

Book Review Symposium: 1. Mike Cole (2019) *Trump, the Alt-Right and Public Pedagogies of Hate and for Fascism: What is to Be Done?* London and New York: Routledge Focus

2. Mike Cole (2020) *Theresa May, the Hostile Environment and Public Pedagogies of Hate and Threat: The Case for a Future Without Borders.* London and New York: Routledge Focus

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Bookending the Collapse of Liberalism

Introduction

Cole has written two extremely prescient books that utilize Marxist analysis to connect the threads between Theresa May, Brexit and Britain First movements within the UK and Trump's redeployment of authoritarian populism within the US to "make America great again," both marking the vacuum created by the failures of liberalism in the wake of the 2008 recession. In a sense, these highly readable texts can be considered bookends to a documentation of the emergence of white nationalism, committed by a major colonizer and its colonial settler state. With *Trump, the Alt-Right and Public Pedagogies of Hate and for*

Fascism, Cole holds up a dialectical materialist magnifying glass to the forces who created and continue to sustain Trump within the media landscape. The strength of the book is its presentation of the academic wing of the alt-right. Often overlooked in favor of older white nationalist groups which are already covered extensively, the academic discourse of the alt-right is more insidious and dangerous. It is their ability to get in the door to acceptability, such as speakers being invited to universities who have diversity laws and policies, in the name of “free speech.”

In *Theresa May, The Hostile Environment and Public Pedagogies of Hate and Threat*, Cole presents a Marxian discourse analysis of Theresa May in the form of an important case study of the interaction of media and policy that is urgently needed. This text investigates the cultural and economic scapegoating of the most vulnerable populations after the 2008 advent of the global recession, blame placing simultaneously used by conservatives to enact and justify austerity measures. Far from being a “moderate conservative” as is often portrayed via commentators, May has used her political position for years to cultivate racist and xenophobic policies that are linked with the global rise of the far right. The reader will be able to trace a direct line from May to the disaster that is Brexit, including making connections between immigration policy in the UK and other countries such as the US. Most importantly, the text serves as a blueprint for how conservative parties enable the far right in the hopes that they can achieve their political aims, along with how quickly they can then lose control of the narrative once that happens.

Fascism’s academic core

The rationale for both of the books is centered on the assertion that fascism always has an academic core of support and style of presentation that then connects with messaging aimed at the working class. Thus, far from being an

esoteric response, the confrontation of fascism requires an academic context, as part of direct action. This involves a call for academics to take up questions of what Cole identifies as extra-institutional pedagogy; in this case, how pedagogy is enacted through the figure of May, who uses public pedagogy as a means of legitimizing racism and xenophobia. Up until now, aside from scholars working in the areas of popular culture and media studies, many within academia have tended to address problems such as social justice as situated within their institutions and on a philosophical level. Cole brings the stark displays of right-wing public pedagogy from the streets into the universities in the form of critical analysis tied to action.

In doing so, Cole carefully dissects the public nature of Trump and May's extra-institutional pedagogical strategies. Readers come to realize that just because an action or intent is framed as "public" does not guarantee its authenticity nor its legitimacy. It may carry the markers of being authentically "working class," but not in the sense of a class acting for itself or its own interests. This is especially the case with Cole's description of the alt-right's use of the Internet, which itself was originally promoted as a publicly-centered force to bring together the world. This, however, was done within a cyber-libertarian frame: people would see a range of views and let the "marketplace of ideas work itself out." Well, we ended up with it working out in a specific way, but not the way we might have anticipated. Turns out, fascism can indeed be one of the outcomes of public discourse. In *Trump, the Alt-Right, and Public Pedagogies*, Cole traces the alt-right's online activity and how it directly connected to the culmination of public display in the form of the torch-carrying white male demonstrators in Charlottesville. In that case, fascism-as-actualized ideology resulted in the death of a counter-protestor.

Public pedagogy and right-wing populism

Most writing on public pedagogy has focused on social justice and the development of progressive causes. It has rarely confronted fascism and right-wing populism as being included within the framework of potential public outcomes. What Cole demonstrates is the peril of the underestimation of figures like May, who are often viewed as traditional conservatives and therefore more “mainstream.” Assuming that May was not able to accomplish coalition building needed to carry out Brexit overlooks that the Tories in cooperation with other far-right parties *are* adept in these areas. They only await the right opportunity. Further, both of these books emphasize that fascism goes beyond a set of ideas. Instead, it requires a set of circumstances to come into realized power. Cole’s meticulous tracing of May’s escalating anti-immigration rhetoric goes alongside increasingly draconian immigration policy, in her attempt to create a “really hostile environment” for immigrants and refugees. It did not take long for far-right parties such as UKIP to latch onto these policies as part of their Brexit messaging nor to extend their targeting of undocumented immigrants to anyone of foreign origin within the country including those seeking asylum and citizens.

The most unsettling takeaway from Cole’s analysis is that the election of Trump and the Brexit campaign may lead to a more lasting far-right movement—in other words, this could be just the beginning. In many respects, the rhetoric and actions of Trump and May can be considered a test case to see how far the right can go on issues like immigration and how their actions can be normalized in the press. For now, they remain authoritarian populist versus full-blown fascist, but the exact demarcation between the two phases is not as clearly defined nor necessarily what needs to be focused on. In *Trump, the Alt-Right, and Public Pedagogies*, Cole provides several examples of how social media spaces, such as Reddit’s The_Donald has brought together formally disparate groups like

men's rights movements, gamers, white supremacists, evangelicals, and libertarians. Often humor and trolling are gateways to involvement with fascist thought, relying on strategies of denial or "just kidding" to cover their intentions. Others, such as anonymous poster GW, assert that "the end of propositional America is the beginning of a new racially defined America... We are the real Americans, the true heirs of the Founding Fathers, and only now are we becoming aware of who we are" (pp. 76-77).

Fascism's intersectionality

Cole also effectively addresses the intersectional components of fascism, such as racism, sexism, disablism and homophobia. These are important aspects that are usually not directly mentioned in leftist analysis that often treat class as a monolithic point of difference. More importantly, in *Theresa May, the Hostile Environment*, Cole points out that racism has more complex, hybridist forms which make it challenging to confront. This form of racism, like xenophobia, has non-color-coded aspects alongside color-coded ones. In the UK, these include discrimination against the Irish, Jews, and Roma/Travelers (groups who are considered white) alongside Islamophobia and anti-Black discrimination. A similar situation exists in the US, where immigration *status* is framed as a problem on the Right so as not to appear racist; however, the majority of their complaints just happen to be centered on *darker-skinned* migrants such as Mexicans or refugees from Muslim countries. It is striking to see the similarities in right-wing discourse around and treatment of British subjects in the Caribbean (the Windrush Scandal) and to a lesser degree people of Puerto Rico, also a US commonwealth (after Hurricanes Irma and Maria).

Confronting fascism

In *Trump, the Alt-Right and Public Pedagogies*, Cole makes a strong case for confronting fascism versus treating it as another garden-variety political viewpoint that deserves a hearing. His reasoning first includes the problems created when fascism is presented as another option in the marketplace of ideas—when fascists are allowed to speak, they are automatically seen as an acceptable and legitimate alternative, albeit an often unpleasant one. At the same time, however, “fascists operate by instilling fear and claiming no right to be here for specific groups” (p. 94). Further, it should be noted that the phrase “no right to be here” can only be realized through the use of “solutions” like deportation, internment, discrimination, and genocide in the targeting of undesirable groups. While some may continue to conceptualize fascist ideas as hypothetical, fascism is about the actual as realized in these ways. This is because “fascists want to destroy literally, if considered necessary and/or expedient, specific constituencies of humankind” (p. 95). Cole’s example of alt-right figures such as Richard Spencer illustrate that far from being speculative, the aims of those who seek a white ethno-state involve direct and violent action. Cole continues by asserting that “the right for fascists to have free speech is less important than the right of those on the receiving end to not be intimidated and abused verbally and physically” (p. 95). This is a remarkable statement because typically in liberal and even leftist readings of free speech, victims of fascist speech are conveniently erased and are treated as the lowest priority. Free speech is therefore privileged above all else, which only seems to embolden proponents of right-wing ideology rather than motivating oppositional discourse. This leads Cole to conclude that allowing for fascist views works *against* promoting democratic discourse “because if in power, fascists’ aim is to smash any form of democracy” (p. 95). Further, Cole demolishes the tired liberal “slippery slope” rationale for allowing fascist speech: that if you ban fascist speech, soon progressive speech will be banned. What this line of

reasoning overlooks (and usually from a position of privilege) is that it is not mere disagreement with fascists that prompts denying a platform for them, it is “historical struggle” waged by the targets of fascist groups “to make sure that fascists do not grow powerful enough to murder them” (p. 95). In other words, it is not so much a matter of locating some kind of line that the right wing shouldn’t step over, as of who will win out with lives on the line.

Towards an ecosocialist future

After presenting an analysis of the current situations within the UK and US, Cole devotes final chapters to the question of what is to be done. These chapters make a clear declaration of the need for a Marxist future without borders. Setting aside the irrationality of borders themselves in terms of enormous resources devoted to policing and maintenance, there is the growing crisis of climate that is prompting mass migration. Nations are increasingly unable to deal with natural disasters, as evidenced by the current wildfire crisis in California—who has the world’s 5th largest economy— where thousands are without power and less able to evacuate due to the speed of the fire’s spread. In many countries, the worsening economic situation for the working class is paired with a dramatic resurgence of right-wing populism and scapegoating of immigrants, many of whom are more likely fleeing regions for reasons that can be traced to climate change. Despite this, we are witnessing a growing resistance that is not only organized, but militant. These groups, ranging from socialist to social-democratic, reject the narrow notion of just supporting “qualified” (read: wealthier and whiter) immigrants, in favor of the ending the concept of humans being illegal to begin with. These concerns are linked with other groups such as Black Lives Matter, who widen their platform to include feminist and gender-affirming policies along with their confrontation of police brutality.

As Cole notes in *Trump, the Alt-Right and Public Pedagogies*, “large numbers of people in the US and many other parts of the world have had enough of neoliberal capitalist exploitation and oppression; and in establishment political parties and politicians in general” (p. 113). We have seen support for this dissatisfaction after the US 2018 midterm election where more leftist candidates won, as well as increasing backing for the Labor Party platform in the UK. The key will be if this sense of being fed up with the establishment can be channeled away from right-wing populism (which also invokes the specter of “the establishment”) and into deliberate efforts to confront climate change. Cole leaves his final warning in *Theresa May, the Hostile Environment*: “Time is running out for humankind to save the planet. It may be the last chance for those of us who refuse to acquiesce in the environmentally destructive hegemonic world capitalist order to engage in revolutionary dialogue” (p. 115).

Cole’s latest book is *Climate Change, the Fourth Industrial Revolution and Public Pedagogies: The Case for Ecosocialism*.

Reference

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Hostile political environments in the US and the UK

Introduction

In *Trump, The Alt-Right and Public Pedagogies of Hate and for Fascism: What Is To Be Done?* and *Theresa May, The Hostile Environment and Public Pedagogies of Hate and Threat: The Case for a Future Without Borders*, Mike Cole explores the hostile political backdrop, and the impact on citizens, settlers, refugees, asylum seekers in the United States (US) and United Kingdom (UK) under Donald Trump and Theresa May respectively. Not only do these publications provide important and interesting reads, they also supply food for thought.

Trump, racism and fascism

The introduction to *Trump, The Alt-Right and Public Pedagogies of Hate and for Fascism: What Is To Be Done?* begins with the day Trump became president of the United States of America (USA). In the first paragraph, Cole describes Trump as “a ruthless, sociopathic, racist, misogynistic, disablist, climate-change denying real estate mogul and reality TV star” (p.1) – which clearly sets the tone for the journey on which the reader is about to embark.

In chapter one, “One glorious destiny in one shared home that belongs to us: The ominous rise of Donald J. Trump”, Cole illuminates commonalities between key fascist events of the past and fascistic elements of the present: e.g. Adolf Hitler’s justification of the elimination of Jewish communities in Europe and Trump’s United Nations speech justifying the destruction of North Korea (p. 9). With respect to “historical significance” it is a worthwhile, yet terrifying train of thought to consider Trump’s presidential legacy. Cole (p. 10) considers

if Trump's populist strategies may outlive his presidency, setting the tone of what is next to come – and raises the question, is Trump a fascist?

Some prominent characteristics of fascism and neo-fascism are discussed: nationalism; state power; transcendence of social conflict by repression; violence and incorporation into “state corporatist institutions” (p. 11); ethnic and political cleansing; sexism and misogyny; homophobia/transphobia and dis/ableism. It is important to note that Cole has not detected racial breeding or eugenics in Trump's pedagogy, issues that could have been addressed in this chapter, birthed and/or fuelled by popularist propaganda, resulting in public pedagogies of hate, threat and fear. Cole concludes that Trump may be viewed as fascistic rather than fascist. The Fascism's Pincer section of this chapter considers Trump's policies of global warming and climate change in general where denial is contextualised as problematic – perhaps Cole will consider the racialised impact of environmental issues on people of colour within and outside of the USA in a second edition of the book.

In chapter two, through engagement with Trump's speeches, slogans and policy agenda and so on, Cole provides a useful critical discussion on his racist discourses. Trump's words are interrogated in relation to his anti-immigration public pedagogies of hate and threat and anti-Mexican policies such as *the wall* [my emphasis] and the Muslim ban. What is really important is that some voices from the American Muslim community who have been emotionally affected by Trump's pledge are represented. A much welcome discussion of Trump's condescending, derogatory and disrespectful interaction with Indigenous Americans in the context of Giroux's pedagogies of innocence and amnesia is also presented in this chapter. This provides nuanced engagement with attributes of hate as pedagogy, for example hate as offence and attack that can be seen when the Army Corps issued documentation stating the right to

cross the water supply of the Standing Rock Sioux Tribe – ordered by Trump himself. Trump’s exception to small acts of peaceful activism in the African American community and his alleged description of immigrants from Africa and Haiti as coming from “shithole countries” are also discussed (p. 31). The rest of this chapter continues in this vein in relation to the criminalisation of immigrants, before discussing Trump and terror, as well as Trump’s social media persona. It is interesting to read the strategic layers or dimensions of Trump’s public pedagogy and how they work in tandem.

“Our glorious leader has ascended to God Emperor! Hail Trump! Hail our people! Hail victory!: The alt-right and public pedagogies of hate and for fascism” is the title of chapter three. These words send chills down my spine – religious or not, one can feel blasphemous and traitor-like for merely repeating the words of a book chapter, even if it is for a book review. An insightful discussion on neoliberal capitalism is provided beginning with the rise of Trump in the political arena and attempts of far-right mainstreaming into US society. In doing so, what Cole calls the “Upsurge in globalization and financialization” is unpacked to discuss the global political crisis. The alt-right’s goal of establishing a “white ethno-state” (p. 48) in the future and the section on “Modern-day colonialism” paints a disturbing picture for the prospects of people of colour.

Interestingly, in chapter four the idea of the Reddit community /r/The _Donald as a breeding ground for the alt-right is discussed. This resonates with the far tight concept of racial breeding that, as I have suggested, could have been discussed in chapter one. That aside, the notion has been picked up in this chapter and explored in much more depth than chapter one would have afforded. It was definitely worth the wait.

Capitalism: reality and resistance

Chapter five is one of “reality and resistance” (p. 78) – focusing on the reality of both global and national capitalism, and their adverse impact on working class people; and acts of resistance, such as anti-Trump protests. Resistance also takes shape as a public pedagogy of defence through activism in both the physical and digital spheres – the bifurcated approach to this aspect of this chapter highlights the ways in which technology is used to impact physical world personal and party politics.

Finally, chapter six highlights various socialist and socialistic movements, ranging from women’s movements to Socialist parties drawing on both commonalities and distinctiveness. In the concluding discussion, the author presents essential conditions based on preceding analysis and proposed categorisation, extending considerations to the use of the term ‘ecosocialism’ as opposed to socialism to account for the toxic interrelationship between humans, the environment and capitalism (see also Cole, 2021). In doing so, Cole makes use of explicit Marxist framing to consider the dynamics between labour, surplus values and profit, before returning to the concept of pedagogy as public.

May and the “really hostile environment”: origins, creation and effect

Chapter one of *Theresa May, the Hostile Environment and Public Pedagogies of Hate and Threat: the Case for a Future Without Borders* engages with and progresses from the 2007/2008 economic crisis, providing a Marxist modes of production conceptualisation of racialisation – moving away from binary understandings of the impact of racialisation on black and white immigrants.

With the rise of right wing and far right politics, this chapter meticulously breaks down the cultural, social and political climate that has nurtured a breeding ground for heightened explicit othering through a range of strategies.

In line with other publications authored by Cole (for example, *Racism: A Critical Analysis*, 2016), chapter one also argues for expanded understanding of racism, for example colour-coded, non-colour-coded, and hybridist with some consideration given to historical and contemporary manifestations. In doing so, Theresa May's "really hostile environment" is examined through the lens of a public pedagogy of hate for immigrants and racialised UK citizens. Through unpicking a range of discriminatory practices within the Conservative party, including those that impact white women and ethnic minority MPs, chapter one leads the reader to the run up to the resurgence of overt discriminatory attitudes, legislation (rules and regulations) and practices towards immigration by MPs under the ConDem coalition government in the UK.

This chapter highlights the passing on of David Cameron's austere visions for the UK to the ConDem coalition which has resulted in mayhem and deprivation for the masses. Cole provides a strong examination of the neoliberal capitalist strategic impact of the UK government, in dialogue with right wing populism and the targeting of families with immigrant members to formulate a public pedagogy of "hate, blame, and threat" (p. 21).

Chapter two smoothly walks the reader through the transition from David Cameron's and Theresa May's leadership of the UK government, as well as Theresa May's transition from Home Secretary to Prime minister in 2016. With emphasis on the Immigration Act of 2016 and supporting hostile environment policies, this chapter chronicles May's public pedagogy of hate, the agents of hate and the role of institutions. Cole really does capture May's relentless devotion to multifaceted escalation of a toxic and hostile environment for immigrants.

Expanding on the various institutions and agents of May's hateful immigration policies and public pedagogy, chapter three provides snapshots of the institutional hostile environment in action, involving surveillance, exclusion and enforcement through the National Health Service (NHS), education, living accommodation, work and detention centres. This chapter touches on the violence of the hostile environment with respect to asylum seeker and refugee children and adults, as well as immigrant women who may not necessarily fall into the aforementioned legal statuses.

The impact on the Windrush generation is the focal point of chapter four. It relates the Windrush scandal to the establishment of the first immigration act in 1971 (which came into effect in 1973). This provides a point of entry into the systematic targeting of the people of which many consider/ed themselves British citizens. The 1971 Act stipulated that settled immigrants from commonwealth countries without restriction have indefinite stay in the UK. Running themes in this chapter are rights, separated families and financial hardship brought on by harsh and inhumane practices. Not only is the bureaucratic warfare of the hostile environment policies discussed in relation to previous governments, the criminalisation of individuals and dismantling of families with longstanding history of settling in Britain is also addressed. What is not discussed is the longstanding history of British affiliation under British enslavement of African people, British colonialism and the impetus for mass immigration during the Windrush era – this is crucial for providing context and attentiveness to specificity within the analysis. Similar, to some previous chapters, the provision of case studies to illuminate individual experiences of this particular type of hostility breathes life into this aspect of the book.

A borderless socialist future

Finally, chapter five has been written in response to increased racism, neoliberal crisis, where Cole proposes and visualises a borderless socialist future. This is a somewhat similar approach to the final chapter of Cole's *Trump, The Alt-Right and Public Pedagogies of Hate and for Fascism: What Is To Be Done?* that presents a public pedagogy for socialism. However, in this chapter, intentionality and sustainability of environmental hostility is discussed in relation to a general increase in overt racism. This sentiment is echoed with regards to neoliberal capitalism and the role of the then Left-led Labour party in removing racial and geographical hierarchy in how immigrants are positioned, and subsequently treated.

It is daunting that Britain's governmental leadership continues under a thick threatening smoke of hateful pedagogical persuasion – this time under Boris Johnson who has been likened to Trump in more ways than one.

With consideration to the publications under review, both provide accessible ways to engage with United Kingdom and United States politics for both undergraduates, postgraduates, and doctoral students, yet is it also an appropriate and beneficial read for early career/well-seasoned academics, activists and those of us who rest on the intersections of some of these categories.

Mike Cole is continuing to theorise public pedagogical discourse, policy and practices in the Tory Party: this time from Disraeli through May's Tory leadership transitioning finally into Boris Johnson's reign (Cole, forthcoming).

References

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- Cole, M. (2021) *Climate Change, the Fourth Industrial Revolution and Public Pedagogies: the Case for Ecosocialism*, London and New York: Routledge Focus
- Cole, M. (forthcoming) *Racism in the Tory Party: from Disraeli, 'Race' and Empire to Johnson, Brexit and the End of Free Movement*

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Racism, Capitalism and Contemporary Politics

Introduction

Mike Cole's, *Trump, The Alt-Right and Public Pedagogies of Hate and for Fascism*, begins with the sentence:

In the early hours of the morning of November 9, 2016, the unthinkable became reality – a ruthless, sociopathic, racist, misogynist, climate-change denying real estate mogul and reality TV star became the first billionaire president of the United states of America (p. 1).

This bold sentence sets the tone of the two books (which could be described as companion pieces), being reviewed here, and provides a neat summary of the themes which Cole tackles throughout his latest two works with his characteristic directness and Marxist critical analysis. A lifelong critic of capitalism and right-wing politics, Cole has always focussed his writing on the economic, social, and political injustices that these have caused, with a particular eye on the negative effects suffered by minoritized and marginalised groups, such as those who find themselves “racialised” by capitalist modes of production. Cole's previous writings have also been extensively concerned

with the role of education in creating and perpetuating inequalities but also with the potential for education to be a transformative and liberating force.

In these new works, we find Cole extending his critical analysis to cover several important contemporary people, groups, and phenomena that both help to explain, and define, the political climate of our time.

Trump and the far right

First amongst these is Trump himself and his association with fascism. Cole's analysis shows not only a complex relationship between Trump and the far-right (including the newly emerged alt-right) but also how Trump-facilitated discrimination based on gender and disability have been mobilised in new ways to form a unique threat to our communities and, with respect to his denial of climate change, indeed to the planet itself. Refraining from directly calling Trump a fascist, Cole prefers a more nuanced description of Trump as "fascistic rather than fascist" and explains how broader themes of discrimination in Trump's personality and political discourse combine to create and facilitate "fascism's pincer", spreading hatred and eroding freedoms via multiple avenues, on multiple fronts.

Cole also turns his attention to current forms of public pedagogy (as opposed to more formal modes of pedagogy such as those practiced in schools, universities, and other educational institutions) as both a feature of, and means of spreading, modern day fascist ideologies. Considering both the content and nature of Trump's political messages (the wall, immigration, islamophobia, indigenous Americans, and other Trump preoccupations), and the modes by which these messages are delivered, Cole provides an insightful, critical commentary on social and mass media, and how these have been manipulated and exploited by

Trump specifically, and various alt-right groups more generally, to both spread and normalise their messages. In particular, Cole's discussion of Trump's use of Twitter, and of why this has been so effective a communication tool for him as a personality, and for his brand of right-wing politics, is both fascinating and terrifying.

Also through the lens of public pedagogy, Cole identifies and analyses the specific nature of the alt-right's political ideology which both incorporates and extends upon "traditional" fascist ideology and pseudo-science. Cole identifies a number of disturbing elements common to alt-right groups, including: a commitment to "scientific" racism; opposition to feminism and gender equality; propagating a highly politicised form of White History; proposing authoritarian measures to deal with social ills; endorsing "common sense" economics; promoting the myth of white struggle against other races, particularly Jews; and, ultimately, the commitment to the creation of a White ethno-state. Indeed, the use of public pedagogy itself as a means of spreading propaganda is identified as a defining feature of the alt-right with, perhaps unsurprisingly, the internet being employed to great effect by a significant number of key alt-right leaders and demagogues. Cole rounds off his discussion of Trump and the alt-right with a concise and worrying analysis of the ways in which the groundwork is being laid for future fascist groups to thrive, as well as showing how disparate, right-wing groups and sub-cultures (from White supremacists to "4chan shitposters") are being emboldened by fascist public pedagogies, forming further strands of "fascism's pincer" and normalising hatred and discriminatory attitudes and practices.

The May and Trump agenda

In *Theresa May, the Hostile Environment, and Public Pedagogies of Hate and Threat*, Cole shifts his attention to parallel events and (re)emerging ideologies in the UK. Lacking such an obvious and ostentatious focal point as Trump, Cole's analysis is more thoughtful and nuanced in this work, but if anything, even more damning. Like its companion on Trump, this work is an impressive piece of research, creating a narrative that weaves together political and social theory, policy analysis, media narratives, and the insipid and damaging effects of right-wing public pedagogies. Cole successfully dispels the widespread myth that portrays Theresa May as a relatively middle of the road, centre-right, conservative politician and lays bare the reality of a (now former) prime minister and home secretary who pursued a political agenda that was, and remains, just as damaging as that espoused by Trump.

While acknowledging that Trump and May are not political analogues of each other, Cole highlights a more specific tendency to exploit (perceived) racial differences and encourage racist attitudes in British politics under May, as opposed to the Trumpian effect of amplifying multiple forms of discriminatory thought and action:

While Trumpism has led to an increase in hatred in general, what Trump and May share in common is what they have both massively upped the barometer of racism, as well as both being scored "somewhat populist" in a major study (Lewis *et al.*, 2019) (p. 5).

Cole goes on to foreground the effects of May-inspired racist policies and practices in the UK on real people, emphasising how the family lives of racial minority groups have been singled out for special attention. He ends his theorising about the hostile environment with deeper, more philosophical

questions, asking whether its racist consequences were intentional or not, and wondering if it is becoming stronger or weaker (or both, in different ways).

Cole's contribution to academic discourse on politics, capitalism and racism

What is impressive about Cole's analysis across both of these books is his ability to explain how specific policies and political decisions at the level of government (from Trump's 2018 State of the Union Address and attendant immigration plan, to the 2012 changes to family immigration rules in the UK, through to the decisions that led to the Windrush scandal) create and feed into grand narratives that demonise, victimise, and exclude already vulnerable individuals and groups, and how this actually impacts people's lives. Drawing on an impressive range of research, Cole makes clear the processes by which the new political hegemonies of Trump and May embolden the far-right and make fascist(ic) ideas ever more palatable in the public consciousness.

With that said, and as deft as Cole's analysis of politics, pedagogies, grand narratives and ideologies is, it is his ability to bring this academic theorising and these discussions of political manoeuvring to ground-level and to show us the consequences of this kind of public pedagogy and politics of hate on ordinary people that are the real strengths of his writing here. These works are full of examples and case studies of the impact of the kind of politics and public pedagogies under discussion, from Mexican immigrants in the United States being arrested and removed from their families and livelihoods, to individuals in the UK whose lives were devastated by the Windrush scandal. Cole provides a very moving account in his book on Theresa May of the emotional, psychological, and financial effects of the hostile environment on his own life, that of his partner, and those of his wider family.

There are three ways in which Cole's latest two books make an important contribution to academic discourse about politics, the spread of hatred (including race hatred), and education. Firstly, they underscore and make a much-needed reconnection in our thinking between contemporary party politics, ideology, and racism. In recent years, academic theorising about race and racism (particularly in education studies) has been dominated by postmodern analyses, such as Critical Race Theory (CRT). Many (although not all) academic writers within these latter paradigms have tended to portray racism as a more amorphous, apolitical phenomena which does not supervene upon any particular political ideology. These two works of Cole's stand in direct opposition to this academic trend and make it patently clear how current right-wing ideology, and right-wing politicians and parties, create and exacerbate racism and other forms of hatred.

Although the connection between politics, ideology, and racism has been a constant in Cole's work throughout his career, nowhere is it more stark than here, with clear connections being drawn between politicians, political ideas, and hate groups spreading their messages via social media. These works present meticulously crafted studies in how insidious political ideas are disseminated through a diverse range of contemporary media to create support for unnecessary and discriminatory policies and practices.

Secondly, these books make explicit the link between capitalism and racism. Again, this has been a theme throughout the whole body of Cole's academic output to date, but one that has also been downplayed by postmodern trends in academic writing about racism. Cole's work in these two volumes represents some of the most developed, politically informed discussions of the mechanisms of capitalism in the age of Trump and the hostile environment, and

how it thrives and indeed depends upon political practices that promote hatred against minoritised groups. This link between capitalism and racism (as well as other form of hatred) is a re-emerging theme in academic discourse, especially amongst more radical writers (see for example, Andrews, 2018, and Kendi, 2019) and these works of Cole's are amongst the most meticulously researched and convincingly argued.

A socialist future

Finally, Cole's two books, despite their subject matter and the bleak analysis of modern politics which they provide, are ultimately optimistic insofar as they argue for a way forward and end to right-wing politics, racism, and other manifestations of hatred. Cole has been a vocal critic of analyses of racism, particularly CRT (see, for example, Cole, 2019) that make no attempt to suggest ways in which racism may be overcome and he does not shy away from this task here. Unsurprisingly for Cole, the solution that he proposes is socialism, but it is a socialism that will be achieved by, in part, turning the public pedagogies of hate on their head to promote unity and by "no platforming" fascist groups and denying them access to the media and the right to participate in mainstream politics.

Cole's treatment of what socialism in a post-Trump/post-hostile environment era might look like is informed by Marx and Engels' refusal, on epistemological grounds, to speculate on what might lie on the other side of a communist revolution. He does, however, allow himself some artistic licence here and presents some pre-requisites for a blueprint of such a society based on the agendas of a wide range of contemporary, progressive, and (in some cases) overtly socialist movements and groups (such as the Workers World Party, the International Socialist Organisation, Black Lives Matter, the MeToo movement, the Democratic Socialists of America, and the Labour Party in the UK). Cole

proposes nothing short of a revolutionary transformation of society which would include, amongst other things: the re-distribution of wealth and democratisation of the economy; full equality for all; concrete proposals to tackle climate change; and open borders and equal rights for immigrants. It is refreshing to see such a well-articulated vision for an alternative future.

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