy – throughout society-not just within the classroom walls.

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Notes

1 <<http://www.ieps.org.uk/publications/online-papers-dave-hill/>>. Accessed on: 02 Feb. 2021.

2 For a discussion between Revolutionary anti-capitalist Marxist Educators and

'Marxian' or left reformist Educators, see; Farahmandpur (2004); McLaren and Farahmandpur (2005), Rikowski (2006; 2019); Kelsh and Hill (2006); Hill (2009); Banfield, (2011, 2015); McLaren (2010; 2013; 2021); Malott (2011) on the one hand and Apple (2006), Salman (2010) and McGrew (2011).

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