Radical, critical and Marxist education in neoliberal Britain

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Abstract

In this paper, we evaluate, and highlight the tensions between, radical, critical and Marxist education as they have played out in British education since the Enlightenment. Our argument has several parts. First, like other Marxists, we believe that consciousness is shifted as much through engagement with class struggle as through ideas. We therefore outline the differences and continuities of these three perspectives in order to unite resistance to the extreme neoliberalism now reshaping education alongside other sectors of public and private life, in Britain and more widely. This reshaping increasingly and primarily serves the interests of the ruling elite—here and elsewhere. We further suggest that Marxist, critical and radical educators in Britain need to work together as part of an international united front to analyse class relations, mobilize workers, forge alliances and articulate a vision in and outside formal and informal educational spaces, to help build another education and world.

Keywords: radical, critical, Marxist, class, activism, neoliberal, Britain

Introduction

Radical, critical and Marxist education in Britain can be understood as part of the wider social and political awakening that consumed Europe in the seventeenth and eighteenth centuries. It is here where Enlightenment ideas about human educability emerged alongside the belief that widespread ignorance merely propped up aristocratic government and could have no place in modern democratic society (Simon, 1974). The Enlightenment had far reaching effects on British society (as on other societies). It included not only the expansion of formal schooling but also popular education through political clubs, societies, agitation and pamphleteering.

For this reason this paper concerns itself, not just with the contemporary shape of radical, critical and Marxist education movements in Britain today, but also with their history. Though each emerged from the same Enlightenment impulse, our aim is to develop an historical approach highlighting tensions and distinguishing features so that the contribution

of each to progressive change can be assessed. In doing so, we are aware of the danger of oversimplification and stereotyping, given that the boundaries separating these movements are a good deal more complex, overlapping and blurred than any typology can capture. Our hope is to better understand the differences and continuities of these movements in order to help unite resistance to what we will argue is the extreme neoliberalism that education is now undergoing as part of a wider transformation of society that increasingly and primarily serves the interests of the ruling elite.

The paper has three main sections. We first look at radical, critical and Marxist educational traditions in Britain historically, considering how they addressed educational privilege and disadvantage. In the second section of two parts we first take this analysis into the present by historically contextualising the increasingly pervasive and deepening neoliberalisation (of English education in particular) over the past 40 years. We give considerable attention to this contextualisation as it enables education critics and activists to frame the present and, importantly, explore how ideas from radical, critical and Marxist educators can challenge these conditions. The second part of this section explores the process by which educationalists initially moved their analyses away from a focus on social class and towards a focus on 'identities' (in which class was largely ignored) and towards studies that gave primacy to gender, sexuality, racialisation and nation as analytical devices with which to understand power dynamics operating in education from the mid-to-late 1970s to the mid-to-late 1990s. The third section of this paper first explores the return of class analysis from the mid-to-late 1990s, now interconnected with gender, sexuality, racialisation and national identities as neoliberalism has been more deeply embedded. We then explore how the growing 'extremeness' of neoliberalism during the past decade, especially post the 2008 economic crisis, has led to the resurgence of interest in Marxist education in general and to a critical pedagogy in and through higher education that fuses radical, critical and Marxist education insights. The final, concluding section suggests how academic activists informed by insights from these perspectives are building alternative educational processes within and against, and outside and against, the neoliberal university and the formal education system more generally.

A history of radical, critical and Marxist education in Britain

Radical education

Radical education is a rich tradition of progressive, socialist and libertarian political critiques associated with popular agitation and subversive dissent (Barrow, 2012). Its defining feature is a rejection of hierarchy and an affirmation of horizontalism invoked through both educational process and product. For radical educators, participatory democracy rather than state governance provides the basis for education (Fielding and Moss, 2011). Strategy is centred on grassroots initiatives, direct action, autonomous collectives and informal communities.

The British radical education movement has its roots in the 17th century European Enlightenment movement of individualism that rejected the 'divine' power of the feudal nobility. Radicals began to join with other political liberals in campaigning against the unaccountable power of the landed gentry (Barrow, 2012). Many took an interest in the writings of the 18th century French philosopher Rousseau, believing that education provided the basis for creating the conditions for the development of liberty and justice. Hitherto, much educational thinking had been informed by Puritan assumptions of the child as born into a state of sinfulness from which they had to be saved. By the 18th century this Puritanism was in retreat and capitalist expansion required tolerance, creativity and enterprising attitudes towards childrearing. William Godwin, whose political work spanned the late 18th and early 19th century, argued that education should cultivate personal autonomy (Simon, 1974). By the 19th century, political anarchists, such as the German philosopher Max Stirner, railed against the authoritarianism of priests and schoolteachers for their attempts to break students' wills, advocating instead that education should aim at emancipation through the development of independent thought. Importantly, the liberal political theory informing these educational ideas contrasted with liberal thought advocating governance carried out by 'benevolent' elites (Kelly, 1995). The former implies that democracy is less a form of government imposed by the ruling elite than an autonomous process created by individuals associating with one another. Radical educators thus historically have rejected the need for ties between educational provision and either the church or the state (Silver, 1975).

Radical education's emphasis on autonomy continued as Britain moved into the 20th century. Economic and political instability provided a fertile backdrop for the radical education movement. Two world wars fuelled growing disenchantment with positivist science, disinterested rationality and the idea of human progress that had informed late 19th century radical education (Callinicos, 2007). Nietzschian-inspired anti-foundationalism became increasingly attractive to radicals as social science scholarship noted the implicitly theory-laden nature of observation and the consequent collapse of the fact/value distinction in human enquiry (Blake et al, 2000; Callinicos, 2007). Anti-foundationalism ushered in a post-positivist way of conceptualising the world: scientific neutrality was critiqued and themes of subjectivity, self-realization, freedom and value-pluralism were revived. The dehumanizing, homogenising elements of positivist science – with its emphasis on linear causality, hyper-rationality and 'value-neutral' quantification – were critiqued by radical educators amongst others. These antiauthoritarian, anti-rationalist themes influenced the British radical education movement most notably through the work of the English educationalist Herbert Read (Ross, 1998) and the Scottish educator A.S. Neill (Barrow 2012). Neill founded the fee-paying Summerhill School in England in 1921 (Neill, 1960) whose ethos promoted self-determination as a bulwark against blind obedience to authoritarian social forces in the family, the workplace and the state. Neill championed the idea that children learn better without compulsion; the school is still well-known for its radical democracy, with regular meetings to determine school rules where pupils have equal voting rights with school staff. Later, anti-foundationalist ideas underpinned an emerging progressive movement in British state education (Kelly, 1986) and by the 1950s existentialist thinking reaffirmed radical ideas

such as self-creation through authentic value choices, rejecting herd-like conformity in favour of spontaneity, playfulness and rebellion (Blake at al, 2000).

By the 1960s and 1970s, British radical educational scholarship continued its theme under the influence of phenomenological and interpretivist sociology, a shift which supported radical campaigns for free-schooling, de-schooling, informal learning, and critical pedagogy (Barrow, 2012; see also Freire, 1996). This coincided with the expansion of higher education and an influx of radicalised academics to university education departments and to the newly emergent polytechnics charged with educating working class students. The English educationalist Michael F.D. Young (1971) and a group of radical collaborators drew inspiration from anthropological and sociological ethnographic accounts that critiqued elitist curricula in British state schools. Their anti-essentialist argument was that 'white, middle-class knowledge' denied students' cultural diversity and personal meaning-making. This 'new sociology of education' highlighted patterns of discrimination against white working class and minority ethnic pupils' cultures. Their critique gained popularity not least because similar critiques were being created elsewhere. The post-positivist intellectual climate of the time exposed the limits of positivism in educational psychology and lent support to a critique of the authoritarian nature of behaviourist pedagogy. These ideas overlapped with (but also critiqued - see Sharp and Green, 1975) ideas central to the British child-centred movement that had allied itself with constructivist pedagogies endorsing inquiry-based learning building on students' prior knowledge and interests. One of the child-centred movement's most prolific protagonists in England was curriculum theorist Vic Kelly (Kelly, 1986), who traced the roots of progressivism to US philosophical pragmatism and began to connect progressivism to an emerging neopragmatist and poststructuralist scholarship.

For some critics however, radical education's progressive potential was undermined by its poststructuralist turn that was viewed as spawning an unashamed relativism (see for example, Maton and Moore, 2010; Moore, 2007). The reduction of knowledge to individual experience or power forecloses any appeal to ontological grounds for arbitrating between multiple truth claims. Truth, critics argued, is seen as a matter of 'voices' struggling to assert their knowledge over that of others. How, they argue, could the radical education movement achieve liberation if its relativism prevented the privileging of any alternative? This limit, we would argue, is symptomatic of deeper philosophical contradictions that Marx's work foreshadowed over a century and a half ago in his critique of idealism. We will discuss this in the section on Marxist education below.

Critical education

Critical education in Britain has drawn on an eclectic and contradictory range of philosophical and theoretical traditions – including Marxism, neo-Marxism, pragmatism, and, more recently, post-structuralism, post-colonialism, feminism, and critical race theory. It therefore overlaps with radical and, as we will show, Marxist education. There is also a long history of liberal education in Britain which celebrates critical thinking per se (a legacy of Platonic idealism in that it gives supreme power to the kinds of critique that rationality offers)

but here we refer to education that critiques the ways in which education is connected to relations of exploitation and domination in society (Apple et al, 2009). Moreover, it is important to note that radical educators' privileging of popular sovereignty and personal freedom (Engel, 2001) can be contrasted with critical educators' privileging of rationality as the means of defining what restraints on personal freedom are justifiable in a democratic society (Apple et al, 2009; Carr and Hartnett, 1996; Kelly, 1995). Critical educators have viewed critical rationality as offering them an important tool to help eliminate 'false consciousness' and realise what Freire (1996) called 'conscientization' (a political awareness that citizens can develop through working with others to transform the world). Although critical educators have aimed to disrupt oppression and discrimination, their foregrounding of critical consciousness (conscious awareness of structural exploitation) has led some radical educators to accuse critical education of encouraging elitist 'detached academia' that has implicitly separated theory and practice (DeLeon, 2014).

However, vulnerability to detached elitism is perhaps more rooted in critical educators' tendency to associate critical thought with individualism. The idea that social phenomena originate in individual agents' motivations or actions is a feature of Continental rationalism but also of British empiricism. In 19th century Britain, social critique was dominated by empiricism, a dominance that privileged the experimental scientist over the theorist (Simon, 1974). Under the banner of scientific detachment, 19th century British social reformers championed supposedly impartial critique which tended to produce elitist analyses. We need think only of middle-class critics - such as Alexander Bain, Jeremy Bentham, David Hartley, Joseph Priestley, James Mill, and Robert Owen - who patronisingly viewed education's role as being that of enlightening and 'civilising' the lower classes to equip them to unite against an undemocratic social order (Simon, 1974). However, this middle class reformism assumed that a state body of elected representatives could govern a society comprised of an aggregate of self-constituted individuals. No consideration was given to how: reformers might learn from workers' struggles; workers might be agents of their own emancipation through collective action; or workers might run their own society.

However, the post-positivist intellectual climate of the twentieth century sought to challenge elitism with its celebration of partiality and reflexivity. In Britain, critical education was influenced by American and European thought: progressive philosophy, indebted to John Dewey's pragmatism (a reformed empiricism), was evident in post-war education policy (Stone, 1999). The American George Counts' social reconstructionism with its emphasis upon transforming society was also influential, most powerfully expressed in England through Brian Simon's work (Armstrong, 2013). And, as the British economy and social democracy flourished in the early post-war period, the Robbins Report (1963) set out a progressive programme of higher education expansion and the Plowden Report (1967) in England celebrated experiential learning, equal opportunity and curriculum relevance (that sought to acknowledge student diversity) in compulsory schooling.

Nonetheless, some critical education was pessimistic about the possibility for realising working class resistance. The Frankfurt School's legacy of Critical Theory influenced some British critical educators to combine suspicion towards a supposed scientific rationality with anxiety about liberal democracy's capacity to slide into totalitarianism (see for example Carr and Hartnett, 1996). The French sociologist Bourdieu offered a similarly pessimistic assessment of the limits imposed on working-class agency especially in his early and mid-career examination of the role of education in capitalist societal reproduction (Bourdieu and Passeron, 1977). Though underpinned by Durkheimian sociology, the British educational sociologist Basil Bernstein's code theory also posited a link between social class, language and the reproduction of educational and wider social inequality (Bernstein, 1971). Doubts about working-class agency also crept into critiques of educational ethnocentrism in the explosion of Weberian and Neo-Marxist studies focusing on personal meaning-making (see for example, Whitty 1985 and Young 1971, and see Ball, 2004, for an overview). Paul Willis, for example, a member of the Birmingham Centre for Contemporary Cultural Studies (CCCS), became known for his ethnographic study *Learning to Labour* (1977), which demonstrated how working-class male pupils reproduced their class (and, as feminist cultural studies work demonstrated, gender identities (see the CCCS Women's Studies Group (1978, (republished 2012)).

Thus, whilst critical education prior to the onset of neoliberalism in Britain was a rich field of work, it had vulnerabilities. Though it powerfully foregrounded the ways that class-based dynamics were played out in and from individual critical consciousness, critics have suggested that the anti-materialist roots of some critical work, like that of radical education, underscored its vulnerability to detached theorising and pessimism (Edwards 2014). And, despite critical education's acknowledgement of structural oppression, some critical scholarship presumed an implicit ontological individualism, particularly where its overriding concern was with equalising opportunity in a society construed as an aggregate of critical citizens. Bourdieuian earlier scholarship, for example, fixated on the power of privatised capital – the personal agency which cultural, social and symbolic capital conferred - rather than on collective working-class agency. The working class as the agent of its own emancipation was also neglected by the Frankfurt School – perhaps a reflection of pessimism within the left after Stalin's counter-revolution and the rise of fascism across Europe (see Callinicos, 2007). The mid-to-late twentieth century influence of post-positivist critique may have eased the way for a revival of the Nietzschian idea that power struggles originated in plural identities rather than in capital's exploitation of surplus value from labour, a point that that Marxist education argues is at the core of all social relations and possibilities for transformation.

What critical education did offer, however, was a conscious awareness of structural exploitation and oppression. When accompanied by revolutionary consciousness, it can perhaps lead to a less pessimistic conclusion (Ollman, 1993). This is the argument advanced by many in the Marxist education movement, to which we now turn. The history of its development presented below weaves together educational insights with aspects of Marxist dialectical and historical materialism.

Marxist education

Marxist critiques of education rest on two assumptions. First, labour is the process through which capital extracts a surplus (profit) from workers, a process that workers can resist to transform the capital/labour relation and social relations more generally. Second, dialectics explains the process by which such transformation can be realised. In his *Theses on Feuerbach*, Marx was critical of traditional materialism's detached spectator epistemology (Suchting, 1986) and distinguished it from his *practical* materialism. He argued that traditional materialism is deterministic in that it assumed that the object (the mind-independent world) merely imprints itself upon the human subject which thereby neglects the active side of human knowing. He was also critical of idealism, a philosophy in which the subject is regarded as primary and constitutive of the object. Marx asserted that humanity as a species labours practically in the material world in order to change it and the changes produced by this labour then act back upon humanity. In other words, there is a dialectical relationship between the person and the world. The profound significance of this dialectical account of humanity for education is captured in Marx's insistence that the 'educator must be educated' (Small, 2014). "'[S]ubject and 'object' are not two items *pre-constituted* [through] … the practice that unites them; rather it is the practice that is primary, 'subject' and 'object' (in the particular context) being *constituted within* that practice" (Suchting, 1986, p.57, our emphasis).

Marx's account of humanity therefore undermined 19th century British empiricist educational reformers' arguments that passive learners could be moulded by teachers. Marx's argument alerts us to the contradiction between these reformists' belief in students as malleable beings and their formulation of education as top-down transmission. The reformers assumed that teachers shaped the environment within which students were educated, ignoring how teachers were shaped through teaching. We would add that this contradiction also undermines any critical education perspective which reduces education to detached theorising from above. Critical theory perhaps contains a residual assumption that theory and the social world are pre-constituted with respect to the practice through which theory is applied, an assumption that overlooks how theory and the social world are constituted *in* practice.

Marx's dialectical account also undermined singularly bottom-up radical educational perspectives. In *The German Ideology*, Marx's critique of Stirner's voluntarism relates to the latter's reliance upon speculative abstractions about the self-determining nature of the human mind—that is, its seeming capacity to act and be in and for itself (Small, 2014). Stirner's philosophical starting point, Marx argued, is therefore closed off from scrutiny inclining it towards dogmatic idealism. This difference between Stirner and Marx lies at the heart of a disagreement between radical and Marxist educators more generally over the state's role in education. Many radicals believe that self-constituted individuals can act outside and against the state. But for classical Marxists this belief assumes that human consciousness exists in a sociohistorical vacuum which ignores how minds are constituted within inherited forms of life and consciousness – including participation in state institutions. As Marx said in his *Critique of the Gotha Programme*, humans are born into the 'womb' of capitalism (see Winn,

2014), and therefore cannot help but engage with the institutions and concomitant material and mental conditions that contain within them the origin and motor of societal transformation. Marx's invocation that 'the educator must be educated' thus can be seen to suggest that workers – including teachers and learners - act in dialectical relation to each other and the state. Marxist educators therefore argue that it is wrongheaded to characterise the education process as uniformly emanating from above or as a multitude acting from below. For Marxist educators, capitalist education systems are sites of class struggle at any particular point in time and it is only by analysing and engaging with this struggle that education can be understood and, importantly, transformed.

British state education is a case in point. Fee-paying schools have long prepared the privileged to rule, which entails learning the capacity to (rightfully, they would argue) rule over others (Simon, 1974). State schools, in contrast, were originally designed to discipline workers to accept their class position through teaching students compliance with authoritarian forms of pedagogy and testing that would prepare them to accept further compliance at work. The wealthy have enjoyed access to a broad liberal curriculum in fee-paying schools whilst working class children in state schools have (to a greater or lesser extent) experienced a restricted curriculum presented from and for ruling class interests. This class-divided system has helped the privileged to privatise and control what they deem to be useful knowledge (for themselves and their supposed subordinates), consolidate ruling class power, and render working class consciousness more vulnerable to fragmentation and accepting of ruling class ideology as 'natural.'

However, a Marxist analysis does not necessarily lead to pessimism about working-class agency. As Suchting's (1986) study suggested, the dialectical process allows intellectual production to be seen as working with, against, or running ahead of, the capitalist base. During the European age of exploration, for example, as economic instability, social unrest and the accumulation of empirical knowledge about other cultures sowed the seeds of reflexivity and resistance, questions about 'human nature' and 'the good society' arose. This reflexive critique led some Enlightenment radicals to ally with the working classes (Simon, 1974) to call for universal humanistic education. Populist working class education movements – socialist organisations, the Corresponding Societies and the Chartists - went so far as to question the capitalist system itself.

Of course this is not to say that the class dialectic inevitably leads to revolution. A profit-hungry industrialist class needed a large pool of trained wage labour. An education system which encouraged workers to develop a deep critique of capitalism threatened ruling class dominance. In 19th century England, many (largely middle class) reformers allied with the upper classes, condemning critiques of capitalism as 'Jacobin propaganda' that incited violence rather than civilised reform (Simon, 1974). Shuttleworth and Lowe for example, the originators of the English state education system, spoke for capitalist class interests when they talked of the need for schools to produce compliant labour disciplined to the supposed inevitability of its role in the economic order. England's free market ideology and its heritage as the first nation in Europe to undergo an industrial revolution meant that it did not establish

state schooling until after 1870 when the Empire was in decline and Britain was losing its competitive edge (Green, 1990). State schools aimed at social control. An embryonic democracy of local school boards was soon abolished and it was not until 1944 that Local Education Authorities (LEAs) were established to oversee state provision, restoring some power to local communities (Carr and Hartnett, 1996). The education system which emerged out of class struggle during the first half of twentieth century England was tripartite – it included fee-paying institutions for the wealthy, grammar schools for those middle-classes deemed fit to join the ranks of those who would manage capitalism, and rudimentary training for those who attended secondary modern schools.

British education remains a site of struggle. We can see this when we examine Marxist and independent working-class education as Britain moved into the twentieth century (for an overview, see Simon, 1990). The line of continuity can be traced back to early Corresponding Societies and socialist organisations and it broadened to include the formal and informal educational activity of, for example, the Trades Union Congress (TUC), the Plebs League and the Labour College movement. The Plebs League and the Labour College movement in particular sought to enable working class educators to shape teaching and learning as part of a programme of self and/or collective teaching (Waugh, 2009). Many students and teachers were socialists, shop stewards, union officials or activists linked to the independent Labour movement. Relative fiscal and intellectual independence from the state permitted curricula relevant to working class needs that focused on industrial relations, workers' councils and Marxist economics. In the early 20th century, a period characterised by global imperialist rivalry, social unrest and economic slump, Marxist education therefore focused on class struggle and building an industrial basis for action to bolster this struggle. It included the analysis of capitalism's base as made up of means of production (tools producing the resources people need to live) and relations of production (between the capitalist class who own or control those tools and the working class who have only their labour power to sell). There was clarity in understanding that at the heart of class struggle is the different relation of each class to the means of production, leading to class antagonism. Workers needed a living wage to survive whilst capitalists needed to profit by finding means to exploit surplus value from workers' labour (e.g. by paying workers as little as possible for working long hours). More militant elements of the independent working class movement understood that critical consciousness of this systemic contradiction was necessary but insufficient to build worker confidence and solidarity – that is, revolutionary consciousness. They understood, in other words, that the dialectical potential of class antagonism (i.e. worker agency) could only be realised when workers collectively resisted the processes by which capitalism extracted profit from their labour. For many in the independent working-class education movement, the possibility of social revolution lay in the linking of industrial activism with independent working class education, given its worker-determined curriculum, pedagogy and assessment. The spread of revolutionary consciousness was thus seen as linked to and informed by workers' experience of industrial relations. Marxist educators argued that if workers were to fully challenge the forces of the state, they needed centralised, disciplined organisation linking educational resistance to industrial action. Workplace industrial action familiarised

workers with capitalists' divide and rule tactics thereby developing an appreciation of how to coordinate worker power in future, as well as furthering educational practices to that end.

However, independent working class education in Britain suffered financial and political setbacks after the 1926 General Strike as worker confidence declined in the face of this defeat (Simon, 1990). It was educators in the USSR who then developed Marxist education (Pinkevitch, 1929). The psychologist Vygotsky (1987) pioneered dialectical pedagogy, arguing for teachers to act as a vanguard whilst avoiding the elitist and contradictory notion of teachers as transmitters of revolutionary consciousness to the wider working class. Consistent with Marx's tenet that the educator must be educated, he suggested that teachers learn with and from struggles of the wider movement by testing ideas against reality with students. Such dialectical praxis required commitment and accountability to democratically-mandated, collective, decisions - a process which clashed noisily with radical pedagogy celebrating spontaneity and individualism. Whilst the radical self-criticism expounded by the British progressive and libertarian movement expressed dissatisfaction with oneself or society, Marxist-Vygotskian criticism denoted dissatisfaction with oneself *in* society. Working in the context of a socialist revolution, Vygotsky knew that there could be no separation of individual and society because the transformation of each coincides in revolutionary praxis.

Although Vygotsky influenced British educators after major works were translated into English in the 1960s, a liberal revisionism meant that the roots of his work in Marxist historical materialism were played down (Rowlands, 2000). British education took a pragmatist and phenomenological turn after the Second World War. Progressive gains occurred as a Labour political majority based in many Local Education Authorities from the early post war era introduced many progressive reforms across the UK up to the 1970s (Grant, 2013). These reforms included lessening support for systems of streaming and selection, the development of a theoretically informed pedagogy and the winning of a nationally formulated pay and conditions framework negotiated via collective bargaining by teachers in England and Wales. Indeed, the gains that occurred in the early post war era underscore the significance of the Marxist argument that the labour movement can put pressure on the state to provide the means to free, and at least somewhat critical, education.

These advances were possible during the supposed 'golden era' when labour had more power (relative to capital) than previously given capital's need for labour-intensive production in the Fordist factories of the early post war era. Of course, employers still sought to control labour (in part through utilising Taylorist working practices, first introduced in the 1920s, that broke down workers' tasks, making them repetitive, effectively de-skilling formerly semi-skilled workers) but workers nonetheless gained better pay and conditions. The welfare state, created at a time of much greater national debt than at present, also resulted in state funded (through taxation) and improved housing, health care, social services and pensions, though of course such improved working and living conditions for working class people were not acts of benevolence. Workers' higher wages enabled them to buy more consumer goods, thereby benefitting capital. These gains also came at the cost of lessened

control over working conditions and technologies, which remained in the hands of industrialists and factory managers. And, by the 1970s high levels of Northern states' workers' pay and conditions, supported by the social structure of accumulation that the welfare state provided, were no longer sustainable. Technological and infrastructural innovations allowed capital to move much of production to begin to the South with its cheaper labour costs and new markets for productive goods (Polychroniou, 2014a).Marxian analysis thus allows the recognition that even a moderately social democratic state and its institutions, including education, would not give up what it deemed to be its necessary disciplinary power over labour. The analysis centres on the educational sphere as a site of ongoing class struggle where capital/labour relations are encountered and efforts to impose ruling class dominance occur. It also highlights spaces where alternative perspectives can be introduced and explored. Informal education linked to struggles in production, and the creation of other, non-state educational spaces can provide opportunities to understand and work collectively to transform class relations. Thus, Marxist education fuses theory and practice dialectically. Knowledge gained through synthesising theory and practice in all sites where they occur – formal and informal education as well as in the workplace – can potentially guide participation in the struggle against capital.

However, as we have noted, the left is not immune to reproducing capitalist logic. The growing power of capital over labour contributed to the already existent sense of fatalism after Stalin's legacy and the fall of so-called communist states after 1991 (Callinicos, 2007). Deterministic, reductive accounts of Marxism - influential in the British left and popularised in education by Bowles and Gintis' (1976) reproduction thesis in their *Schooling in Capitalist America* – have perhaps encouraged some scholars to dismiss classical Marxism and reject a deeper engagement with historical materialism and its relevance for education. However, as the above has hopefully shown, the need for such engagement is both timely and urgent. We now turn our attention to the recent past and present, where we examine the neoliberalising of education in the context of the neoliberalising of the capital/labour relationships and of possibilities of and for class consciousness that have occurred during the past 40 years.

Exploring the current economic and political context of radical, critical and Marxist education

Since the 1970s the government in England has engaged in a structural attack on education that has been part of a wider attack by capital on labour in Britain and more generally. Below we first suggest that capital has taken off the velvet gloves with which it had to deal with Northern labour in the Keynesian era and now stands increasingly bare fisted: it further pressurises Southern labour and now hits out more severely than before against Northern labour, initially targeting its periphery and now targeting core countries. Second, we examine shifts in radical, critical and Marxist education. We look first at the so-called cultural turn in radical, critical and Marxist education traditions from it 1970s to 1990s in which identity politics was primary. We then examine how, during the past 20 years, identity politics has been partly integrated within what some (Marxist) educators consider a reinvigorated interest in class consciousness, analysis and activism. The third section explores how some radical,

critical and Marxist educators in the past 20 years have turned to critical pedagogy and popular education to help build more progressive educational processes and systems.

The wider economic and social context from the 1970s to the present

An economic crisis in the 1970s ended the prior period of Long Boom in Northern nations. The crisis was most immediately caused by rising and insecure prices for energy provided by oil-rich decolonising Southern nations. Consequent rising Northern energy costs were compounded by Northern capital extracting less surplus value from Northern labour than in the early post war era as labour costs rose. There was also an oversaturation of goods in Northern markets (Polychroniou, 2014a; Lazzarato, 2011). State costs for an expanding welfare system had also grown in the early post war era. Capital's response to these pressures was twofold. It moved industrial production to the South, with cheaper labour and regulatory costs and new markets for goods. Southern workers became industrialised, earning higher wages than they had as subsistence labourers and thus could consume some of the goods they made, enhancing Northern capital's coffers. Capital also de-industrialised Northern labour and introduced the leaner production that telecommunication and information technologies enabled. These technologies utilised 'new forms of corporate organization' and new labour 'skills' (Lapavitsas, 2014). Capital could thereby lower Northern workers' pay and conditions and contract the welfare state (Lazzarato, 2011; Polychroniou, 2014). '[F]our decades of indifferent growth, often stagnant incomes and rising inequality' have followed (Lapavitsas, 2014).

Northern workers' wages (including those in 'professional' jobs) initially stagnated and more recently have fallen significantly whilst working conditions have worsened through greater worker precarity (Haiven, 2011; Polychroniou, 2014b). In Britain, real wages grew by 2.9% in the 1970s and 1980s, 'but fell to 1.5% in the 1990s and 1.2% in the 2000s' (The Institute of Employment Rights, 2014). Full time employees' wages on average dropped by 7.5% from 2009-2013 alone (Office for National Statistics, 2014). The welfare state was slimmed down and, since the financial crisis of 2007-2008, is shrivelling, as 'the revenue, time (of retirement, vacations, etc.) and the social services that had been wrested through social struggle from capitalist accumulation' are increasingly paid for by individuals who also pay for the costs of some formerly state provided social services (Lazzarato, 2011:27; Haiven, 2011). Consequently individual and household debt has risen, and been added to by banks and other financial agencies offering individuals and households credit to buy additional goods and services. In the UK alone, household debt in 2013 was 138% of income (Heath, 2014). Debt for the many grows as does profit for business, corporate and financial bodies providing credit. As of 2013, the bottom 50% of the UK population owned around 10% of the nation's wealth while the top 10% owned more than 50% of this wealth (IMF Fiscal Monitor, 2013:39) (Lapavitsas, 2014; Lazzarato, 2011).

These shifts in capital/labour relations since the 1970s have led to the emergence of a new power bloc of 'banks, institutional investors, private enterprise, governments [and the political class], entire swaths of public administration, as well as the media and academics, and international or supranational organisations (such as the International Monetary Fund, World Bank and the World Trade Organization)' (Lazzarato, 2011:98; Polychroniou, 2014a). The state has been a key driver in this process. Its neoliberal ideology promoted 'pro-market changes across society', claiming that the supposedly free and unhampered meeting of buyer and seller in the marketplace should provide the model for restructuring other areas of social life. Responsibility, financial and otherwise, for these areas of social life has been placed onto individuals and nations (Lapavitsas, 2014; Lazzarato, 2011; Polychroniou, 2013, 2014a).

The state has also permitted banks in general, and central banks in particular, 'independence' from the state which has allowed them to invest in speculative, financialised activities. Prior interest free funding for the welfare state is being replaced by funding from private providers charging higher interest rates. The state acts as final guarantor of these speculative ventures (Lapavitsas, 2014; Lazzarato, 2011; Polychroniou, 2014). State deregulation now extends from banks to business and corporate interests so that capital now can easily cross national borders and plunder other nations' natural and labour resources. Granting so much governing capacity to the rest of the power bloc has led to diminished state power to determine and finance national activities (Haiven, 2011, Polychroniou, 2014a). European states currently "have no choice but to apply the economic and social policies dictated by the market (that is, by the economic-political-financial power bloc)" (Lazzarato, 2011: 99) whilst continuing to act as final guarantor of debt accrued from speculative ventures of deregulated financial bodies. As a consequence, the state has, since the economic crisis of 2007-2008, turned to its population to pay for these activities through imposing austerity measures (Haiven, 2011; 94).

Harney (2009) and Harney and Dunne (2013), characterise the period post 2007-2008 as one of 'extreme neoliberalism', dialectically comprised, on the one hand, of 'extreme externalisation' as capital globally profits (11-fold) more from speculative activities outside production than from production (Haiven, 2012). Capital also pushes labour and regulation costs out by moving production from one cheap Southern labour force to another cheaper one, with fewer regulatory bodies protecting labour. Further, capital now externalises blame for economic crisis on to individuals and nations, obliging them to take upon themselves 'the costs and risks externalized by the state and corporations' (Lazzarato, 2011:50; Harney and Dunne, 2013; Lapavitsas, 2014).

On the other hand, there is also what Harney (2009) and Harney and Dunne (2013:339) call 'extreme regulation' that entails an assault on labour through "waves of management, auditing, reporting, and political exhortation". This assault takes the form of requiring workers to scrutinise themselves through producing ever proliferating categories of information about themselves as workers through which management and peers judge them and they must judge themselves (Harney and Dunne, 2013:339). In education, this means that teachers and lecturers spend more time on "second order activities … of performance

monitoring and management" (Ball, 2003:221) than on first-order activities (of teaching, research and administration). Through producing such documentary evidence, individuals become complicit with regulatory logic and alienated (Canaan, 2010; Harney and Dunne, 2013; Shore and Wright, 2000). This 'work on the self' introduces regulation of the self into the future and through one's morality. (Lazzarato, 2011:104). Shrinking state funded social services require individuals and households to indebt themselves, an act that extends exploitation beyond labour to the promise of future payment for credit presently provided. One must thereby "estimate that which is inestimable – future behaviour and events – … [exposing] oneself to the uncertainty of time" (Lazzarato, 2011:45). Thus it is "man's [sic] *moral existence*, man's *social existence, the innermost depths of his heart"* that is indebted (Marx in Lazzarato, 2011:56, emphasis Lazzarato).

This context frames the changes that have occurred in British government policy on education during the last 40 years. England in particular has pursued very divisive and radical educational policies though it should be noted that, since the 1980s and particularly after devolution in 1999, these policies have found less favour in Scotland and Wales, which have taken their education systems in their own distinctive directions. In the discussion below, the English context in particular therefore informs much of the discussion of radical, critical and Marxist educators responses to neoliberal policies.

Government Education Policy and Radical, Critical and Marxist Education: 1970s to the present

The post war educational advance was attacked from the 1970s. The radical right in England escalated their questioning of the quality of state education in order to move away from the prior moderately liberal education agenda towards an agenda more fundamentally serving capital's needs and interests by developing human capital (Apple, 2003; Hill, 1989, 1990; Department of Educational Employment [DfEE], 1998). There has been a slow erosion of teachers' pay, conditions and control over what and how they teach, supported by a right wing media campaign from the 1980s that celebrated neo-liberal and neo-conservative ideologies (see Chitty, 1989; Jones, 1989; Hill, 1989, 1990; Tomlinson, 2001). Teachers' unions went on strike from 1984-1986 for better pay and conditions; their successful efforts, however, led to the government introducing the 'School Teachers' Review Body' in 1991, which has since imposed teachers' pay and conditions rather than engaging in pay bargaining with unions (Canaan, Hill, Maisuria, 2013). The 1988 Education Act, passed by a large Conservative parliamentary majority, compounded the neoliberalising of primary, secondary and post-secondary education by replacing local authority control of schooling by central control that restructured education as a semi-competitive and quasi-marketised system. The National Union of Teachers (NUT) 1993-1995 boycott of government imposed testing of 7 year old children (but not 11, 14 and 16 year olds) led to league tables being abolished for this age group alone. However, from the mid-1990s until the Coalition government came to power, teachers have been relatively acceptant of a slow chipping away at their pay and conditions and at student assessment. Capital's increased mobility and its de-regulation of labour markets, coupled with a state encouraged sense of fatalism, and growing work

precarity and intensification, have created a hostile backdrop to teacher trade union organization and to the belief that unions can do more than protect pensions and support teachers' and lecturers' disputes with management.

After New Labour's election victory in 1997, government policy continued its trajectory of centralized control. In 1998 they announced that pupils under 11 would no longer have to follow foundation curricula in detail and placed emphasis on teaching to literacy and numeracy targets. By 2003 some concession to widespread professional hostility (DfES, 2003) were made through introducing the *Primary Strategy* and later the *Cambridge Primary Review* (Alexander 2010). The evidence-informed Cambridge review confirmed the deleterious effects on learning of micro-managed teaching, high-stakes testing and narrowing curricula. However these concerns were ignored by the incoming Coalition Government which introduced its own National Curriculum in 2012 based on 'traditional' values. The revised curriculum published in 2013 remained overloaded, concerned with rote-learned content over the learning process and gave renewed emphasis to Standard English and the chronology of 'British' history. Resistance has been further undermined by sweeping structural changes to teacher training, with university involvement reduced and (limited) funding and accreditation powers shifted to Teaching Schools (DfE, 2010).

Similar processes have occurred in HE. Cuts to university education began within three days of Thatcher coming to power and within four years, government block grants to universities were cut by 17%, introducing the idea that universities required greater 'efficiency' given reduced government funding (Shattock in Slaughter and Leslie, 1997). The Thatcher government commodified HE through its (1980) decision to charge international students £1,000 fees. In 1992 the Conservative government eliminated the 'binary divide' previously separating universities from polytechnics resulting in worsening conditions for nearly all HE institutions. Student numbers doubled from 1990 to 1996 whilst state funding fell by 30% and staff numbers were unchanged (CVCP, in Barr and Crawford, 1998). The funding problems universities faced were now framed as problems requiring market rather than state solutions.

The bilaterally produced Dearing Report in 1998 sought to resolve this problem through introducing upfront tuition fees of £1,000 per year that pushed funding further from the centre (government) to its recipients (deemed 'consumers'). Fees more than trebled by 2011-2012 and led the Coalition government, in the aftermath of the bipartisan Browne Review (2010) to raise tuition fees to between £6 and £9k per annum and to government cuts to its to tuition fees' contribution by between 80 to 100%. Student loans for tuition fees were granted by private providers rather than by government. These providers charged fluctuating rates underwritten by government; estimates suggest that government public sector debt from HE loans will reach between £50 and £100bn during the next 20 years (Campaign for the Public University, 2011; McGettigan, 2013).

Since the 1980s British education restructuring generally has been supported by new managerialism. Teachers and lecturers, like other public sector workers, must now re-work their professional identities as indicated by a World Bank report of the late 1990s that argued that university restructuring as a marketised and commodified institution required restructured subjectivities of worker. Such restructuring entailed:

> lay-offs, forced early retirements, or major retraining and reassignment . . . which means radically altering who the faculty are, how they behave, the way they are organized, and the way they work and are compensated (Johnstone et al in Levidow (2001: 15).

Avis (1999 in Avis 2005: 210) notes that this restructuring introduced a: "[l]oss of control"; "[i]ntensification of labour"; "[i]ncreased administration"; "[p]erceived marginalization of teaching"; and "[s]tress on measurable performance indicators". We would argue, then, that the kind of extreme regulation that Harney (2009) and Harney and Dunne (2013) described is now apparent in universities. This is matched by, as we suggested above, the gradual revival of setting and selection in schools where centrally-imposed authoritarian pedagogies with utilitarian-oriented curricula, as well as ideological and political attacks on state educators and their unions, has occurred (Ball, 2003; Canaan, 2008, 2010; Davies and Petersen, 2005).

Thus the past 40 years has been a time of reduced state funding for education, of externalising many costs from government to financial and corporate sectors that then push their costs on to institutions and (thus far only in HE) on to individuals. Government in turn has introduced marketising 'efficiencies' and creeping privatization. This process has been accompanied, since the 1980s, with the restructuring of academic labour through processes informed by the kind of extreme regulation of which Harney (2009) and Harney and Dunne (2013) speak. This is the context in which we now consider radical, critical and Marxist education during the past 40 years.

In the 1970s and 1980s, the liberal sociological examination of social class mobility (largely perceived as being obtained in and through education) came to a halt. Some of these researchers argued that the near silence with regard to class analyses from the 1970s was due to their research having "reached a theoretical dead end' given their 'overly monolithic historical model of class" (Savage, 2005:798). We would argue, guided in part by the contributions made by radical and critical educators thereafter, that this model of class *was* monolithic. It singularly focused on men and boys; it (wrongly) considered that social class mobility was possible in the apparent liberal democracy that Keynesian policies offered (Themelis, 2013:34), and it assumed that class relations could singularly be determined by occupation, without considering how occupation itself indicated a position in a class system dominated by those who owned and managed production. For reasons outlined in the historical section above, this model of class was never that of classical Marxist educators who recognised, from Marx, that occupation alone did not provide an adequate basis for understanding social class (Wrigley, 2013). Classical Marxists would argue that whilst capitalism continuously changes in *appearance*, antagonistic class relations nonetheless

endure. Thus, our argument has been that from the 1970s class relations were restructured as heavy industry moved to the South, many formerly industrialised Northern workers became either 'self-employed' or marginalized "into chronic unemployment or insecure low-paid work (the so-called 'underclass')" whilst, especially during the last 20 years, public sector workers have been proletarianised (Wrigley, 2013:156).

These factors at least implicitly shaped educationalists' mindset from the 1970s. As noted above, radical and critical educators participated in the so-called 'cultural or 'linguistic turn' in the social sciences which ignored deeper structural, relational mechanisms to focus more on the constitutive role of cultural processes and language systems. This turn enabled them to suggest that social identities were "always built on an edgy repudiation of a variety of 'threats'" (Lawler, 2008:142) and therefore needed to be seen "through the[ir] relation to the other, the relation to what it is not" (Hall, 1996:40). However, as Crompton (in Wrigley, 2013:146) notes, the "'cultural turn' in the social sciences . . . involved not simply a (re-)emphasis on the significance of culture, but also a turning away from economic or structural explanations and analysis". Significantly absent from these perspectives, then, was the Marxist recognition that exploitation in and through the labour market and the struggle against this exploitation have long provided the motor for progressive social change. In a context where the neoliberal ideology predominates, educationalists, amongst others, have been at least partly swayed by (and have likely had to internalize the regulatory facet of this ideology that encourages people to see themselves as individual agents singularly capable of transforming themselves and their circumstances). Indeed, this ideology ignored what is now more widely recognised as the growing and deepening class war that neoliberal capitalism has created (Jones, 2011).

Perhaps unsurprisingly, as this war against all but the wealthiest deepened, educationalists began to reconsider re-introducing class into their analyses. From the 1990s poststructuralists pointed to the ways that neoliberalism entailed a "decoupling of self from the weight of group, community and tradition" (Hey, 2005: 856)—although a concept of class not just as a group, community or tradition, but as a set of relationships through which the ruling class exploited all others – remained absent. For example, Reay's (2006), analysis of how middle class students attending predominantly working class school used the insights they gained from rubbing shoulders with those less privileged than themselves to their own cultural advantage failed to consider how relations of exploitation shaped middle and working students' class positions (Wrigley, 2013:147).

The work of Bourdieu on multiple forms of capital began to influence radical and critical educators, enabling them to introduce into their analyses ideas of privilege with which they argued that "class-based judgements of 'normality' and 'rightness'" excluded and expelled dimensions of 'working-classness' (Lawler, 2008:126, 125, Skeggs, 1997). Again, however, these judgements were often located at the level of individuals rather than through an appreciation of class as a system of social relations resting on the exploitation of the working class by the ruling class.

Further, as Wrigley (2013) reminds us, the assumption amongst radical and critical educators that Marxist analyses singularly focused on class to the exclusion of culture, ignored how, from the 1950s, British Marxists in the New Left renewed Marx and Engels's idea that, as Eagleton (in Wrigley 2013: 150) stated, culture "brings together both base and superstructure in a single word" and has informed much of the Marxist education tradition.

The resurgence of critical pedagogy in higher education

As this paper suggests, the neoliberal attack on education generally has widened and deepened during the past 40 years and intensified still further since the recent economic crisis. Yet education trade unions, like others, are increasingly perceived as merely negotiating the terms of members' pensions and conditions. Perhaps unsurprisingly given this context, radical, critical and Marxist educators in universities, who still have relatively more control of their curricula and assessment strategies than primary, secondary or further education educators, have turned towards critical pedagogy to guide their determination to intervene in and challenge an educational system that professes neutrality but seeks to maintain neoliberal assumptions of privilege for the few. Further, post the 2010 Browne Report and the 2011 Higher Education White Paper in England, some of these critical pedagogues, especially Marxists, have begun to create alternatives within and against and outside and against the neoliberal university.

Amsler (2011: 61) notes that it is crucial to define critical pedagogy, in part because its insights are appropriated by corporate interests and government to produce "consumerised longing for autonomy [in a context where] … discourses of participation have become ubiquitous in mainstream politics". Definition is also necessary because radical, critical and Marxist educators use this pedagogy to serve different political projects (Amsler, 2011 and Ball, 2012). We share Amsler's concern that there has been a "systematic attempt to eliminate spaces within education where non-market political values, intellectual traditions, and pedagogies can possibly be articulated as alternatives, and from within which claims for their recognition can be made" (Amsler, 2011:66). Neoliberal logic pervades many aspects of social life, pre-empting the imagining of alternative possibilities (Amsler, 2011:66).

Our analysis of critical pedagogy is guided by Canaan's (2013) reading of Freire's work that suggests that critical pedagogy has four key components. First, critical pedagogy is "overtly political and critical of the status quo" and concomitantly is "committed to progressive social and political change" (Crowther, 2010:16). Thus, whilst education claims to serve everyone, it "function[s] in the interests of the dominant class" (Freire, 1987:103).

Second, critical pedagogy seeks to work with and against students' current interrelated worlds and worldviews. It utilises a problem-posing strategy that presumes that students as subjects have demonstrated that they are "capable of knowing" (Freire, 2001:112), that they can fuse "action and reflection' [or praxis for the] … transformation of the world" (Freire, 1996:106). Praxis here operates at a phenomenological level; it entails a transformation of one's perceptions of and practices in the world. Through problem-posing in dialogues with

students, teachers gain insights about students' current understandings and pose further problems to encourage students to challenge and go beyond their current understandings.

Third, such transformation presumes an ontological stance of "permanent openness" (Freire, 2001:119); "'being' and 'making with' others in a world conditioned by one's antecedents" and also "demands an anchoring in practice" (Freire, 2001:58; 2003:9). Marxist critical pedagogues take this position one step further, arguing that what Freire calls the 'ontological need' for hope requires praxis, the fusion of theory and action seeking to transform currently exploitative *social* relations (Freire, 2003:9). Freire viewed critical pedagogy in the classroom as the basis for phenomenological praxis that enabled people to change themselves through working collectively for revolutionary change. In his later work Freire viewed learning (and teaching) in the classroom as simultaneously positive and negative practices that were part of a more far-reaching revolutionary praxis:

> For what and for whom do I study? And against what and against whom?... It is necessary … that we know that our comprehension of the future is not static but dynamic … It is not by resignation but by the capacity for indignation in the face of injustice that we are affirmed (2001:73-74).

Freire thus conceptualizes evolutionary praxis as being at the core of the student-teacher relationship (Au, 2007). Radical and critical education appropriations of critical pedagogy often argue that education serves dominant interests but do not necessarily view class as providing the basis for this dominance. Marxist critical pedagogues claim, in contrast, that the education system has always been organised to serve the ruling class and attempts to do so by inculcating teachers and students into this logic. Radical, critical and Marxist educators all believe that education entails "intervention in the world" that dialectically opens up "both the reproduction of the dominant ideology and its unmasking" (Freire, 2001: 90-91). They differ in terms of whether they view class, gender, sexuality, race, nation as equally interrelated (the stance of radical and critical educators) or foreground class as primary and as subsuming other forms of oppression (Marxist).

In addition, all critical pedagogues seek to work with students "to demystify popular ideologies; expose the subtle ways that power works through language, bodies, and representations; facilitate the imagination of radically different modes of life" (Amsler, 2011: 61) However, only Marxist educators argue that the exploitative relationships forged in and through labour provide the basis for all other oppressive relationships. Further, they argue that such relationships need more than demystification; they must be overturned.

Radical pedagogues emphasise how critical pedagogy offers the possibility for all students' voices to be heard; they seek to create 'counter-narratives' that decentre dominant narratives and thereby enhance the possibility of greater understanding amongst individuals from different backgrounds. Indeed, Pinhasi-Vittorio and Ben-Yosef (2014, italics in original) recently argued that "[a] critical pedagogy approach allows us to validate *all* students' learning abilities by situating learning in the students' experiences while defining learning as a collaborative exchange of perspectives". As Marxist critical pedagogues, we would ask, is

it enough to de-centre dominant narratives? Whilst doing so might help students recognize that the ruling elite shape their ways of thinking, it ignores what we view as a vital component of critical pedagogy: building a society in which liberation rather than exploitation is the motor of social action.

Critical educators engaging in critical pedagogy, in contrast, often influenced by critical theory, and by post structuralist theories that point to the power dynamics that operate in HE as well as in all educational sites, go beyond giving space to diverse voices within the classroom. However, they do not necessarily move from critique to praxis. Marxist critical pedagogues, we argue, are committed to all four of the tenets of critical pedagogy enumerated above. We could cite Canaan's (2013) piece as an example that seeks to suggest that revolutionary praxis that starts in the classroom is crucial, but can only be realisable when conjoined with collectively organised industrial struggles.

Conclusion: radical, critical and Marxist education and the way forward

In this paper, we have highlighted the tensions between radical, critical and Marxist education as they have played out in British education since the Enlightenment. Radical education's antiauthoritarianism reminds educators of the dangers posed to liberty by treating learners as impassive cogs in a Taylorist machine. But its abstract notion of personal autonomy is insufficiently qualified by reference to the material and social relations of the capitalist formation. Such qualification is necessary to give fuller meaning to this autonomy. For example, libertarian free schools are very different to the neoliberal free school or academy. The first are rooted in anarcho-collectivism whilst the latter instantiate the privatisation of education lauded by the British Conservative Party's rhetoric of the 'big society'. Inside capitalist relations, radicalism is in danger not just of pessimism about the Enlightenment project but also of some of its ideas continuing to be appropriated by the Right. Critical education meanwhile, offers powerful tools for nurturing critical consciousness but its vulnerability to detached theorising risks severing its link to activism. Whilst it vocalises despair towards capitalism's failings, it is less vocal about the positive, transformative power of industrial action, activism and solidarity.

Our argument has been that consciousness is shifted as much through engagement with class struggle as through ideas. In March 2014, for example, the British Trade Unions Congress (Johnson and Mansell, 2014) launched its *Education Not For Sale* campaign against privatisation of schools, colleges and universities. It drew on evidence suggesting that privatisation costs taxpayers millions of pounds in fees to lawyers, head-hunters, accountants, estate agents and management consultants, with profits extracted through the purchase of school support services from the private businesses of directors, trustees and (often) their relatives. In 1999, the NUT launched their *School Teachers Opposed to Performance Pay* (STOPP) campaign. STOPP have organised a number of protest events, including a march and rally in London. In December 2012, a group of schoolteachers, school governors, academics and parents launched the *Primary School Charter*, a united initiative which included conferences, publications and engagement with mainstream media. Space prevents

us including more examples but suffice to say there is widespread opposition to the attacks on education. The division and demoralisation fortified by the logic of ever more encroaching marketization means that there is growing recognition amongst educators of the need to turn opposition into action. As governments clash with education unions, united industrial action on a national and international scale is more vital now than ever. The British government's confrontational strategy is a high risk one; parents are not guaranteed to condemn strikes, particularly where alliances between different opposition movements and education unions are forged. Teachers', students' and workers' involvement in industrial action can raise the collective critical consciousness and confidence needed to win. These disputes open up opportunities for all educators to educate more broadly about the purpose of education and its value as a public good. This can extend to debate about the ongoing transfer of public wealth and democratic control to private ownership in other spheres such as health, housing, utilities and transport. Economic and political battles can fuse to extend education beyond what can be learned in a formal classroom. It is vital that we open up the spaces of opportunity that forthcoming industrial disputes will create. Marxist, critical and radical educators in Britain need to work as part of an international united front to analyse class relations, mobilize workers, forge alliances and articulate a vision in and outside their classrooms that another education and world is possible.

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