

Consensualised Reproduction and Fascisation of Society: Critical Pedagogy in Times of Despair¹

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Abstract

The paper looks the contemporary capitalism and how it has mounted its offensive on the lives of workers across the globe and specifically in India. The aim of education has move much beyond the idea of knowledge that the even welfare regimes conceived. It is about skilling, which in turn is about a training an individual to be unconcerned about the oppression and exploitation that goes around her. In other words, it is a tacit consensualisation for the existing order of things. This consensualisation has acquired dangerous proportions because these are also the times of a peculiar ethos emerging wherein the masses are made to instil within themselves the idea of hatred and a fascination of violence at different levels – between nations to mob lynchings and to verbal violence over social media. These are the times of, what I call, fascisation of society. What would critical pedagogy as an instrument or as a possibility to counter these processes of consensualisation and fascisation would is also being discussed here. It is argued that critical pedagogy, while locating itself within the labour-capital dialectic must also move towards exploring the possibilities of organisation or how its teachings can lead to a situation of counter-mobilisation. The idea that critical pedagogy must not profess organisation emanates from the liberal framework entrenched into the Left/Marxian thought, which does not realise that in battlefields possibilities of being neutral, quiet and non-partisan do not exist.

Keywords: neoliberalism, critical pedagogy, capital-labour, fascism, fascisation, consensualisation

Offensive at the working class – the labour in *general* to labour in *particular*

On November 7, 2014 the President of India gave assent to the three labour law amendment bills sent by the Government of Rajasthan after getting them passed in the assembly (Jha, 2014). These amended labour laws (namely the Industrial Disputes Act, 1947, the Contract Labour Act, 1970 and the Factories Act, 1947) have become more business friendly. It would also mean that they are more anti-labour. The Indian government is interested in changing the labour laws as part of its central legislations and among other pending Bills it wants to get through the Parliament are the Industrial Relations Code Bill 2016 and the Wage Code Bill 2016². Once passed these will facilitate easier hiring and firing in factories. The Indian state wants this change because it would boost economic growth (Nanda, 2016) (and I always wonder at whose cost!). The same governments who want to withdraw whatever benefits of labour laws that the workers have, also creates high unemployment by taking away their jobs as the whole employment scenario becomes precarious. On the other hand, the nature of capitalism, which would inevitably get stuck in one kind of crisis or the other has led to creation of jobs (which are counted by census as employment), which are ‘momentary’ in nature (and I am not even inclined to use the word ‘temporary’ here), what in the UK are called ‘precarious’ jobs. McDonalds shuts down shops in many of Indian cities till further notice due to whatever reasons (Montgomery and Iyengar, 2017); there have been massive lay offs in the IT sector (which would continue in days to come as argued by many economic analysts)³; the job loss in general has been there as well⁴. All these developments, if combined with the worsening labour conditions as the Indian state seems from what has been referred to above, do not paint a good

picture for the India's working class. Pauperisation would grow along with a very skewed income/wealth inequality as statistics also seem to be indicating. This was a general question of labour, but if one turns towards the teachers one finds that 13.18% of total teachers teaching at the primary and secondary schools are contractual (non-permanent), whose forms of contract varies. This would come to a whopping 1064434 in absolute numbers. There are states with as high as 54% (Mizoram) of total teachers being contractual (Mehta, 2016). This trend looks likely to worsen. It is in this situation that one finds a state like Bihar announcing that it will "compulsorily" retire "non-performing" teachers above the age of 50 years (Kumar, 2017). On the other hand the Rajasthan government has decided to give away the government schools to the private sector. "As per the policy, 75% schools in rural areas and 25% schools in urban areas will be identified on the basis of their recent results and will be given to private players who have to pay Rs. 7.5 million for operating each school. The state government will reimburse the amount over a seven- year period time at Rs 1.6 million per annum. Another Rs 20,000 would be reimbursed to the private parties as expenses per student" (Rawal, 2017). One cannot have a better example of throwing open the schooling system to forces of market and therefore, an inevitable shutting down of the government schooling system. This would also imply that the workers teaching in schools will be as much at mercy of capital as those working in the soap factories. Marx sounds so true here when trying to make sense of productive labour he gives example of the school teacher. He writes:

Capitalist production is not merely the production of commodities, it is essentially the production of surplus-value. The labourer produces, not for himself, but for capital. It no longer suffices, therefore, that he should simply produce. He must produce surplus-value. That labourer alone is productive, who produces surplus-value for the capitalist, and thus works for the self-expansion of capital. If we may take an example from outside the sphere of

production of material objects, a schoolmaster is a productive labourer when, in addition to belabouring the heads of his scholars, he works like a horse to enrich the school proprietor. That the latter has laid out his capital in a teaching factory, instead of in a sausage factory, does not alter the relation. Hence the notion of a productive labourer implies not merely a relation between work and useful effect, between labourer and product of labour, but also a specific, social relation of production, a relation that has sprung up historically and stamps the labourer as the direct means of creating surplus-value. To be a productive labourer is, therefore, not a piece of luck, but a misfortune (Marx, 1887).

The number of private schools is increasing, which inevitably has worse working conditions due to its direct effort at surplus maximisation. There can be different ways to understand the growing privatisation of school as well as higher education. One way to look at it by studying the enrolment figures in government as well as private schools and the other way to understand privatisation is through looking at the number of institutions. National Sample Survey Organisation (NSSO) data shows that between 2007-08 and 2014 the percentage distribution of students in government primary schools has come down to 62% compared to the earlier figure of 72.6%. On the other hand, the same figures have gone up for the private aided schools (private schools who also get government support) from 6.5% in 2007-08 to 8.1% in 2014 and the increase in share for the private unaided schools (schools not financially supported by government) has gone to 29.7% from 20.3% (NSSO, 2014, p.69). In terms of number of private schools, between 2010-11 and 2015-16 a total of 77,063 private schools have come up in India as opposed to 12, 297 government schools (Kingdon, 2017). One can see similar trends for private unaided upper primary and secondary schools as well. The same is true for technical/professional institutions in higher education sphere where most students study in private unaided institutions. Even the government schools have adopted

contractualisation as a policy decision to hire teachers. There are federal states, which have not hired regular teachers for decades. Now federal states like Rajasthan have been handing over the state run schools to private players (Rawal, 2017).

Higher education is not better off. The number of private institutions has gone up like anything and the ‘normalisation’ of informalisation of the labour force has led to worse working conditions. While the number of private universities in March 2012 was 111 it went up to 235 in March 2016, i.e., it more than doubled in four years (UGC, 2016, p. 88). The number of colleges run/managed by private entities is much more when compared to government run colleges. The number of private unaided colleges is 22755, private aided is 4924 (total number of private colleges being 27679) whereas the number of government colleges is only 7988 (GOI, 2016). Along with this, and as a natural corollary, one finds informalisation of workforce in universities and schools. So one finds huge number of teachers in schools, faculty members in colleges and universities and the non-teaching workers being employed on a temporary, contractual basis. Their salaries are lower than what a regular, permanent worker would get and they can be fired anytime. This allows for a cheap labour workforce as well as curtails possibilities of unionisation due to extreme insecurities imposed on them.

So, something like this also happens:

An institution gets affiliation from well-known university to teach some professional courses such as Bachelor of Education. It calls for applications for jobs as per the UGC norms, which is not a bad salary compared to most of the India’s working population. People apply and get jobs as well. Because the Indian state is committed to rooting out corruption, fund leakages, etc., bank account with Aadhar⁵ has to be opened and so on and so forth. Being a staff

member of a faculty seems a good enough job. But what happens when the salary gets transferred to your account? One finds that all documents of the faculty are with management. They transfer money as per the UGC scale into your account but then also force you to issue them some cheques to pay back what they have been given to show the authorities. This and much more innovative mechanisms are developed not exceptionally but on a large scale.

While these are issues related to income and economics there is an increasing surveillance, non-involvement of faculty in designing the courses or indirectly, etc., making life much more difficult in the higher education system. Therefore, the teacher as a worker and the school as the institution with all its dimensions such as curriculum and pedagogy must be located within the labour-capital dialectic.

On Fascism/Fascisation

Why talk about fascisation? Are we living in a fascist state? These are tough questions to answer because of the complex situations that we encounter today. One can immediately get back to history and look at the fascism of Auschwitz variety and immediately concludes that India is still far from it. But on the other hand, one finds oneself trapped in a dilemma when one after another dissenting voices are murdered along likes of what the Nazi SS or the Gestapo would do. There is a clear similarity between the global assertion of the Right (Hill, forthcoming, 2018) and what is happening in India. This has led to debates about whether India can be called a fascist state. Ever since the right wing Bharatiya Janata Party (BJP) came to power quite a few intellectuals have been targeted. Govind Pansare, a communist leader was killed in 2015, MM Kalburgi, the noted Kannadiga writer and a rationalist was also killed the same year. Then in 2017, the anti-right journalist Gauri Lankesh has been gunned down. Now renowned intellectual and a staunch critique of brahmanical order

KanchaIllaiah has been getting death threats. Apart from these, a new trend of public mob lynching, of primarily Muslims, has emerged.

Muslims were the target of 51% of violence centred on bovine issues over nearly eight years (2010 to 2017) and comprised 86% of 28 Indians killed in 63 incidents, according to an India Spend content analysis of the English media.

As many of 97% of these attacks were reported after Prime Minister Narendra Modi's government came to power in May 2014, and about half the cow-related violence – 32 of 63 cases – were from states governed by the Bharatiya Janata Party (BJP) when the attacks were reported, revealed our analysis of violence recorded until June 25, 2017 (Abraham and Rao, 2017).

There has been a virtual erasure of any autonomy of the judiciary and executive with some exceptions. Government has openly voiced its opinion to have say in appointment of judges to highest courts, the right wing leaders have been made in Indian state icons, ending the era of liberal capitalist iconography, examples being Deen Dayal Upadhyay, Nanaji Deshmukh (who were closely associated with the right-wing Rashtriya Swayamsevak Sangh) and so on. The party in power hounds any dissenter, even of liberal variety, with active support from instruments of state. Universities have been under great attack with vice-chancellors dictating terms of running it, centralising all powers. Any academic, who works from a left perspective, specialises in gender studies and is vocal about her beliefs and analysis or even if anyone does a negative analysis of the current government has been hounded (Kumar, 2017). Though in debates scholars have called this a neo-conservative tendency, which for them works at three levels: firstly, as “the circumscription, the attempt to straightjacket students’, teachers’ and professors’ practices”; secondly, as centralised enforcement by state apparatuses; and thirdly, as ‘cultural wars’ through use of

ideological apparatuses (Hill, 2006). So, it might appear that India situation today is no fascistic but authoritarian. It is in this context that there have been debates of whether to call this situation fascist or not has arisen.

Karat writes that

Fascism as an ideology and as a form of political rule emerged in between the two World Wars in the 20th century. When the capitalist system was engulfed in deep crisis and faced with the threat from a revolutionary movement of the working class, the ruling classes in Germany opted for an extreme form of rule that abolished bourgeois democracy (Karat, 2016).

When in power fascism becomes “the open terrorist dictatorship of the most reactionary, most chauvinistic and most imperialist elements of finance capital.” Based on the fact the conditions for emergence of fascism — “in political, economic and class terms” — are not present because the ruling class is not confronted with any imminent danger of its collapse, neither is Indian capitalism facing a crisis, and no section of the ruling class is working for the overthrow of the bourgeois parliamentary system. It would therefore be difficult to call the current state of affairs as fascist. Rather “what the ruling classes seek to do is to use forms of authoritarianism to serve their class interests” (Karat, 2016). All the restrictions that we encounter today are the ones imposed by neoliberal order, he argues. He goes on to say that under fascism elections are redundant but in India they are very important.

He is confronted by Jairus Banaji (2016) who argues that treating fascism as entirely about ‘finance capital’ “ignores the formation of culture and looks simply at the economy as a force that affects politics without mediations of any sort”. He goes on to say that

“Anti-Semitism, racism, xenophobia, Islamophobia, Islamism, Hindutva, patriarchy, male violence, caste oppression, militarism, and (not least!) nationalism then become basically irrelevant; window-dressing on a beast (capitalism) that works in some purely economic way, as if the ‘formation of the authoritarian structure’ (Reich) which has everything to do with how reactionary ideologies come about in the wider reaches of civil society is not a process every bit as material as the economy.” (Banaji, 2016)

He argues how would one understand the mass violence against Muslims, the compromised justice system, the corporate support for a ‘decisive leader’ or use of nation and nationalism as instruments to whip up frenzy be understood. He writes

While all authoritarianisms are not fascist, all fascisms are a form of authoritarianism. What is distinctive about fascist authoritarianism is its appeal to forms of mass mobilisation and attempt to create sources of legitimacy among ‘the masses’ – through cultural (e.g. pseudo-religious) and ideological domination.” (Banaji, 2016)

A significant question is also posed when Banaji asks whether fascism comes all of a sudden or there are processes, which go into the making of this final culmination of the fascist state. There is a mass mobilisation which fascism is able to generate and this happens through a variety of mechanisms – from use of cultural symbols, playing with ideas of ‘nation’ and nationalism’, etc. Wilhelm Reich writes that “Since fascism, always and everywhere, appears as a movement which is supported by the masses of people, it also displays all the traits and contradictions present in the average character structure: Fascism is not, as is generally believed, a purely reactionary movement; rather, it is a mixture of rebellious emotions and reactionary social ideas” (Reich, 1946, p.5). Even within Marxism there have been at least three theories of fascism. The first one, which Renton calls the “the left theory of fascism”, looked at “the

conditions of its growth”. This theory considered “the purpose and function of fascism, as a form of counter- revolution acting in the interests of capital” important. Renton’s critique of this theoretical strand has been that it failed to talk about the specifics “about fascist counter- revolution”, which did not allow the Italian or the German Communist Parties to take it as a serious threat. “The second, or right theory of fascism” took the opposite approach of “ignoring the rise and function of fascism, and examining instead its ideology, and the mass, radical character” of the movement (Renton, 1999, p.3). So, for Marxists looking at it fascism became “radical and exotic, outside and threatening to capital”. Consequently, “the Italian and German Socialist Parties in the 1920s and 1930s, and the Communist Parties after 1934, described capitalism itself as a bulwark against fascism, and stood paralysed and unable to act when members of the ruling class allied with fascism”. Renton goes for the third theory, which he calls the “dialectical theory of fascism”, developed by Leon Trotsky. This theory treated fascism as both a reactionary ideology and also a mass movement. (Renton, 1999, p.4). He accepts that there is a resurgence of fascism today (and he is writing in the European context) and this would grow. The features that he highlights can be found in India as well and this grows out of the crisis that capitalism faces in a smooth functioning. In other words, the fascist possibilities might be latent and become manifest when the survival question for capital becomes important. Renton writes

Fascism thrives on bitterness and alienation, both of which capitalism nourishes with regular doses of unemployment and crisis. This fuels despair, which further stimulates fascism to grow. Fascism lives off racism, sexism and elitism, while capitalism promotes its own prejudices, guised as common-sense beliefs, which seem to fit people’s experiences, while effectively holding them back from challenging the system. Capitalism generates the myths of racism and elitism, which fascists use for themselves (Renton, 1999, p.16).

Ghosh (2016) argues that fascism becomes a political regime

constitutive of the mobilisation of objective revolutionary possibilities, which inhere in increasing subalternisation of the masses, against the liberal form of the capitalist state precisely in order to reproduce that state by recomposing the political form of its embodiment. (The state, we would do well to realise here, is nothing but the institutionalised congealment of the value-relational grammar of social relations.) In this process, it cannibalises the earlier liberal-institutional form of the state. This unambiguously reveals why Fascism is a mystification of revolution and is, therefore, a counter-revolution.

It is in this sense that fascism, as an expression of unrest/discontent among masses can be understood. Reich traces it to the individual and his cravings, which would lead him to be part of the collective mobilisations that fascism do. He writes

Fascist mentality is the mentality of the subjugated "little man" who craves authority and rebels against it at the same time. It is not by accident that all fascist dictators stem from the milieu of the little reactionary man. The captains of industry and the feudal militarist make use of this social fact for their own purposes. A mechanistic authoritarian civilization only reaps, in the form of fascism, from the little, suppressed man what for hundreds of years it has sown in the masses of little, suppressed individuals in the form of mysticism, top-sergeant mentality and automatism (Reich, 1946, p.6).

Riley (2016) works on Gramsci and believes that fascism for him “represented for Italy and Germany their belated and terribly distorted version of the French Revolution. There was an undeniably “modernizing” element to these regimes that was fused with their attack on the Left, and with their racist imperialism” (Riley, 2016). Posing his understanding of the contemporary right-wing he remarks that “increasingly, profitability requires direct political support

(bailouts, austerity programs, and so on). This undermines the operation of “liberal democracy,” which has been the central political and ideological cement of the capitalist class across the advanced world since 1945” (Riley, 2016). If this has been the case then does it also not imply that the capital seeks to connect more and more to the masses directly now for a variety of reasons. There ought not be too many mediating agencies between the state and people. The presence of mediating agencies raise questions about the conduct of the state, about its relationship with the corporate capital and so that the processes of accumulation can work unhindered and when crisis emerges it can tackle them directly. An authoritarian, fascist regime can create this simple looking, straightforward, uncomplicated relationships to have the autocracy of capital. However, this fascism is also not of the same form as we saw in early 20th century because it lacks the energy of the earlier avatars. Riley attributes it to the absence of an opponent such as Soviet Union, as it was earlier. But can one say that it creates new oppositions such as the Muslims, the communists, so-called anti-nationalists and the dissenters. However, within nation states, there is a weak or absent opposition to capital, which can mobilise the masses and that is also the reason why the right does not have similar energy. But this right continues to proceed conquering the popular imagination.

Obviously, the question that comes to one’s mind is how does one understand the India of today? Despite the talks of a country unhurt by the economic recession that affected the United States of America is it a country where, if one goes by the accounts of bourgeois/liberal bourgeois intellectuals, everything is fine? It doesn’t seem so. In an age of unreal, despite the spectacularity of governance aided by the untruth spinning doctors of diverse disciplinary backgrounds, the crisis seems to be looming large. This crisis being experienced by the people beneath the spectacularity had to be tackled as soon as possible. It could burst into an upheaval anytime as shown by the ILO study (ILO, 2011).

There has always been an impending crisis - generated by the asymmetry between aspirations and income due to alienation of the worker from the product created through the processes of surplus accumulation. The new labour processes while brought about newer techniques of appropriation of surplus under different idioms such as 'opening up', 'liberalising', 'competition', 'efficiency', etc., they also created the crisis in individual lives of workers. We are still to realise at a mass scale the manifestations of this crisis which have established the linkages between household and work place at unprecedented scale and brought the tension, alienation and repression of the workplace into the very 'private' lives of the workers and their families. This impending manifestation can take different forms - from a rebellion against capital to a rebellion/diversion of rebellious energy towards a violent state of being resulting into support for a sectarian, fascist political force. It is the corporate capital understanding the fragility of situation that wanted a 'decisive' leader and government, somebody who does not listen to anybody but himself, not even his party and his associates. Thus, setting into motion a process of fascisation of society - individuals and institutions. The similarities between the way Indian state today functions and the way university vice-chancellors work is quite similar. The tragedy is that they do it with the support of the masses. The online world of concern that we encounter seems disconnected in their thought from that of masses. The online anti-right presence does not seem to reflect a similar sensibility on the ground. This is reflected in absence of mass mobilisations even when something like demonetisation happens or when one after another Muslims are lynched. It would be worth understanding from where does the consensualised popular support for the Right emerges? It is this consensualisation that is allowing capitalism in its present form to be reproduced.

Consensualised Reproduction

How and why does consensus get created? There are many ways in which this happens. It is relevant to bring in Althusser (1971) here who argued that capitalism in order to survive must reproduce the conditions of production. What does this mean? It simply means at one level that in order to live longer every social formation must reproduce (1) the productive forces; and (2) the existing relations of production. Hence, the system must reproduce the labour-power through payment of wages, which is necessary for the survival of labour. However, because the society is not static and is constantly progressing this labour-power cannot remain static. It has to be 'competent'. The teacher of yesteryears is useless today. S/he cannot teach today because of non-updation of its competence. The skills need to be constantly updated and enhanced. But then the question arises as to how does this labour skill get reproduced?

“unlike social formations characterized by slavery or serfdom, this reproduction of the skills of labour power tends (this is a tendential law) decreasingly to be provided for 'on the spot' (apprenticeship within production itself), but is achieved more and more outside production: by the capitalist education system, and by other instances and institutions” (Althusser, 1971, p. 132).

These institutions which reproduce skills also simultaneously ensure reproduction “of submission to the ruling ideology for the workers, and a reproduction of the ability to manipulate the ruling ideology correctly for the agents of exploitation and repression, so that they, too, will provide for the domination of the ruling class 'in words'” (pp. 132-33). Children learn what is 'good behaviour' (which is defined as 'the attitude that should be observed by every agent in the division of labour, according to the job he is 'destined' for: rules of morality, civic and professional conscience, which actually means rules of respect for the socio-technical division of labour and ultimately the rules of

the order established by class domination” (1971, p. 132) and this ‘goodness’ defined as per the requirements of the larger system.

Education system is nothing but an instrument, which seeks to create propitious conditions for capital to exist and expand. It is these terms that it is important to locate education as “an aspect of the class relation”, which is involved “in generating the living commodity, labour-power whose consumption in the labour process is a necessary condition for the social existence of the class relation between labour and capital in contemporary capitalism” (Allman, et al). If one recognises this aspect the conceptualisation of the education and critical education would also be different and, hence, it has a much lasting impact on our vision of how education is to be located.

The consensus, which is being created by capital right now, is something based on this logic of reproduction. The schooling system as well the higher education system is dedicated towards this consensus building exercise. This consensualisation process becomes furthermore complex when one looks at how the technology is used to exercise control and domination over our minds. Marcuse had amply shown how techno-bureaucratic system exercises this control which does not lead us think the way we should have thought but rather we think the way capitalism wants us to think. This use of technology is reflection of how social relationships are designed. He writes that

Technology, as a mode of production, as the totality of instruments, devices and contrivances which characterize the machine age is thus at the same time a mode of organizing and perpetuating (or changing) social relationships, a manifestation of prevalent thought and behavior patterns, an instrument for control and domination (Marcuse, 1998, p.41).

He goes on to elaborate on deliberate the consensualising efforts of the system makes us a One-Dimensional Man, an entity bereft of any independent mind to think, a representation of the state of loss of criticality. This is achieved through elements of fear that the system generates amongst us – fear of different kinds ranging from our own neighbor who is a Muslim to a neighboring country or the fear of our livelihood taken over by communists. And technology is woven into this to such an extent that it makes us support authoritarianism, corporate sharks as well as mindless race for nuclear warfare. We become part of the designs of capitalist state, even the fascist state when there is no place for fear to exist.

In National Socialist Germany, the reign of terror is sustained not only by brute force which is foreign to technology but also by the ingenious manipulation of the power inherent in technology: the intensification of labor, propaganda, the training of youths and workers, the organization of the governmental, industrial and party bureaucracy—all of which constitute the daily implements of terror—follow the lines of greatest technological efficiency. This terroristic technocracy cannot be attributed to the exceptional requirements of “war economy”; war economy is rather the normal state of the National Socialist ordering of the social and economic process, and technology is one of the chief stimuli of this ordering (1998, pp.41-42).

This situation of a relentless war against teaching-learning, against the workers involved in this process necessitates the need to imagine and re-imagine the educational processes in a such a way that we begin destroying this system. And the role of critical pedagogy becomes significant here.

We have to enter this Pedagogical War: Need to decide which side are we on

The process of consensualisation and the process of reproduction is also a

pedagogical process unleashed on the masses to ensure that capitalism, the rule based on inequality and exploitation thrives. Pedagogy is used to ensure that all children not only become part of this process but accept the fact of surplus accumulation as give, inevitable and the best possible framework to live and survive. It is in this context that it prepares either so-called neutral masses or those who believe that there is no alternative to the way things are conducted. The task of this pedagogy is to demonstrate the beauty of exploitation, absence of hope and impossibility of an alternative. But Shaull says that

There is no such thing as a neutral educational process. Education either functions as an instrument that is used to facilitate the integration of the younger generation into the logic of the present system and bring about conformity to it, or it becomes "the practice of freedom," the means by which men and women deal critically and creatively with reality and discover how to participate in the transformation of their world. The development of an educational methodology that facilitates this process will inevitably lead to tension and conflict within our society. But it could also contribute to the formation of a new man and mark the beginning of a new era in Western history (Shaull, 2005, p.34)

Hence, there has to be a counterposition of how the critical pedagogy looks at education and of its practices vis-à-vis that of capitalism (which is fascising today). That alternative imagination of education must be spelt with rigour and vigour to counter the educational blasphemy of the ruling classes. But the challenge also is that there are too many alternative pedagogies in front of us and whether they (1) root themselves in the processes of production and recognise the linkage between educational processes and the exploitative social relations; and (2) whether they confront the exploitative system with a pedagogy which also talks of altering the existing social relations based on and emanating out of the processes of accumulation. These pedagogies/visions must

be used to demonstrate the cracks in the existing system as well. Bell Hooks, with her postmodern inclinations (and dangers of fragmenting the war against capital), argues that the school must reveal to the students what the social realities are and how those realities come into existence must constitute a fundamental part of the teaching learning process. However, the schooling system is not designed to be like that. It hides those realities because they might produce subversive humans who would challenge the status quo. Hence, school as an institution must produce obedient humans. She writes:

“School changed utterly with racial integration. Gone was the messianic zeal to transform our minds and beings that had characterised teachers and their pedagogical practices in our all-black school. Knowledge was suddenly about information only. It had no relation to how one lived, behaved. It was no longer connected to antiracist struggle. Bussed to white schools, we soon learned that obedience, and not a zealous will to learn, was what was expected of us. Too much eagerness to learn, was what was expected of us. Too much eagerness to learn could easily be seen as a threat to white authority.” (1994, p.3)

This would seem so true of the oppressed groups in any part of the world - the marginalised castes, ethnicities, gender as well as classes in any part of the world. She does to the extent of drawing the linkages between the production process and the hegemonic schooling/education system but argues against the existing framework based on her experience as a black student how the schooling system made even the blacks reinforce the domination of the white hegemony. She brings in the element of *excitement* as a subversive category when argues that excitement is

viewed as potentially disruptive of the atmosphere of seriousness assumed to be essential to the learning process. To enter classroom settings in colleges

and universities with the will to share the desire to encourage excitement, was to transgress. Not only did it require movement beyond accepted boundaries, but excitement could not be generated without a full recognition of the fact that there could never be an absolute set agenda governing teaching practices. Agendas had to be flexible, had to allow for spontaneous shifts in direction. Students had to be seen in their particularity as individuals... and interacted with according to their needs. (p.7)

What the education system does is that because of its hegemonic ideas to ensure that every gets drawn into its project of shaping the world it does not acknowledge the presence of marginalized students in the class. One can see in case of EWS students in the schools or the Dalits or even girls. She argues that "...any radical pedagogy must insist that everyone's presence is acknowledged" and this insistence "has to be demonstrated through pedagogical practices". In a critical pedagogical practice "there must be an ongoing recognition that everyone influences the classroom dynamic, that everyone contributes. These contributions are resources. Used constructively they enhance the capacity of any class to create an open learning community." (Hooks, 1994, p. 8)

For scholars like Henry Giroux the critical pedagogy develops out of "a recognition that education was important not only for gainful employment but also for creating the formative culture of beliefs, practices, and social relations that enable individuals to wield power, learn how to govern, and nurture a democratic society that takes equality, justice, shared values, and freedom seriously" (2011, p.4). Critical pedagogy is about transforming knowledge and therefore becoming active agents in the process of this transformation, which is much more than merely consuming it.

There are scholars who would pick from the way education is to be understood as located within the universe of capital-labour relations and therefore the idea of an alternative, critical pedagogy has to also emanate from there. Because the

system is mechanical, because it is dehumanizing, because it is teaching hatred, because it is making children averse to having a sense of history that locates them and their previous generations in a context of strife and struggle for survival there has to be a critical pedagogy that questions these dangerous trends by reconstituting its own vision – by bringing forth the idea that dreams are essential for envisioning, that day-dreaming, as Ernst Bloch taught us, can be a way to ascertain imaginations to work on. He would say

It is a question of learning hope. Its work does not renounce, it is in love with success rather than failure. Hope, superior to fear, is neither passive like the latter, nor locked into nothingness. The emotion of hope goes out of itself, makes people broad instead of confining them, cannot know nearly enough of what it is that makes them inwardly aimed, of what may be allied to them outwardly (Bloch, 1996, p. 3).

The daydreams can be “provocative, is not content just to accept the bad which exists, does not accept renunciation” and it is “has hoping at its core, and is teachable”. It is this hope that the relations of production that has brought them into this state of being can be altered, that the world of misery and exploitation can change and this process of change does not stop anywhere, as many ‘leftists’ in past believed but it goes on as a continuous process.

If critical pedagogy is imagined as hoping and imagining, as against a mechanical process that simply prepares an individual to be subservient to the system then it is for a radical social transformation as well. McLaren and Farahmandpur argue that critical pedagogy must have the “capacity to foster the principle of social justice and to propel this principle into the realm of hope, so that it might arch toward the future in a continuing orbit of possibility” will not be achieved. They go on to say that in the process of doing this critical pedagogy it

offers a historical challenge to helplessness and despair. Its strength also resides in its singular ability to make resignation implausible and defeat untenable, despite the criticism launched by some that would immobilize critical pedagogy by dismissing it as "always already" trapped within a modernist voice of sovereign authority and totalizing certitude. Critical pedagogy functions as a form of critical utopianism that reveals the birth of tomorrow out of the struggle of today... Yet it needs to recognize its own provisionality, and to caution itself against prematurely bringing closure to the narrative of emancipation. The politics of the imagination upon which critical pedagogy is based also requires that we imprint our collective will on the workings of history. What the left needs is not a republic of dreamers isolated from class struggle but a contraband pedagogy, a profane pedagogy and educational brigandism for the next century, one capable of forging new tactical possibilities for pressing forward the project of social democracy and setting limits to the reign of capital. It is this unalloyed commitment to critical agency... (McLaren and Farahmandpur, 1994, pp.32-33).

.... critical pedagogy needs to establish a project of emancipation that moves beyond simply wringing concessions from existing capitalist structures and institutions. Rather, it must be centered on the transformation of property relations and the creation of a just system of appropriation and distribution of social wealth. It is not enough to adjust the foundational level of school funding to account for levels of student poverty, to propose supplemental funding for poverty and limited English proficiency, to raise local taxes to benefit schools, to demand that state governments partly subsidize low-property-value communities, or to fight for the equalization of funding generated by low-property-value districts (although these efforts surely would be a step in the right direction). I am arguing for a fundamentally broader vision based on a transformation of global economic relations—on a different economic logic, if you will—that transcends a mere reformism within existing social relations of production and international division of labor. But challenging the swaggering, gunslinging, frontier-style economic practices of the tycoon capitalism that we are witnessing today must also be accompanied (as Giroux argues) by a powerful cultural critique that can speak forcefully to

the creation of antiracist, antisexist, and antihomophobic pedagogies of liberation. (McLaren and Farahmandpur, 1994, p.31)

This understanding of critical pedagogy also emanates from an understanding that education makes capitalism possible. It is not only a cultural handiwork to teach hatred to children but it is located in a context of labour-capital relations where teaching hatred is required by capital in current conjuncture because it feels threatened by the possible eruptions against its misdeeds. It is precisely because of this that pedagogy within classrooms are asking us to read texts of particular kind, why teachers of particular kind are being appointed in universities and schools and why refreshers courses are being redesigned as well. Outside these institutions the pedagogical significance of advertisements, lies spread through social media and technological advancement used to dislocate and relocate the figures of leaders are other forms of pedagogy. But to ensure that this is carried out in the most effective way, the education system is also proving dangerous to them because sitting here we all are also talking about critical pedagogy and something called neoliberalism. There is a need to change this body of people called teachers because they can be dangerous as well.

...because education and training socially produce labour-power, and there are real limits to this process, this is a source of labour's strength as well as its tragic predicament. On the latter, the tragedy of labour results from the fact that labour creates its own opposite (capital) that comes to dominate it... Indeed, it creates something that permeates its own soul in the form of human capital. On the other hand, teachers and trainers are implicated in socially producing the single commodity – labour-power – on which the whole capitalist system rests. This gives them a special sort of social power. They work at the chalkface of capital's weakest link: labour-power. Hence, they have the capacity to work with Red Chalk... to open up visions of alternatives to capitalism in the classroom, or at least provide vital critiques of its violent class relation and market inequalities. Teachers are in a special position

regarding their capacity to disrupt and to call into question the capitalist class relation. Furthermore, teachers can also insert principles of social justice into their pedagogy, principles that are antithetical to the generation of the class divide and also market and social inequalities (Allman et., al).

The war is on, those with access to resources, technologies and all kinds of weaponry are out there to fight there. The counter-offensive is weak because the understanding of the situation itself is very superficial. To fight fascism we go back to the liberals as Gramsci puts it

The worker, the peasant, who for years has hated the fascism that oppresses him believes it necessary, in order to bring it down, to ally himself with the liberal bourgeoisie, to support those who in the past, when they were in power, supported and armed fascism against the workers and peasants, and who just a few months ago formed a sole bloc with fascism and shared in the responsibility for its crimes. And this is how the question of the liquidation of fascism is posed? No! The liquidation of fascism must be the liquidation of the bourgeoisie that created it. (Gramsci, 1924)

Hill (2017) intervenes in this whole debate in an extremely manner when he succinctly points what does being critical mean: “teachers should be actively involved in the fights for economic and social justice, that they should be critical, organic, public, socialist, transformative intellectuals, who are activists”. He goes on to define each of these concepts:

Critical means just that- being suspicious, questioning, interrogating, not accepting prima facie evidence, digging deeper, with a commitment to social and economic justice

Organic is being part of, knowing about, living, and representing the class/section of the class we are representing.

Public means going public, speaking out, and defying intimidation.

Socialist means being egalitarian, working for an egalitarian, and non-capitalist society, where the wealth (such as ‘the commanding heights of the economy’—banks, industry, and public utilities) of the country is owned collectively.

Transformative means using our abilities, teaching, membership, and leadership to critique and work towards reconstruction.

Then he says that we are not merely intellectuals but we are “socialist critical transformative intellectuals whose responsibility is “to offer intellectual stimulus, analysis, utopianism, hope, vision—and an analysis of how to get there—organization.” Located within the labour-capital dialectic is the position of the teacher and task of critical pedagogy. However, this location remains non-effective unless there is a conscious responsibility taken upon the self by the critical educators to act towards the goal of non-exploitative, non-oppressive social and economic order. Unfortunately, that is where the left educators fail in their own different ways. Being an organized Left they have not created a well-thought critical pedagogy as per the debates outlines above and developed critical voices that become participants in the anti-systemic struggles. Or, they have confined their analysis to how powerful the space of education – classroom or institutions – are not leading to the logical culmination of how those spaces become part of street struggles. This inability to *go beyond* has also led to making universities into a separate set of battleground and India is a good example to show how over last one decade or so universities have lost most of their battles against the system because the support base of those struggles always remained confined within the boundaries of intellectuals and did not spill onto the streets and societies outside of it. If fascism or any form of authoritarianism is to be fought the correct measure of the battleground has to be made – it is more than the universities. It is everywhere and as critical

educators this understanding would lead to better strategisation of fights against the system that has created a complex web of consensualising mechanisms – within as well as outside the educational institutions.

Notes

¹I am thankful to the reviewer for comments. It has helped me to reflect on certain aspects, which were completely left out.

²The labour laws can be changed at both the levels. In the federal structure, different federal governments have the right to change the labour laws within their own territories and for the industrial units that come under their purview whereas the central/national government has to change the laws for the units that come under its purview.

³See for related information: <http://economictimes.indiatimes.com/tech/ites/it-to-layoff-up-to-2-lakh-engineers-annually-for-next-3-years-head-hunters-india/articleshow/58670563.cms>; <https://thewire.in/157093/1-5-million-jobs-lost-2017-demonetisation/>; <http://www.livemint.com/Industry/4CXsLIIZXf8uVQLs6uFQvK/Top-7-IT-firms-including-Infosys-Wipro-to-lay-off-at-least.html>

⁴<https://www.bloombergquint.com/business/2017/06/27/india-may-see-more-job-losses-over-next-decade-low-skill-jobs-skill-development>

⁵Aadhar is a national identification number allotted to each individual to which there are massive oppositions but the government is forcing it upon people. Some of these views can be found at <https://scroll.in/article/832595/privacy-security-and-egality-are-not-the-only-serious-problems-with-aadhaar-here-are-four-more>; <https://thewire.in/119323/real-problem-aadhaar-lies-biometrics/>; <https://thewire.in/136102/coercion-aadhaar-project-ushar/>

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