

Autocratic Top-down Censorship, Chris Hedges, and IATEFL's Entrenched Resistance to Anti-Capitalist Critical Pedagogy

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Preface: An article for EFL educators cursorily censored by IATEFL

The article below (here slightly expanded) -- an introduction with many hyperlinks to the critical theory and analysis of Chris Hedges as a key body of discourse within critical pedagogy and social justice analysis in the US -- was originally included in the *IATEFL Global Issues Newsletter* No. 40 (July-August 2019, <https://tinyurl.com/newslet40>) draft for publication, accepted by its editor as finalized. Hedges' critical thought is largely or completely unknown inside IATEFL, even among most members of the Global Issues SIG. But the 'gatekeeper' Publications Comm. at IATEFL -- the UK-based international association of teachers of English as a foreign or second language, a major educational UK charity, and the second-largest global association of EFL teachers on the planet -- demanded *at literally the last minute* that it be removed. It was then summarily censored from the newsletter linked above, distributed 1 Aug. 2019. The *GISIG Newsletter* editor defended the article in its relevance for social justice pedagogy inside EFL teaching, a core pedagogical focus of GISIG, but was arbitrarily overruled. At no point did the 4-member PubComm. try to contact me as author directly. A number of our colleagues in GISIG cannot comprehend why a person's individual views as an ELT professional are excluded here, they are not the 'views' of a SIG. What are the limits of freedom of opinion and expression inside IATEFL, especially within its 16 SIGs? IATEFL's heart are its SIGs. The core question: Do SIGs within

IATEFL have the autonomy cum right to publish what they and their appointed editors deem fit? If not, *why not?* Is there an invasive censorship filter in the association? I have been associated with GISIG since June 2002, and a member of its Committee now for a number of years as Yahoo discussion list animator. This was not a ‘desk reject’ (<https://tinyurl.com/reject654>). The Publications Comm. at IATEFL is not a ‘peer-review committee,’ it exercises a gatekeeper filter function, and must ‘authorize’ a newsletter by every one of 16 IATEFL SIGs before it can see the light of day and be distributed to SIG members. Unfortunately, SIG newsletters are behind paywalls, not open-access. All IATEFL SIGs fear they have to create members-only ‘benefits’ to sustain & boost membership, such as blocked access to newsletters for non-members. As the IATEFL hierarchy knows, I beg to differ, and think SIG membership should be cost-free, publications open-access to all EFL teachers across the planet. The PubComm. suggested -- to my mind likely a censorship subterfuge, given the fact that Hedges’ thinking is highly ‘offensive’ to the ruling class and the prevailing cultures and architectures of power -- that my article lacked concrete material on how to apply Hedges’ critique (radical, anti-capitalist) within EFL classroom practice. But it is not a ‘practical’ article. It is true that the article presents a rich *mélange* of material on Hedges’ thought, not a battery of prepared lesson plans and simplified ‘activities.’ Yet this is an article inside GISIG, one of several IATEFL SIGs with clear focal interests in social justice pedagogy. And in gaining better knowledge about how to frame arguments for honing social awareness, empathy and social change. Bewildering in this context is the naïve statement by the PubComm. to the editor about the article curtly justifying its censoring: “We are all unsure as to the reason for including it in the newsletter and its relevance for ELT professionals. ... how can they use it in the classroom?” Hedges is eloquent on ‘ecocide’, which is increasingly our key issue (<https://tinyurl.com/climeem999>) foregrounded inside GISIG. See his

three interviews with Extinction Rebellion founder below. And on US gun culture (<https://tinyurl.com/guncult876>), recent shootings, Lowkey's gun rap (<https://tinyurl.com/lowkeyguns99>) all over again (lyrics <https://tinyurl.com/gunlyrics99>). And outspoken on a whole array of issues relevant to our social and political malaise in virtually every society on the beleaguered planet at this darkening juncture. And he is rarely if ever cited by our EFL colleagues.

Limited space for the *Newsletter* article rendered it impossible to extrapolate on “how they can use it in the classroom.” For example, in developing ‘critical concept mapping’ (<https://tinyurl.com/concept987>), a cutting GISIG tool. I chose to concentrate on sketching access to Chris Hedges’ thinking, as yet too little known and discussed inside critical pedagogy within TEFL internationally. A second follow-up article concentrating on a review of Hedges’ book *Unspeakable: Chris Hedges on the Most Forbidden Topics in America* (2016 <https://tinyurl.com/unspeak777>) was announced in the article for the next Dec. *Newsletter* 41, and would also be dealing with more practical applications. In my view, most GISIG members are experienced teachers, many active with social justice pedagogy issues – institutional racism, corporate cultural and advert brainwashing (<https://tinyurl.com/advertwash99>) extreme social inequality, resolute BDS (<https://tinyurl.com/bds999x>) support, continuing US/EU-neo-imperialism, human flow, climate emergency and the shambolic contemporary Systemic ‘rifts’, ecological and other (<https://tinyurl.com/marxrif99>) in global capitalism in the Marxian sense. Along the analytical lines of Giroux, McLaren, Kincheloe, A. Maisuria (<http://www.jceps.com/archives/534>) & others. In the main, our GISIG colleagues have their own ideas/ experience in crafting exercises and activities, what students can read, listen to, discuss, interact with, write about. The

teachers don't constantly require pre-prepared lesson plans. They can publish such materials in follow-up, coupled as I recommend with exploratory action research (EAR <https://tinyurl.com/earsmith99>). The article is also targeted largely toward spurring teachers' more abstract critical knowledge -- and their own need for becoming better acquainted with CP theorists and their discourse, as Dave Hill (<https://tinyurl.com/dhill2010>, <https://tinyurl.com/dhill2019>) has strongly underscored generally for 'norm' teacher preparation and its umpteen+ deficiencies. Chris also interviewed various key people in London on the critical left in July/Aug 2019 on RT, eye-opening and linked now in the article below. The article introduces a substantial battery of materials as resource, as our GISIG editor clearly understood. To my mind, the IATEFL PubComm. was inadequately aware of that relevance -- unfortunately so, given the GISIG context of forging ELT "literacies of power" (<https://tinyurl.com/macedo999>) as reflected in this recent GISIG eco-webinar (<https://tinyurl.com/gisigweb99>). At issue here is *academic freedom of expression*. IATEFL can disagree but not *rush to delete*. Hedgesian discourse is at the heart of 'daring to disagree' and 'question more,' the wellspring of innovation: badly needed everywhere these days, also inside IATEFL and our classrooms. Listen to Margaret Heffernan's brilliant TEDtalk 'The Sound of Things Not Being Said' on that (<https://tinyurl.com/silen999>). Perhaps certain 'legal questions' are involved in censoring an article by an IATEFL 'watchdog' committee. But then they have to be spelled out precisely, openly aired.

It is recognized by an increasing number of EFL scholars, some very senior, that IATEFL-type thinking does not address state sector needs adequately 2019 anywhere. It is, perhaps inevitably as a UK charity, geared to private sector / industry needs and priorities, increasingly interwoven with the forces of capitalist accumulation (<https://tinyurl.com/harveyaccum>) across the globe --

esp. given the burgeoning TEFL industry worldwide, propagating (and propagandizing) a neo-imperial English as triumphant default world lingua franca. Reflective of that is the recent incisive 2-page critique of IATEFL by Scotland-based colleague Steve Brown (2019 <https://tinyurl.com/brown19x>), which I recommend all readers of the article below also read. Steve's article was published in IATEFL's July-August bulletin *VOICES* 269. Diversity of opinion is essential. Steve notes there:

In many contexts, ELT – perhaps more than most types of education – is used to indoctrinate learners into a neoliberal world of individualism, competitiveness and self-interest, but it needn't be like this. ELT could be used as a source of emancipation, giving people language skills that allow them to challenge hegemony and have a positive, transformative impact on global society. Over the years though, IATEFL has been noticeably reluctant to take a position against corporate ELT. ... IATEFL's silence on the way ELT promotes social and economic injustices is made all the more uncomfortable when we consider how it relies so heavily on corporate sponsorship for its own existence. ... It is certainly possible to criticise – and be frustrated by – IATEFL's reluctance to directly oppose the organisations that have shaped ELT's development into a neoliberal, market-driven profession. (pp. 10-11)

Steve also welcomes some recent ongoing changes, including the possibility to publish his own article. You can find a more direct earlier draft of his 2019 *Voices* article at his blogsite (<https://tinyurl.com/sbrownblog>). But my own article below, here slightly expanded, was summarily censored, no real discussion whatsoever. Of course, 'rewriting' was advised. Why? What specifically? Its 're-actionary' last-minute censorship was in effect a fait accompli. In my view, that needs to be interrogated inside IATEFL and the broader EFL teaching profession, and such practices halted. There are better ways of dialogue and reasoned procedure among ELT educators, as Heffernan

in her cited TEDtalk suggests for us all. In August 2015, an article of mine on teaching Gaza in the critical EFL classroom – and the entire *GISIG Newsletter* 32 issue – was held up by the Trustees for some eight weeks after it had been finalized on 31 July. A protracted discussion ensued, some deletions and changes were proposed, we reached an agreement (although I protested this interference) and the article and issue were finally published in late Sept., here a link to the issue: <https://tinyurl.com/gazaartic>.

Likewise In Sept. 2015, senior ELT scholar Alan Maley initiated an extended circular email discussion online: ‘A publishing experience to reflect on – and publicise’. It involved a chapter of his in a book that was accepted and then perfunctorily ordered removed, without consulting him, before publication by an editor at Routledge. Alan was truly incensed and raised a number of questions online about publishing ethics and procedure. And in effect a breach of a tacit ethical code in dealing with authors. The article was subsequently published in *HLT 18(3)*, (<https://tinyurl.com/hltmaley2016>), you can access there. An extract below is from his preface titled ‘The origins of this article’. Such power abuses in TEFL need to be called out, where and whenever they occur:

Shortly before the collection was being finalised, the editor was instructed by the series editors to withdraw my chapter. Clearly this academic publisher and its associated academic advisors have a very low threshold of tolerance for views which run counter to their own. ... Even if contrary views are believed to be invalid, they surely have a right to be aired? ... This is the sort of thing we might expect from a totalitarian dictatorship but not from a society embodying the democratic values of freedom of expression and the open debate of differing views which we pride ourselves so much on in the West. Those of you who are published authors will be well aware of the slow erosion of the rights of and respect for authors in the current publishing scene. ...The behaviour of the

publisher and its academic associates in this case seems to me to be even more disrespectful of the status of the author. Virtually the only means at our disposal as authors to combat this kind of behaviour is to make it as widely known as possible

Introduction

♪ *Hand On Your Gun* <https://tinyurl.com/lowkeyguns99>

OBAMA NATION <https://tinyurl.com/lowk99obama> ♪

This article -- its musical epigraph two Lowkey raps -- introduces colleagues to the thinking and life of dissident investigative journalist, social justice activist, writer and educator, Chris Hedges. He has established himself since leaving the *New York Times* in 2003 as a bold, outspoken thinker and activist in the US, not based in academe, in a sense now free and freelance. He has published 13 books, a number on the NYT Bestseller list, and is a regular columnist at *Truthdig* (<https://tinyurl.com/truth999>). His many readily accessible video-recorded talks, podcasts and interviews (a number hyperlinked below) are impressive. He also runs a superb weekly interview show on RT ‘On Contact’ (<https://www.rt.com/shows/on-contact/>). The American Academy of Arts and Sciences recently awarded him a prize for his contributions to American literature, stating: “His many books and columns on the website Truthdig about our broken democracy, corporate tyranny, and ecocidal madness inspire us to articulate action. His work is enlightening and intense—a furious necessity” (<https://tinyurl.com/HedAAAS>). All this comprises a robust storehouse of critical thinking confronting the impending/ ongoing crises we face. It can flow more into what ELT social justice pedagogy as emancipatory practice (<https://tinyurl.com/explor99>) -- as discussed by our colleague Steve Brown in IATEFL GISIG (Brighton IATEFL conference 2018), and his article in the

current *GISIG Newsletter* 40 (pp. 8-12 <https://tinyurl.com/newslet40>), based on his PCE L'pool presentation 2019 -- is seeking to achieve, informing and undergirding its conceptual architecture. The need is for destabilizing the pious hypocrisies of our dominant social and economic narratives, honing more powerful lenses of social critique and social empathy with the disadvantaged and excluded. This is a brief informative bio (<https://tinyurl.com/hedgesbio>) of Hedges at *Truthdig*. Here an overview of his work/life: <https://tinyurl.com/Hedges987>.

Latest probing book on America's unravelling within and without

His last book, on the decline of the United States, is *America: The Farewell Tour* (2018 <https://tinyurl.com/finaltour99>), with seven biting chapters: *DECAY – HEROIN – WORK – SADISM – HATE – GAMBLING – FREEDOM*. Readers can encounter Chris in a September 2018 interview about the book, titled “Collapse of the American Empire?” (<https://tinyurl.com/emp987>) – a video now approaching 2,740,000 views. A stimulating talk (<https://tinyurl.com/talkoct987>) in Oct. 2018 introducing the book's topics is also worth watching, discussing with colleagues, sharing with advanced students. The issues raised concerns us all, wherever we teach. They are central to radical critical pedagogy, and the American Studies as integrated into ELT teacher preparation and classroom discussions. Can help to open students' – and colleagues' – hearts and eyes. The book's website above notes:

America, says Pulitzer Prize-winning reporter Chris Hedges, is convulsed by an array of pathologies that have arisen out of profound hopelessness, a bitter despair, and a civil society that has ceased to function. The opioid crisis; the retreat into gambling to cope with economic distress; the pornification of culture; the rise of magical thinking; the celebration of sadism, hate, and plagues of suicides are the physical manifestations of a society that is being ravaged by

corporate pillage and a failed democracy. As our society unravels, we also face global upheaval caused by catastrophic climate change. All these ills presage a frightening reconfiguration of the nation and the planet. Donald Trump rode this disenchantment to power. ... Hedges argues that neither political party, now captured by corporate power, addresses the systemic problem. Until our corporate *coup d'état* is reversed these diseases will grow and ravage the country. ... “Hedges writes a requiem for the American dream” (*Kirkus Reviews*) and seeks to jolt us out of our complacency while there is still time.

Here an August 2018 video'd lecture (<https://tinyurl.com/augusttalk99>) in a packed local library on *America: The Farewell Tour*. Corporate dominance is central in his critique, from a strong social class-based analysis (192,000 views). At min.17:35-2010 he discusses what disasters may well loom, including US power's downfall:

The inevitable collapse of the American Empire. All of the warning signs that have brought down other empires throughout history are ‘flashing red’ within the American Empire. ... One is the political paralysis, the inability of the System to address the injustices, the economic deprivation, the loss of rights of the population, and in fact to make it worse.

Hedges concludes at min. 32:30 and then takes probing questions from the audience, well worth a listen, such as discussion of ‘ecocide’ looming and other issues troubling Americans. There is a ‘class war’ from the top down shaking the US to the very core, profit over people. This our dark reality in Baltimore (<https://tinyurl.com/balt99>), a US city pauperized by the banks and deindustrialization.

Early politicization, love for the word and a profound distrust of power

Chris was born 1956 into a social activist family, his mom and dad both trained as Presbyterian clergy. His very engaged father ran the local church in a tiny working-class town (Schoharie <https://tinyurl.com/schoha>) in upstate New York, then about 2,000 residents, where Chris grew up. His mom, from a rural Maine working-class background, worked as an English teacher in a state school. Chris loved to read, write stories, poems from a very early age. He chose to major in English, his first degree was a B.A. in English Literature at Colgate Univ. His literary heroes are Orwell and James Baldwin. His dad, a ‘rebel’ inside the Presbyterian clergy in New York state, was involved in the civil rights, gay rights and anti-Vietnam war movements in the ‘60s. He clashed as church minister over issues of local racism with the Schoharie school principal, and was probably banned (Chris says) from even entering the local school!

So Chris at age 10 was sent off by his rebellious dad to a highly elite boarding school on a scholarship. This move politicized him, deeply. Working-class in background, he wasn’t accepted by the other students, often bullied as an outsider. Chris developed a strong intellectual dislike for many of his co-students from the extremely wealthy corporate class at the prep school, and their families arriving in grand limousines -- a profound lasting distrust for the ruling class, the ‘powerful,’ and their ‘hegemony’. He would likely agree with Rachel Shabi (<https://tinyurl.com/shabischools>) in the UK about how private schools are par excellence ‘engines of privilege’ (<https://tinyurl.com/engines987>) reproducing gross inequality. This informs his thinking down to today, a taste for ‘rebellion’ and its need. Growing up in the ‘60s/’70s, during the Vietnam War and civil rights campaigns, he also developed an abhorrence for war and all forms of violence. His maternal uncle in Maine had been mentally destroyed by

his service in WW II, what today would be diagnosed as severe PTSD. Chris discusses this at length in the interview-based book *Unspeakable. Chris Hedges on the Most Forbidden Topics in America* (2016 <https://tinyurl.com/unspeak777>), at many points an oral auto-ethnographic biography. You can download *Unspeakable* as an audiobook (<https://tinyurl.com/unspeakaudio>), cost-free. What intrigues me here is how our early years shape what we later become. For ourselves as educators, the value of auto-ethnography (<https://tinyurl.com/ethno99>) meshed with narrative knowledging (<https://tinyurl.com/narra987>). Both my immigrant tailor granddads were active in the ILGWU (<https://tinyurl.com/ladies999>), a militant garment workers union.

In his Introduction to *Unspeakable* (2016), the book co-editor and interviewer, critical journalist David Talbot (Skyhorse Publishing, Hot Books <https://tinyurl.com/hotbooks99>), writes (pp. 1-3):

Our media has become such an all-embracing echo chamber of power—or its corollary, a bright and shiny distraction from its misery—that it's a shock whenever a dissident voice breaks through this wall of sound. One of the most singular and bracing voices of dissent in our time belongs to Chris Hedges. He is no stranger to the corporate ranks of journalism, toiling for over two decades as a war correspondent, primarily for the *New York Times*, where he shared a Pulitzer Prize for team reporting on the events of 9/11. ...“Perhaps in our lifetimes we will not succeed,” Hedges has written. ... “Rebellion – which is different from revolution because it is perpetual alienation from power rather than the replacement of one power system with another – should be our natural state.”

In a passage relevant to our work as critical educators, Talbot states (p.5):

... it does not trouble him being sidelined by the corporate media. “If you measure your success by your impact...then you will be easily seduced into reconfiguring what you do,” Hedges told me ... “Obviously, I want to have an impact. But I don’t want to cater to the wider culture. I won’t speak in ways that they dictate. At that point I become like them...You have to hold fast to your integrity. I am shut out for a reason.”

Chris thus perceives bold, integrity-grounded rebellion, “perpetual alienation from power,” as our desirable “natural state.” As citizens, activists, as *educators*. Talbot (p. 3) notes: Hedges “calls this indomitable will to resist ‘the sublime madness of the soul,’ quoting Reinhold Niebuhr.” This is part of what Hedges sees as a radical *Christian moral economy* in struggle against the multiple evils of capitalism, in some ways social-anarchist, and inspired by Martin Luther King, see <https://tinyurl.com/radevil99> on RT. An amazing speech by MLK in Chicago in 1967 is one that all EFL (and other school subject) teachers should know & discuss (<https://tinyurl.com/chiking99>). It is as timely in 2019 as back then, focusing on war, poverty and racism. From min. 34:40 he speaks of a “true revolution of values” that likely sealed his fate. Many aspects of such *rebellion* are manifest in Extinction Rebellion (<https://tinyurl.com/chrisextinc>), a Hedges article. Hedges interviewed Mark Hallam, ER founder on RT, 9 March (<https://tinyurl.com/dande999>) and 16 March 2019 (<https://tinyurl.com/dande16ma>) and again on 11 August in London (<https://tinyurl.com/aug11xx>).

Discovering Hedges’ thought: three spoken texts, one interview in print

(1) An excellent June 2019 58-min. interview as podcast (<https://tinyurl.com/deflate19>) is a strong, spot-on recent introduction to his thinking, titled: “On Deflating the Ruling Elite through Civil Disobedience.” Chris also discusses the *gig economy* (from min. 14:40), comments on Marx’s

analysis of 'late capitalism' (min. 23:23), and privatizing of education today. From min. 29:24 he discusses the rise of the US Christian fundamentalist right and what he deems as incipient American fascism, now intensifying.

(2) This 16-min. VICE video in Toronto (230,000 views <https://tinyurl.com/vice2030>) with Chris Hedges in 2015 is a concentrated interview that can be discussed with colleagues and students at B2 level. He says it in a nutshell: "My focus is delineating power and how it works, and why we can't trust it" (min. 9:54):

We're going to have to destroy the system of corporate power ... it's up to us, it means acts of sustained civil disobedience. We have a moral imperative to stand up, if not for ourselves, for those who come after that one revolts finally not for what they can achieve but for who it allows them to become. And that we can't use the word hope if we don't revolt. If we remain passive, then we are accepting the death sentence that is being handed to us by these corporate forces. (min. 5:40-6:17)

He speaks of the "inability of the government to do anything but serve the needs of a tiny cabal. In this case, a corporate cabal" (6:28-34). From min. 6:50, he talks about his experience with OCCUPY, a "seminal moment in modern history," (7:20); and stresses: "I teach in a prison, and boy, you walk in that prison, and these prisoners, THEY understand the System" (10:19-24). His work as a prison educator is touched on below.

(3) On 5 Nov. 2016, he spoke at a Green Party US election rally in Philadelphia, here the <https://tinyurl.com/greensphil> . In terms of US political parties, he supports GPUS (<https://www.gp.org>) and Jill Stein, and interviewed Jill on RT (<https://tinyurl.com/jills999>) in July 2016. This militant speech is really worth

pondering, and the response from GPUS activists is electric. He says (min. 18:12): “Our job is not to accommodate to the corporate state, our job is to destroy it.” The talk is in part social-anarchist, eco-socialist, a ‘fierce eloquence.’ His Philly audience reflects the solid anti-capitalist current inside GPUS.

(4) An extract from the beginning of *Unspeakable*, Chap. 5, “Beyond Electoral Politics.” David Talbot interviews Hedges, was later published as “Why the left must go beyond electoral politics” in *Salon*, Oct. 2018 (<https://tinyurl.com/salohedges>). It gives insight into how he views charade elections and their ‘corporate party’ politics.

Intellectual background: shaping influences on Chris

Chris’ own political thought -- largely geared where possible to galvanizing grass-roots, localized civil disobedience, anti-System movements like Occupy stateside -- has been influenced by Marx and Marxist thinkers such as Rosa Luxemburg, Gramsci and David Harvey, Richard Wolff, social-anarchist activists like Emma Goldman (<https://tinyurl.com/emgold99>), Alex Berkman, Bakunin, Kropotkin, Noam Chomsky, sociologists such as Emile Durkheim, and religious thinkers like Reinhold Niebuhr, Daniel Berrigan and others. He has a very strong proletarian class consciousness. Chris is a graduate (M.Div.) of Harvard Divinity School, a trained (and later ordained) Presbyterian minister, like his renegade social activist father. Chris in fact shepherded a church in the poverty-stricken Boston district of Roxbury for two years, a shattering experience that fundamentally shaped his political thinking about inequality, racism and the marginalized (see below). Yet his broader analysis of the ills and evils of our time-place have been impacted in particular by ideas of the radical political philosopher Sheldon S. Wolin (<https://tinyurl.com/wolin99> b. Chicago

1922, d. Salem/OR 2015). Wolin was long at Princeton University, near where Chris lives, elite halls of academe where Chris has also taught by occasional invite. Wolin's thought is briefly introduced below, also links to Marxist Richard Wolff's critique. Hedges interviewed Prof. Richard Wolff on his RT program 'On Contact' in April 2018, a striking exchange of views (<https://tinyurl.com/wolffhedges>). Hedges also has underscored a key new book by historian Alfred McCoy, *In the Shadows of the American Century: The Rise and Decline of US Global Power* (2017 <https://tinyurl.com/mccoy99>), a major US historian whose work has influenced him. Hedges likewise interviewed Prof. McCoy on RT (<https://tinyurl.com/mccoy777>). Here a brilliant McCoy lecture (<https://tinyurl.com/mccoylect>). Hedges recently interviewed the radical UK rapper Lowkey (<https://tinyurl.com/lowkeyRT99>) in London, discussing the wreckage of neo-liberalism, state terrorism and resistance. That interview ends with a video of his rap 'Terrorist?', complete with the lyrics/stark imagery. Here Lowkey's *Voices of the voiceless* (<https://tinyurl.com/lowkvoices>). Much to ponder / discuss. We need to teach Lowkey gun rap (<https://tinyurl.com/lowkgun>) with lyrics (<https://tinyurl.com/lkgunlyrics>) in ELT classes: *Obama nation* (<https://tinyurl.com/voiceslk>) + lyrics (<https://tinyurl.com/obnat99>).

Investigative war correspondents who have been through the muck, blood and horror

Unlike many critical thinkers based in the academy, Chris was for nearly two decades an investigative journalist and war correspondent on the blood-soaked ground in Central America, the Balkans (esp. Bosnia and Kosovo) and the Middle East, including time based *inside* Gaza. As a war reporter, he often faced the danger of injury, even death. He also reported first-hand on the end of the Cold War in key locations in Eastern Europe (Prague, Leipzig). He was for

ca. 15 years on staff with the *New York Times*, four years chief of its Middle East Bureau, and speaks Arabic. Chris was a joint recipient of the 2002 Pulitzer Prize for his reporting on 9/11 terrorism. He took many personal risks as an often dissident foreign correspondent, and ultimately quit the NYT in 2003 over his opposition to Bush's war in Iraq in May 2003 (detailed below), and the paper's attempt to muzzle him. He has not been on staff since by any MSM (mainstream media) institution (nor does he want it), but is central in *truthdig* and with RT. In 2002 he published an extraordinary book, *War is a Force That Gives Us Meaning* (<https://tinyurl.com/warforce99>), followed in 2003 by *What Every Person Should Know About War* (<https://tinyurl.com/knowwar99>). both fierce indictments of war and violence. Engaged courageous war correspondents -- who report from the front lines -- build up a unique storehouse of experience witnessing the horrors of war first-hand, and combat's later fallout, mental and physical, like his uncle. He has seen Hell and worse. Chris also has a special connection with our horrendous Civil War battle in July 1863, and readers will find his 2019 piece (<https://tinyurl.com/memgetty99>) "War, Memory and Gettysburg" engrossing, as is his article on war's dead rhetoric (<https://tinyurl.com/deadrhet99>). He speaks at eloquent length about his war experiences in Central America and the Balkans in this 2018 talk (<https://tinyurl.com/wartalk99>). Chris is also a fierce critic of the violent US mythologem of guns and liberty, in a March 2019 *Truthdig* article (<https://tinyurl.com/gunslib>):

The proliferation of guns in American society is not only profitable for gun manufacturers, it fools the disempowered into fetishizing weapons as a guarantor of political agency. Guns buttress the myth of a rugged individualism that atomizes Americans, disdains organization and obliterates community, compounding powerlessness. Gun ownership in the United States, largely

criminalized for poor people of color, is a potent tool of oppression. It does not protect us from tyranny. It is an instrument of tyranny.

The US mass shootings, (<https://tinyurl.com/deadly99>) an 'American story,' have continued Aug 2019 in *Gunfighter Nation* (<https://tinyurl.com/gunfight99>). See a recent thesis on Richard Slotkin's now classic 3-vol. study of US 'regeneration through violence' (<https://tinyurl.com/thesi99>), a work Hedges often cites. Recommend Slotkin's study. And Lowkey's *Hand On Your Gun* rap (<https://tinyurl.com/lowkgun>). Many Latino students stateside now say: "Anywhere I go I feel threatened" (<https://tinyurl.com/threat99>).

Critical educator inside max-security prison bars

He is also an engaged educator hands-on, heart-on, teaching history and literature over the past 11 years in a college credit program offered by Rutgers University. Where? In prisons in New Jersey, one a super-max security prison. He lives in Princeton/NJ. That experience has been central in shaping his pedagogical ideas. Few of us in ELT or other fields have long-term experience teaching convicted prisoners, many incarcerated 'for life,' often for crimes they did not commit. In *Unspeakable* he explores his prison educator experience auto-ethnographically. This article concludes with some of his reflections about educating behind bars. Useful is a detailed review of *Unspeakable* in these pages as well.

Active resistance the best antidote to despair

In his August 2018 lecture (<https://tinyurl.com/despair99>), at one point he emphasizes the catalyst *solidarity*:

When you sit home alone, when you attempt as an individual to cope with the profound despair that we all must feel, it will conquer you. But when you build

relationships -- and not electronically, but the way relationships can only be built, and that is person to person. When you build community and when you carry out acts of resistance, that active resistance is the best antidote to despair. (min. 64)

What that suggests is the need for solidarity in local, placed-based, hands-on action and concerted resistance, building toward mass civil disobedience, like Extinction Rebellion (<https://rebellion.earth>) 2019. And the Occupy Movement (<https://tinyurl.com/rebe999>): read Hedges brilliant analysis on that! He was in the streets with protesters in NYC. He knows as an activist solidarity is therapeutic, an “antidote to despair,” defeatism. Also in that vein is this 2017 interview with Dave Hill and Leena Robertson, “Pessimism of the Intellect and Optimism of the Will,” deeply echoing Gramsci (<https://tinyurl.com/optim999>).

Further talks and articles

A superb 2-hr talk in Nov 2018 by Hedges is on the “Ruleless-ness tearing our world apart,” with many audience questions (<https://tinyurl.com/anomie99>). The lecture is based on a Sept. 2018 *Truthdig* article “American anomie” (<https://tinyurl.com/amer987>), proceeding from Emile Durkheim’s sociological analysis of anomie. As mentioned, he interviewed Jill Stein of GPUS on RT in July 2016. There are 70+ *truthdig* videos of his (<https://tinyurl.com/hedgesvid>). Browse his ‘On Contact’ RT (<https://tinyurl.com/hedgRT>) site, many great interviews; here with George Galloway (<https://tinyurl.com/gallow99>) in London. Also in London, Chris interviewed Mohamed Elmazzi (<https://tinyurl.com/elmazz99>) regarding an international PSYOPS clandestine network of pro-military propaganda UK-based, part of Cold War 2.0 in the MSM, aiming to ‘instill a military ethos ... into the wider British society.’ Here RT also on the Cold War 2.0 (<https://tinyurl.com/cohen987>). Striking is a lecture by Hedges on the legacy of the Marxist activist/ thinker Rosa Luxemburg, (<https://tinyurl.com/rosa987>) speaking at a panel “Rosa

Luxemburg: Reform or Revolution?" at the Left Forum 2016 in NYC. She was murdered in Jan. 1919 in Berlin, her body dumped into the Landwehr Canal, like Gustav Landauer (<https://tinyurl.com/landau99>) as well, murdered 2 May 1919 in Munich, crushing the socialist/ anarchist German Revolution. Rosa's death a dark specter still haunting Europe (<https://tinyurl.com/haunt987>) here & now.

An instructive article in *Truthout* by Hedges is "We, the vast underclass, must rise up against global mafia – or die" (<https://tinyurl.com/riseup987>). Recent *Truthdig* articles of his can be accessed here (<https://tinyurl.com/column99>), and his '10 best columns of 2018' are available here (<https://tinyurl.com/tenbest999>); a different range of articles here (<https://tinyurl.com/revo999>) Teachers can explore, their intermediate-level students can browse, in the framework of Krashen's FVS –Free Voluntary Surfing (<https://tinyurl.com/volunt99>) online -- discovering what intrigues them, do 'narrow reading' (<https://tinyurl.com/narr987>).

Chris is fundamentally alarmed about the climate emergency, manifest in extreme weather events (<https://tinyurl.com/howfast999>) now virtually everywhere; he has recently republished on "The Great Flood" (<https://tinyurl.com/flood987>) and rising sea levels, and largely agrees with Bill McKibben's (<https://tinyurl.com/extrem987>) overall analysis. Chris is particularly concerned about the disastrous effect of the animal agriculture industry on CO₂ emissions and disastrous climate change. He conducted led an intriguing interview in 2016 with two activists in the campaign against animal agriculture, the meat and dairy industry, an episode in *Days of Revolt*, accessible here (<https://tinyurl.com/sur987>). It revolves around the docu-film *Cowspiracy* (<https://tinyurl.com/cowspir>). There is a companion book

(<https://tinyurl.com/cowspir987>) on the film, its Introduction by Hedges, such discussion now crucial. Why? Because the huge *atmospheric impact* of animal farming is often marginalized in protest/ official planning on reducing carbon emissions. Chris and his wife are vegan activists.

‘Reality Asserts Itself’

Here the first in a series (<https://tinyurl.com/rea991>) of 7 interviews with Chris Hedges in 2013 on *the REAL news*, within a series entitled ‘Reality Asserts Itself,’ all of which are accessible online (<https://tinyurl.com/rea9992>). Fascinating interviews, from 14:57 he speaks in interview 1 about his work as a tyro church pastor in Roxbury in Boston, further shaping his class analysis:

The real seminal moment was moving into the inner city, and watching what we do to our poor. The warehousing of our poor, the shattering of lives, especially the lives of children, of poor children. That maybe rattled me more than anything I saw, and I’ve seen horrific things. ... And I think that for a white person of relative privilege, to confront the cruelty of what we do to poor people of colour in this country, and to begin to understand institutional forms of racism, all the mechanisms by which we ensure that the poor remain poor ... really rattled me, really shook me. It made me question all sorts of things. The myths we tell ourselves about ourselves, the nature of capitalism, the nature of racism, exploitation.

In interview 2 (<https://tinyurl.com/rea9972>) Chris discusses inter alia his speech highly critical of the US war on Iraq given as an invited commencement address at Rockford College, 17 May 2003. The reaction of the crowd gathered at this small college in Rockford, Illinois was extreme. The RC officials did not defend him, he was loudly booed, hauled off the podium. This incident, which caused a furor in US mainstream media, led to Hedges deciding to leave the *New York Times* in protest at the reprimand he was handed for presenting such critical

views of the US attack on Iraq and its aftermath. Here is a news report on the incident (<https://tinyurl.com/rocklan99>), and the full speech text (<https://tinyurl.com/spee999>), banned by Rockford College, and maligned by *New York Times* editors for having “impugned the objectivity” of the paper and its staff. I published an article two weeks after the incident at Rockford College, reflections on what ELT might become in Iraq under the American military/corporate capitalist boot: “Teaching the language of the conqueror,” *Z-Magazine*, 1 June 2003 (<https://tinyurl.com/conq999>). The piece had some echo (<https://tinyurl.com/conq9876>) inside ELT and is perhaps still timely: *English as a tool of occupation*. Here is the third interview (<https://tinyurl.com/rea997x>) with Chris. Inter alia it discusses the stance that “rebellion, resistance itself is a moral imperative” (min. 2:52). All seven interviews are worth our and colleagues' attention and time, in IATEFL and beyond.

You can browse for other texts and talks by Hedges, and acquire some of his books: *Empire of Illusion* (2009) is superb (<https://tinyurl.com/illus99>), as is *Wages of Rebellion* (2015) (<https://tinyurl.com/wagesof987>), and *Death of the Liberal Class* (2010) (<https://tinyurl.com/liber999>).

Chris Hedges, Joe Sacco and Israel

Hedges collaborated with writer/cartoonist Joe Sacco on the superb graphic book *Days of Destruction, Days of Revolt* (2012), dealing with extreme poverty pockets in the US (<https://tinyurl.com/days987>); you can use in some form with students, insightful for understanding US inequality. This interview with Hedges (<https://tinyurl.com/uspov99>) explores the themes of poverty examined in the book. The US data presented in *Days* on pp. xiv-xv is mind-blowing. Its epigraph: *For they have sown the wind, and they shall reap the whirlwind* – HOSEA 8:7. Chris also praises Joe Sacco's comic-illustrated docu-story *Footnotes in Gaza* (2009 <https://tinyurl.com/footgaza99>); here from min. 30 to

min. 59 is a comics-illustrated lecture 2011 (<https://tinyurl.com/hedgsac99>) on how Joe Sacco worked in putting together the book documenting the bloody Israeli invasion of Gaza in the 1956 Suez Canal Crisis, and the IDF slaughter of Palestinians there. The video is introduced by Chris describing how he met Joe Sacco in Bosnia in 1995 and their later work collaborating in 2001 on an article for *Harper's* about Suez and Gaza 1956. Chris then was NYT M.E. From min. 9:50 Joe takes over, many drawings brilliantly discussed. Are teachers among us in ELT beginning to use any Sacco books (<https://tinyurl.com/sacjour77>) in graphic journalism, such as this (<https://tinyurl.com/sacpal>)? Or perhaps this book (<https://tinyurl.com/sacfix>) and/or this (<https://tinyurl.com/gora999>)? High time to explore Sacco in TEFL, do action research on how his unique work impacts on students.

As mentioned, Chris lived based in Gaza, covering Israeli attacks from the inside. Chris remains highly critical of Israeli policy, he supports BDS (<https://tinyurl.com/hedgbds>), and in 2016 interviewed the Israeli peace activist Miko Peled (<https://tinyurl.com/mikointer>), son of Gen. Mattityahu Peled. Miko, now based in the US, is highly critical of Zionist hyper-nationalism. His dad Gen. Peled strove for building bridges between Palestinians and Israelis and ending the Zionist 'ethnocratic' dimensions of Israel -- its wholesale hijacking of Jewish ethics, of our Jewish history. Matti Peled founded the PLP (<https://tinyurl.com/peledpro99>), in which I was active in Israel (1980s). Miko is the younger brother of Nurit Peled-Elhanan, our colleague in literacy research at the Hebrew Univ. of Jerusalem. Here a 2011 lecture by Nurit on 'Palestine in Israeli Textbooks' (<https://tinyurl.com/pelednur1>); here Nurit in interview, centered on racism, other issues in Israel (<https://tinyurl.com/pelednur22>); and here speaking on Gaza (<https://tinyurl.com/pelednur33>). Nurit is on the *JCEPS EAB*. Yet outrages in Gaza go on & on (<https://tinyurl.com/solpal99>), in the

West Bank (<https://tinyurl.com/solpal88>), Israeli prisons (<https://tinyurl.com/palsol77>), children in court (<https://tinyurl.com/palsol66>), border bloodshed (<https://tinyurl.com/palsol55>). And fierce calls for West Bank annexation (<https://tinyurl.com/palsol44>). On 2 Aug 2019 our English literature colleague Dr. Hanan Ashrawi issued a call for blacklisting Israel for their unethical treatment (<https://tinyurl.com/ashrawi99>) of Palestinian children.

A systemic, deeper compass: Sheldon Wolin's "inverted totalitarianism"

At min. 14:22 in his August 2018 video'd lecture (<https://tinyurl.com/augusttalk99>), Chris speaks about Sheldon S. Wolin, mentioning Wolin's notion of "inverted totalitarianism," a startling term for what the US and most other industrial democracies have now become: "you still have the facade, you have the iconography, the language, the institutions of an open society, of a democratic state, but internally corporations have seized all the levers of power to render the citizen impotent." Wolin is a political philosopher and analyst whose thinking is essential. It is a unique analysis of the role of the war on terror after 9/11, the security and surveillance society we live in, the near total erosion of any genuine kind of people's democracy. What is 'superpower,' the growing appeal of right-wing populism, white supremacy ideologies (<https://tinyurl.com/suprem88>), and the parallels today with past totalitarian regimes, such as expansionist Nazism, and other fascist outrages. In US streets today: protest against US concentration camps (<https://tinyurl.com/concenxxx>). Hedges wrote the Preface to a posthumous new edition of Wolin's classic work, *Democracy Incorporated. Managed Democracy and the Specter of Inverted Totalitarianism* (2017 <https://tinyurl.com/wolin987>).

Wolin is still scarcely known or cited among our colleagues in TEFL. That can and should change. A good starting point is Hedges' remarkable 3-hour interview with Prof. Wolin in Nov. 2014 shortly before his death, available in full online (<https://tinyurl.com/hedgwolin>) exploring "superpower, the true face of inverted totalitarianism." Probing questions from Hedges, penetrating answers from perhaps the greatest political theorist of democracy and its failings, indeed destruction, in recent US history. Wikipedia has a detailed entry on the concept of 'inverted totalitarianism' (<https://tinyurl.com/wolin555>). Wolin's article in *The Nation* 2003 (<https://tinyurl.com/wolin444>) is also fundamental, its chilling subtitle: "How the Bush regime is effecting the transformation to a fascist-like state." Both Wolin and Hedges believe fascism in new wrappings is infecting the body politic in the US, spurring right-wing populism. Hedges has written a book *American Fascists: The Christian Right and the War on America* (2008 <https://tinyurl.com/chrisfasc>), looking inside Christian fundamentalism, powerful today in the current White House. Hedges is very distrustful of what he calls 'institutionalized Christianity.' And read this (<https://tinyurl.com/fascant99>) on US fascism July 2019, from the left socialist grouping <https://refusefascism.org/>. Ideally, colleagues should discuss *Democracy Incorporated* and also Wolin's monumental *Politics and Vision: Continuity and Innovation in Western Political Thought* (1960; 2nd rev. ed. 2004 <https://tinyurl.com/wolin333>). Books crafting a philosophical armature for social justice pedagogy. Hedges thinks *Politics and Vision* ranks as one of the truly great studies on political philosophy by a 20th-cent. US scholar. In deepening more radical critical pedagogy here & now, Wolin's work is essential.

Engaged anti-capitalist analysis and TEFL critical pedagogy

The vibrant core and all-enveloping radical focus in Hedges' thinking and activism is his searing critique of Corporate Capitalism and its neo-imperialism, even neo-fascism 2.0 (<https://tinyurl.com/suprem999>), as a global corporatized System that humanity must move beyond. An informed anti-capitalist, pro-socialist viewpoint and agenda beckon. That is a complex issue too rarely addressed *directly* by most EFL teachers in social justice pedagogy. Or indeed by teachers of history, civics, environmental studies, politics, even economics. We often hesitate to name the capitalist elephant in the room, as Marxist economist Prof. Richard D. Wolff (<https://tinyurl.com/richw999>) repeatedly stresses (Wolff 2015 <https://tinyurl.com/richw888>), likewise in a June 2019 Wolff lecture (<https://tinyurl.com/richw777>) on Marx's life and legacy. Prof. Wolff's website Economic Update (<https://tinyurl.com/richw666>) is superb to explore, as is his site *Democracy at Work* (<https://tinyurl.com/richw555>). His following in the US in recent years has burgeoned; a highly laid-back style of Marxist analysis that students/colleagues can learn from. See also Hedges' Wolff interview RT, linked above.

As I see it, that focus in critical TEFL is now imperative. Incisive basic anti-capitalist critique, far beyond an analysis of 'neoliberalism' and its myriad downsides, is still largely taboo, 'unspeakable' in many classrooms. It takes courage to address that centrally. Anti-capitalist, anti-power radical discourse and advocacy involve risk-taking as a worker anywhere. Inside critical pedagogy in TEFL, it is also rarely broached under what we term PARSNIPs (<https://tinyurl.com/parsnip9>) -- to my mind a somewhat coy euphemistic acronym for 'controversial issues.' Moreover, I would take issue with Adrian Wallwork where he observes in his interview in the *GISIG Newsletter* July 2019 (<https://tinyurl.com/newslet40>) (p. 50): "...try to present both sides of the story

(even the side that you personally may strongly object to).” I think many of these dire issues of racism, poverty, inequality, disempowerment, have no real ‘two sides.’ But of course that can be debated. Teachers of EFL and other disciplines and school subjects are welcome to explore our GISIG IATEFL site (<https://gisig.iatefl.org>). See in particular our timely June 2019 webinar ‘Climate Emergency: What Action Can the ELT Community Take in the Classroom?’ (<https://tinyurl.com/gisigweb99>), presented by Owain Llewellyn, his blog <https://eltsustainable.com> . Explore also the GISIG >Climate Change Emergency Resources<, a useful climate-justice (<https://tinyurl.com/emerg999>), digital micro-library. And the GISIG site: *E-lesson Inspirations* (<https://tinyurl.com/lesso777>).

We have to be far more active, up-front, in pointing in-service and veteran teachers toward sources of such critical transformative thinking, galvanizing new forms of discussion and debate among colleagues and their students, forging building blocks for what Donaldo Macedo terms “literacies of power” (<https://tinyurl.com/macedo999>). In fact, perhaps we could be spurring anti-capitalist Teacher Learning Communities (TLCs <https://tinyurl.com/tlc999>) inside TEFL, whatever the local risks. I would also recommend exploring articles by our UK colleague Prof. Dave Hill on Marxist education 2010 (<https://tinyurl.com/hillmanifes>), 2017 (<https://tinyurl.com/marxneolib99>) and 2019 (<https://tinyurl.com/marxneolib9919>), how teachers should & could be critically trained. Also the work of colleague Alpesh Maisuria (<https://tinyurl.com/maisur99>). Such articles need to be assigned, carefully discussed, their theses debated. They can sharpen insights into the mazes of distraction, infotainment, consumerism and brainwashing enveloping our very being. Articles and books (<https://tinyurl.com/rethinbooks>) from *Rethinking Schools* stateside are fundamental for countering dominant narratives and basic

for colleagues involved in social justice pedagogy in language arts classrooms anywhere. As the rapper Lowkey describes his own politico-aesthetic in his London interview with Chris Hedges July 2019

(<https://tinyurl.com/lowkeyRT99>): “Assert collective agency, number one, and that is the confronting of the culture of power with the power of culture.” A solid motto for critical pedagogy. Here a rap to introduce Lowkey to students: *Wake Up* (<https://tinyurl.com/lowkwake>). It can be combined with Lowkey interview + the rap ‘*Terrorist?*’ above and the rap *Voices*. Akin to rap is ‘slam’ poetry (<https://tinyurl.com/performs1a99>). Chris to my knowledge has not written on poet Porsha Olayiwola (<https://tinyurl.com/porsha99>) but could: her slams *Father’s American Dream* (<https://tinyurl.com/fathdream>) *Water* (<https://tinyurl.com/water999>), *Rekia Boyd* (<https://tinyurl.com/rekia999>). Here an interview with Porsha (<https://tinyurl.com/porshainterv>), now Boston Poet Laureate 2019. A fierce slam performer is M. F. Katwiwa, a Kenyan US immigrant, on racism (<https://tinyurl.com/katwiwa9>), and on colonies (<https://tinyurl.com/katwiwa992>).

Hands-on classroom research

Teachers can discuss, develop classroom activities, spoken and written, project-based learning, essays, debates on aspects of Hedges’ incisive critique applied to their own students’ lived experience. And do classroom research on what actually changes hearts and minds, critical EAR. The Smith/Rebolledo (eds.) *Handbook for EAR Exploratory Action Research* (<https://tinyurl.com/handEAR1>) is certainly a possible framework, team-work-oriented, as Richard Smith suggests in his excellent introduction on video (76 min.) to EAR: Part I (<https://tinyurl.com/smithpar1>) and Part II (<https://tinyurl.com/smithpar2>). See also Smith’s *Champion teachers: stories of exploratory action research* (<https://tinyurl.com/champEAR1>). Richard Smith

gave a similar introductory webinar in 2018 on >Exploratory Action Research < for UNRWA teachers in Gaza, at the invite of the Hands Up Project (<https://tinyurl.com/hanUP1>). Here Part 1 (<https://tinyurl.com/GazEAR1>) and Part II (<https://tinyurl.com/GazEAR2>). See also Anne Burns on Action Research (<https://tinyurl.com/ARburns>). Needed are TLCs that you can galvanize locally face-to-face or digitally, energizing robust Continuing Professional Development (CPD). And all this should be part of grassroots ‘Decentring ELT’ (<https://tinyurl.com/decenter999>) now & here. Change can only come from effort below. Placed-based, localized, solidarity-driven. The new *TDAJ* is one solid step in that direction (<https://tinyurl.com/tdaj777>). See, show, discuss also our GISIG West-Africa-based webinar 2019 on ‘Building Teacher Communities – Going Global with WhatsApp’ (<https://tinyurl.com/goglob99>). Likewise useful are these 50 ‘best practices’ (<https://tinyurl.com/bestpr777>) for language teachers, many empathy-centered. Also eye-opening reading is Judith Deutsch, “Ways of Seeing Children: The Facile Psychology of Capitalism,” *The Bullet*, 12 August 2019 (<https://tinyurl.com/seekids99>), powerful commentary there on the subliminal messages of children’s books, and a critical look at Israeli militant hero mythology ingrained in the school curriculum narratives.

Within an expanded envelope of transformative CPD

More broadly I think a core demand for our own advocacy inside IATEFL is that study time be allocated for teachers for CPD, and some sort of ‘credit’ allotted teachers formally, in terms of salary, voice. For publishing, attending workshops, local micro-conferences. That’s being done in part by the Israeli Ministry of Education for example, what is called in Ivrit *gmul* ‘credit’ (<http://www.etai.org.il/gmul>) for various kinds/genres of CPD-related activity. There is also a crying need to spur such time-space in local teacher associations,

many of which contain only a tiny fraction of EFL teachers in a given country as members. Moreover, our often bedeviled IATEFL Associates have to be reinvented, partially through local, grass-roots mini-chapters and micro-conferences (and unconferences <https://tinyurl.com/unconf999>), not just some annual conference in the UK or elsewhere – inevitably, whatever the plusses for participants, larger-scale conferencing regrettably often is *much ado for the more privileged few*, and also has a truly mammoth carbon footprint (<https://tinyurl.com/fprinELT>). Deep democracy in TEFL cries out for reconfigured architectonics of CPD on far more level playing fields. Including concerns about working conditions, gig job situations, non-unionization, teacher exploitation, depression (<https://tinyurl.com/depress888>). TaWSIG has recently published Kate's angry tale of woe from Germany (<https://tinyurl.com/germwoe>). She ends her article: "Something is clearly rotten in the state of language teaching in Germany." Read also Kevin from Chile on being bullied as a teacher (<https://tinyurl.com/bullkey>). A counter-journal to IATEFL as such in key ways is *The ELT Worker*: read a remarkable piece (<https://tinyurl.com/workELT-04>) from The Whistleblower and all of issue 3 (<https://tinyurl.com/workELT-03>). *Notes from Below* is a new socialist journal oriented to workers' concerns (<https://notesfrombelow.org>). *Teachers as Workers* (TaWSIG <https://tinyurl.com/TaWSIG99>) is a growing ELT-critical worker grouping likewise dubious of IATEFL, and curtly rejected as a SIG by IATEFL [!] in 2015. Inside TESOL, Inc. based in the states, a quite different political & teacher organizing climate, is the interest section (IS) *Tesolers for Social Responsibility* (<https://tinyurl.com/SRIS999>), in effect a stateside-based cousin of GISIG.

In a current piece in *Voices* #269, critiquing the commodifying corporate permeation of IATEFL and the commercializing EFL 'industry,' Steve Brown

has boldly described some key toxic ills and brighter spots (<https://tinyurl.com/brownside99>), in fact *asking us*: ‘*Which Side Are You On?*’” (<https://tinyurl.com/seeg999>) You can find an earlier, more direct version of his 2019 *Voices* article here at his blogsite (<https://tinyurl.com/sideon999>). A useful history of IATEFL is S. Rixon & R. Smith (2017, cf. esp. pp. 136-52 on ‘influence’ <https://tinyurl.com/histIATEFL>). And again: listen to Margaret Heffernan’s TEDtalk (<https://tinyurl.com/silen999>) noted in the Preface above, it is basic.

Dylan’s 1964 “*The times they are a-changin’*” (<https://tinyurl.com/bo9876>) (here lyrics: <https://tinyurl.com/tex9876>) and his “*Blowin’ in the wind*” (<https://tinyurl.com/how8888>) are also fitting musical 🎵 epigraphs 🎵 for this article, and core questions Hedges is incisively addressing. Issue 40 of the *IATEFL GISIG Newsletter* (<https://tinyurl.com/newslet40>) from which this present article was summarily censored, has a very useful article by Rita Divéki (pp. 17-23) on using protest songs in ELT critical syllabi. Marxists like Dave Hill and others, Slavoj Zizek on RT (<https://tinyurl.com/ziz8888>) here speaking on climate protest (<https://tinyurl.com/zizpro999>), need to be read and listened to in our classes: discussed, written about, questioned, pondered, anchored in students’ own *place-based lived experience*.

In every end, there is also a beginning

As underscored, Chris Hedges has worked as an educator the past 11 years with prisoners (male, female, other) in New Jersey prisons, maximum and super-max security. He teaches literature and history through a critical social-justice lens, developing hands-on empathy with his deeply beleaguered students. This jailhouse pedagogy is both wrenching and inspiring, he has many striking stories. Including one about a key prisoner strike involving his own students,

and the consequences they've suffered as victims of absolute penal power daring to rebel for their rights. Maybe he agrees that prisons should ideally be abolished (<https://tinyurl.com/jails999>). One class wrote a play *Caged*, and is seeking a producer. In *Unspeakable* he observes:

Prisoners understand power in a way that a Princeton student is almost incapable of. They know the dark side of power and institutional racism. They know what our system of justice is really about. They have endured the worst of police violence. They know what poverty does to people. A conversation about power in a prison classroom begins at a much, much higher level (loc. 1541-43, e-book).

Chris concludes the book, well worth a follow-up review here (as noted and a downloadable audiobook, cost-free: <https://tinyurl.com/unspeakaudio>), with this moving teacher's tale of self-reflection and distress:

I had a student in my history class who was arrested at age 14 for a murder I don't believe he committed. He had lived on the streets after his stepfather had beat his mother to death in front of him. He held his mother's head as she died. He was tried as an adult. He's not eligible to go before a parole board until he's 70. He was my only A-plus student. He waited until everyone left the last class. He says, "I know I will probably die in this prison. But I work as hard as I do so that one day I can be a teacher like you." That's why I do what I do. That's why I teach in a prison. And that's why I have hope.

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research interests in ELF, American literature, sociolinguistics, critical pedagogy, German and Jewish history, post-socialist, minority and Holocaust studies. He has taught English/ German at universities in 10 countries, including the US (U Michigan, Georgia Tech, IIT/Chicago, Ohio U), Ireland

(TCD), Germany (U Saarland), Iran (U Kerman), Laos, Thailand (RMUT Srivijaya; RMUT Phitsanulok), Nepal (Tribhuvan U), Malaysia (U Malaya) and three universities in Bulgaria (VTU, Veliko Turnovo; Stopanska Akademiya, Svishtov; KPU, Shumen). Bill is on the board of *JCEPS*, the IATEFL GISIG Comm., linked with the editorial staff of the annual academic journal *Любословие/ Lyuboslovie* at KPU in Shumen, and with projects at Yad Vashem, Israel. He is based as an independent researcher/writer, retired in eastern Bulgaria.