

# **Critical Teacher Education for Economic, Environmental and Social Justice**

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## **Abstract**

*In this paper we set out proposals that constitute a democratic Marxist manifesto for teacher education for economic, environmental and social justice. In doing so, we of course recognise structural limitations on progressive action but also that teacher agency is shaped and not erased by these. We therefore sketch the strategic shape a transformative UK teacher education might take in resistance to attacks on workers from longstanding neoliberal hegemony and, more recently, from so-called 'austerity'.*

**Keywords:** *Teacher Education; Social Class; Marxist; Eco-Socialist; Economic Justice; Environmental Justice; Social Justice*

## **Introduction**

In this paper we set out proposals that constitute a democratic Marxist manifesto for teacher education for economic, environmental and social justice. In doing so, we of course recognise structural limitations on progressive action but also that teacher agency is ‘shaped’ rather than ‘erased’ by these. We thereby sketch the strategic shape a transformative UK teacher education might take in resistance to attacks on workers from longstanding neoliberal hegemony and, more recently, from so-called ‘austerity’.

We position our analysis in opposition to the Radical Right in both its neoconservative and its neoliberal manifestations (Hill, 2012, 2013a, b, 2017; Hill et al, 2016). We include in this critique neoliberalised social democratic parties such as New Labour in the UK, Pasok in Greece, the PS in France, PSOE in Spain, and other social democratic parties, and former Radical Left parties such as Syriza in Greece, which have brought in privatisation and welfare cuts. We define these as neoliberalised social democratic parties (in the UK, so-called ‘Third Way’ or ‘New Labour’ (c.f. Ball, 2007, Hill, 2006, 2007)). We are mindful of the failed ‘Third Way’ projects of social democracy as symptomatic of the failure of social democratic parties to galvanise those on the Left demoralised by successive neoliberal assaults on workers’ rights, wage, and the social wage. Counter-hegemonic praxis has had to adapt and the work of ‘single-issue groups’ has taken on greater significance in resisting the juggernaut of marketization, privatization and New Public Managerialism. These have rallied around education campaigning foci rather than an agreed manifesto.

However, in the period since the 2008 economic crisis, the potential of these campaigns to unite resistance and build class consciousness has increased.

There is no sign of a return to pre-crisis levels of growth. Workers are suffering the material impact of what Roberts calls a ‘Long Depression’ similar in magnitude to those beginning in 1873 and 1929 (Roberts, 2015). Trade union confidence is still low but there are signs of recovery. In the UK, the teaching assistants’ dispute (BBC, 2017) is a recent example. There have also been several local - sometimes successful - anti-academy actions in which teachers, parents and activists have resisted proposed ‘Academy’ status for their school (academisation effectively hands schools over to private organisations and businesses, c.f. AAA, 2018). And as we write, in spring 2018, university staff members of the University and College Union (UCU) are fighting attacks on their pension (The Telegraph, 2018). We have also seen significant strikes more widely, such as that by the RMT union on various rail networks.

Some campaigns may seem piecemeal and short-lived, but many young teachers will be new to active struggle. It is here that they can learn the objective power of our class and the foci which activate education campaigns - testing regimes, teacher workload, narrowed curricula, budget cuts, academisation and privatisation - can draw their attention to the larger issues at stake. The national and local campaigns against budget cuts to schools were highly effective against the Conservatives in the 2017 general election campaign, linking local and national cuts. There is potential for galvanizing a union of environmental, social and economic concerns, and labour rights struggles, in the educational sphere. As we argue below, they suggest a project of united action against the capitalist vision of education in the twenty first century.

Before we proceed to detail the shape of such action however, it is strategically important to begin by outlining the current state of the structural context within which UK teacher education operates.

## **Part One: The Structure of Teacher Education**

### Whither Critical Teacher Education?

On the relation of teacher education to securing economic and social justice, Paula Allman (2000) argues

education has the potential to fuel the flames of resistance to global capitalism as well as the passion for socialist transformation. (Allman, 2000, p. 10)

The key question of course, is how far this transformative potential can be realised. The autonomy available to individuals, schools and teacher education providers has been brutally curtailed during the neo-liberal project (Hill, 2001a; 2004; 2017; Giroux, 2004). One of the greatest structural blocks on the development of cadres of counterhegemonic ‘teacher-intellectuals’ is their political neutralisation at the earliest stages of their induction into the governmentally proscribed ritual of ‘effective teaching’.

As noted elsewhere<sup>i</sup> this is part of the neo-liberal project of global capitalism. The World Bank is the greatest producer of policy ‘advice’ and funding for education of which governments are disciplined servants. Marketisation ensures a Business Agenda *for* Education (what it requires education to do) and a Business Agenda *in* Education (how it plans to make money out of education)<sup>ii</sup>. Corporate managerialisation consolidates control

over the certification of teachers in order to realign education to the need of the globalized economy. (McLaren and Baltodano, 2000, p. 35)

In England and Wales, successive regulations in 1992/1993/2007 and 2011 (DfE, 1992; 1993; 1998; 2007; 2011) have reduced Initial Teacher Education (ITE) to ‘delivery’ of a quietist set of 8 ‘Teachers’ Standards’, limiting

graduates to those who will innovate only *within* capital's assigned project. Indeed, restructuring of the teacher education landscape has incentivised school-based networks (many now outside of local authority control) to *lead* teacher recruitment and development, with universities having much reduced autonomy. These measures have firmly tethered Qualified Teacher Status (QTS) to pupil progress. This might seem rational were it not that 'progress' is reduced to the latest Standards and Testing Agency's (STA) test results, first administered in May 2016 against a backdrop of public concern and widespread academic condemnation (More Than a Score UK, 2017). The crudely positivist similarities to the payment-by-results, 'exam factory' system of nineteenth century England is very stark. Such commodification

rules out the very critical freedom and academic rigour which education requires to be more than indoctrination. (McMurtry, 1991, p. 215)

ITE in England and Wales is thus almost unrecognizable compared the 1960s and 1970s. Liberal progressive and social democratic teacher education of that period was one manifestation of a more widespread backlash against the conservative teacher-centred pedagogy of the post-second world war era. Interpretivist analyses of classroom ecologies displaced much of the reductionist and grandiose calculations of teacher effects on pupil outcomes championed by the effectiveness research movement. Reflective practice gained ground over competency frameworks, albeit with very uneven application. Even into the 1980s, many schools, universities and local education authorities developed curricula aimed at equality of opportunity, environmental sustainability and peaceful international relations. Indeed, some, such as the Inner London Education Authority (ILEA) tried to develop socialist anti-racist, anti-sexist policy and praxis seeking to combat working class disadvantage (ILEA, 1984; 1985; Hill, 1997a).

Of course, radical economic critique was conspicuous by its absence from liberal-progressive discourse. This is not surprising given that progressive education rests upon political reformist assumptions. As critics insist, social welfare gains for the working class were permissible only in the post-war, geopolitical context of profitability for Western imperialist leaders tightening their neo-colonial grip on labour, capital and markets abroad (Cliff 1957). Nonetheless, reformist alternatives to ‘austerity’ (i.e. Corbyn in the UK, Sanders in the USA, Podemos in Spain and Jean-Luc Mélenchon in France) have reignited enthusiasm for parliamentary politics. This presents opportunities, but historical lessons learned about the inadequacy of reformist solutions need to be shared.

### Detheorisation

Given the transformative power of theory, it is not surprising that the Right has detheorised initial teacher education (ITE). In England and Wales, under Conservative, New Labour and Conservative-led coalition governments, references to social scientific theory (pedagogic, philosophical and political) have disappeared from policy documentation. Now, ‘trainees must demonstrate ‘good subject knowledge’, partly through adherence to government-sponsored commercial programmes. They must not “exploit pupils’ vulnerability” which “might lead them to break the law” (DfE, 2011, p.14), leaving beginning teachers feeling uneasy about teaching history lessons referencing traditions of resistance - are children to be taught, for example, about anti-apartheid, suffragette, anti-war, social justice for social housing tenants, or environmental movements?

Of course, the UK government never present their ITE agenda as repressive. Policing of outcomes is consistently presented as ‘common sense ‘rather than reactionary (Boxley, 2017, p. 112). Yet, in exchange for QTS, beginning

teachers must confine criticality to technical adjustments which do not interrupt the rate of profit or otherwise challenge the hierarchical distribution of power. This is the hidden curriculum favoring technocrats who accept this assignation whilst punishing the potential visionaries.

To say that teacher education is being shaped by such forces is not, of course, to suggest defeat. It is rather that assessment is an essential supportive analysis to the forces of resistance, to which we now turn.

### Resistance in the Here and Now

For the majority of student teachers in the England and Wales, Radical Left groups have negligible impact upon their lives. It is unlikely that many socialists are heard presenting the case for a wholesale revolutionary transformation of schooling. It is rarely that ‘big-P’ Political positions are discussed during students’ ‘professional studies’, lending discussion a dull patina of ‘neutrality’- the currency of the ‘traditional intellectual’ (Gramsci, 1971).

Yet, campaigning over, for instance, privatisation issues, alongside traditional bread-and-butter trade-union type campaign work can be ‘stimuli’ and ‘subject matter’ for ITE. Very often, issues are effectively articulated within and through trade union structures. Over the years, the National Union of Teachers (NUT) has worked with the Socialist Teachers Alliance and Labour Party socialists as well as members of most of the small parties on the Marxist Radical Left (Regan, 2008).

With the accession to General Secretary of STA stalwart Kevin Courtney in 2016, it was widely felt that the STA had become increasingly domesticated,

and its place on the radical left of the NUT was taken by the Local Associations National Action Campaign (LANAC), an umbrella grouping of largely Trotskyist factions. The National Education Union (NEU) is a 2017 merger of the NUT and Association of Teachers and Lecturers (ATL) which enhances potential for united struggle. There are also new initiatives. One of the authors is currently working with the National Education Union's (NEU) pilot *Just One Change* project which provides trade union training for student teachers. This could be one way that ITE students are introduced to positions which run counter to the austerity agenda. The articulation of counterhegemonic ideas is a means to offer students the chance to consider the kinds of arguments presented by the Radical left and offer the possibility for critical discourse and consciousness to arise and be shared.

Though the organised left still remains relatively small and its influence unevenly felt, especially outside the capital, it is important to mention some of the UK organisations with which common ground is shared on the question of educational resistance:

1. The Socialist Workers Party: the SWP's status as the largest Marxist group in Britain is reflected in their numerical presence in the NEU. It has organised teachers largely under the auspices of united fronts.
2. Socialist Resistance, the British section of the Fourth International are also active within the STA, though, with the election of the left-wing social democrat Jeremy Corbyn as Labour leader in 2015, many members have joined the Labour Party.
3. The Alliance for Workers' Liberty operates within LANAC (and formerly the STA) and has an organisational presence in Leeds and Nottingham. They publish the annual *Workers' Liberty Teachers* magazine. Having deregistered as a political party, since 2015 its members have operated within the Labour Party.



4. Counterfire, the result of a factional split from the SWP in 2010, has members in the NUT/NEU and a strong presence in united front work around, for example, the People's Assembly.
5. The Socialist Party (SP) have organised within LANAC in the NUT/NEU, with a web presence (<http://socialistteachers.org.uk/>) and bulletin publication, *Socialist Party Teachers*.
6. The National Campaign Against Fees and Cuts, a socialist organisation of students and education workers, played a major role in the student demonstrations of 2010 (when over 130,000, mainly students, marched, c.f. Hill, 2010), the 2011 demonstrations (when around 15,000 took part) and 2014 (when around 10,000 took part). They, together with other groups and student unions, have organised a number of occupations of university buildings, for example (at Sussex University) against privatisation of university services.

In total, Radical Left education workers in these groups can be counted in the hundreds, rather than the thousands across the whole of England and Wales. It is thus unsurprising that few student teachers are ever exposed to proposals of the kind offered by these organisations. However, a small number of academics attempt to introduce education students to Marxist ideas and analysis, and some hundreds in total have, since 2010, attended the annual ICCE conference, *International Conference on Critical Education* (i.e. ICCE, 2018) , and rather smaller numbers the occasional *Marxism and Education: Renewing Dialogues* conferences and seminars, co-ordinated at various times by Glenn Rikowski, Tony Green and Alpesh Maisuria (c.f. Canaan et al, 2013).

Moreover, single issue campaigning can build united resistance. Engaging student teachers in campaigns can build opposition to government policy. The

issues of the day; cuts in student maintenance grants, racism, imperialist conflicts, and climate change; are ‘educational questions. Spaces to address these within teacher education curricula can be created. Radical left groups have published useful materials (i.e. Kelly and Malone 2006; Socialist Resistance, 2007; Wilkes 2007a; 2007b, Magdoff and Bellamy Foster, 2011). These make the connection between unfettered growth and an education system which feeds and reproduces both production and consumption sides of an unsustainable economic system. This is not the place to draw out these connections<sup>iii</sup>, let it suffice to say that, in his last days Paolo Freire recognised that

[e]cology has gained tremendous importance at the end of this century. It must be present in any educational practice of a radical, critical, and liberating nature. (Freire, 2004, p.47)

Of strategic importance in this, is critical Ecopedagogy. Ecopedagogy recognises a dialectic between ‘environmental justice’ - the question of the unequal distribution of harmful environments between people - and ‘ecological justice’ - the justice of the relationship between humans and the rest of the world. McLaren and Houston (2005a) “map out what a dialectics of environmental and ecological justice might look like” (McLaren and Houston 2005a, pp. 169-70). This involves creating curriculum space to draw out the complex web of relations between local environmental injustices; historical injustices arising out of the circuits of capitalist socioeconomic relations, including racism and colonialism; the impacts of industrial processes on the planet’s ecosystems; and the ideological production of nature under capitalism. Understanding the material and ideological production of nature as a social and historical process highlights how our ideas of what matters in nature is never fixed, uniform, or stable.

[What an ecosocialist project for ITE] broadly illuminates is precisely how the present state of nature is neither inevitable nor desirable - and that ecologically and socially just alternatives exist. (McLaren and Houston 2005a, p.173)

So far in this paper, we have suggested some strategic responses to the restructuring of initial teacher education. We turn now to principles and policies. We begin by addressing education as a whole in Tables 1 and 2, and then a set of principles and proposals for ITE in Tables 3 and 4.

## **Part Two: Radical Left Principles for Education and ITE**

### The Radical Left and Education as a Whole

Though there is some debate, the following four principles are broadly accepted by the Radical Left.

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| <ol style="list-style-type: none"><li>1. vastly increased equality (of outcome)</li><li>2. comprehensive provision (i.e. no selection)</li><li>3. democratic community control</li><li>4. use of the local and national state to achieve an anti-discriminatory society, rather than simply an inegalitarian meritocratic focus on equal opportunities to get to very unequal outcomes.</li></ol> |
|---|

Table 1. Overarching Radical Left principles for Education

These overarching Radical Left principles are expressed through the following twenty principles<sup>iv</sup> which include some recognition of the emerging debate both in Europe and the USA over what McLaren and Houston (2005a) term ‘critical ecopedagogy’<sup>v</sup>.

1. Increased funding, resulting in, for example, smaller class sizes, better resources and low environmental impact school buildings set in grounds conducive to child and community development;
2. An end to selection and the development of fully comprehensive system;
3. A ban on private education;
4. Schools and colleges on a 'human scale' within communities;
5. Greatly increased provision of free school transportation;
6. Free nutritious school food;
7. Cooperation between schools and local authorities, rather than marketised competition;
8. Community democratic accountability, rather than illusory 'parental choice';
9. Increased powers for democratically elected and accountable local government;
10. Enactment of policies aimed at achieving greatly more equal educational outcomes, irrespective of factors such as social class, gender, 'race', sexuality or disability;
11. Anti-elitist, anti-racist, flexible common curriculum;
12. Rich curriculum, allowing themes, natural and human processes to be explored in a range of ways - artistically, musically, scientifically, politically, ecologically;
13. Place-based learning: critical studies of environmental impacts of capital on local scales alongside historical injustices arising out of exploitative economic relations;
14. Teaching and learning to foster critical awareness, sensitivity towards and confidence and ability to challenge ecological and social injustice;
15. The abolition of punitive testing regimes and the establishment of alternative creative assessment practices;
16. Teachers educated to exercise authority in democratic and anti-authoritarian ways, with a commitment to developing their school and community as sites of ecological and political awareness and activism;
17. Breaking down of boundaries fixed within educational systems i.e., between childhood dependency and adult responsibility and between subject specialisms;
18. Teachers and administrators who act as role models of integrity, care and thoughtfulness in institutions capable of embodying ideals in all of their operations, avoiding hypocrisy in a separation of academic and theoretical ideals from reality;
19. Recognition on the part of teachers and officials that all knowledge acquired in schools and FE and HE institutions carries with it the responsibility to see that it is well used in the world;
20. A fostering of democratic, egalitarian, collaborative and collegiate culture.

Table 2. Radical Left Principles for Education

Radical Left Principles for Initial Teacher Education

We turn now to these principles within teacher education. These, we suggest, should form the basis of the review and development of current policy, theory and practice. In the table below, we set out those principles, together with New Labour, social democratic (i.e. Old Labour' or 'Corbynite'), and Radical Right positions. Though not exact equivalents, closely corresponding education philosophies are also given.

	RADICAL LEFT	LABOUR RIGHT	SOCIAL DEMOCRATIC	RADICAL RIGHT
	Social Reconstructionism	Liberal Pragmatism	Liberal Progressivism	Conservatism
(i) the development of classroom skills and competencies		√√	√√	√√
(ii) the development of subject knowledge	√√	√√	√√	√√
(iii) the development of intellectual critical skills	√√	√√	√	XX
(iv) commitment to ethical/moral/environmental 'critical reflection' and its egalitarianism	√√	XX	√	XX
(v) inclusion of data on equality issues organized both as core units and as permeation	√√	XX	√	XX
(vi) a holistic approach to social, economic and environmental justice in the curriculum	√√	XX	X	XX

(vii) skills in dealing with discrimination, harassment and labelling within classrooms and institutions	√√	√?	√	XX
(viii) the development within institutions of open <i>fora</i> on social and ecological justice and equality where students and staff in institutions can meet in a supportive environment	√√	XX?	√?	XX
(ix) development of critiques of competing social and economic theories and ideologies in schooling and society	√√	XX	?	XX
(x) development of knowledge and skills to critically examine the ideological nature of teaching and the nature of teachers' work	√√	XX	?	XX
(xi) knowledge and skills to critically examine the ideological nature and effects of education policy and its relationship to broader economic, environmental, social and political developments	√√	XX	?	XX

(xii) the concurrent development of critical reflection, throughout and from the beginning of the ITE course	√√	XX	?	XX
(xiii) primarily, but not totally predetermined rather than primarily negotiated curriculum objectives	√√	XX	?	√
(xiv) support for a major role for higher education institutions in ITE. Opposition to totally/primarily school-based routes	√√	√X	√√	XX
(xv) acceptance of different routes into teaching concordant with graduate teacher status and the above principles	√√	XX	?	XX

Table 3. Fifteen Radical Left Principles for the Initial Teacher Education Curriculum

Table 3 Key index:

- √√ Strong Agreement
- √ Agreement
- ?? Not at all Clear/Very Arguably so
- ? Not Clear/Arguably so
- O Equanimity
- X Disagreement
- XX strong disagreement

### Radical Left Proposals for a Core Curriculum for ITE

These proposals do not imply a return to education's post-war liberal-progressive and social democratic consensus. They arise in a landscape dominated by capitalist crisis and subject not only to the social and economic insecurities inherent to the capitalist mode of production, but also environmental insecurities of the most pressing kind arising from the same material bases. They pursue the four overarching principles for education as a whole by requiring a core curriculum for ITE that will:

- Engage in pedagogic theory in which the socio-political, economic and environmental contexts of schooling and education are explicit. This includes understanding of children, schooling, society and nature, their inter-relationships, and alternative views and methods of, for example, classroom organization, schooling, and the economic and political relationship to society and nature;
- Develop equal opportunities so that children do not suffer from labelling, under-expectation, stereotyping or prejudice;
- Enable student teachers to develop as critical, reflective teachers, able, for example, to decode media, ministerial (and indeed, Radical Left) distortion, bias, and propaganda. This encourages the development of teachers, able to interrelate and critique theory and practice (their own and that of others);
- Include not only technical reflection, but also critical reflection, so as to question a particular policy or theory, and to ask such critical questions as 'whose interests are served?'; 'who wins?' (if only by legitimating the status quo) and 'who loses?';
- Enable student teachers to understand the social, economic and environmental inequalities and injustices present in their places of work and residence, and to critically engage with ways in which these might be challenged;

Table 4. Radical Left Proposals for the ITE Core Curriculum

Of the following proposals, the first three are common across different ideological positions, and because of their near universality in Britain, we do



not develop them here. The next two are also widely shared, although they assume different degrees of salience within those positions. The final ten propositions are more specifically Radical Left-Green.

The ITE Curriculum should include:

1. **Classroom Skills and Competencies:** Teachers need reflective skills and understanding of learning, teaching and classroom management.
2. **Subject Knowledge:** Clearly, teachers need to know what they are talking about and what they wish pupils to learn.
3. **The Development of Higher Level Analytical and Intellectual Skills.** This demands that teachers are capable of acting and thinking at an abstract level as understood by, for example, Vygotsky's 'scientific' thinking.
4. **Support for a Major Role for Higher Education Institutions in ITE and Opposition to School-Led Routes:** Higher Education institutions focus on developing the theoretical perspectives outlined above, promoting the advance of pedagogy through a theory-practice dialectic.
5. **Welcoming of Different Routes into Teaching Concordant with Graduate Teacher Status and the Above Principles:** The routes into teaching are tactical matters, subject to these principled considerations. The provision of more 'flexible' routes into teaching should not result in a compromising of other principles and should not translate into a 'flexibilisation' or fractionalising of the mass teaching force, such as the inclusion within the ranks of 'teachers' of a second-class of 'paraprofessional' cadres.
6. **A Commitment to Economic, Social and Environmental Justice, and Recognition of the Interconnection Between the Three:** If equal opportunities policies stop at celebrating cultural diversity and establishing positive and non-stereotypical role models, and do not see themselves as a development of broader economic justice, then they can be viewed as, in essence,

conservative, for failing to challenge the status quo, based as it is on social class and exploitation (Bullard, 2005) . A Radical Left perspective highlights the partial and therefore illusory nature of economic and social justice within the capitalist economic system.

7. Research Evidence on Equality Issues - On Racism, Sexism, Social Class Inequality, Homophobia, And Discrimination/ Prejudice/ Regarding Disability and Special Needs, And the Intersection of These Factors With Economic And Environmental Inequalities: Core units on equality and equal opportunities are required. Weaknesses of the permeation model limit effectiveness and issues must be put firmly on the agenda, not just slipped into spaces within other sessions (Gaine1995). A holistic approach requires firstly, that these are approached conceptually, thereby interlinking different forms of oppression; and secondly, organizationally, as part of units addressing data, theory and policy in general.
8. A Class-Based Approach to Social, Economic and Environmental Justice in the Curriculum: This is not to declare, *ab initio*, that all children should receive totally equal amounts of teacher time. Equality of treatment ignores the greater resources required by children with greater needs. Table 5 below sketches an outline curriculum.

Analytical primacy should of course be given to class. Class is the structurally central social relation of capitalist education, law, media, military and other apparatuses. It is the defining feature of capitalist exploitation, whereas other forms of oppression are not essential to its continuation, however much they are functional to this. Student teachers should know that the Weberian-inspired lexicon of ‘class’ in current common usage does not equate to the economic categories of classical Marxist critique, but are, rather, commodified categories defined by levels and patterns of consumption, and largely of use to bourgeois social theorists, marketeers and economists.

	Social Class	'Race' and Religion	Sex	Sexuality	Special Needs
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>➤ What's the problem?</li> <li>➤ Evidence/data on inequality</li> <li>➤ Quantitative statistical</li> <li>➤ Qualitative Student's life histories children's life histories in                             <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• classrooms</li> <li>• school institutions</li> <li>• the education system</li> <li>• ITE</li> <li>• societal structures and environments (i.e. housing, employment, politics, media)</li> </ul> </li> </ul>					
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>➤ Why is it happening and why it should or should not?</li> <li>➤ Theoretical analyses explaining, justifying, critiquing/ attacking such inequality, including, for instance:                             <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• biological models</li> <li>• conservative structural functionalism</li> <li>• liberal democratic pluralism</li> <li>• structuralist neo-Marxism</li> <li>• culturalist neo-Marxism</li> </ul> </li> </ul>					

<p>➤ Anti-egalitarianism policy developments which seek, or have the effect of, increasing inequality in:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• classrooms</li> <li>• school institutions</li> <li>• the education system/ITE</li> <li>• society and societal structures</li> <li>• local and global environments</li> </ul>					
<p>➤ Egalitarian policy developments that seek, or have the effect of increasing, egalitarianism in:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• classrooms</li> <li>• school institutions</li> <li>• the education system/ITE</li> <li>• society and societal structures</li> <li>• local and global environments</li> </ul>					

Table 5. Curriculum Detail for Student and In-Service Teacher Education Courses

We are aware here of different levels of truth (which is not to lapse into postmodernist relativism). As Allman (1999) notes, there are meta-transhistorical truths which hold across ‘the entirety of human history’ (p. 136). Then there are transhistorical truths, which have held good to date but could be invalidated in the future. Thirdly, there are truths historically specific to a particular historical formation such as capitalism, the sorts of truths Marx was

primarily interested in. Finally, there are conjuncturally specific truths - propositions that attain validity within specific developmental phases of a social formation, such as current data and specific issues, which are transient to a greater or lesser degree, even though the mode of their analysis may not be so.

From a Marxist perspective, it is essential to accept as fundamental to dialectical methodology the epistemological liberty to abstract conceptual particularities in a flexible manner with regard to their generality. It would be of no use to abstract a singular phenomenon, such as a sudden shift in government education policy without the capacity to identify the event not only locally and in policy-specific context, but also within the context of economic growth imperatives derived from structural features of capitalist accumulation.

A failure to recognise the importance of expanding the parameters of a process can result in a tendency to abstract end results as self-referencing and requiring only internal reorientation. A re-emphasis of the pupil testing regime, for instance might be understood largely in terms of ‘correcting’ or ‘rebalancing’ results, requiring technical or working-practice solutions, rather than raising questions about radical change in terms of patterns of teaching and learning, knowledge production consumption and exchange. Ollman (2003) provides a useful framework of generality levels within which abstractive acts may occur. The lens at Ollman’s ‘level two’, for example, de-focuses those attributes which are particular to individuals and foregrounds “what is general to people, their activities, and products because they exist and function within modern capitalism” (Ollman, 2003, p.88). Clearly, a dialectical relationship between educator and students would result in a degree of negotiated curriculum detail at different levels of analysis and critique.

- **Skills in Dealing with the Incidence of Classist, Homophobic, Racist, And Sexist Remarks and Harassment at Various Levels, such as Within the Classroom and Throughout the Institution:** It is important here to address other types of harassment, such as labelling and bullying based on body-shape, and their corrosive effects on children's learning and well-being.
- **The Development Within Institutions of Open Fora on Social and Ecological Justice where Students and Staff in Institutions Can Meet in a Supportive Environment:** This is an additional form of learning, where individual self-development comes through sharing experience and ideas. Teachers contribute their knowledge not only by transmission but also through interlocution where individual contributions are valued and respected. The culture of such a forum can foster a climate where individual 'voices', levels of consciousness and experiences, and levels of critique are legitimated. Such 'voices' however should be subject to critical interrogation, not accepted uncritically<sup>vi</sup>.
- **Critiques of Competing Approaches and Ideologies of Schooling, Teacher Education and Social and Economic Organisation:** This should include skills to examine critically the nature of curricula, hidden curricula and pedagogy, schooling, education and society. This enables student teachers to challenge the ideologies that underpin the selection of knowledge that they are being asked to teach, as well as official models of the teacher development and major ideologies of education.
- **The Development of Knowledge and Skills to Critically Examine the Ideological Nature of Teaching and the Nature of Teachers' Work:** Here, student teachers should develop an understanding of the potential role of teachers in transforming society so that they can “resist becoming mere managers of day-to-day activities imposed from beyond the school” (Harris, 1994, p. 115).

- The Concurrent Rather Than the Consecutive Development of Critical Reflection, Throughout and from the Beginning of the ITE Course: The common assumption in ITE is that levels of reflection should be developed in sequential order, i.e. that critical reflection is more appropriate for teachers who have attained technical-reflective skills (Calderhead and Gates, 1993; Hill, 1997b). However, if the social context of schooling is left until 'post-initial training', many Newly Qualified Teachers will not actually get any post-initial training other than in-service training days which are overwhelmingly instrumental, concerned with how to 'deliver' results. If contextual, theoretical and social/economic justice and equality issues are not studied during Initial Teacher Education, they may never be.
- Substantially predetermined rather than primarily negotiated curriculum objectives: Calderhead and Gates (1993) raise the key questions of whether

a truly reflective teaching program should have predefined content or [...] be negotiated, [and how to] reconcile the aim of developing particular areas of knowledge, skill and attitudes with the aim of encouraging autonomy and professional responsibility (Calderhead and Gates, 1993, p. 3).

This is an issue for postmodernist, postmodern feminist and liberal pluralist critiques of the concept of teachers as critical transformative intellectuals, as well as postmodernist critiques of Marxist class-based analysis and policy proposals. They refer to the tension between developing student teacher autonomy on the one hand and seeking to develop a particular ideology on the other. Liston and Zeichner observe the significant historical shift of emphasis within the Radical Left (1987). At various times the focus has been on the content of programmes, the skill of critical analysis and curriculum development, the nature of the pedagogic relationships between teachers and pupils, and between teacher educators and their students, or on the connections

between teacher educators and other political projects which seek to address the many instances of suffering and injustice in our society (p. 33).

The debate centres on whether ‘democratic participative pedagogy’ should typify a programme. Arguably, heavy use of learner-centred discussion militates against the development of the broad span of critical theoretical insights argued for here. In accordance with Radical Left principles, course objectives should - following national debate and taking into account particular student needs at any particular historical juncture - be substantially pre-determined in such a way as to allow critique to be brought to bear at the different levels of analysis referred to above.

This proposal is for a curriculum which is organic in the sense Gramsci (1971) intends when referring to the formation of intellectuals. As Rikowski (2001c) notes

[for] organic intellectuals, the goal is not ‘to tell the people what to think’ but to enable them to think clearly - to provide them with the tools (critical literacy in the first instance) to engage in cultural action incorporating the exercise of critical (dialectical) consciousness aimed at social transformation. (Rikowski, 2001c, p. 63)

Of course, a teacher educator is also educated in the process of forming a dialectical unity with the student groups/teachers that is non-antagonistic, as participants move from

concrete conceptions of the world (their limited praxis) ... [towards] ... a critical, scientific or, in other words, dialectical conceptualization. (Allman, 1999, p. 115)



- The Application of Critical Evaluation to School-Based Practice and Experience: Theory can provide the analytic and conceptual apparatus for thinking about practice, within the formal and hidden curriculum, while practice can provide the opportunity for the testing and assimilation of theory. Since successive government's restructuring have moved the landscape gradually towards school-led and school-based ITE programmes, the detheorization of teacher education is a major problem in the development of effective teaching, critical skills, awareness and teaching, and in the development of a revolutionary transformative critical pedagogy.
- Environmental Justice Pedagogy: Environmental justice pedagogy also entails active engagement between students, communities and the environment - projects might include urban food production/gardening; water catchment monitoring, public open space issues, green energy, sustainable transport, local impacts of climate change, such as flooding etc. in addition to the more traditional 'eco-sustainability' activities such as recycling and visiting national parks. Environmental justice pedagogy enlarges the field of environmental education to address complex social, economic and environmental issues at multiple geographical scales so that students can empirically locate themselves within them and develop critical, historical and transformative knowledge. This is important for students and teachers living and working in economically disadvantaged urban communities - because it can reorient the curriculum to deal with specific environmental justice issues that these communities face (Houston, 2007).

### **Conclusion: The Politics of Educational Transformation**

Arguments that we live in a post-capitalist, post-industrial, or postmodern era can be contested, as can the Radical Right argument set out in only slightly different ways by Conservative and New Labour governments, that the only

future for humankind is the application of free market economics to the societies of the world. A Radical Left re-organization of societies, and of their educational apparatuses, committed to egalitarianism and economic and social justice, remains viable.

Radical Right models, even with social democratic gloss, are of little relevance in this endeavour. Practices in schooling and in teacher education need to be changed, rather than reproduced. Radical Right and Centrist ideology on schooling, training and ITE serves a society aiming only for the hegemony of the few and the entrenchment of privilege, not the promotion of equality and economic and social justice.

Teacher educators from various other political perspectives may well agree with a number of the recommendations we make. They may not agree with the explicit emancipatory, critical and transformative role of teacher. Yet this role, and the role teachers as critical, organic, public intellectuals instead of technicians, is necessary for the development of a critical, interrogating, citizenry - thoughtful, questioning, perceptive as well as skilled - pursuing a democratic, anti-authoritarian, socially responsible and socially and economically just society.

Many of the educational Left vacated the ideological battlefield during the neo-liberal media offensives. In 2001, McLaren wrote

part of the problem faced by the educational left today is that even among progressive educators there exists an ominous resignation produced by the seeming inevitability of capital. (McLaren, 2001, p. 28)

This has been true of erstwhile Left writers, educationalists and ideologues in Britain in their retreat from the cultural and educational advances of the 1970s and 1980s (c.f. Farahmandpur, 2004; Kelsh and Hill, 2006; Rikowski, 2006; Hill, 2007). It has also been a feature of education policy analysis (typified by the rightward Labour party shift before the onset of Corbynism).

However - whilst we do not underestimate the limitations on the autonomy of teachers, teacher educators, and indeed, the very limited autonomy of the educational sphere from the economic - historically and internationally, this does not imply that this backward trend will continue. Spaces always exist for counter-hegemonic struggle - sometimes narrower, sometimes (as in the 1960s and 1970s) broader. Moreover, the 2008 economic crisis has triggered a fight back from education workers. The 2016-17 Teaching Assistants' dispute was an impressive demonstration of solidarity. Tens of thousands of students discovered and learned from the mass student marches against student fees in 2009 and 2010 (Hill, 2010). And currently, having recognised the limitations, and having recognised that there is potential for transformative change, we maintain that whatever space does exist should be exploited.

By itself, divorced from other arenas of progressive struggle, its success will be limited. This necessitates the development of pro-active debate both by, and within Radical Left organisations and parties, and education worker trade unions. But it necessitates more than that. It calls for direct engagement with liberal pluralist (modernist or postmodernist) and with Radical Right ideologies and programmes in and through all the Ideological and Repressive State Apparatuses.

As intellectual workers educating teachers, the ideological intervention of teacher educators is likely to have more impact than that of sections of the workforce less saliently engaged in ideological production and reproduction. But, by itself, the activity of transformative intellectual teacher educators, however skilful and committed, can have only an extremely limited impact on an egalitarian transformation of society. Unless linked to a grammar of resistance, such resistant and counter-hegemonic activity is likely to fall on relatively stony ground. As McLaren and Baltodano (2000) suggest, reclaiming schools and teacher education as arenas of cultural struggle and education in general as a vehicle for social transformation in conservative/capitalist times is premised upon a clear commitment to organize parents, students and communities (p. 41; c.f. Rikowski, 2001e).

In keeping aloft ideals of economic, social and environmental justice and of dissent, teacher educators and the community must resist the ideological hijacking of our past, present and future. Teachers and teacher educators are too strategically valuable in children's and students' education to have slick media panaceas and slanted ministerial programmes attempting to dragoon them into being uncritical functionaries of a conservative state and of the fundamentally and essentially inegalitarian and immoral society and education system reproduced by the capitalist state and its apparatuses.

The particular perspectives defined in this paper are based on a belief that teachers should be transformative intellectuals. They should enable their students, not only to gain knowledge and skills but also to question, critique, judge and evaluate 'what is', 'what effects it has', and 'why?' and to be concerned and informed about equality and economic, environmental and social justice - in life beyond the classroom door and within the classroom walls.

As McLaren (2001, p. 31) puts it, “Do we, as radical educators, help capital find its way out of crisis, or do we help students find their way out of capital?” The success of the former challenge will only buy further time for the capitalists to adapt both its victims and its critics, the success of the latter will determine the future of civilization, or whether or not we have one.

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<sup>i</sup> c.f. Hill, 2004; 2013a; b; Rikowski, 2001a; b; c; 2002a; b; McLaren and Boltodano, 2000; Rees, 2001; McMurtry, 1999; Hatcher and Hirtt, 1999; Hatcher, 2001.

<sup>ii</sup> c.f. Hatcher, 2001; Molnar, 1999; 2001; Hill, 2001b; Rikowski, 2001a; b; c; 2002a; 2007.

<sup>iii</sup> c.f. McLaren and Houston 2005a.

<sup>iv</sup> For Radical Left discussion of these principles, c.f. Footnote (i) together with Hill, 1991; 2001b; 2002. In Australia this tradition is exemplified in the work of Kevin Harris (1979; 1982; 1984; 1994), and in the USA, most recently, by Peter McLaren and his associates, i.e. Aguirre, 2001; McLaren and Farahmandpur, 2005; McLaren and Rikowski, 2001.

<sup>v</sup> This is an emerging field: this article is not the place to map it, c.f. Gadotti 2003; Kahn 2003a; 2003b; 2005

<sup>vi</sup> See Kincheloe, Slattery and Steinberg, 2000; McLaren and Farahmandpur, 2005.