

Class, Capitalism and Inequality: Schooling and Education in neo-liberal, neo-conservative and neo- fascist Covid times: a Classical Marxist critical analysis and activist programme

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Abstract

This article focuses on a particular group in capitalist society that is disabled, demeaned and denied by capitalism itself, through processes of economic exploitation, systematic and systemic class exclusion, and discrimination/ prejudice- that is- the working class. In doing so I recognise that the working class (defined as all those who sell their/ our labour power) is segmented horizontally into 'layers', or strata (for example, the dispossessed, unemployed, unskilled, though to the supervisory. managerial level/ stratum) and also vertically, for example, by 'race' and by gender; with particular ethnic groups, and women in general, disabled and oppressed and exploited to a greater degree than their/ our white, male sisters and brothers).

Analysing from a Classical Marxist perspective I address the structures of the capitalist state through which this exclusion and 'subalternising' is imposed, through formal state structures such as education, media, the panoply of state force and class law, as well as through the material power of the capitalist class, expressed through, for example, wage suppression and enforced immiseration of the majority of the working class.

In doing so I address two types of neo-Marxist analysis- 'Structuralist neo-Marxism' and 'Culturalist neo-Marxism', and the dialectical relationship between them. They differ on such matters as: the degree of 'relative autonomy'

for resistant agency; the relative impact and import of cultural-ideological as against structural- material analysis; and the salience or not of social class analysis, the Capital-Labour relation, vis-a vis other forms of oppression such as 'race; and gender', and their implications for political resistance and organisation at the cultural-ideological level and at the level of power, the material power to reform and revolutionise economic and social relations of Capital.

I propose an activist programme of resistance at two levels. Firstly, societal level, looking at Marxists such as Marx and Engels, Rosa Luxemburg, Lenin, Trotsky and the dialectical relationship between Reform and Revolution.

Secondly, at the level of Education, both formal and informal (through social movements, political parties, trade unions, through public pedagogy for example). Within the formal education structures, I advance specific proposals regarding schooling and teacher education.

This is a panoptic paper- the issues above are linked in terms of Classical Marxist analysis of capitalism, class exploitation and oppression, and the implications of such analysis for the praxis and politics of resistance.

Keywords: *Marxist, social class, education, activism, revolution*

Introduction

No delirium lasts forever. No empire lasts forever. No ruling class rules forever. No economic system lasts forever. Not a slave economy. Not a wage slave economy. Not a capitalist economy and society that demeans, degrades and

diminishes and subordinates and subalternises its labouring class, the working class, and, in particular, through super-exploitation, particular gendered and 'raced' and migrant groups within the working class in national and in global economies.

In Lenin's words (1918/2002), 'there are decades when nothing happens. There are weeks when decades happen'.

Decades are happening now. The class nature of capitalist society is stripped bare before our eyes- and is now understood so much more nakedly than before the Covid pandemic, than before the crises of Austerity and Covid since 2008- and before that- since the capitalist economic crisis of the 1970s, and the cruel Thatcher-Reagan-Pinochet responses of the 1970s and 1980s. It has become more and more obvious that Capital would rather have them / their children and their elderly die, rather than allow business to suffer a temporary fall in profits through strict lockdowns in the Covid period, that for Capitalism there is but one 'God', and that God is Mammon, the worship and lust for money, profit-above all else.

This is capitalist economics and its politics of death. Not just through Covid and state responses, not just through periods of particular austerity, but through the economic process of economic exploitation and super-exploitation itself.

The contrast between 'Wall Street' and 'Main Street' is so extreme that it is now obvious, *contra* the 45 year- old message, 'TINA', that 'There Is No Alternative' to austerity, that 'there is not a magic money tree'. What is now clear is that when capitalism is threatened, there is indeed a forest of magic money trees to bail out businesses! But, alongside the forest, there is a graveyard - a graveyard of hopes and lives and scarcely recalled memories of a more civil, a more social democratic, a more equal society. Those memories

stroked by the voices of the old, and stoked by socialist, Marxist and communist organisations and movements, proclaiming, 'it doesn't have to be like this'.

It is now patently obvious to millions, to perhaps billions, that Austerity is and has been a political choice, a political tool, that capitalist governments, whether Tweedledum former social democratic parties, or Tweedeldee conservative, liberal or nationalist authoritarian parties, do, indeed, act where, to quote Marx and Engels (1848/2010) 'The executive of the modern state is but a committee for managing the common affairs of the whole bourgeoisie'.

Capitalism is Class War from Above (Harvey, 2005), a war that since the Reagan-Thatcher-Pinochet initiation of neoliberal capitalism in the 1970s/1980s, has resulted in the ever-quickenening intensification of the exploitation of the labour power of workers and the intensification of inequality- of wealth, income, housing, health, childhood, education, life, death. In the richest countries on the planet there are millions homeless, sleeping on the streets or in tents, millions using food banks and food charities. Within the working class, clearly, the global and the national poor, suffer most. The poor die young. How long you live, how sick you get is related to social class. In the UK, for example, there is an 18-year difference in healthy life between the richest and the poorest (Lydall and Prynne, 2013; Hill, 2018, 2020a, b). And the gap, in Britain and the UK, and globally, is growing.

SOCIAL CLASS AND CLASS WAR FROM ABOVE

Social Class Exclusion and Segmentation- horizontal and vertical

I now focus on that particular group in capitalist society that is disabled, demeaned and denied by capitalism itself, through processes of economic exploitation, systematic and systemic class exclusion, and by systemic institutional and personal discrimination/ prejudice.

First, I want to briefly discuss Marx and Class. Marxist definitions are not 'gradational', with people being graded according to social status, life-style, consumption patterns for example, as in Weberian inspired definitions of social class, but 'relational'- based on an individual's or a family's relationship to the means of production. Do you own the factory, warehouse, shop, farm, sales company, call-centre, distribution company, restaurant/ cafe that you work in, or are you employed by the owner, the capitalist or the shareholders? Do you sell your labour power - your work time, skills and aptitudes - to a boss or bosses and hence to capitalists, who make a profit from the surplus value that your labour produces?

Marxist Class Analysis

In Marxist class analysis, 'Our epoch, the epoch of the bourgeoisie'.. (that is, capitalism) ...'has simplified class antagonisms. Society as a whole is more and more splitting up into two great hostile camps, into two great classes directly facing each other — Bourgeoisie and Proletariat' (Marx and Engels, (1848/2010). What Marx called 'the Bourgeoisie' are those who employ and profit from the labour of the labourers - the working class, and the working class, termed by Marx and Engels 'The Proletariat' - are those of us who sell our labour to capitalists, or to state institutions that keep the labour supply, the profit supply, trained/ educated and healthy (such as the National Health Service, schools, universities).

Workers are paid only a proportion of the value they create in productive labour. The rest of the value they create, surplus value, is taken by the capitalist class as profit. The capitalist mode of production is a system of exploitation of one class (the working class) by another (the capitalist class). It is the Labour - Capital Relation, *the economic relation of production*. While superficially it

appears that the worker receives a 'fair day's work for a fair day's pay', the extraction of surplus value reveals the deep reality of class exploitation.

Weber and Market Definition of Class

I want to detour briefly, here, to contrast Marxist and Weberian definitions of social class. As Deb Kelsh and I have typified Weberian analysis (Kelsh and Hill, 2006).

for Weber, it is "class situation", which he equates with "market situation", that is the basis for "class." "Class situation," writes Weber, "means the typical probability of 1. procuring goods, 2. gaining a position in life and 3. finding inner satisfactions, a probability which derives from the relative control over goods and skills and from their income-producing uses within a given economic order" (1914/1968, p. 302). "Class'," for Weber, "means all persons in the same class situation" (p. 302). "Class situation' and 'class'," Weber summarizes, "refer only to the same (or similar) interests which an individual shares with others" (p. 302). "Always," Weber argues, "this is the generic connotation of the concept of class: that the kind of chance in the market is the decisive moment which presents a common condition for the individual's fate" (p. 928). Thus, Weber notes that "'class situation' is, in this sense, ultimately 'market situation'" (p. 928).

Class Strata, Horizontal and Vertical Segmentation

Within Marx's own writings, and within Marxist sociology, such as that of Erik Olin Wright (1989, 2002) there are attempts to account for the existence of the 'old middle class'/ the petit bourgeoisie and the new middle class (of 'professional workers', the 'New Middle Class'), and of an 'underclass', or lumpenproletariat. However, to emphasise, the basic distinction between the capitalist and the worker is this- do you sell your labour or do you purchase that labour- are you 'the boss', or one of the 'bosses' owning the particular production, marketing, distribution process?

The working class (to repeat, defined as all those who sell their/ our labour power) is segmented both *horizontally* and *vertically*.

Classes are internally stratified - each of the two great classes of society has different layers, or strata, and within those layers, the patterns and extents of economic exploitation/ super exploitation, and of personal and institutional, individual and structural, oppression/ discrimination and is gendered and 'raced'. is segmented *horizontally* into 'layers', or strata (for example, the dispossessed, unemployed, unskilled, though to the supervisory. managerial level/ stratum). Thus, within the working class, professional and managerial strata such as senior managers, teachers/ academics, doctors and dentists, lead longer and healthier lives in general, than the poorer and the manual strata, the checkout operator, food delivery (Hill, 2020a, b). Professional workers and skilled workers and those with college degrees in general have a higher standard of living than semi-skilled or unskilled workers, and those in 'the precariat' (Standing, 2014) for example on zero-hours contracts, or unemployed workers. Whatever their stratum, or 'layer' in the working class, however, Marxists assert that there is, *objectively*, if not *subjectively*, a common identity of interest between these strata (Hill, 2018).

The working class is also segmented *vertically*, by 'race' and by gender, with particular ethnic groups, and women in general, particular religious groups, and particular sexual groups such as LGBT and transsexuals, disabled and oppressed, allocated inferior provision such as schooling, attacked, raped, murdered, –and exploited in the labour market, to a greater degree than their/ our white, male brothers.

As well as presenting above, my own basic heuristic model of horizontal (different layers, or strata, or levels of the working class) and vertical

segmentation (in terms of, for example, 'race', gender, able-bodied-ness), I want to acknowledge the philosophically derived model advanced by Grant Banfield (2010, 2016a, b, 2021). Banfield (2021) explains,

What characterises the horizontal is that it is observable and *directly* experienced (the 'empirical' world if you like). We see, we are, the dispossessed/advantaged, employed/unemployed, workers/bosses etc. The vertical however plunges to what is *not directly* observed/experienced. It is the explanatory axis of deep relations of power (eg. class, 'race', gender etc.) and the power of things (eg. the power of human beings to consciously labour). For example, we don't see labour power we only know it through its effects i.e. through the enactment of actual labour. Actual labour is the material expression at a particular time and a particular place (i.e. on the horizontal plane) of the power or potential to labour (i.e. from the vertical layers that cannot be directly seen or experienced) The material power (potential and vertical) of the capitalist class is expressed through the oppression and enforced commiseration of the working class (actual and horizontal). (Banfield, 2021. See also Banfield, 2016a, p2).

Despite the horizontal and vertical segmentation of the working class, horizontal 'strata' or 'layers', each containing vertical 'raced' and gendered groups within them, what each of these groups within the (broadly defined) working class have in common is that they all must sell their labor power to capitalists, or to organizations and apparatuses in the capitalist state, in order to be paid a wage that allows them to subsist and meet various needs so that they can return to work the next day in good enough shape to participate in the production or circulation of surplus value.

Divide and Rule and the Rise and tactics of Fascism

This vertical and horizontal differentiation is deliberately politicised, publicised, pronounced, encouraged by Capital and its media and by its rabid hate-mongering Fascist and ultra-nationalist/ ultra-conservative political parties and

leaders, such as Trump, Bolsonaro, Erdogan, Modi, Orban, the Party of Truth and Justice government in Poland. Capitalist politicians and media 'divide and rule' - whipping up hatred and division, for example, between black and white, men and women, LGBT and straight, immigrant and non-immigrant, Muslim and Christian, public sector employees and private sector employees, employed and unemployed, 'deserving poor' and 'undeserving poor', 'roughs' and 'respectables', low paid workers and so-called 'middle class' (professional, supervisory) sections of the working class), 'boomers' and 'millenials' (Hill, 2020a, b).

And this hate-spreading- this victimisation and vilification and sometimes murder of targeted groups and individuals- immigrants, the homeless, transexuals, gays and lesbians, black and brown people, women- is whipped up by the current Fascisation of society, of governments, of security forces and police. To take just a couple of verses from my poem (Hill, 2019a)

Bolsonaro, Orban, Trump, Erdogan, Salvini
the Law and Justice Party in Poland
all say they are democrats.
They stir hatred.
They stir violence.
They stir suppression of critical thought.
in universities, schools, in minds.
They intimidate those of us who protest.
They threaten.
They enact.
They destroy civility.
They peddle fear,
and hatred

They normalise dehumanisation
they desensitise cruelty
-they kill
Marielle Franco, Pavlos Fyssas, Jo Cox, Heather Hayer....

There is a road,
travelled in the past,
and being travelled now,
through the beatings and the killings
Of the subhuman,
"The Other"
the Outsider,
the immigrant,
the minority,
the LGBT,
the feminist
the homeless,
the impoverished,
the 'alien ideology',
the internationalist,
the trade unionist,
the communist

and the poem concludes,

Fascists, neo-Fascists, pre Fascists, post Fascists,
proto Fascists, quasi Fascist... Fascists
No Pasaran
Like stinking fish,
they belong
in the dustbin of history.
Throw them there

Social Class Exclusion from Society: Capitalism and the Class War from Above- Neoliberalism, Neoconservatism and Fascism

Neoliberal and neoconservative policy differs in different national and historical contexts. But their aims- at maximising and aggrandising private capitalist profit- do not vary. These aims are fundamental to capitalism. This maximisation of profit is at the expense of both the social wage (welfare benefits/ public services) and the individual wage and working conditions and rights of workers. This intensification of the extraction of surplus value from the labour power of workers, including education workers, has many terms, such as 'Immiseration Capitalism' (Hill 2012a, 2013, 2017), 'Kleptocratic Capitalism', 'Turbo-Capitalism' and 'Class War from Above' (Giroux, 2004; Harvey 2005).

In the interests of capital accumulation, of the maximisation of private oligarchic profit, whole regions are devastated, impoverished, written off. This is as true of Detroit, or the South Wales valleys and northern ex-coal minefields in England, of impoverished regions in Russia, Bihar and Uttar Pradesh in India, and whole countries such as Bulgaria- in the post-Soviet capitalist economies. We are witnessing the global, internal and external migrations from poverty and the crippling of the social state, and the impoverishment, pauperisation, absolute immiseration of internal and external migrant labour- people, humans, families- who live, love, and labour, their sinews aching with the intensification of the extraction of surplus value from their labour power. The rich grow fatter and richer and ever more gluttonous. The poor, the migrants, the working classes, die early and sick. Written off as useless to capitalism.

Hundreds of millions of impoverished children live without access to basic health care or schooling. Around 5.6 million children under the age of five die each year because there is no clinic to safeguard their births, help them, if

necessary, to take their first breath, provide life-saving antibiotics to fend off respiratory infections, or ensure timely access to a \$1 dose of life-saving anti-malaria medicine in the event of an infective mosquito bite. (Sachs, 2018) ,

A mere 1% of the billionaires' net worth each year would amount to around \$91 billion, a sum that could ensure access to health care and education for the poorest children across the globe. (UNESCO estimates a global financing gap for education of \$39 billion per year; WHO professionals estimate a global financing gap for health of \$20-\$54 billion per year) (Sachs, 2018).

Commentators from across the political spectrum are in general agreement that in a vigorous 'class war from above' (since the economic crisis of the mid-1970s, ('the oil crisis')) the capitalist class has been incredibly and exponentially in wresting back from the working class a greater and greater share of public wealth, of the share of national income and wealth, across much of the capitalist world (Picketty, 2014; Oxfam, 2020, 2022a, b, Elliot, 2022). As El-Gingihy (2018) points out, the 'wealthiest eight billionaires ... have as much wealth as the bottom half of the global population. The Oxfam Report (Briefing Paper) proclaims that,

The wealth of the world's 10 richest men has doubled since the pandemic began. The incomes. of 99% of humanity are worse off because of COVID-19. Widening economic, gender, and racial inequalities—as well as the inequality that exists between countries—are tearing our world apart.

This is not by chance, but choice: "economic violence" is perpetrated when structural policy choices are made for the richest and most powerful people. This causes direct harm to us all, and to the poorest people, women and girls, and racialized groups most

The Daily Mirror report (Hiscott, 2022) on the Oxfam 2022 Annual Report (Oxfam, 2022b) summarises that

The combined wealth of the world's mega-rich has rocketed by a record £3.6trillion during the Covid pandemic, a report reveals.

The 10 richest men in the world own more than the bottom 3.1 billion people. If they spent a million dollars each a day, it would take them 414 years to spend their combined wealth.

A 99% windfall tax on their gains during Covid could pay to make enough vaccines for the entire world and still leave plenty to fill financing gaps in climate measures, universal health and social protection.

As billionaire Warren Buffet has put it, 'There's class warfare, all right, but it's my class, the rich class, that's making war, and we're winning.'

Macroeconomic Inequality and the Suppression of Wages

There have been deliberate assaults on both the social wage (state provided benefits such as unemployment, health, retirement, disability, family and children's support benefits) and on the actual wage for labour provided. Beams (2020) points out how, in the USA, the suppression of wages is at centre of widening social inequality. Citing Taylor and Ömer (2020) in their *Macroeconomic Inequality from Reagan to Trump*,

the share of profits in national income began to increase after 1970 at the rate of 0.4 percent per year, eight percentage points over 50 years .. the reduction in the labour share of national income by 8 percentage points means that, with gross domestic product in the US now at over \$20 trillion, workers would be receiving some \$1.12 trillion more in income had the previous distribution between wages and profits applied.

Regarding Chile, the early test-bed for neoliberalism, with the Fascist dictator Pinochet in power between 1973 and 1988, Dolack (2020) lays bare impacts of neoliberal capitalism

In Augusto Pinochet's Chile, the majority of workers earned less in 1989 than in 1973 (after adjusting for inflation). Labor's share of the national income declined from 52

percent in 1970 to 31 percent in 1989. The minimum wage dropped almost by half during the 1980s, and by the end of that decade, Chile's poverty rate reached 41 percent and the percentage of Chileans without adequate housing was 40 percent, up from 27 percent in 1972. One-third of the country's workforce was unemployed by 1983.

Protesters, 'The Social Outbreak', the 'Estallido Social' in Chile, protesting against privatisation, social inequality and the cost of living, interviewed by Reuters in 2019, voiced that they were struggling to make ends meet because of the high costs of part-privatised education and health systems, rents and utilities.

Similar results were in Argentina, following the Military coup and government 1976-1983. Dolack (2020) continues,

In Argentina, the main union federation was abolished, strikes outlawed, prices raised, wages tightly controlled and social programs cut. As a result, real wages fell by 50 percent within a year. Tariffs were reduced deeply, leaving the country wide open to imports and foreign speculation, causing considerable local industry to shut. For the period 1978 to 1983, Argentina's foreign debt increased to \$43 billion from \$8 billion, while the share of wages in national income fell to 22 percent from 43 percent.

Social Class Exclusion from Education- inc. the young, the disabled

Hundreds of millions of impoverished children live without access to schooling lacking access to adequate public schools with trained teachers, electricity, books, and hygienic facilities. (Sachs, 2018)

UNICEF (2020) points out that

On any given school day, over 1 billion children around the world head to class. More children and adolescents today are enrolled in pre-primary, primary and secondary

education than ever before. Yet, for many of them, schooling does not lead to learning. A lack of trained teachers, inadequate learning materials, makeshift classes and poor sanitation facilities make learning difficult for many children. Others come to school too hungry, sick or exhausted from work or household tasks to benefit from their lessons.

The consequences are grave: An estimated 617 million children and adolescents around the world are unable to reach minimum proficiency levels in reading and mathematics – even though two thirds of them are in school.

CLASSICAL MARXIST AND NEO-MARXIST ANALYSIS OF CAPITALIST STATE STRUCTURES AND PROCESSES

Analysing from a Classical Marxist position, I address the structures of the capitalist state through which this exclusion and 'subalternising' is imposed, through formal state structures such as education, and also through the pro-capitalist media, the panoply of state force and class law, such as restrictions on trade union membership and action. This 'subalternising' also, importantly, is enforced through the material power of the capitalist class, expressed through, for example, wage suppression and enforced immiseration of the majority of the working class.

Here, below, I focus on the role of education in capitalist economy and society.

Education and Reproduction

Bukharin and Preobrazhensky in their 1920 *The ABC of Communism* (1920/1959), set out a Marxist analysis of the role education performs in capitalist society

In bourgeois society the school has three principal tasks to fulfil. First, it inspires the coming generation of workers with devotion and respect for the capitalist régime. Secondly, it creates from the young of the ruling classes 'cultured' controllers of the

working population. Thirdly, it assists capitalist production in the application of sciences to technique, thus increasing capitalist profits.

Bukharin and Preobrazhensky describe each of these tasks:

Just as in the bourgeois army the 'right spirit' is inculcated by the officers, so in the schools under the capitalist régime the necessary influence is mainly exercised by the caste of 'officers of popular enlightenment'. The teachers in the public elementary schools receive a special course of training by which they are prepared for their role of beast tamers. The ministries of education in the capitalist régime are ever on the watch, and they ruthlessly purge the teaching profession of all dangerous (by which they mean socialist) elements.

Marx, and then Lenin, described such teachers- and we can include the Professoriat and media workers, as 'those who, 'still claimed some scientific standing and aspired to be something more than mere sophists and sycophants of the ruling-class, tried to harmonise the Political Economy of capital with the claims, no longer to be ignored, of the proletariat. Hence, a shallow syncretism' (Marx, 1973/1999). Lenin (1916/1939, p. 14) later theorized this fraction as a 'stratum of bourgeoisified workers; who are 'the real agents of the bourgeoisie in the labour movement, the labour lieutenants of the capitalist class, real channels of reformism and chauvinism'.

In Western capitalist economies, we can say that the aim is to 'withhold 'critical' secondary and higher education from working class youth despite the best efforts, and love indeed, of many teachers, education is perceived for working class youth as 'skills training', devoid of - indeed, hostile to - 'deep critique'. There is the suppression of critical space in education, the strict control of teacher education, of the curriculum, of educational research (Hill, 2006, 2007; Rikowski, 2008). Of course, many teachers resist. As Althusser (1971) notes,

I ask the pardon of those teachers who, in dreadful conditions, attempt to turn the few weapons they can find in the history and learning they 'teach' against the ideology, the system and the practices in which they are trapped. They are a kind of hero.

Two Types of neo-Marxist Analysis: Structuralist neo-Marxism and Culturalist neo-Marxism

In this section I examine two apparently contrasting and disputed Marxist analyses of the role and functions of education in capitalist societies, Structuralist neo-Marxist Analysis and Culturalist neo-Marxist Analysis. While there are differences between them, set out in this section, they both differ from Classical Marxism in that they both, to different degrees, stress the relative autonomy of individuals and structures, and agency, from capitalist economic structures and relationships.

Jessop's (Jessop, 2014) critiques both these neo-Marxist analyses:

The disadvantages of Marxism as a sociological analysis of power ... include its neglect of forms of social domination that are not directly related to class; a tendency to over-emphasize the coherence of class domination; the continuing problem of economic reductionism; and the opposite danger of a voluntaristic account of resistance to capitalism.

Various Marxist and neo-Marxist writers label the two types or schools of neo-Marxist analysis differently. Regarding terminology, Mike Cole (2016, pp.8-9) uses the terms, structuralist and humanist, giving Althusser as an example of the former and Gramsci as an example of the latter. Cole argues for the strengths of both positions: structuralism as showing the power of structures in capitalist societies and humanism, the power of human will in breaking through them. Similarly with the influential Australian neo-Marxist, Kevin Harris, whose 1982

Teachers and Classes: A Marxist Analysis (Harris, 1982) was Althusserian, and can be termed structuralist. Here, Harris states,

Educators, as historical subjects, belong to their eras and are led to actions and choices defined by the concrete, existential, and objective conditions of their times. These conditions, combined with the whole of teachers' personalities, conscience, and levels of critical reflection, as well as the overall conditions of the class struggle, will ultimately define what can be practised and achieved (Harris, 1982, p. 153).

Harris' 1994 book, *Teachers: Constructing the Future* (Harris, 1994) was more Gramscian, focusing more on what teachers can 'do'.

Cole, Harris, and my own work, synthesise, in various degrees, the two types of neo-Marxism. However, the three of us would agree with the three Structuralist critiques of Culturalist/ neo-Marxism set out below.

Drawing from a Gramscian perspective Culturalist neo-Marxist writers focus on the potential and for teachers and schools to 'make a difference', that they can work to, and have some degree of success in promoting an anti-hegemonic, resistant ideology, for example antiracism and anti-sexism. Gramsci (1971), and Resistance theorists after him, such as Apple (1979, 1982), Saltman (2011, 2018), Giroux (1983, 2001) believe 'a new social order depends not just on the seizure of state of power but on the transformation of minds, common sense, and civil society by educative work' (Saltman, 2018, p.664). Structuralist neo-Marxist writers, such as Althusser, whose work emphasises relative autonomy, and 'over-determination', rather than determination.

Autonomy and Agency

Culturalist neo-Marxists have, *firstly* criticised Reproduction theorists concerning the degree of *relative autonomy and agency*. They critique reproduction theorists for not recognising space for resistance where they believe students and teachers have a degree of autonomy to contest and colonise against the (capitalist individualist, competitive, acquisitive) dominant ideology. Culturalist neo-Marxists emphasise the degree of 'relative autonomy' that teachers in classrooms, individual schools, and Departments of Education, and governments can have in relation to the demand of Capital, in relation to what capitalists, the large corporations, would like them to do. Culturalist neo-Marxists draw from and stress the power of human agency, the power of people to intervene and to change history.

Thus, Culturalist neo-Marxists, such as Resistance Theorists, criticise Structuralist neo-Marxists for focusing on the way in which the capitalist economic structures '*determine*' state policy, with the capitalist state 'inevitably' reproducing the capitalist system within and through education. However, it needs to be recalled that Structuralist neo-Marxists, for example, Althusser, emphasises relative autonomy, and 'over-determination', rather than determination.

Understanding and definition of social class

A *second* area of difference between Culturalist neo-Marxists and Reproduction neo-Marxists is over the *understanding and definition of social class*. Deborah Kelsh and I (Kelsh and Hill, 2006, see also Hill, 2001, 2005) present a detailed Classical Marxist critique of Culturalist neo-Marxism, for example that of Michael W. Apple, and what we ascribe as his neo-Weberian analysis of class. We criticise those 'who have participated in the conversion of the Marxist concept of class to a descriptive term by culturalizing it -pluralizing it and

cutting its connection to the social relations of exploitation that are central to capitalism'.

We continue,

As the revisionist left now uses class, the term 'social class' refers to social divisions, social strata, that are effects of market forces that are understood to be (relatively) autonomous from production practices, that is, from the social relations of capitalism that are the relations of exploitation between labor and capital (Kelsh and Hill, 2006:4-5).

We note that,

In the place of the Marxist theory of class, the revisionist left has installed a Weberian-derived notion of class as a tool of classification useful only to describe strata of people, as they appear at the level of culture and in terms of status derived from various possessions, economic, political, or cultural... such Weberian-derived classifications serve to occlude class consciousness and the class contradiction within Capital (Kelsh and Hill, 2006, p.8).

Class is reduced to what as Angela McRobbie calls the 'social relations of shopping' (cited in Zavadardeh, 1995, p. 45)

Analysis of class, 'race' and gender

A *third* major point of differentiation, following the focus on agency and autonomy within capitalism, is their *analysis of class, race and gender*.

USA writers such as the Michael W. Apple, who writes powerful and influential critiques of neoliberal capitalism and education, giving a political economy analysis, and arguing for democratic schooling. But in doing so, and using his position of esteem in the USA radical left, he criticises classical and revolutionary and class-based forms of analysis.

A further feature of Culturalist neo-Marxists is the retreat from class analysis into forms of identity analysis and identity politics, into, for example, a focus on intersectionality. 'Race', gender (and other) oppression(s) are deemed to be of equal, or 'parallel', or in the case of Critical Race Theory, at least in the British version, 'BritCrit' (associated with David Gillborn e.g. Gillborn 2005, 2013) for example, of being more important to focus on academically, programmatically, politically, than issues of social class and the Capital - Labour Relation.

Apple (2006a, p. 680, see also Saltman, 2011, McGrew, 2011) accuses an unspecified 'mid-Atlantic' group (by whom he was referring to Peter McLaren, Mike Cole, Dave Hill, Paula Allman, Glenn Rikowski and co-thinkers) of being Marxist fundamentalists, of being 'Bowles and Gintis look-alikes, of being mechanistic and deterministic, seeking to purify 'the' Marxist tradition of the taint of culturalism and of the sin of worrying too much about, say, gender and race at the expense of class'.

Apple has been contested by Kelsh and Hill (2006), Curry Malott (2011) and Glenn Rikowski (2006) who critique Apple's 'neo-Weberian, mainstream sociology of education, with its radical veneer (in which Marx plays an inhibited role)' (Rikowski, 2006, p. 68).

Mike Cole, e.g. 2017a, 2017b, 2020) has criticised this pre-eminent focus on 'Race' by David Gillborn, for example considering that social class- the Capital - Labour Relation is the fundamental structuring of society and its inequalities, and that the 'parallelism' arguments (i.e. race, gender are of equal importance as social class in capitalist societies in terms of structural discrimination) of Michael Apple by pointing out that while these characteristics- skin colour, gender for example, (and other signifiers and identities such as sexuality)- are

indeed victims of both personal and systemic oppression and discrimination (indeed, murder, rape, brutalisation as well as casual myriad daily micro-aggressions) the primary structuring of inequality in society is that of social class. In addition to suffering repetitive and lifelong demeaning, disabling individual and systemic oppressions and discriminations, the working class, those who sell their labour power, are not only oppressed, they are also economically *exploited*- whether they are male, female, binary sex, gay, straight, black, brown, white.

In this, Cole (e.g. (e.g. 2017a, b, 2020), and his co-writers and thinkers such as Dave Hill (2008, 2009a, 2009b), Alpesh Maisuria (in Cole and Maisuria, 2007; Maisuria, 2011), and Carl Parsons (2019, 2020), and earlier writers such as McLaren and Scatamburlo d'Annibale (2004) consider that a theory which sees 'race' as the primary form of oppression in society (and in education), like the 'equivalence theory' of Michael W. Apple in the USA, politically takes the heat off the capitalist class, opens the way for calls for reforming the present political educational social systems- rather than their replacement.

While recognising the power of subjective identities and consciousness, and while not being dismissive of racism (or, indeed misogyny and sexism, homophobia, for example) as intrinsic to global capital's agenda, these forms and processes of ("race," gender, caste) marginalization and inequality are functional for the capitalist system of exploitation, which uses schooling and formal education and other agencies of the state to reproduce the existing patterns and forms of educational, social, and economic inequalities.

They are functional in a number of ways: they occlude class consciousness and impede the development of the working-class movement by dividing the working class; they lend themselves to the creation of bourgeois groups among

immigrant descended/ black/caste groups and women which have a self interest in perpetuating the capitalist system of exploitation; and they facilitate the extraction of surplus value by sustaining pools of marginalised cheap labour, of the super-exploited (this is developed in Hill, 2009b), not least the super-exploitation of labour in the 'global south' in the massive and continuing transfer of wealth from the South to the North (Glazebrook, 2020). As Glazebrook notes, Capitalism is a system of global exploitation of which the entire populations of Western nations are net beneficiaries.

The Disabling Implications of Culturalist neo-Marxism for Political Strategy

Theory which sees 'race' as the primary form of oppression in society (and in education), like the 'equivalence theory' of Michael W. Apple in the USA, takes the heat off the capitalist class. As Kelsh and Hill (2006) note,

Those on the revisionist left, such as Apple, claim to be "deeply committed to social transformation" (Apple, 2003, p. 17), but the "transformation" he speaks of is problematic. First, in actuality, it is quite limited. Second, it is, at the same time, a fantasy. He does not want to abolish the capitalist regime of wage-labour involving exploitation. He wants, for example, to "eliminate poverty through greater income parity" (2006b, p. 68). Indeed, he argues not for transformation, but for a "politics of interruption" (2005, p. 392). This is a limited aim insofar as it leaves exploitation in place, capitalism unchallenged, and the repressive political and state forms of capital in control. It is also a fantasy because as Marx argued and as the world has seen, under capitalism, "accumulation of wealth at one pole is . . . accumulation of misery, agony of toil slavery, ignorance, brutality, mental degradation, at the opposite pole, i.e. on the side of the class that produces its own product in the form of capital" (Marx, 1867/1967a, p. 645).

To refer to Apple's (and others') 'tryplich' or parallelist, and also to black separatist or separatist feminist analysis and foci and programmes (some of

which were discussed in the preceding section of this chapter on 'analysis of class, race and gender', these various aspects of Culturalist neo-Marxism serve to dampen, inhibit, hide, demean class-based programme, resistance, revolution, opening the way for calls for reforming the present political educational social systems- rather than their replacement.

McLaren and Scatamburlo d'Annibale's (2004) critique of this 'trptych' formulation: Race, class and gender, while they invariably intersect and interact, are not co-primary. This 'triplet' approximates what the 'philosophers might call a category mistake'. On the surface the triplet may be convincing -some people are oppressed because of their race, others as a result of their gender, yet others because of their class -but this 'is grossly misleading' for it is not that 'some individuals manifest certain characteristics known as 'class' which then results in their oppression; on the contrary, to be a member of a social class just is to be oppressed' and in this regard class is 'a wholly social category' Furthermore, even though 'class' is usually invoked as part of the aforementioned and much vaunted triptych, it is usually gutted of its practical, social dimension or treated solely as a cultural phenomenon -as just another form of 'difference.' In these instances, class is transformed from an economic and, indeed, social category to an exclusively cultural or discursive one or one in which class merely signifies a 'subject position.' (p. 186)

Dialectical relationship between Structuralist neo-Marxist theory and Culturalist neo-Marxist theory

Contemporary neo-Marxist Structuralist Theorists and activists do take part in the dialectic between the two schools of neo-Marxist analysis. Much of the rest of this essay is, indeed, concerned *precisely* with resistance, precisely with the resistant counter-hegemonic, socialist role of Marxist, socialist, communist educator-activists.

But this recognition and injunction to struggle, and to struggle in the cultural ideological arena as well as the arena of mobilisation and physical material action, is not starry eyed, it does not ignore the Labour-Capital Relation, nor does it ignore the ultimate brute force of both the Capitalist State and of the economic and employment power of the Capitalist Class. There is always in Capitalism, the potential, the threat, and the actuality of brute force, violence, of the state repressive apparatuses when capital, capitalism, and their dominance seems under threat. Not just the state repressive apparatuses of the law, police, army- but also the repressive aspects of the ideological state apparatuses (Althusser, 1971) - the dismissals, the non-promotions, the in-house/ in-school/ college punishments and debilitation, the harassment and 'pressurising' of trade union representatives.

There is the attempted incorporation, assimilation, into 'the mainstream' of resistant or potentially resistant individuals (such as local and national trade union and political leaders), at a societal level there is overt (as well as ongoing covert) ideological warfare, such as Bolsonaro's attempts in Brazil to wipe out Freireanism and the attempts by the current UK Conservative government to ban Marxism in schools and universities (Barrow, 2021). At the murderous level, there is the ultimate in repressive state apparatuses- mass murder, concentration camps, 'disappearance' of leftists and trade unionist, for example in Chile and Argentina.

Classical Marxism and neo-Marxisms

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 Althusser (Hill, 2001, 2005) was of Althusser's formulation that *Economic Determination in the Last Instance* means, 'in the last "overdetermined" analysis. 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'* (my italics).

This unduly minimalist concept allows Resnick and Wolff to interpret Althusserian 'overdetermination' as giving *equal weight* (my italics) to political, ideological and economic factors:

Overdetermination offers a notion of base and superstructure as conditions of each other's existence... It permitted the construction of a theory of society in which no process - economic, political, cultural or natural - and no site of processes - human agency, enterprise, state or household - could be conceived to exist as a cause without being itself caused. All, whether human agent or social structure, became defined - within a web of mutual overdeterminations. (Resnick and Wolff, 1993:68)

The 'bell', of economic determination, that (for Althusser) 'never tolls', is, at the current juncture of capitalism, now tolling- in terms of the nakedness in capitalist class/ governmental discourse- and in terms of the brute force, repressive legislation, the mailed fist no longer cloaked in a velvet glove, wielded by the capitalist class and the governments and repressive state apparatuses that, ultimately, and increasingly clearly, serve them.

In Mandel's words (1976, p. 49, cited in Banfield, 2010, p. 131),

under capitalism, labour is essentially *forced labour*. Wherever possible, capitalists prefer hypocritically to cloak the compulsion under a smokescreen of 'equal and just exchange' in the 'labour market'. When hypocrisy is no longer possible, they return to what they began with: naked co-ercion.

While the (Althusser's) concept of 'overdetermination' represents a greater recognition of the role of force and of the repressive aspects and effectiveness of state apparatuses, than that held by the alternative Culturalist neo-Marxist analyses examined here, it is still deficient. The theory of 'economic determination in the last instance' is inadequate.

To repeat the phrase, (Althusser's) overdetermination is trumped by economic determination, by the Capital-Labour relation, by 'the determinacy of actual class relations and objective class interests (Banfield, 2015, p.11).

FUNDAMENTALS OF CLASSICAL MARXIST ANALYSIS

In this section, I set out, and in some cases, re-emphasise, from a Classical Marxist perspective, what is specifically Marxist about the proposals set out.

Class Analysis: the Capital-Labour Relation

The first distinguishing feature for Marxists is the salience of class- class in the Marxist sense of being a relational concept, rather than a Weberian gradational concept- as compared with other forms of structural oppression, discrimination and inequality. Marxists in general Marxist Feminists, Marxist anti Racists, Marxist Queer Theorists stand together with social movements and civil rights campaigners in opposing racism, sexism, homophobia, and other forms of discrimination. And support reforms suggested, enacted by non-Marxist reformists, together with social movements and civil rights campaigners

But Marxists go further than criticizing (and acting against) social discrimination, oppressions, into economic rights. And further than that, into the recognition that full economic rights cannot be achieved under a capitalist economic system, but only under a socialist or communist (socialism being the stage on the road to full communism).

Furthermore, it is recognized that it is only the organized working class (black-white; male-female; straight-LGBT, Dalit and all other castes) that can organize and succeed in replacing the Capitalist system. The Communist Manifesto (Marx and Engels, 1848/2010) is startlingly powerful and relevant today in its analysis of capitalism. Capitalism, as analysed and criticized by Marxists, is the systematic exploitation by the capitalist class of the labour power of the working class(es), with the capitalists appropriating the surplus value created by the labour of the working class(es). This is the relationship between Capital and Labour-the Capital-Labour Relation. With capitalists pocketing this surplus value as profit.

There is, under capitalism, a continuous 'class war', a continuous antagonistic relationship between the exploiting class and the exploited class, whatever the state of subjective appreciation/ understanding/ political and class consciousness is. Each of the two (major) classes of society engaged in struggle over increasing the proportion of surplus value (the value left when raw materials, rents, and wages/salaries have been paid) that should go into capitalists' pockets as profits, or into workers' pockets as wages, and, as welfare benefits-the social wage. In the words of *The Communist Manifesto*, 'society as a whole is more and more splitting up into two great hostile camps, into two great classes directly facing each other: Bourgeoisie and Proletariat' (Marx and Engels, 1848/2010). In today's language, the 0.1%, 'the rulers of the universe', and most of the rest (Picketty, 2014).

More broadly, the struggle is over ownership of the means of production (Ebert and Zavarzadeh, 2002). The struggle over the distribution of surplus value is a trade-unionist struggle (as Lenin points out in the 1902/1999 *What Is To Be Done*) that does not go beyond the limits of “what is”: capitalist relations. There is a “social wage” only in the parameters of capitalism, which in fact makes those social wages necessary (because of exploitation for surplus value that leaves workers unable to meet their needs). The redistribution of surplus value as a trade unionist demand is precisely this.

And it is the state apparatuses that not only keep the working class, this workforce, trained and fit to work— schools, universities, and health services—but that also attempt to keep the working class in a state of ‘ideological acquiescence’, to believe that with regard to how society, the economy and politics are ordered, ‘there is no alternative’.

Capitalism must be replaced by socialism and that change is revolutionary

Marxists believe that reforms are not sustainable under capitalism, even if, when they are implemented, they are hugely or minimally welcome to Marxists. However, they are unsustainable, and are stripped away when there are the (recurrent and systemic) crises of capital, as happened in the 1930s, 1970s, post 2008 and only too likely with the Covid crisis for Capitalism of the current period). I want to emphasise here that social democratic parties and politicians, such as Pablo Iglesias and Podemos in Spain, Alexis Tsipras and Syriza in Greece, Jeremy Corbyn and the majority of the Labour Party membership in the UK, Bernie Sanders and Alexandria Ocasio-Cortes in the USA, do not want and have never wanted to replace capitalism—they just want to manage it better, to regulate it, to reform it -to make it work better, with more ‘social justice’, and with what Lenin called ‘trade union demands’, for increasing the social wage and the individual wage and collective wage of workers, with ‘better

management of capitalism' understood to mean the more equitable distribution of surplus value.

In Classical Marxist analysis capitalism is never acceptable, whether regulated, reformed, social democratic or not, because it is the exploitation (economic, therefore political, cultural, social oppression) of humans by humans. Hence what defines Classical Marxists is a belief, an analysis, that capitalism must be replaced per se/ in itself, regardless of the degree of desirability or sustainability / non-sustainability of reforms under capitalism. The Classical Marxist position is that capitalism is fundamentally anti-human. And, on this basis, one is compelled to act to overturn capitalism – to overturn a system that is driven by a logic that denies the capacity to be human.

This is an important point: it is why Marxists, activist Marxist teachers, work to develop class- consciousness, a sense of the working class being 'a class for itself' (its class position) as opposed to 'a class in itself' (a class with class consciousness) (Marx, 1847/1999) a class with 'good sense' as opposed to 'common sense' (Gramsci, 1971).

The link between workers' consciousness and socialist revolution is to teach against, to subvert, what Lenin termed, this 'ideological enslavement' (Lenin, 1902/2008) in order that workers of the world can unite, as 'a class for itself' and break the chains that bind them. Class-consciousness does not follow automatically or inevitably from the fact of class position.

The *Communist Manifesto* (Marx and Engels, 1848/2010) explicitly identifies the "formation of the proletariat into a class" as the key political task facing the communists. Therefore what is needed is a revolution to replace, to get rid of, the capitalist economic system with its capitalist economic relations of

production and its capitalist social relations of production-the ownership by capitalists of the wealth and the power in society. (This is what Marx termed, in Volume One of *Das Kapital*, 'the negation of the negation') (Marx, K. (1867/1999).

An elected socialist government would not be able to bring about much change which went against the interests of the capitalist class because the military, judiciary, police and corporate hierarchy are not democratic. The national and global capitalist class use state violence, and/ or the instruments of global or US capitalist economy or military to stop Socialism.

The ballot box alone cannot bring about revolution, firstly, because state institutions in capitalism are not democratic, and, secondly, because national and international capitalism (in the form of the 'American Cavalry' and dollars) intervene- often bloodily, to impose pro-capitalist, pro-USA right-wing governments. History is littered with the figurative and the literal corpses of left-leaning democratically elected governments and their supporters, overthrown by military coups throughout the globe. For example, governments and numerous the Republican government in Spain in 1936-39, and in Latin and Central America since the 1960s such as Brazil in 1964, Bolivia in 1971, Argentina in 1976, Chile in 1979 and many others, recently, most notably, attempts by the US government in alliance with Venezuelan capitalists to subvert and remove the Chavez- Maduro popularly elected governments.

A Congress or Parliament or president or Prime Minister has limited power over state institutions such as 'the secret state'. Between 2015 and 2019 we can see the subversion and threats of subversion, of a potential Jeremy Corbyn led Labour government in the UK, a potential left-social democratic government from within what might be termed the state apparatus of the Labour Party

bureaucracy and various MI5 and CIA 'assets' within the Parliamentary Labour Party, subversion that caused Corbyn's downfall and electoral defeat in 2019. There were non-too-subtle threats of military intervention if Corbyn were to take power, just as there had been with the reported putative 'Coup of the Colonels' against the mildly left-wing Harold Wilson UK government in the 1960s.

For revolutionary Marxists, a socialist revolution is necessary, so that there comes into power (not just into government) an egalitarian, socialist economic, political and education system.

Nor, in a capitalist economy, does a government have power over the economy—there can be a 'strike of capital'. As Young et al (2017) remind us, capitalists get what they want through structural power over the economy.

Capitalists routinely exert leverage over governments by withholding the resources — jobs, credit, goods, and services — upon which society depends. The “capital strike might take the form of layoffs, offshoring jobs and money, denying loans, or just a credible threat to do those things, along with a promise to relent once government delivers the desired policy changes.

Ultimately, the capital strike teaches us that reform is not enough. Power over investment brings power over the political process. Eliminating the capital strike therefore requires the radical democratization of economic ownership and control in society: an end to private capital and illegitimate power in all its forms.

Revolutionary Transformation of Economy and Society

A socialist, a Marxist, revolution needs to be preceded by and accompanied by a (Marxist) Class Programme, Organisation, and Activism The third point of difference between Marxist and non-Marxist radicals 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 Marxist is activist praxis, within the limits of one's ability and competing demands. Most Marxists move beyond proposal into activism and praxis- praxis is action guided by theory, or theory in motion. As focuses on activity within formal teacher education courses and its wider education structures. As Marx (1845/2002) notes, 'philosophers have only interpreted the world. The point is to change it'. Marxists, recognise that political organization, programme development, and political intervention are necessary.

Revolutions do not fall off trees, like apples. As Lenin, in *State and Revolution* (1918/1999) wrote, socialist revolutions have to be fought for-and defended.

MARXIST POLITICAL STRATEGIES AND PROGRAMMES AT STATE LEVEL

Reform and/or Revolution: Minimum, Maximum and Transitional Programmes

In this section, I briefly return to the three fundamentals of Classical Marxist Analysis, - (1) Class Analysis: the Capital Labour Relation; (2) Capitalism must be replaced by Socialism and that change is Revolutionary; and (3) Revolutionary Transformation of Economy and Society needs to be preceded by and accompanied by a Class Programme, Organisation, and Activism- within the Classical Marxist literature on Reform and Revolution

Marx and Engels in *The Communist Manifesto* proclaim the need to 'fight for the attainment of the immediate aims, for the enforcement of the momentary interests of the working class; but in the movement of the present, they also represent and take care of the future of the movement (Marx and Engels,

1848/2010) but to go beyond this, into revolution. Rosa Luxemburg's *Reform or Revolution: Party, Vanguard, Programme and Organisation* (Luxemburg, 1899/1999) and Lenin (1902/1999) *What is to be Done* discuss, and critique, 'The Spontaneity of the Masses and the Consciousness of the Social-Democrats' (Lenin, 1902/1999). Lenin, like Marx and Engels, and like Luxemburg, always supported reforms. But, for Lenin, Capitalism predisposed the workers to the acceptance of Socialism but did not spontaneously make them conscious Socialists. The proletariat by its own efforts in the everyday struggle against the capitalist could only go so far as to achieve "trade-union consciousness," within the boundaries of capitalism. He therefore proposed the party as the "vanguard of the proletariat." - a highly disciplined, centralized party that would work unremittingly to suffuse the proletariat with Socialist consciousness and serve as mentor, leader, and guide, constantly showing the proletariat where its true class interests lie.

Lenin (1902/1999) in the section 'Trade Unionist Politics and Social Democratic Politics' of *What is to be Done*, called these 'trade union demands'. Going beyond 'trade union demands' he noted that,

The task of the Social-Democrats' (by which, in the nomenclature of the day, he meant Revolutionary Marxists- the Marxist Revolutionary party in Russia from 1898 to 1903 was called the Russian Social Democratic and Labour Party- in 1903 it split into Bolsheviks and Mensheviks)), 'however, is not exhausted by political agitation on an economic basis; their task is *to convert* trade-unionist politics into Social-Democratic' (that is Revolutionary Marxist) 'political struggle, *to utilise* the sparks of political consciousness which the economic struggle generates among the workers, for the purpose of *raising* the workers to the level of *Social-Democratic* (i.e. Revolutionary Marxist) 'political consciousness' for increasing the social wage and the individual wage and collective wage of workers.

Rosa Luxemburg (1906/1999) attacked precisely this limitation of trade union activity (and its bureaucratisation) while welcoming the educational impact of the mass strike. In Vennell's (2016) succinct summary

Her argument was that in the process of participation in strikes workers would shed all their ideological ties to the dominant ideas of society and develop a capacity to organise society themselves, in the interests of the vast majority. In short, she believed that although some workers could be won to socialist ideas by meetings and propaganda, the vast majority would be won to socialism in struggle. In short, the mass strike had an educational outcome

In connection with 'Reform or Revolution'- which should be understood as 'Reform *and* Revolution', there are different types of programme adumbrated by different groups and traditions within the Left, from reformist to revolutionary.

There are:

Minor Reforms: defences, protections, such as Health and Safety at Work legislation, 'time off' and office space for trade union representatives, regulations about standards for housing construction, grants or bursaries for studying, regulated standards for food (for example, 'no chlorinated chicken');

Major reforms: protections regulations and provisions, such as setting up a National Health Service, a free state education system, Retirement Pensions, Unemployment Benefit; the Right to Paid Maternity Leave, Legislation against Racism, Sexism, Homophobia.

Revolutionary Changes: that change the economic and social system, that change from capitalist economic and social relations of production, to those that are socialist or, ultimately, communist. Such revolutionary changes are nationalising or otherwise socialising or collectivising capitalist industry and agriculture- that is to say, expropriating capitalist ownership, major

redistribution of wealth and income to decimate and dispossess the economic power of the capitalist class, establishing collective (state, local state, workers' co-operative) control and ownership of mass media (television, radio, newspapers), nationalising or otherwise socialising, collectivising capitalist industry and agriculture, the cancellation of repossessions and evictions, automatic adjustment of wages in line with inflation, the democratisation of the workplace, unrestricted inspection by the public of the financial records of corporations and financial institutions. Such Revolutionary Changes are those that change the economic and social system, that change from capitalist economic and social relations of production, to those that are socialist or, ultimately, communist.

Some major reforms could be termed as Trotsky (1938/1981) termed it, 'a transitional programme', a programme that seems so 'good sense' that it has mass support, but which capitalism could not countenance without its self-destruction. A 'transitional' demand is a reform whose implementation would breach the framework of the current bourgeois order' (see Hill, 2012b).

Trotsky's 'transitional programme' comprises demands that are apparently reformist, made by the working class and its leadership, but demands which have consequences beyond what capitalism can sustain. While the nature of these demands has changed over the decades, the principle remains the same. Struggles for what is needed now lead to fights for things that the capitalist system, the capitalist class, isn't able or prepared to concede. A 'transitional programme' makes demands that do challenge the system. The potential for eruptions comes from struggles for apparent reforms that don't seem unreasonable, such as, in today's pandemic world, the Zero Covid demand (NHS-Keep Our NHS Public, 2020). Such demands have all sorts of potential. The idea that the virus should be suppressed rather than just contained leads to other demands, for example against privatisation of provision, massively

increased funding for the National Health Service, funding for people to stay off work and so on.

Other examples of a transitional programme are contained in David Harvey's (2020) suggestions, alluded to below, or in the implementation of the education policies and principles I advance below in this paper.

The Role of Revolutionary Marxist Educators/Activists

I am a Marxist, a Revolutionary Marxist who wants to supplant / replace capitalism by socialism (and then, ultimately, into communism). Social Democrats, social democratic parties, such as the Labour Party in the UK, want not to replace capitalism, but to make it nicer, to manage capitalism better, to make it more benign, a bit more equal, to improve the lives, health, education, working conditions, social and welfare benefits and provision for working people. And leaving the capitalist class in power. In some times of Capitalist growth, in some 'the boom' years, in times where the working class and its organisations, its trade unions, its strikes, have won concessions from the ruling capitalist class, real improvements and regulations are introduced and implemented, such as in the post-war, post 1945, years. Only to have those gains snatched back by the capitalist class whenever there is a crisis of capital/for capital(ism). Thus the 1930s 'Great Depression', the 1970s and 1980s recession, and the post-1908 'Bankers' Crisis' of finance capital. Each followed by cuts in 'real pay' for workers, cuts in social provision, a reconfiguring of the distribution of surplus value.

Our role, while supporting, acting for reforms, both defensive and offensive, is to teach, to persuade, to propagandise that Capitalism must be replaced by socialism and that change is revolutionary, that we do not just want a bigger slice of the cake, but that we want to control the bakery, that Capitalist ownership must be abolished, not just reformed.,

Where Classical Marxist analysis of economic, social, human rights policy, and education policy, differs from other critique/ critics - even the vibrant left democrats (who are not socialist) like Henry Giroux -is that Marxists, firstly, prioritise class analysis, secondly, go beyond critique, go beyond deconstruction, into reconstruction - into proposals for a fundamental change in society and economy, a socialist economy. And, thirdly, Marxists go beyond proposal/ programme into activism and praxis. Hill, D. (2019a). It is important to re-iterate the word, the activity, '*praxis*'. Activism is not only spontaneity and voluntarism, both of which eschew theory in favour of action; praxis is action guided by theory, is theory in motion. For Marxists, it is Marxist theory.

MARXIST PROGRAMMES AT THE LEVEL OF EDUCATION

Much of my recent writing (Hill, 2017, 2019b, 2020a,b,c; Rasinski, Hill and Skordoulis, 2018) and interviewing (Kimmerle and Hill, 2020; Rodriguez and Hill, 2020) is devoted to the resistant and the revolutionary role of teachers, academics and education/ cultural workers in different arenas, from national and local electoral and direct action politics.

Focusing on Critical Education, Critical Educators, Marxist Education, Marxist Educators, I seek to address four aspects of education: pedagogy, the curriculum, resistance in the classroom and the hidden curriculum, and the structure of schooling nationally and locally (within school).

To Return to Agentism/ Voluntarism/ Class Activism within the Structural Constraints of Capital and its Apparatuses

For Marxists, capitalism is not just immoral and a case of 'oppression'. The more important Classical Marxist analytical point is that capitalism is

exploitative, it is fundamentally anti-human. It is based on economic exploitation.

However, most Marxists and socialists (the terms are slightly different and used differently in different historical and geographical situations) point to the need for 'agency' for action, for the need for Marxist militants and activists to work to develop class consciousness. To return once again to Marx and Engels' phrase (Marx and Engels, 1848/2010) the development of the working class as a (conscious) 'class for itself', is the primary aim of communists, in contrast to, and a development of, the currently existing position of the working class as a 'class in itself'. That is, with economically similar positions in relationship to the ownership of the means of production and similar social relations of production, but with no sense of class unity or class struggle (Marx, 1847/1999). Freire used the term, 'conscientization' (Freire, 1972).

Marxists believe in 'agentist' activism, in the need to develop strong political organizations to fight for major social and economic, revolutionary, change. For Marxists today, socialism and Marxism are not 'inevitable', they have to be fought for. Marxists believe that the point is not simply to describe the world but to change it. In Marx's words, referred to above, 'The philosophers have only interpreted the world, in various ways; the point is to change it' (Marx, 1845/2002).

The development of class consciousness, of Marxist critical political awareness, of course takes place in strike action, in political activism within the workplace, the street, the family, the friendship group, through social movements, political parties, trade unions, through public pedagogy for example, as well as the classroom, as well as in formal educational settings/ structures.

Resistance in and through the Formal Education System: Schools

Within the formal education structures, I refer to specific proposals regarding schooling and regarding teacher education

I set out a Marxist Manifesto for Education elsewhere (Hill, 2010). Many - most - of the 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/neo- fascist capitalism. They call for:

- [1] Small class sizes
- [2] Abolish league tables and abolish most externally set assessment tasks
- [3] Restore local democratic control of state schools that have been handed over to private corporations, charities and individuals to run, and establish local democratic control of such schools
- [4] Establish a fully Comprehensive Secondary School system so that each school has a broad social class mix and mix of attainment levels
- [5] Remove Private Profiteering from Schools/ Education services that have been privatized. Return these services to public/ social control
- [6] Integrate private schools and colleges/ universities into the state education system
- [7] Remove organised religion from schools and end state Faith Schools.
- [8] Provide a good, and local, school for every child
- [9] Provide free, nutritious, balanced school meals
- [10] Provide free adult education classes, non-vocational and cultural as well as vocational
- [11] Restore or establish free, state-funded residential centres and Youth Centres/ Youth clubs

- [12] Free up curricula that are over-prescriptive, to move beyond 'the basics curriculum'
- [13] Revise school inspectorial and surveillance systems so they are supportive and advisory rather than punitive
- [14] Encourage Critical Thinking across the curriculum. Teach children not 'what to think', but 'how to think'. Teach about Marxist analysis and the class exploitative nature of capitalism
- [15] Teach in schools for ecological literacy and a readiness to act for environmental justice as well as for economic and social justice.
- [16] Ensure that schools are anti-racist, anti-sexist and anti-homophobic and are environmentalist
- [17] Provide an honest sex education curriculum in schools that teaches children not just 'when to say no', but also 'when to say yes'.
- [18] Develop proper recognition of all school workers, with no compulsory job redundancies
- [19] Set up school councils which include student as well as teacher and non-teacher worker voices
- [20] Broaden teacher education and training on the detailed lines suggested below, so it is theorised and socially and politically contextualised, not restricted (primarily or totally) to technical 'delivery' and control skills
- [21] Set up a completely free, fully funded, publicly owned and democratic education system from pre-school right through to university, with no fees, and with financial grants for poorer students post 16 and for further and higher education

Where Marxist and communist educators, and Revolutionary Critical Educators (for example McLaren, 2005, 2013) differ from social democrat and liberal

educators is that we emphasise socialist transformation, ending, surpassing, capitalism. Social democratic and liberal/ liberal-progressive educators do not proclaim the need for an anti-capitalist revolution, the need to replace capitalist economic and social relations by socialist ones. That is a key difference. (Hill, (2019a, 2020c; Rodriguez and Hill, 2018).

To repeat, most of these schooling and teacher education proposals set out below would be accepted by social democrats. But, I want to stress here - Marxists develop and propagate them in the context of the three basic principles of Marxism set out earlier. Social democrats do not.

Resistance in and through the Formal Education System: Teacher Education: an Eco-Marxist Policy

I now set out set out proposals that constitute a democratic Marxist manifesto for teacher education for economic, environmental and social justice.

Recognising the structural limitations on progressive action but also that teacher agency is shaped and not erased by these. (Edwards, Hill and Boxley, 2018).

Now, congruent with these proposal for schooling, are proposals for a Marxist manifesto for teacher education for economic, environmental and social justice.

Such a programme should:

- (1) Engage in pedagogic theory in which the socio-political, economic and environmental contexts of schooling and education are explicit. This includes understanding of children, schooling, society and nature, their inter-relationships, and alternative views and methods of, for example, classroom organization, schooling, and the economic and political relationship of schooling to society and nature;

(2) Develop equal opportunities policies and praxis so that children do not suffer from labelling, under-expectation, stereotyping or prejudice;

(3) Enable student teachers to develop as critical, reflective teachers, able, for example, to decode media, ministerial (and indeed, Radical Left) distortion, bias, and propaganda. This encourages the development of teachers, able to interrelate and critique theory and practice (their own and that of others);

(4) Include not only technical reflection, but also Marxist critical reflection, so as to question a particular policy or theory, and to ask such critical questions as 'whose interests are served?'; 'who wins?' (if only by legitimating the status quo) and 'who loses?'

(5) Enable student teachers to understand the social, economic and environmental inequalities and injustices present in their places of work and communities, and to challenge them. (Hill, (2019a, 2020c; Rodriguez and Hill, 2018).

CONCLUSION: THE ORGANIC CRISIS OF CAPITALISM, SOCIALIST IMAGINATION, AND OUR ROLE

The Mask is slipping- the mask of the inevitability and efficiency and desirability of neoliberal capitalism- 'the market knows best' is being spattered with the blood of the dying and the tears of their families. Following from Gramsci we can see that the permanent 'Culture Wars' between different views of the world, different ideologies, different ways of understanding the world and our place in it, how society was, how society is and how it should be, is undergoing a massive shift.

Hegemony and The Slipping Mask

Using Gramsci's concept of hegemony, we can see what Gramsci (1971/2000) called the cultural hegemony (or dominance) of the ruling capitalist class, for example, the belief propagandised by the Mainstream media and by state apparatuses, that 'dog eat dog competitive consumerist individualism', is being challenged by the material circumstances, the actual lived experiences of millions. The ideological hegemony of neoliberal ideology and policy was and is that human potential is released and served by competition, individualism, low taxation and 'the small state'. Yet now, the dominant, hegemonic, capitalist ideology is being challenged by an (ideological) understanding, stemming from the impoverished material conditions and the actual, practical, lived experience of a shared collective effort, society, economy.

At a macro-level, at the level of mass consciousness, billions are seeing that citizens can and do take local collective and solidaristic action, that, Millions, perhaps billions, globally, are understanding that neoliberalism, 'leaving it all to the market', is inferior to state planning (not that 'statism', for Hal Draper (1966) 'socialism from above' as opposed to 'socialism from below' is necessarily socialist). And that local collective action, the thousands of local community groups that have sprung up to help vulnerable neighbours for example, are working from an ideology, a belief in, community service, not in profit taking and profit impelled private enterprise.

Market signals were clear: There's no profit in preventing a future catastrophe'. In our millions we are seeing that 'the emperor has no clothes', the nakedness of the neoliberal system which responds only in terms of market profitability, not the common good (Hill, 2020a).

Organic Crisis of Capitalism

The crisis consists precisely in the fact that the old is dying and the new cannot be born; in this interregnum a great variety of morbid symptoms appear.”□

Gramsci’s theory of ‘organic crisis’ analyses a crisis touching on almost every sphere of the capitalist system: economic, (geo-)political, ideological, epidemiological, cultural, environmental, etc. Such crises lay bare fundamental contradictions in the system that the ruling classes are unable to resolve, weakening hegemony and marking historical transitions between non-revolutionary situations and potentially revolutionary situations. As Booth puts it,

we are in an epoch of capitalist decay, facing an organic crisis of capitalism- one in which the system is caught in a vicious downward spiral; where falling employment leads to falling demand which in turn leads to falling investment, and thus a further fall in employment, and so on and so forth (Booth, 2020. See also; Sewell, 2015a, 2015b; Hill, 2020a, b).

Socialist Imagination and Marx on Wealth

David Harvey (2020) asks,

Is there some way to organise the production of basic goods and services so that everybody has something to eat, everybody has a decent place to live, and we can put a moratorium on evictions, and everybody can live rent free? Isn’t this moment one where we could actually think seriously about the creation of an alternative society?

Looking at an imaginary communist society, Harvey quotes Marx in *Grundrisse* (Marx, 1858/1973):

Truly wealthy a nation, when the working day is 6 rather than 12 hours. Wealth is not command over surplus labour time . . . but rather disposable time outside that needed in direct production, for every individual and the whole society.

To give the fuller quote from Marx, in *The German Ideology*, (1846)

For as soon as the distribution of labour comes into being, each man has a particular, exclusive sphere of activity, which is forced upon him and from which he cannot escape. He is a hunter, a fisherman, a herdsman, or a critical critic, and must remain so if he does not want to lose his means of livelihood; while in communist society, where nobody has one exclusive sphere of activity but each can become accomplished in any branch he wishes, society regulates the general production and thus makes it possible for me to do one thing today and another tomorrow, to hunt in the morning, fish in the afternoon, rear cattle in the evening, criticise after dinner, just as I have a mind, without ever becoming hunter, fisherman, herdsman or critic.

The Role of Revolutionary Marxist Activist Educators and Cultural Workers

How to get from here to there, from the current mass destabilisation and changes in awareness and consciousness? It doesn't happen by magic. And revolutions do not, like apples, fall off trees. Class consciousness does not follow automatically or inevitably from the objective fact of economic class position. Marx's *The Poverty of Philosophy* (1847/1999), as already referred to, distinguishes between a 'class-in-itself' (an objective determination relating to class position) and a 'class-for-itself' (a subjective appreciation of class consciousness). In *The Eighteenth Brumaire of Louis Napoleon* (1852/1999) Marx observes,

In so far as millions of families live under economic conditions of existence that divide their mode of life, their interests and their cultural formation from those of the other classes and bring them into conflict with those classes, they form a class.
(Marx, 1852/1974: 239)

This is the class, 'in itself'. *The Communist Manifesto* (Marx and Engels, 1848/2010), as noted above, explicitly identifies 'the formation of the proletariat into a class', that is, a 'class for itself' as the key political task facing communists'.

Both in the education arena and in the wider society, we Marxists seek to serve and advance the interests of the working class -recognising the fundamental nature of class exploitation and the multiple oppressions based on identities and subjectivities. We, as teachers, as educators, are working class, too: we sell our labour power to capitalists and to the apparatuses of the capitalist state, such as schools and universities. We have to consistently and courageously challenge the dominant ideology, the hegemony of the ruling class, the bourgeoisie, the capitalist class. We have to contest the currently hegemonic control of ideas by the capitalist state, schools, media, and their allies in the institutions of religion.

But the situation we face is not just a war of ideas, an ideological war: it is also an economic class war, where the social and economic conditions and well-being of the working class are threatened and undermined by the ruling class and its capitalist state goes even further, and argues that contemporary and future capitalist onslaughts will result in deaths for 'superfluous' workers and sections of the non-working industrial reserve army.

What is clear is that the task regarding capitalism, for Marxist activists and educators, is not just to reform capitalism, welcome though such reforms are, and we must be active in campaigning for and protecting such reforms. But, regarding capitalism, our task is to replace it with democratic Marxism. As teachers, as educators, as cultural workers, as activists, as intellectuals, we have a role to play. We must play it.

To repeat, but to develop from, an earlier phrase, from the poem, *Fish and Fascism* (Hill, 2019a), which referred to Fascism and to Fascists- the rotten fish are not just the Fascist version of Capitalism - it is Capitalism itself: 'Either we throw these rotten fish and their stench out, or the stench will overpower us'.

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Acknowledgement

I would like to thank Grant Banfield for his comments on a draft of this work.

Any faults/ errors remain mine.

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