Education Accountability and Repression of Democracy Post-9/11

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Abstract

This paper examines the role of education accountability policies as ideological support for political repression and war in the post-9/11 U.S. political context. It focuses on the relationship of accountability policies to the growing suppression of civil liberties and racial targeting and justifications for military aggression. Drawing on qualitative data from a study of Chicago public schools, I examine how accountability discourses and practices are actually experienced in schools as a system of coercion. I argue that the policies normalize surveillance, regulation and punishment; promote rigid binaries of good/bad students, teachers, and schools; erode social solidarities; and undermine critical thought and agency. In this way, education policies and practices contribute to a shift in U.S. political culture that legitimates the suppression of critical thought and action, obedience to authority, punishment of dissent, racial profiling and regulation of people of color, and restriction of democratic participation. The paper situates the state's political response to 9/11 and its policy of pre-emptive war in relation to the crisis of legitimacy of capitalist globalization and challenges to neoliberalism from below. This post-hegemonic context clarifies what is at stake, politically and educationally. It defines both the urgency and the opportunity for defining a liberatory politics of education..

On October 23, 2002, Brett Bursey and other members of the South Carolina Progressive Network, which Brett directs, protested President George W. Bush's fund-raising visit to Columbia, S.C. Brett was carrying a sign that said "No War For Oil." At the Columbia airport, police under the direction of the U.S. Secret Service told them that since they were "protesters" they would have to go to a "Free Speech Zone" out of sight of the President. Several thousand Republican Party supporters, many carrying signs, were allowed to remain in the area. When Brett asked why he had to leave when Bush's supporters were allowed to stay, he was told it was the "content of his sign" not security issues. When he refused to go to a designated free speech zone because, "I am in a free speech zone; it's called the United States of America," he was arrested for trespassing. Although state charges were dropped five months later, the next day federal charges were brought against Bursey by U.S. Attorney Strom Thurmond Jr. under the statute regulating threats to the President, an offense punishable by six months in federal prison. (Letter, Greensboro Justice Fund, 9/2003).

In a special issue of the *American Educational Research Journal*, titled "Education and Democracy," editor Linda McNeil noted, "Maxine Green teaches us that education should help fuel the social imagination – it should aid our ability to envision a social world that does not yet exist. In the post-September 11 world, any lesser purpose for public education seems unworthy" (McNeil, 2002, p.248). I want to take this idea a step farther to examine the relationship between neoliberal school accountability policies and post-9/11 political repression and justifications for pre-emptive war in the U.S. If, as Stuart Hall suggests, education is a means "by which men and women are formed and shaped as social individuals" (quoted in Grace, 1984, p.37), what kinds of social identities are being developed through current accountability discourses in education? And how do the dispositions, orientations to knowledge and social agency, and the mechanisms of control produced by these policies intersect with the suppression of civil liberties, racial targeting, and militarism that have come to define U.S. politics since 9/11? In what sense, is education, as Hall suggests, "politics by other means" in the post-9/11 context?

I begin by summarizing some features of this political context and then describe ways in which education policies are ideologically aligned with the War on Terrorism, the

security state, the identification of enemies within and without the U.S., and the policy of pre-emptive war. I focus specifically on ways in which school accountably practices normalize surveillance, punishment and obedience to authority; limit what can be said; undermine critical thought; and erode social solidarities. I go on to situate the response of the state to 9/11 in the context of the neoliberal crisis of legitimacy, drive for U.S. global domination, and challenges to capitalist globalization from below. A dialectical appraisal of the present situation clarifies what is at stake, politically and educationally, and suggests both the dangers and the possibilities of schools as sites of counter-hegemonic thought and action.

Contests over education are part of the struggle over power and hegemony in society as a whole (Apple, 1996; 1995). This struggle unfolds through curriculum content – what constitutes official knowledge – and form – ways in which it organizes actions and meanings of students and teachers. Thus day to day social interactions in the classroom are deeply ideological processes that shape consciousness and common sense ideas about the way the world works and one's place in it. They become part of the social reality that defines and limits human agency, part of the ideological apparatus that domesticates thought and mystifies power relations, negating the possibility of creating an alternative to the existing social structures (Freire, 1970/1994; Macedo, 1994). "[S]ocial reality involves not only the structural constraints that are often taken as the limits of the possible: it also involves consciousness and thus encompasses philosophical, theoretical, ethical, and common sense ideas" (Gill, 2000, p. 30).

Acting within these constraints, and drawing on ideological resources outside of schools (for example, families, communities, youth organizations), schools can also be spaces of social critique, resistance, and democratic praxis. They can help young people develop critical consciousness about structures of oppression and exploitation and affirm their roles as transformative subjects. In fact, in the day to day life of schools, multiple ideologies are at play and curriculum embodies both liberatory and oppressive aspects. Yet, at given historical moments, there are trends that powerfully shape education and other institutions. The current dominance of neoliberal policies is such a moment.

With George W. Bush's federal education legislation (endorsed by Congress), the *No Child Left Behind Act of 2001* (NCLB), school accountability, high stakes tests, standards, and systems of punishment and reward have been made official policy and the dominant education agenda in the U.S. Federal policy, along with state and local mandates, regulate the work of teachers, students, and schools and substitute the discourse of the market for complex processes of teaching and learning. These policies are just one aspect of the larger neoliberal project to privatize public institutions and commodify public and private life while increasing state regulation of individuals and institutions through new forms of accountability, testing, standards, and surveillance. NCLB typifies this international trend of neoconservatism in politics and neoliberalism in economics (Apple, 2001; Gill, 2003). Much has been written about the relationship of these education policies to neoliberal economic goals, the exacerbation of educational and social inequality, and the privatization of public education in the U.S., UK, Australia, and elsewhere (e.g., Apple, 2001; Ball, 1994; 1997; Gillborn & Youdell, 2000; Lipman, 2004; Molnar, 1996; Saltman, 2000; Smyth, 2001; Whitty, Power, & Halpin, 1998).[1] Here I focus on the post-9/11 political implications of these policies.

My discussion is grounded in analysis of Chicago Public School (CPS) policy. Chicago stands as an exemplar of accountability and centralized regulation of schools. CPS policies hold those at the lowest rungs of the system – teachers and students – responsible for the systemic failures of public schools. They offer a simple, straightforward solution: teachers and principals are to be monitored, governed, and regulated by standards, scripted instruction, mandated curricula, standardized tests, and outside agencies contracted by the school board to oversee failing schools. Those who do not measure up get the "support" of after-school and summer school test-prep remediation. If after this "help" they still fail standardized tests, they are retained or assigned to special basic skills high schools. Under this policy, thousands of students, mostly African Americans and Latinos, have been sent to mandatory remedial after-school and summer school programs, retained in grade for as long as three years, and sent to basic skills Academic Preparation Centers for failing eighth graders who are over 15 years old.

Between 1997 and 2001, I studied how these policies were actually lived by teachers and students in four quite different public elementary schools. Two schools are over 95% African American and serve areas with extremely high levels of poverty. One had been on probation since 1996. The third school's student body is over 90% Mexican/Mexican-American and about 90% low-income. Many of the families are recent immigrants. The fourth school is located in a multi-class, racially mixed community. It is over 50% African American, with the remainder of the student body is divided among white, Asian, and Latino/a students. Relative to other CPS schools, it has high standardized test scores with 70% to 80% of students at or above national norms. My research consisted of semi-structured and open interviews of teachers and administrators, and in one school, student interviews; observations of classrooms and school activities and meetings; and analysis of school documents. I have written about these schools and the meanings of accountability policies for teachers and students in the context of globalization, the restructuring of the labor force, and the cultural politics of race in the city (Lipman, 2004; 2002). I have argued that the policies are part of a process of regulating and controlling students of color in a context of growing inequality and reconstitution of urban space (Lipman, 2003a; 2003b). Here I return to these schools and extend my analysis to consider the implications of the data in the post-9/11 political climate.

The Post-9/11 Political Context

In the two years since the 9/11 bombings of the World Trade Center and Pentagon, the U.S. government has set in motion a material and ideological process that seriously threatens democracy, civil liberties, and movements for economic and social justice. The legal basis has been laid, and significant steps taken, to erase fundamental civil liberties, vastly increase government surveillance of individuals and organizations, and persecute and incarcerate people without legal recourse. Under the premise of the "War on Terrorism," thousands of people of Middle Eastern and South Asian descent have been racially profiled, harassed, detained, interrogated, deported, humiliated, imprisoned, and spied upon. University and high school teachers and staff have been fired, suspended, or publicly denounced for expressing views critical of U.S. foreign policy[2] while high school teachers have been prohibited from wearing anti-war buttons while pro-war "Support the Troops" buttons are approved as

"patriotic."[3] Peaceful demonstrators exercising their rights to free speech are fenced off inside "protest pens," swept up by police without cause or provocation, and in some instances, arrested, gassed, and savagely beaten while reporters "embedded" among the police (using tactics borrowed from the Pentagon in Iraq) are the only media authorized to cover the events (Defede, 2003) . As the "War on Terrorism," manifested so far in the destruction and occupation of Afghanistan and Iraq, promises war without end, a huge portion of the social wealth produced by U.S. working people is being transferred to the military industrial complex.

While many U.S. people may feel personally untouched by attacks on civil liberties, the legal mechanisms and ideological conditions have been put in place to monitor every person in the U.S. and to arrest and incarcerate indefinitely without trial any individual or group singled out by the government as a foreign enemy agent or domestic terrorist. As Gloria Ladson-Billings (2002) notes, "Not since the McCarthy era have we been so quick to evacuate our rights and search for enemies among us." Only one Congressperson, Barbara Lee from California, voted against House Resolution 64, which ceded Congress's future authority to the President regarding the use of military force in response to the 9/11 attacks. We are routinely accommodating to the militarization of daily life in a security state with terror alerts on the nightly news, concrete barriers around public buildings, detentions of immigrants without charges as back page news, and vast new government powers to surveil the most private aspects of our lives largely unreported in the popular media. We are living through a *process* of establishing the ideological and material conditions for what the generally mainstream United Steel Workers Union, called "a police state" after witnessing the police violence and denial of rights at demonstrations against the Federal Trade Act of the Americas (FTAA) in Miami in November, 20003 (USWA Calls, 2003).

In the recent film, *The Pianist*, about a Polish Jew who survived the Nazi destruction of the Warsaw Ghetto, we witness the step-by-step, inexorable process of humiliating, persecuting, brutalizing, isolating, starving, and finally annihilating the Jewish population of Warsaw in 1939 and the seeming willingness of large portions of the Polish population to turn a blind eye and acquiesce as fascism unfolded. Although there were Poles who resisted Nazi occupation and risked their lives to save Jews, the

process of normalizing and legitimating state surveillance, repression, and finally terror is deeply instructive. Elimination of civil rights, racial targeting, detentions, suppression of dissent, and the doctrine of pre-emptive war depend on securing silence if not acquiescence from the majority. This is an ideological process that is fueled by the manufacture of fear and grounded in a new common sense, a "fortress mentality" (Giroux, 2003b) that frames repression as security and creates rigid binaries of "good" and "evil," "us" and "them." (Who is "us" for oppressed and marginalized people in the U.S.?) Substituting suspicion and fear for whatever sense of collectivity exists justifies schemes like the TIPS program, floated by the Bush Administration, that would have recruited 1 in 24 people in the U.S. to spy on their neighbors (Goldstein, 2002).

The current assault on "dangerous others" is, of course, not new. It resonates with the history of U.S. imperialism, driven by the economic imperatives of monopoly capital and rooted in the belief in Western superiority and the ideology of white supremacy (Takaki, 1993). Its general acceptance is made possible partly because a security state has already been normalized for communities of color that are persistently under siege by police (Parenti, 1999). Nevertheless, a specific justification and a particular ideological climate must be created to accommodate the majority to the lurch to the Right that is underway now. Systematic surveillance, repression, and war must be made acceptable, necessary, and normal to a substantial portion of the population. In part this is accomplished through the barrage of jingoistic patriotism and culture of fear promulgated by politicians of both political parties for broadcast on the nightly news. The importance of the symbolic dimensions of this conservative assault cannot be underestimated (see Bourdieu, 1998). But a crucial aspect of this process is also social practices in everyday life that render people docile, obedient, and easily manipulated and conforming (Foucault, 1971). In this context, I argue that we need to rethink the meanings of dominant education policies grounded in accountability and centralized regulation of schools.

The Articulation of Education Policies and Political Repression and Militarism

Policy is a power-producing and re-producing social practice that operates on multiple levels and dimensions (Ball, 1994). In one sense, policies are discourses – values, practices, ways of talking and acting that shape consciousness and produce social

identities. They teach people to become certain kinds of people (Foucault, 1995/1977). “[P]olicy ensembles, collections of related policies, exercise power through a *production* of ‘truth’ and ‘knowledge’ as discourses....Discourses are ‘practices that systematically form the objects of which they speak.’” (Ball, 1994, p 21). From this perspective, power works through educational practices, social interactions, and the normative language of schooling to construct social identities, social relations, and dominant modes of thought. Through immersion in a discourse, “learning *inside* the procedures,” people learn to take on specific perspectives and adopt core values, to “master an identity without a great deal of critical and reflective awareness about these matters, or indeed about the Discourse itself” (Gee, Hull, & Lankshear, 1996, p.13).

Policy rhetoric is also a form of symbolic politics (Gusfield, 1986) that organizes public consciousness around common sense concepts of education, social relations, and specific social groups and mobilizes people around particular social agendas. In this sense, policy shapes how we define complex social issues and the range of solutions which appear rational. How particular education reforms frame debates about social issues limits the range of options for action and thus can be more important than the specific policy choices (Lankshear, 1998). Probably the most powerful impact of the political Right over the past 20 years has been its ability to reorganize consciousness and reshape the public conversation, substituting the vocabulary of individual self-interest for the public good, individual responsibility for collective responsibility and social welfare, and standards and choice in the market for equity (Apple, 2001). Thus, *No Child Left Behind* and school accountability generally is as much about shaping how we think and who we become as it is about dictating practices.

In the following sections, I examine the constellation of language, practices, and dispositions which constitute school accountability for ways in which they frame how we talk and think about the role of the state, race, and human agency; how they shape student and teacher identities and limit critical thought and action. However, people’s lived experiences in multiple settings provide a repertoire of cultural and ideological resources with which to develop core values and ways of being in the world. The complexity of lived experiences is one basis for the development of personal and

social agency and the capacity to resist, challenge, and reshape dominant meanings. The notion of policy as an arena of ideological struggle is particularly relevant to the search for sources of counter-hegemonic action.

Normalizing Surveillance, Punishment, and Obedience to Authority

The revolution in information technology has made possible a dramatic expansion of data gathering on individuals and organizations. The logic of the speculative world economy, the fluidity of capital, and just-in-time production depend on the rapid acquisition and use of data. Information on consumers, corporations, and national economies is used to predict consumption patterns, plan investment strategies, and manage debt (see Gill, 2003). Through credit card numbers, electronic records, new genetic and face-recognition technologies, and tracking internet activities, corporations and government agencies are able to amass huge and detailed data bases on people throughout the world. Moreover, video surveillance in public places – from schools, to convenience stores, to ATM machines – and metal detectors and intensive searches in schools, airports, and court buildings have all become a fact a life in the U.S. This new surveillance culture is epitomized by “spy software” and “snoop ware” that allow the users to monitors every keystroke on a user’s computer simply by sending her or him an email. Already used by business, the software is available to any buyer. The New York Times reported that there are more than a dozen spy programs on the market that are “used legally by employers to monitor workers’ internet use, by parents to follow their children’s online wanderings, and by husbands and wives to catch cheating mates” (Schwartz, 2003). We are living in the ultimate Foucaultian panopticon designed for the observation of the many by the very few.

Surveillance is, as Foucault (1971) argued, a potent means of social control which teaches people to discipline themselves and renders them docile, obedient, and easily manipulated. The legitimation of surveillance in the name of national security and anti-terrorism has taken on new dimensions in the aftermath of 9/11. Sociologist James Petras, writing in *Z Magazine*, notes that “signs of a police state are evident everywhere” (Petras, 2002, p.10). It is well-known that the new repressive measures of the USA Patriot Act and proposed Patriot II and the new Department of Homeland Security allow the government to secretly spy on individuals and organizations, to search and seize records or personal belongings without a warrant, and to legally

detain without trial and/or deport thousands of Arabs, Muslims and South Asians. At the same time, suits filed by the American Civil Liberties Union, resolutions passed against the Patriot Act by three states and over 215 communities including Chicago and Philadelphia, reflect significant opposition. At issue is the build-up of a state apparatus with the authority to intrude into every aspect of our lives and to punish without legal recourse those singled out by the government. Debate over state surveillance tactics is critical both for blocking their implementation and to disrupt the ideological climate that justifies and normalizes a security state.

Education policies are implicated in the construction of a climate that takes surveillance as necessary and makes democracy expendable. As Vinson & Ross (2001) argue; high stakes testing is a technique of discipline and social control combining both Foucault's notion of spectacle (the observation of the few by the many) and surveillance (the observation of the many by the few). Under *NCLB*, the state intrudes into the lives of teachers and students through intensified regulation and surveillance (Macrine, 2003), including holding them accountable to standardized tests, classroom inspections, mandated scripted curricula, and systems of punishment such as school probation, student retention, and tying teacher evaluations to student test scores. As *NCLB* and state education standards take hold, course content in university teacher education programs is increasingly being tied to standards-based tests that pre-service teachers must take for certification. In California for example, teacher educators report that State law SB2042 has decimated multicultural, anti-racist education by tying teacher credentialing, and therefore teacher education, to Western-centric, white dominated state curriculum standards (Ahlquist, Lea, & Whang, 2003).[4]

Accountability practices contribute to the legitimation of surveillance and punishment by the state *as a normalized practice.* In my studies of public elementary schools in Chicago, teachers experienced accountability as a system of intense monitoring and punishment. This is particularly true for schools on probation that are under the supervision of central administrators and outside "experts" who are contracted to raise test scores. Teachers in these schools work under the omnipresent eyes of these supervisors who visit classrooms unannounced and check what is written on the chalk board, displayed on the walls, and recorded in teachers' grade books. A teacher at one school said, "It's sort of abusive, especially when you get into the [probation]

program.....They walk in and see what we are doing and they come anytime" (12/2000). In some of the schools, teachers report that they experience a new system of "walk throughs" by district administrators (ostensibly to provide constructive feed-back) as a punitive system of monitoring as each visit provokes a scramble to get certain types of student work up on bulletin boards and certain documentation ready for inspection.

By measuring and sorting students, teachers, and schools and holding them publicly accountable for results on standardized tests, the state brings those who are failing more closely under the gaze of power (Ball, 1994; Foucault, 1971). Overwhelmingly the Chicago schools and the students designated as failing are African American and Latino. In the schools declared deficient, surveillance and punishment have become routine. But normalizing surveillance of "deviance" also establishes the basis to scrutinize and inspect everyone. As accountability has become the dominant discourse, surveillance has become a necessary and inevitable part of the way all schools function to some degree. The annual ritual of the publication of standardized test results, state "watch lists" of schools scoring below state minimums, and now NCLB's index of failing schools, are already taken for granted.

Although purportedly designed to promote equity through uniform standards and mandatory outcomes, accountability is a highly authoritarian system of monitoring by powerful state agents. It works against educators and communities evaluating their schools and sharing information in order to collectively improve them (Lipman & Gutstein, 2004). In the schools I studied, the policies bred powerlessness. A school administrator described a common perception:

> ...that we can only do so much and that our hands are tied. Different policies and procedures, I think, are what sort of shuts down people from having a perspective that there's an opportunity for expansion. And that once we begin to see the limitation, or the perceived limitation, sometimes people shut down (4/2000).

To different degrees, in all the schools there was a culture of coercion that stifled oppositional voices as people felt pressured to bow to the authority of policies emanating from the "Central Office." People were simply afraid to speak out. Although some teachers spoke behind closed doors about their disagreements with

high stakes tests, mandatory retention, and probation, there was no open challenge that I was aware of. A teacher described the coercive climate:

> And then I have wanted so badly to rally parents, to talk with and inform them, but knowing that what would most likely happen is that the administrator would find a reason to fire me. You have to do something pretty awful to get fired from the Chicago Public Schools, unfortunately you have to do something pretty awful, and I have a feeling that someday I might have been accused of having done something pretty awful in order to get rid of me (5/2000).

Fear and intimidation were especially salient at the two lowest-scoring schools which were under the strictest monitoring, and where principals had the least flexibility. An administrator at one school took a great risk to support parents who went to the Board of Education to complain about the unfairness of the district's mandatory retention policy. It is well-known that the best practice is to "fly under the radar," to avoid any controversy that could bring scrutiny from school district authorities. In short, accountability as a system of surveillance and coercion breeds fear and suppression of dissent and teaches people to silence themselves. It is obvious that these dispositions are crippling to democracy and critical thought and action. What is important about these school policies is that they legitimate and accustom people to these behaviors.

Limiting what can be said – A discourse of containment and inevitability

In 1995, the new CEO of CPS berated critics of his newly installed accountability policies as defenders "of the failed policies of the past." Appropriating the language of equity, he framed the issue as a simple choice: either accountability and centralized regulation of schools or continue the injustices and failures of the past (social promotion, low-expectations and low-achievement of students of color). By addressing real problems and presenting his framework as the only alternative, accountability became a "discourse of containment" (Popen, 2002), stifling public debate and claiming sole authority to speak for Chicago's school children. As Stephen Ball (1990) points out, discourses are "about what can be said, and thought, but also about who can speak, when, where and with what authority" (p.17). Eight years later, accountability has become a regime of truth. Education is redefined as achievement on standardized tests, and to publicly question these goals is to go back to the "soft bigotry of low expectations," as Bush charges. As McNeil (2000, p.262) notes, "accountability as a closed system admits no critique." To stand up in a teachers'

meeting and denounce high stakes tests and the system of accountability is to be irreverent and irrelevant. A teacher described being met with a wall of silence when she challenged the ethics of high stakes at a teachers' meeting:

> So I sort of just went on to share a little story about how the kids and I just talked about it [the high stakes test] very openly....I said that I think they need to realize that, that there are some things that we have to do and we don't necessarily have to agree with or think that they are the best things in the world. And other people sort of just took over the conversation and said, "Well, I have posters that say what their scores are going to be, what they're predicting their high scores are going to be." "I have the kids sing songs about it." "I have the kids, you know, check each other's practice test so to put pressure on each other because they get embarrassed when they check their test" (5/2000).

The effects do not stop at the school door. "A discourse of containment – of what can be said and by whom – produces a culture of containment and epistemic privilege" (Popen, 2002, p.386). It does not require much imagination to connect the silencing technologies of the regime of school accountability with the post-9/11 culture of containment and epistemic privilege that has delimited public discussion about the root causes of 9/11 and about "terrorism" in the U.S. and abroad. To deeply question the actions of the U.S. government, to challenge the very definition of terrorism to include U.S. domestic and international policies, to link the violence of 9/11 with everyday violence of life in the U.S. and the policies of globalization internationally, is to go beyond the limits of the sayable. Speaking about TV host Bill Maher who lost his show *Politically Incorrect* for questioning government policies, Bush's press secretary, Ari Fleischer, warned the American people to "watch what they say." In the same vein, Attorney General John Ashcroft threatened that critics of the Patriot Act "aid terrorists" (Kissinger, 2003).

Accountability is a totalizing discourse. In the schools I studied, although educators continued to hold on to more holistic, democratic, culturally relevant, personally and socially meaningful visions of education (Lipman, 2004), examples of the power of accountability to shape language and practice also abounded. Administrators and some teachers described critical thinking as the ability to think critically about standardized test questions. An arts integration program and a conceptually rich mathematics curriculum were weighed in relation to their potential to raise test scores. Good teachers were identified by their students' scores. One administrator described

how teachers planned their lessons: "Now they're looking at what is actually the things that students need to know to make [it] on the Iowa Test or the ISAT" (12/9/98). Each accountability-driven practice (e.g., test-prep instruction, narrowing of the curriculum) was justified by reference to its relationship to another. Even a high-scoring school with a politically powerful parent group and a history of challenging the school board was influenced by this agenda. Despite its rich culture of literacy and highly competent teaching staff, in the fall of 2002, the principal adopted a semi-scripted reading program touted for raising test scores.

To varying degrees, in the schools I studied, there was an accommodation to the existing educational order as an immutable reality. For example, a first grade teacher described why she gives the Iowa Test of Basic Skills (the high stakes standardized test) to her first graders even though it is optional until third grade: "I don't mind taking the Iowa test because you might as well get them used to it." (11/2000). An administrator described a similar rationale in her school: "Also with the ISAT, we are meeting with kindergarten, first, second graders so that the teachers are teaching the children to think along how the ISAT is worded." (The ISAT is the state high stakes test which is not given until fourth grade.) This "discourse of inevitability" (Hursh, 2001) normalizes what exists as the only possible form of social organization and ideology. For example, in response to the question "To what extent is your teaching dictated by standardized tests?" one teacher said, "A great deal. I think that is the way this world is, so you really have to meet the standard if you expect to do well" (12/98). The result is the denial of human agency and paralysis of social action.

This way of thinking is engendered by the neoliberal version of reality – there is no alternative to the primacy of the market and neoliberal social policy. Stephen Gill (2003) summarizes the political implications: "Thus the operation of the neo-liberal myth of progress in modernist capitalism is intended to implicitly engender a fatalism that denies the construction of alternatives to the prevailing order, and thus, negates the idea that history is made by collective human action" (p.130). As Bourdieu (1998) notes, backed by the social authority of "experts" "[neoliberalism] produces a form of demoralization. And one of the reasons for its strength is that it is held by people who all seem to agree with one another – consensus us a general sign of truth" (p. 54). As the system becomes universalized and no alternative is posed, it defines

the boundaries of what is possible. To oppose *No Child Left Behind* or Chicago's accountability is to oppose progress toward equity and justice in schools. The discourse of inevitability in schools articulates with a broader political discourse in which the War on Terrorism, the security state, a huge military build-up, and the occupation of Iraq are the only possible paths to a safer world.

Undermining Critical Analysis

José Macias (2002) advises in response to the bombings on 9/11 and the U.S. government violence that has followed, "that we look critically at these phenomena within the contexts of history, power, inequality, globalization, and market forces" (p.282). In the wake of 9/11 there was a rare opportunity to re-examine the relationship of the United States to other nations and its role in the world. In the days and months after September 11, 2001 a new interest in international affairs created an opening for critical analysis, especially in classrooms where students of all ages asked, "Why do they hate us?" The potential to examine U.S. foreign and domestic policies in social and historical contexts has perhaps not been paralleled since the Vietnam war and the social movements of the 1960s and 1970s.

It is precisely this sort of social-historical analysis that is undermined by educational processes driven by standardized education, right answers to decontextualized questions, and market mechanisms of accountability. McNeil reminds us that a whole generation of students now graduating in Texas has known no other kind of education than that dominated by policies that structure out "the possibility for discussing student learning in terms of cognitive and intellectual development, in terms of growth, in terms of social awareness and social conscience, in terms of social and emotional development" (2000, p.202). As Henry Giroux (2003b) points out, we are witnessing the end of any notion of education as a public space to critically engage ideas and prepare students for thoughtful democratic participation. I don't want to overstate critical thought in U.S. schools prior to 9/11, but to the extent that possibilities for thinking, critique, and agency existed, those possibilities have shrunk. The influence of standardized tests, scripted instruction, and standardization are further restricting the space for engagement in critical and ethical examinations of knowledge just when we need it most (Canaan, 2002; Lipman, 2004; McNeil, 2000).

Popen (2002) argues that one technique of containment is literalism, a claim to epistemic authority that defines truth as ahistorical, authentic, authoritative, and not open to debate. Literalists control the meaning of Sept. 11 by drawing on the rhetorical power of absolutes (Popen, p.390) – "good vs. evil," "American vs. anti-American." "In this world of emergency time, politics assumes a purity that posits only one right answer, one side to choose" (Giroux, 2003a, p.xvi). "You are either with us or against us." Although this way of thinking can be dismissed as jingoistic and an artifact of Christian fundamentalism. it is also cultivated and valorized by literalist social practices that teach us to think in simplistic binaries and that reinforce the epistemic authority of those who claim the power to name what is true and correct. The pedagogy of standardized tests is such a discourse. Real learning involves dialogue and contestation of various perspectives. But the construction of high stakes tests around one right answer and the substitution of test preparation books for the curriculum rule out contextualized knowledge and critical analysis. Systems of accountability based on the imposition of tests, prescriptive standards, and scripted curricula deny students and teachers alike the space for complex and competing interpretations, contextualization of knowledge, and challenge to authority. I witnessed students who were practicing for the ITBS disagree with the *Test Best* Answer books. Despite the compelling logic of their interpretations, their teacher reminded them, "This is the answer they want you to give," and therefore it was right.

NCLB and the whole system of accountability are posited on simplistic binaries that sort students, teachers, schools, and whole school systems into those that are "failing" and those that are "successful." The absurdity of this classification was revealed in Chicago when some schools went, overnight, from being "models" that students were scrambling to get into and parents and teachers were extolling, to "failing schools" that students could transfer out of – all by a tenth of a percentage point on the school's test scores (Cholo & Little, 2003). The complexity of human development and intellectual and ethical and political engagement at the heart of education is reduced to a cut score. One administrator told me, "And if they're not able to master what's on that Iowa [high stakes test], I don't care what other things you're taught. Looking at it from what Bush is looking for, you're not taught. You are a failing school" (1/2001). The certitude with which people and schools are sorted into categories of good and bad and punished or rewarded accordingly is also pedagogical in a larger sense. It

reinforces the validity of moral absolutes and normalizes and encourages public acts of denunciation – precisely the terms the Bush administration evokes to single out and name terrorists and potential terrorists (see Giroux, 2003a).

Schools have become another arena in a media-driven culture dominated by images as substitutes for authenticity and complexity. What is good is easily quantified by test scores and prescribed by standardization, eroding all complexity.

> High-stakes, standardized testing/SBER [standards based education reform] and those who authorize and endorse it aim to impose a certain set of images relative to 'good' or 'effective' education, including those of the 'good' student, the 'good' teacher, the 'good' school, the 'good' parent, the 'good' curriculum, and 'good' instruction" (Vinson & Ross, 2003, p.247).

As Vinson and Ross argue, the construction and consumption of images of "good education" works to discipline students, teachers, and the general public to certain sets of education practices and to obscure the complexity and socio-cultural and historically situated nature of actual teaching and learning, privileging how the school looks on standardized measures over what is really going on there.

There are examples of this everywhere in Chicago public schools: teachers rush to get officially prescribed work on their bulletin boards before an inspection by the area superintendent; teachers whose students score the highest on standardized tests are celebrated regardless of what is actually going on in their classrooms; and writing is reduced to the formulaic five paragraph essay. Such a system robs education of any meaning or purpose, reducing it to the production of images at all costs, including recruiting or rejecting students based on test scores (as some public charter schools are doing), focusing instruction on those with the greatest potential to raise the school's scores, and even cheating to enhance the school's image.[5] Even student attendance is part of an image to be cultivated. At the beginning of the 2003-2004 school year, CPS offered chronically truant students sports tickets and part-time jobs as a lure to come to school on opening day to boost attendance figures (Washburn & Olszewski, 2003). Given these practices, it comes as no real surprise to read that some Texas schools had doctored their drop-out rates and college enrollment data to produce the impression of a "good" or "improving" school (Schemo, 2003). Schools are becoming another arena to acclimate us to superficial judgments based on

simplistic criteria. These are exactly the uncritical habits of thought that tolerate racial profiling and terrorism baiting through carefully orchestrated image-making campaigns.

Erosion of Social Solidarities

Since 9/11 the state has increasingly claimed sole authority to define and police the public interest while sowing suspicion in our midst. The federal round-ups, detentions, deportations, and persecution of people from Arab and Muslim countries after 9/11 and continuing harassment, arrests, and impounding of Palestinian relief funds represent a new round of racial profiling cultivated on the fertile ground of racism and justified by supposed threats to “our way of life.” People are being convinced to trade civil liberties for the promise of “homeland” protection from dangerous “others” in our midst. The new security state solution plays to people’s real fears in a world made insecure by economic and political policies that have robbed countries and regions of their resources and self-determination. But I suggest that the ascendance of the security state as a common sense solution is also a result of the erosion of social solidarities over the past 20 years. As neoliberal policy has privatized the public sphere and shifted responsibility for social problems onto individuals, it has undermined whatever ethic of social responsibility and alliances were forged through labor and social movements in previous decades.

Accountability policies are a prime example of the lived experience of shattering social solidarities. From the emphasis on individual achievement, to competition over test scores, to an elaborate hierarchy of surveillance, accountability promotes individualism, mistrust, and blame. McNeil points out the negative implications for student dialogue and collaboration:

> Standardization further reduces public education to a private good by measuring, and thereby validating, only highly individualized means of achievement. Individual test scores on highly fragmented facts and skills, have in many jurisdictions caused schools to minimize the evidence of learning that is made visible though discussions, writing, shared projects, extensive research, and other activities that draw the student into dialogue with other students and with people beyond the school (2002, p.245).

A circular culture of blame for low test scores pits administrators against teachers, teachers against students and parents, parents against teachers, and teachers against each other. Although in Chicago teachers are not yet formally evaluated by their students' test scores, an informal system of evaluation prevails that has teachers vying for the highest scoring students. A teacher described the situation:

> ...[in the past] people would support each other, smile and say good morning, and nobody does anymore. Everyone is just stressed. Unbelievably stressed. And it's becoming sort of competitive, like "I got x amount of children, and how many children do you have? I don't want her kids, but I want his kids and don't give me this, instead of...." So I see a lot of that (12/ 2000).

The same sort of competition is fostered among schools. In 2002, CPS gave 60 schools $10,000 each for improvement on standardized tests, developing accountability benchmarks, and realigning local school improvement plans with CPS goals. The money may have been insignificant, but the competition for public recognition it fostered was not, especially in a context of few demonstrations of appreciation for teachers' and students' efforts.

The implications of these policies for the intensification of racism and racialized blame are predictable. Teachers report that in some schools the disaggregation of test scores by race, as required by *NCLB*, rather than provoke a re-examination of educational practice is resulting in blaming African American and Latino students for bringing down test scores (*Teachers for Social Justice*, November 2003).

Disaggregating test scores by race does not necessarily provoke an examination of underlying ideologies, structures, school norms and practices, and dominant assumptions that marginalize students of color, immigrant students, and language minority students. In fact, in the context of systemic racism, I found that using disaggregated test scores as a club against a school that supposedly "worked" for the majority, reinforced the belief that those for whom the school was not "working" had something wrong with them and lead to a focus on methods to improve these deficient individuals (Lipman, 2004).

While there was evidence in my data of teachers working together, the individualized and public nature of test scores and their consequences also pitted teachers against each other and, in some cases, schools against the parents. As one teacher explained:

> “[high stakes tests] creates] a competitiveness among the teachers because these tests are very public. The scores are very public and you are going to get a list and whoever’s class gets the highest test scores is going to get a prize..... there is this underlying competitiveness amongst teachers for their children to do better on the test, which is just downright scary. You can just feel the energy when we are in meetings and things (5/2000).

At this school, administrators were also required to report student absences to the Chicago Housing Authority. As part of the accountability system, families with children who had excessive absences or tardiness could be evicted or placed on a list that would make them ineligible for new public housing, further eroding whatever bonds of mutual support had been built between the school and the community. The *NCLB* provision that allows students in “failing” schools to transfer (although there are very few slots to transfer to) also pits parents and students against each other, replacing school communities that might work together for the common good with a pool of individual education consumers competing with each other for the few available slots in supposedly high performing schools. Any shred of collective action for collective welfare is supplanted by the cutthroat logic of the market where “good” schools are obtained by the most savvy, attractive, and persistent customers (see Whitty, Power, & Halpin, 1998).

We should not underestimate the ideological implications of these experiences. These are social practices (albeit contending with other social practices in other social arenas such as churches, community organizations, and families) through which people learn to shun solidarity, seek individual rewards, and cast individual blame. In this sense, individualized achievement and mechanisms that promote competition for resources and outcomes erode our capacity to act in democratic collective ways.

The Centrality of Race

Accountability, as both an elaborate system of surveillance and a public spectacle of failure and deficiency, is a highly racialized form of social discipline. In the schools most affected, those attended by African Americans and Latinos, accountability is experienced as public humiliation and punishment. Individuals are blamed for the historical and present failures of an education system grounded in race and class inequality and injustices. A teacher at one school said,

> I have also heard teachers, security guards and administrators say things like when a child is misbehaving in the hallway, 'do you want me to tell all these kids around you what your test score is so that they can hear how stupid you are?'" (5/2000).

Drawing on the vocabulary of the prison system – probation, retention, supervision – accountability is another aspect of what Giroux (2003b) aptly describes as the "criminalization of social policy" (p.39) and the production of a "culture of punishment and incarceration" (p.41). In Chicago, the schools subject to the strictest regulation and control, the schools on probation, the students that are retained, and the communities stigmatized by the publication of low test scores are African American and Latino (Lipman, 2002). It is no accident that these polices are aligned with the social isolation of African American communities in particular and their disproportionate exclusion from the restructured work force.

Thus accountability becomes is a form of public racial profiling. The process of testing, sorting, and displaying failure becomes a spectacle of the dysfunction of African American and Latino students, schools, and communities. It demonstrates for all the world to see that these are the people that need supervision and correction. Targeting these schools for remediation is really a way of scapegoating them for the state's historical failure to provide even a modicum of decent education. The policies also have a potentially powerful effect on the students. To the extent that students are subjected to the regimentation of education-as-test-preparation and scripted curricula, they are learning inside practices that deny their capacity for critical thought, prescribe their responses, and undermine the authority of their own ideas and experiences. This is a deeply pedagogical project, teaching people the limits of who they are and what they can think and become. Of course these lessons are deeply contested. The fact that so many youth challenge the legitimacy of what goes on in schools suggests the degree to which they resist this humiliation and regulation (see for example, Generation Y, 20021).

Education policies that demonstrate supposed deficiencies of youth of color and justify their regulation are a critical component of the criminalization of these youth and their communities (Parenti, 1999). They legitimate racial profiling and regulation as official policy. Racism is an ideological fault line through which the legitimation of police state actions and U.S. imperial wars takes hold. Deeply rooted in the political

history of the U.S., its dominant ideology and social structures, racism and white supremacy have always been central to the legitimation of U.S. pursuit of empire, ideas of American exceptionalism and moral superiority, and division of the world into "us and them" binaries that demonize and dehumanize those who are not "white" or Western (Takaki, 1993). We should remember that previous periods of extreme political repression were made acceptable by targeting those defined as not "white" or as "aliens," e.g., immigrant trade unionists and Socialists persecuted and deported through the 1919 Palmer Raids, Japanese interned during World War II, the anti-communist witch hunt of the 1950s, and the Black Panthers, American Indian Movement, and other revolutionary organizations spied upon, harassed, falsely imprisoned, and assassinated by the FBI's COINTELPRO operations in the 1960s and 1970s. The current climate of scapegoating, suspicion, fear, and intimidation relies on demarcating "dangerous others" who are not "white," not "Christian," not "Western, and not "American" from the rest of "us."

The Conjuncture of Global Neo-liberalism and Global Resistance

The defining feature of the present situation is the conjuncture of global neo-liberalism and global resistance. September 11 and its aftermath can only be fully understood in relation to this conjuncture of social forces. On one side, the *supremacy* of a transnational capitalist bloc, composed of the G7 countries led by the U.S., attempts to impose the dominance of the market and the inexorable logic of capitalism on all countries and every sphere of social life through neoliberal economic, cultural, and social policy. On the other side, forces of resistance, both structural and cultural, are lining up against it – including social movements from below and national economic interests of countries in the global South (Gill, 2003). Drawing on Gramsci's theory of hegemony, Stephen Gill argues that unlike periods of relative capitalist stability when the main form of rule is *hegemony,* the present period is one of *supremacist* rule. During periods of hegemonic rule, "the coercive face of power recedes and the consensual face becomes more prominent" (Gill p. 84) as a particular class or class fraction persuades other classes to accept its leadership and its core values, forming a trans-class political economic coalition, or "historical bloc" (Gill 2003; Gramsci, 1971). This was the case in the post-World War II hegemonic period when U.S. and Western European capital secured a multi-class compact with labor

and the parties of social democracy. Gill argues that what emerged from the structural crisis of capitalism in the mid-1970s[6] is a politics of *supremacy* – power without consensus.[7] Power is organized around a supremacist bloc with the G7 states and transnational capital in finance, manufacturing, and services and a strata of privileged workers at its core (see also Castells, 1989).

The neoliberal economic and social policies of this bloc are subjecting the majority of nations and peoples of the globe to market forces while preserving social protections, such as tax breaks and anti-labor laws, for the powerful (corporate capital, privileged workers, the wealthy). The hierarchical and contradictory effects of neoliberal policies are spawning a growing rift between “popular masses and ruling ideologies” (Gill, p. 119). This rift is reflected, for example, in popular resistance to the World Trade Organization and other multinational neoliberal trade agreements. Gramsci characterized supremacist rule as inherently unstable precisely because it does not have the consent of the vast majority. It maintains power but it faces a crisis of legitimacy. The neoliberal discourse of inevitability, progress, and freedom of choice is an attempt to resolve this crisis by presenting the interests of transnational capital as the common interest.

But the crisis of legitimacy is grounded in the increasing impoverishment, social dislocation, destruction of traditional ways of life, devastation of whole countries, possibly irreversible environmental degradation, intensified exploitation, and unfathomable disparities of wealth and poverty within and among nations (including the U.S.) (see, e.g., Bello, 2001; Bourdieu, 1998; Castells, 1989; Gill, 2003; Sassen, 1994; 1998). As Gee, Hull, & Lankshear (1996) aptly warn,

> We are heading towards a world in which a small number of countries and a small number of people within them will benefit substantively from the new capitalism, while a large number of others will be progressively worse off and exploited (p. 44).

In the U.S. the ideological and material force of neoliberalism is felt in the restructuring of everyday life. While a tiny handful have amassed enormous wealth and a small strata of professional knowledge workers at the headquarters of globalization have benefited, the majority is working longer hours for less pay and fewer social benefits and suffering lack of health care, quality education, increased

housing costs, and massive consumer debt (Castells, 1989; Sassen, 1994).[8] A vast army of immigrant workers displaced by globalized capitalism lands in the U.S. and Western Europe to perform the new low-wage service jobs and to meet a growing tide of racism. At the bottom of the U.S. economy are African Americans and some Latinos who are a superfluous population from the standpoint of capital, banished to new urban Bantustans and criminalized and controlled by the penal state (Brown, 2003; Parenti, 1999) as evidenced by the magnitude of African American and Latino incarceration.[9]

Internationally, the false promise of market driven economic reforms has begum to unravel with the late 1990s meltdown of neoliberal economic policies (Argentina is a prime example) and the strength of anti-neoliberal political candidates in South America (Brazil, Venezuela, Bolivia, and Ecuador are examples). Resistance to neoliberal economic arrangements is also reflected in stalemates of the World Trade Organization in Seattle and the Fair Trade Agreement of the Americas (FTAA) in Cancun as nations of the South attempt to defend their national economies against transnational capital. Most significant, the crisis is spawning a diverse global social movement from below of farmers, workers, environmentalists, human rights activists, feminists, indigenous peoples, and intellectual and cultural workers against the neoliberal agenda and increasingly against capitalist relations of production, imperialism, and war (Porto Alegre II, 2003). These social forces are coalescing in the World Social Forum and demonstrating their opposition on the streets of Seattle, Genoa, Cancun, Jakarta, and elsewhere. The struggle for land, work, housing, the environment, culture, language, dignity, and justice is a life and death struggle. This was powerfully manifested in the suicide of a Korean farmer as an act of supreme protest at the 2003 FTAA meeting in Cancun. Although not organized around a poltical program, these diverse social movements are concretely and ideologically challenging the new orthodoxy that there is no alternative to neoliberal social policy and the primacy of the market (see Porto Alegre II, 2003). Cooperative movements (e.g., women's producer cooperatives in Latin America), self-sustaining organic farming projects, land seizures by landless farmers and homeless city-dwellers (as in the powerful MST [landless] and urban tenants movements in Brazil) are making tangible the slogan "Another world is possible." This is a beginning step toward defining a program for emancipatory economic and social relations.

Dominance without hegemony requires coercion. Of course, coercion is always an aspect of power, even during periods of relative stability. There is a long history of war and terror by imperialist powers against national liberation movements and the consistent use of state power to suppress workers and African Americans, Latinos, Native Americans, Asians, and others. However, coercion, criminalization, surveillance, and repression and the use of force internationally are accelerating in the present situation. The wealth and privilege accruing to a small section of the world's population must be defended against possible expropriation. It is these "privileged consumption and production patterns ...of a small section of the world's population that contemporary systems of policy and military power, used in the 1991 Gulf War, are designed increasingly to protect" (Gill, 2003, p.129). The determination of state actors to intimidate and divide emerging social movements was clear in the violence unleashed against anti-globalization demonstrators in Seattle in 1999, Genoa in 2001, Davros in 2003, and Miami 2003 (see Petras, 2002), and in U.S. government support for coups against President Chavez in Venezuela and Aristide in Haiti, the murder of labor leaders organizing against transnational corporations in Central and South America, and peasant leaders like Chico Mendez in Brazil.

For U.S. capital and the state, 9/11 provided a useful rationale to further U.S. domination of the neoliberal world order through war and occupation. In the name of spreading democracy and human rights, a country that is evacuating democracy and human rights promises war without end. As prize-winning writer and social activist, Arundhati Roy (2003), so sharply puts it,

> Here we are, confronted with an Empire that has conferred upon itself the right to go to war at will, and the right to deliver people from corrupting ideologies, from religious fundamentalists, dictators, sexism, and poverty by the age-old, tried-and-tested practice of extermination.

The stakes of this contest are perhaps higher than at any time in human history. South African anti-apartheid leader and revolutionary intellectual, Neville Alexander, argues compellingly that the alternatives are stark: Either capitalism be eliminated or we will be plunged into barbarism (Alexander, 2003; see also, Mészáros, 2003).

In this post-hegemonic world, negation of civil liberties, heightened surveillance, and legalized racial profiling are insurance against the possibility of significant political

resistance. The multiracial rebellion in Los Angeles in 1991 and a resurgent U.S. labor movement motivated by the most exploited sectors of new immigrant labor are two harbingers of the crisis of legitimacy coming to roost in U.S. cities (Davis, 2001). The legalized basis for the suspension of civil liberties and political repression is a tool to contain the unprecedented social and economic contradictions created by world capitalism (see Gill, 2003, also Brown, 2003). And 9/11 provided the opportunity for its implementation. The shift since 9/11 to a "shock and awe unilateralist imperial strategy" of pre-emptive war and regime change (Tabb, 2003) will certainly evoke further domestic and global opposition. The alarming speed with which laws curtailing free speech and the right to protest government policy have been implemented is matched by police violence against protesters. This was evidenced in the police state tactics that met protesters against the Free Trade Act of the Americas meeting in Miami in November, 2003 (Defede, 2003; USWA, 2003), in the protest pens and denial of public access created to limit anti-war demonstrations in New York in February 2003, the mass arrests of war protesters in Chicago in March 2003, and the creation of "free speech zones" to isolate demonstraters like Brett Bursey. This new national security climate is fueled by a discourse of fear and jingoistic appeals to patriotism (Giroux, 2003a) and buttressed ideologically and materially by social practices that regulate, discipline, and further undermine social solidarities and critical and complex thought.

Conclusion

The political implications of 9/11 put opposition to neoliberal education policies in a new light. School accountability policies undermine critical thought and dialogue and human agency. They discipline students and teachers alike to the power of central school authorities and create a coercive climate in which teachers and school administrators are afraid to speak up against educational practices they privately abhor. They sort students and schools based on the superficial images constructed out of test scores and promote simplistic binary thinking. They create a culture of fear and individual blame and erode social solidarities. The authoritarianism of these policies is particularly meted out in public to students of color and their schools and communities, defining them as deficient and in need of regulation. The supposed efficacy of these policies legitimates surveillance and coercion as public policy. These

are insidious lessons. Learning inside the practices of accountability apprentices one to the compliant dispositions and uncritical habits of thought that breed tolerance of systematic government surveillance and political repression, racial profiling, and jingoistic appeals to patriotism and war. It is not hyperbolic to cite the relevance of Hitler's famous statement, "What luck for the rulers that men do not think."

On the other hand, the contradictions between the rhetoric of democracy and opportunity and the reality of curtailed rights and growing economic polarization and war create a pedagogical space. September 11 changed the political landscape and made the U.S. role in the world an immediate topic, awakening an interest in world affairs and the U.S. role that many of us who teach have not seen in our classrooms. The disparity between massive military spending and the need for educational resources, jobs, housing, and health care lays bare the need for new national priorities. It is also quite transparent that those who fight on the front lines in the U.S. military are overwhelming people of color, products of the basic skills education promulgated by accountability policies. Also, the disheartening effects of school accountability policies and *NCLB* on teaching and learning are beginning to open cracks in their legitimacy. There are some indications that heightened contradictions are drawing people into political action who have never been active before. Among the hundreds of thousands who demonstrated against the Iraq war were many who had never attended a political demonstration. On a global scale, the reach of transnational capital has brought together an incredible array of diverse social movements against the consequences of capitalist globalization. It is truly a teachable moment.

Three points seem salient in this context. First, this is an historic moment for speaking out and acting. Children and youth need teachers who challenge techniques of silencing by demonstrating the courage to speak up and act against injustice. When 12 teachers in a Chicago high school publicly announced they would not give a mandated standardized test, they engaged in a pedagogical and political act that rippled out to teachers beyond their school and set an example for their own students of courage in the face of authority. Other Chicago teachers have made analysis of the war on Iraq part of the curriculum, introduced their students to alternative media sources, and found ways to circumvent and critique test-driven curricula.

Second, the power of dominant discourses is undermined by people's lived experiences outside of official institutions. Youth of color facing persistent police harassment, surveillance, racial profiling, and the absence of any meaningful opportunities for education and work within official channels have little reason to see the existing system as legitimate. In addition, youth and community organizations and aspects of popular culture embody residual and emergent ideologies and experiences of agency that run counter to the social discipline produced by schools and dominant ideologies. Perhaps it has never been more important for teachers to build on the resources and experiences of students' families and communities as the grounding for a critique of the social order and as sources of personal and social agency. Similarly, first-hand experience with the new security state can also bear the seeds of critique and opposition. The violence against peaceful demonstrators against the FTAA in Miami so shocked union members and senior citizens rallying there that they have been drawn into a public challenge against what they termed a "police state." They saw first-hand the violence of the police and the manipulation of the media. In a similar vein, standardized testing and accountability have so devalued any notion of humanistic and caring education that they are creating an ethical and professional crisis for many teachers. Although they are driving some of the best out of teaching, accountability policies also open a space to critically examine the politics of the dominant education agenda and to think more deeply about what kind of education we want for a democratic society. The injustices of high stakes tests can also be a starting point for students to develop critical consciousness about inequality and social reproduction (Christensen, 2000; Gutstein, 2003).

This leads to the third point. Beyond critique, we need a new social vision, a new liberatory politics of education that speaks to the good sense that makes educational accountability policies resonant. As Geoff Whitty (2000) argues, we cannot, indeed, return to the failed state bureaucratic policies of the past which reproduced social inequalities through education. Whitty suggests we need new forms of accountability, new voices, new forms of teacher professionalism based on more participatory relationships with diverse communities, and new contexts for collective decision-making to challenge both the marketization of education and the centralized control of the state.

> Part of the challenge must be to move away from atomized decision making to the reassertion of collective responsibility for education without recreating the very bureaucratic systems whose shortcomings have helped to legitimate the current tendency to treat education as a private good rather than a public responsibility (p.89).

One step that critical scholars of education can take is to make more public and more central to our conversations and theories projects such as the Citizen Schools in Porto Alegre, Brazil (Gandin & Apple, 2003) that concretely and theoretically challenge neoliberalism and posit an education that embodies active and critical citizenship. We need more examples of efforts to create "another world" if we are to develop both the public consciousness that it is possible and deeper understandings of what it would look like.

This is a period of immense danger when global capitalism, pre-emptive war, and the abdication of democracy are presented as the only option. But the crisis of legitimacy that these policies produce and the realities they lay bare, also present people in the U.S. who care about justice and democracy with an historic opportunity to help transform the present world order of destruction, exploitation, and untold suffering. The urgency and opportunity of the present moment suggests that it is not too dramatic, not too far reaching, and not too idealistic to see our work in education within Arundhati Roy's (2003) stirring call to action:

> The only institution more powerful than the U.S. government is American civil society....
>
> You have access to the Imperial Palace and the Emperor's chambers. Empire's conquests are being carried out in your name, and you have the right to refuse....
>
> If you join the battle, not in your hundreds of thousands, but in your millions, you will be greeted joyously by the rest of the world. And you will see how beautiful it is to be gentle instead of brutal, safe instead of scared. Befriended instead of isolated. Loved instead of hated.
>
> I hate to disagree with your president. Yours is by no means a great nation. But you could be a great people. History is giving you the chance.
>
> Seize the time.

Notes

1. This is happening through voucher plans, corporate take overs of public school systems, growth of for-profit schools, and outsourcing educational services to corporate education venders. The inability of public schools to meet accountability standards creates the justification for their privatization, as has already happened in Philadelphia, Washington, D.C., and elsewhere.

2. Tenured Palestinian professor, Dr. Sami Al-Arian, was fired from the University of South Florida in December 2001 based on unsubstantiated claims of possible terrorist connections. (Butler, 2002). In North Carolina, Elizabeth Ito was fired from her teaching position at Forsyth Technical Community College in April 2003 after she voiced concerns in class about the war in Iraq (Teacher loses appeal, 2003). "Defending Civilization: How Our Universities Are Failing America and What Can Be Done About It," a report published by the conservative American Council of Trustees and Alumni (Martin & Deal, 2002) claimed college and university faculty were "the weak link in America's response to the attack" of September 11. It publicly named more than 40 academics supposedly unaligned with "public opinion" on the war on terrorism. The report declared, "We learn from history that when a nation's intellectuals are unwilling to defend its civilization, they give comfort to its adversaries." In New Mexico six high school teachers and counselors were suspended for speech or expression related to opposition to the Iraq war (Haas & Hart, 2003).

3. In Evanston, IL, before the war on Iraq, the school district prohibited teachers from wearing anti-war buttons while American flag pins and other signifiers of support for Bush's war policy were allowed because they were not regarded as "political."

4.The California Commission on Teacher Credentialing awards credentials and certificates on the basis of completion of programs that meet Standards for Educator Preparation and Standards for Educator Competence" (Standards for Educator Preparation, 2003).

5. In 2003, several Chicago schools were accused of cheating on standardized tests.

6. The structural crisis of capitalism, beginning in the mid-1970s and exaccerbated by the oil crises of 1974-1975 and 1979, was the principal motivation to dismantle the capital labor compact and restructure the labor force through deregulation, cuts in benefits, reduction in wages, and increased part-time labor. This changed qualitatively the labor/capital power relationship in favor of capital. Weakening organized labor through the restructuring process had negative implications for salaried workers as well.

7. In the 1980s, to increase the rate of profit, U.S. and W. European capital introduced the new neoliberal socio-economic model – restructuring the labor force nationally and globally, finding new markets and increasing penetration of existing ones, and incorporating new regions into the capitalist economy. The break-up of the socialist bloc at the end of the 1980s accelerated the internationalization of these capitalist economic processes. These policies were facilitated by a change in the role of the state from political legitimation and redistribution to domination and capital accumulation The revolution in information technology facilitated labor flexibility and decentralized and sub-contracted production sites with substandard wages and labor conditions.

8. The boom of the 1990s produced greater disparities in wealth than at any time in history. It also produced the destruction of pensions and health benefits and reduction of real wages and job insecurity, higher tuition for university education, and more stress on two wage-earner families.

9. Human Rights Watch reported that in 2002, out of a total population of 1,976,019 people incarcerated in adult prisons and jails, 1,239,946 or 63% were Black or Latino although the two groups together comprise 25% of the population of the U.S. (Race and Incarceration, 2002). In 2003, although blacks account for only 12 percent of the U.S. Population, 44 percent of all prisoners are Black (Incarcerated America, 2003).

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