

# **Immiseration Capitalism, Activism and Education: Resistance, Revolt and Revenge**

**Dave Hill**

*Anglia Ruskin University, Chelmsford, England*

## **Abstract**

*This is a panoptic paper in five parts.*

*In **Part One**, Immiseration Capitalism, I examine the current neoliberal cum neoconservative austerity capitalism and its 'class war from above', in particular its resultant relative immiseration and its absolute immiseration, with particular reference to Greece, Ireland, Britain and the USA. In*

***Part Two**, Anger at, Analysis of and Activism within/ against Immiseration Capitalism, I argue that there is a necessity for Anger, (Marxist class-based) Analysis, and Activism, with Programme, Organisation and Strategy. Activism, Analysis and Strategy are then addressed in terms both of electoralism and in terms of direct, extra-Parliamentary activism, both being deemed necessary, but with the former having limitations and the latter being deemed essential. Here, I lay a stress on the importance of revolutionary Marxist party.*

*In **Part Three**, I identify the main features of Neoliberalism, Neoconservatism and Education for Austerity Capitalism and Immiseration, contrasting this, in **Part Four**, with Activism in the Education Arena: Critical Pedagogies, Socialist Education. Here, I summarise key aspects of critical pedagogy and socialist education, and also summarise Marxist critiques of theories that serve to disable class based analysis and activism in education and society: postmodernism, identity politics, and revisionist/ reformist socialism.*

*In **Part Five**, Resistance: Revolt, Revenge and Strategic Activism, I return to Resistance and Revenge and call for them to be strategically focused.*

*The paper is also slightly autobiographical, referencing some of my own relevant experiences, blogs and writing. As a panoptic paper it is therefore, inevitable a summary paper, in places, an extended annotated bibliography.*

### **Keywords**

Immiseration, capitalism, socialist education, revolutionary Marxism, activism, critical pedagogy, revenge

### **Part One: Immiseration Capitalism**

Across the capitalist world governing capitalist political parties and governments are using Naomi Klein's '*Shock Doctrine*', (2007), to once again wrench back to themselves what David Harvey (in his '*A Brief History of Neoliberalism*' (2006)) exposed as the increasing concentrations of wealth in a 'class war from above'.

Despite the views of some media pundits, that neoliberalism was dealt mortal blows as an ideology after the Lehman bank demise of September 2008 (e.g. Seamus Milne in *The Guardian*, see Milne, 2008), it is clear that the ruling capitalist classes of many American and European economies, and the international capitalist class as a whole, have not forsaken neoliberalism. Indeed, they are using its nostrums and doctrines with a vengeance to ensure that: firstly, the capitalist system is saved and, secondly, that workers pay for capitalist crisis. The drive to get back to 'normal' capitalist life through pursuing neoliberal policies has recently been made abundantly clear in the case of the UK through Colin Crouch's (2011) detailed account regarding the 'strange non-death' of neoliberalism in overall economic and social policy. And, at a journalistic level, Chang (2012) highlights the similarities between the Structural Adjustment Programmes (SAPs) enforced on governments in Latin America and Africa in the 1980s and 1990s by the IMF and 'European governments inflicting an old IMF-style programme on their own populations (see also Chang, 2010). We see the 'explosion of precariousness and the social deconstruction in the capitalist metropolises' (International Viewpoint, 2012).

The result is welfare is slashed, the poor live more precariously, more unhealthily, and die earlier. The low paid strata of the working class are duped and failed by the ideological apparatuses of the state, and repressed and kept in line and in prison, and

(in some cases) in the ghetto, by the repressive apparatuses of the state.. One of the most extreme examples of attacks on the right to organise, and to organise protest is the recent Republican legislation in the US state of Wisconsin to take away public sector workers' rights to collective bargaining (incidentally, occasioning the largest trade union rallying and activism for decades, MacAskill, 2011; Socialist World, 2011).

We are now, in much of the advanced, late capitalist industrialised world, in an era of intensified class struggle, intensified stratification, and intensified resistance. In the words of Karl Marx and Friedrich Engels' of 1847 in *The Communist Manifesto*, 'Society as a whole is more and more splitting up into two great hostile camps, into two great classes directly facing each other: Bourgeoisie and Proletariat' (Marx and Engels, 1847).

The corollary of this intensification of class conflict and resistance, with riots and flames in the streets of Athens, Madrid, London, Lisbon, with millions demonstrating and taking part in general strikes, 'Occupy'/ indignado movements, student protests. Accompanying this is the intensification of repression, together with the rise once again of Nazi and extreme right, racist, anti-trade unionist, anti-Left forces, For example, in Greece, in both the 6 May and the 17 June elections of 2012, the avowedly neo- Nazi Golden Dawn party won approximately 7% of the votes- including the reported support from 50% of Athens police, and is currently polling over 20% (Smith, 2012). Once again in history, we need to realise that, in Brecht's words (from the final line of his play *The Irresistible Rise of Arturo Ui*) warning us that, even if Hitler is dead, "the bitch that bore him is in heat again". The bitch of capitalism in crisis and under threat.

In what follows, I detail examples of *Austerity Capitalism* and *Immiseration* from states where I have been politically active, attending meetings, taking part in strikes and demonstrations, making speeches at trade union, left activist political and academic meetings, in the last decade: in Greece, Ireland, Britain and the USA.

### ***Greece***

Greece, under the heel of the austerity policies of the Troika, (the European Commission (of the European Union), the European Central Bank, and the

International Monetary Fund and the 'Memoranda' of Cuts (in salaries, pensions, jobs) and privatisations has become the economic, political and social laboratory for the capitalist onslaught on the pay, workers' rights, and public and welfare services/provision. Greece is where the transnational capitalist class is seeing just how far it can push a national working class before there is social breakdown and revolution (Kloke, 2012a, b). The aim of the transnational capitalist class is clearly to reduce the living standards and lives of Greeks to the levels of other Balkan economies, to the wage levels of €200 per month, from what is the current salary levels of €700 a month (Nikolakaki, 2012).

Not since the Nazi occupation, with its mass killings / executions of Greeks and deaths from starvation have Greeks from various strata of the working class suffered such privation, anxiety, terror, impoverishment. This is affecting the so-called 'working class' and the so-called 'middle class'. Both of these strata are, in fact, strata of the working class, those whose labour power is exploited by the capitalist class. I discuss the classic Marxist binary definition of class towards the end of this article). Both strata of the working class suffer. The 'social catastrophe', the 'Catastroika', (Catastroika, 2012; see also Socialist World, 2012) social impoverishment through mass unemployment (with 50% youth unemployment) large cuts in salaries/ wages and pensions, the imposition of supplementary taxes, the immiseration that Marx predicted, in *Das Kapital*, (Marx, 1867, Vol. 1, chapter 25) with real wages falling, and working conditions deteriorating. In recent decades there has been across the capitalist world, the progression of 'relative immiseration', with the wealth of the working class growing far more slowly than that of the capitalist class. But what we are seeing now, most spectacularly of all in Greece, but also in countries such as Britain, Ireland and the USA, is the progression of 'absolute immiseration', with an absolute deterioration of income, wealth and living conditions- and mass impoverishment (see Hill 2006a; Greaves, Hill and Maisuria, 2007; Hill, Greaves and Maisuria, 2009).

The aim of the Troika is for the Greek wage to be reduced at 150 euro / month. This was said publicly in a hearing at European Parliament after a question of a ,Euro-MP EMP Nikos Hountis. Unemployment now (Summer 2012) is 24% whereas in 2008, it was 8%. Among youth, more than half are unemployed. In a population of

approximately 11 million, there are now 450.000 families with no wage or any kind of income. In Athens alone there are 25,000 homeless, and the last two years in Greece there have been more than 3.000 suicides (Vatikiotis, 2012). Sotiris (2012a) details the post June 2012 election demands of 'the Troika' including cutting the number of universities, for a new reduction of the minimum wage (which has already been reduced from 751 to 586 euros), the Troika demands a complete dismantling of whatever has been left of labour market regulation, including abolishing the 5-day working week and re-introducing the 6-day working week.

Sotiris' (2012a) analysis is that

This process can be described as the "downsizing of a country". In the end Greece will emerge as a poorer country, with a diminished productive base, with reduced sovereignty, with a political class accustomed to almost neo-colonial forms of supervision and with a Greek bourgeoisie ready to accept a subaltern position in the new emerging European division of labour and to see its erstwhile ambition to play a more important economic and political role in the region curtailed in exchange for a violent change in the balance of forces with labour.

But Greece is not alone in facing this capitalist onslaught on the lives, conditions, health and services of the welfare and social state. While the hearts of Greeks burn with anger and misery, the super-rich fiddle – avoiding tax and taking bigger and bigger profits. 'Greece's richest entrepreneurs, the shipping company owners, do not pay any taxes on their earnings, which are exempted from taxation on the grounds that they are international under a rule incorporated into Greece's constitution in 1967, the first year the junta of the colonels was in power'. (Dreier, 2012a).

### ***Britain***

This immiseration, both *relative* immiseration and *absolute* immiseration, is also so evident in Britain "The 1,000 richest people in Britain became 30 % richer in the last year. That's a £77 billion rise in wealth—enough to wipe out around half the government's budget deficit" (Dorling, 2010a. See also Dorling 2010 b). One banker, Bob Diamond (until recently, head of Barclays Bank) 'earned' £100 million in 6 years. Whereas, for the masses, 'Cuts push UK workers' living standards back 30 years' (Shaoul, 2012), with 'working families struggling to make ends meet are worse off than they were 30 years ago'. Shaoul reports on *All in this together?*, a report by Bristol University's Stewart Lansley, published in January 2012, which shows that 'the share in national output (Gross Domestic Product, GDP) going to workers over

the last 30 years has fallen from 58 percent in 1978 to 53.8 percent in 2011 ... This is a cumulative wage loss of £1.3 trillion. In 2011, workers lost £60 billion in wages, earning more than £2,000 a year less than in 1978.

Lansley points out that

Top executives in the UK have been awarding themselves an ever-larger share of the economic cake since the depth of the downturn, even though the cake has been shrinking in size. As a result, the pay gap between executives and their staff has continued to widen, despite the persistence of the economic crisis. In 2000, the ratio of FTSE 100 top executive to typical employee pay stood at 47:1. By 2007 this had nearly doubled to 92:1. By 2011 it has risen again to 102:1. (Lansley, 2012:27).

Whereas for workers,

In the year to June 2010, average real pay fell by 3.6 per cent, and then by a further 3.8 per cent in the year to June 2011. Fewer than 2 out of every 100 employees enjoyed a pay settlement above the rate of inflation in the year to October 2011. It was a similar story in 2010: while 28 per cent of the workforce enjoyed a nominal pay rise in the first half of 2011, close to three in five had their pay frozen and around 6 per cent took a nominal pay cut.

A significant minority of the workforce has suffered a mix of pay cuts and worsening conditions of work, including longer hours, cuts in fringe benefits such as car allowances, and reductions in holiday entitlement and maternity and paternity leave. (Lansley, 2012:29)

Just to take one other example of inequality, in 2010 in London, the top 10% of society had on average a wealth of £933,563 compared to the meagre £3,420 of the poorest 10% – a wealth multiple of 273. This is the multiple of the top 10%. The multiple of the top 1% would be in the thousands. This level of inequality has not been seen since the days of the slave trade. (Ramesh, 2010).

And this increasing impoverishment and immiseration of the poor is set to continue. *Who Gains from Growth?*, drawn up by the Institute for Fiscal Studies (IFS) and the Institute for Economic Research (IER), forecasts that 'even if the economy returns to a "golden scenario" of steady growth, with no further cuts than those already announced' the results will be that 'a household on a middle income of £22,900 will forfeit £800 by 2020, a 3% drop. A low-income couple struggling on £10,600 (at 2009 prices) can expect a crippling drop of 15% to £9,000' However, in stark

contrast, 'those on £50,000 plus a year will enjoy the cream of 1.5 million new jobs and see a rise of 0.2% in their annual income' (The Observer, 2012).

These widening gaps in income and wealth will inevitably, accompanied as they are by the decline on welfare service and welfare and labour benefits, result in the poor dying even earlier than the rich. In terms of 'Healthy Life Expectancy' (HLE) at birth, with males in the 'Professional Class' having an HLE of 77.0 years, and males from 'Unskilled' backgrounds having, at birth, an HLE of 65.6 years. (White and Edgar, 2012). According to *The Guardian* newspaper, in 2006, life expectancy in the Glasgow constituency of Shettleston was 63, that is, 13 years less than the UK average (Gillan, 2006).

### ***Ireland***

And, as for Ireland, 'The 300 richest people in Ireland are worth almost €57bn or more than the entire Libyan or Croatian economy. They've got much richer too, with close to €6.7bn added to their combined wealth over the last year'. No hard times for them! (The Independent, 2011).

In the article 'Ireland: Shock, austerity, Sinn Féin and the United Left Alliance' Derwin (2012) writes that 'the new cohort of young teachers in September will be starting with 30% less pay than they would have had before the cuts'. Derwin continues,

The "What's Left" tracker index published by the Irish League of Credit Unions in April found that up to 47% of Irish adults have less than €100 to spend by the end of the month once bills are paid (*Irish Times*, April 16, 2012a).

He continues,

A Central Statistics Office survey on income and living conditions in Ireland in March showed the average income of the top 20% of earners was 5.5 times greater than those in the lowest 20% (*Irish Times*, March 28, 2012b). This inequality ratio – up from 4.3 a year earlier – is the highest figure on record since this measurement was first used in 2004. The survey found that average disposable income for Irish households in 2010 was €22,168, a 5% drop from the 2009 figure of €23,326. This is the lowest figure recorded since 2006. (Derwin, 2012)

The newly elected Fine Gael/ Labour Party coalition government in Ireland (in the February 2011 general election) replaced the Fianna Fáil government. But, as in other countries, the incoming government adopted austerity policies not dissimilar to their predecessors.

Instead of getting rid of 30,000 public employees, as Fine Gael wanted, or 17,000, in accordance with the Labour Party's campaign, they reached a compromise and settled for 25,000 to go by 2015. They will cut €9 billion from public spending. They did not increase direct taxes but did increase indirect ones, so the elite will rest easy in their beds. (Socialist Voice, 2011).

Socialist Voice continues,

The privatisation of €2 billion of what they call “non-strategic” state assets will only be the start. In the “Programme for Ireland” signed with the EU and IMF there are clear commitments to selling off state assets, including the ESB, An Bord Gáis, ports, airports, and much more. €2 billion will not be enough (Socialist Voice, 2011).

## USA

In the USA, commentators such as Robert Frank, point out that billionaires live in ‘Richistan’ (Frank, 2007; Times Online, 2007) where a particular anxiety appears to be that there is a five year wait for luxury Rolls Royce cars. One CEO (Chief Executive Officer), incoming CEO for Yahoo, has been awarded a pay package of \$129 million over five years. (Grey, 2012). As Grey points out,

This is considerably more than the \$102 million the city of Detroit said it would save when, the same week, its Democratic mayor, David Bing, unilaterally imposed an across-the-board 10 percent cut in city workers’ pay, along with drastic cuts in health care and hundreds of layoffs. The obscene and absurd compensation package for Mayer—at a time when manufacturing workers are being told their new wage benchmark is \$13 an hour or less—is but one more expression of the decay of capitalism and the decadence of the new aristocracy that presides over it. Nowhere are the avarice of the ruling class and its plundering of society more naked than in America.

Millions of workers’ main anxiety is the weekly or monthly wait for the next pay cheque to buy the family groceries. Millions in advanced capitalist countries, billions globally, live in ‘Pooristan’.

In the USA, ‘Inequality in the United States is on the rise, whether measured in terms of wages, family incomes, or wealth and is much higher than that of other advanced countries’ (Economic Policy Institute, 2006). And, millions in the USA



are outraged by a level of class inequality that has taken on obscene proportions not seen since the 1920s, where today 130,000 people have as much wealth as the poorest third of the country. Millions are appalled by rampant corruption, war profiteering, and drastic cuts in desperately needed social services while billions are being spent each week to destroy Iraq. (International Socialist Review, 2007).

And, as Yates reminds us, in the USA,

Over the years 1950 to 1970, for each additional dollar made by those in the bottom 90 percent of income earners, those in the top 0.01 percent received an additional \$162. In contrast, from 1990 to 2002, for every added dollar made by those in the bottom 90 percent, those in the uppermost 0.01 percent (today around 14,000 households) made an additional \$18,000 (Yates, 2006)

More recently, two reports in Sept 2011 show the shocking growth of social inequality in the United States, with the concentration of wealth in the hands of a few people on a scale not seen since the Great Depression. (Kishore, 2011) (Harvey, 2005, and Dumenil and Levy, 2004 are very clear on this).

*Forbes* magazine shows that the '400 richest Americans, combined net worth has soared to \$1.53 trillion, up 12 percent since last year'. For the rich, in their apartheid type social segregation, it is party-time, dancing on the graves of those who die early through poverty' Kilshore reports that the 'number of Americans living in poverty—defined as about \$22,000 for a family of four—soared to 46.2 million last year, its highest level on record'. And the personal wealth of one man in New York, John Paulson, 'at \$15.5 billion was approximately equal to the total net income of the bottom 20 percent of the New York City Metropolitan area, or about 1.6 million people'. (Kishore, 2011)

At the global level, 'a far-reaching new study suggests a staggering \$21tn in assets has been lost to global tax havens. If taxed, that could have been enough to put parts of Africa back on its feet – and even solve the euro crisis' (The Guardian, 2012). The article continues, 'the world's super-rich have taken advantage of lax tax rules to siphon off at least \$21 trillion, and possibly as much as \$32tn, from their home countries and hide it abroad'.

The structure of the rest of this paper, building on an examination of 'Immiseration Capitalism', now moves to: Anger, Analysis (Marxist), Activism, Programme, Organisation, Strategy.

***PART TWO: Anger at, Analysis of and Activism within/ against Immiseration Capitalism***

In this paper I argue that we need anger, to feel anger, and to display *anger*, at austerity capitalism, at its social class based differential impacts. These impacts are of course, felt differentially within different groups within the working class. Many ethnic minorities, women and the disabled are, in general, not only oppressed, (discriminated against, demeaned, degraded) but are also exploited (in terms of the rewards they gain for selling their labour power) more than other workers).

Anger needs to be accompanied by Marxist class-based *analysis*, of capitalism, of an analysis and understanding of who wins and who loses in capitalism, of who caused the current crisis and who continues to profit by it, and who loses through the crisis and has to pay for it. For me, in my writings and speeches, as a political and trade union activist, and as an academic activist and writer, it is Marxist analysis, of capitalism, the exploitation of the labour power of workers, the capital-labour relation, that best analyses, explains, the current crisis in education and the wider crises in society/ politics/ economics.

However, anger and the (Marxist) analysis are not enough. This analysis has to lead to *activism*. Activism of a particular type, for the revolutionary transformation of capitalism into democratic socialism/ Marxism. I am using the word 'revolutionary' here to denote major, societal, economic and political change, to denote a transition from the current neoliberal *cum* neoconservative capitalism to democratic socialism/ Marxism. Concerning 'democratic socialism', I want to make it clear that here I am *not* talking about parliamentarist social democracy, a social democratic notion of parliamentary "socialism", even of the temporarily benign welfarist redistributionist kind. By democratic socialism, I am trying to express that the goal should be the political power of workers organisations, that the socialist democracy I, and revolutionary Marxists talk about and work/ agitate for, has a revolutionary class content.

By 'the political power of workers' organisations'; I am referring to organisations in Greece that currently exist in embryo, and were apparent and in existence in particular during the 'hot summer' of 2011, and continue in various forms, such as self-help/

soup kitchens, 'neighbourhood committees', or 'local assemblies' or 'popular assemblies' together with 'workers' committees' running factories and enterprises that has/ have been taken over under workers' control. In other countries in other times such area neighbourhood committees and such factory/ enterprise committees might be called 'soviets' or 'workers' councils' (see, for example, Maltby and Thomas, 2012; Catastroika, 2012; SubmediaTV, 2012. In this section of the paper I am indebted to Jette Kroman, 2012, for her comments on aspects of political theory/ analysis).

Activism is translated into and through a political *programme*, a series of demands/ policies. To realise those demands, to progress towards them, requires a means, a vehicle, *organisation*. On the question of organisation there have been and are considerable debates, between, for example, Anarchists, Anarcho-Syndicalists, the Occupy Movements, social democrats, and various types of Marxist-Leninists, for example about horizontal and vertical organisation, vanguardism, democracy from below, and democratic (or, indeed, undemocratic) centralism- about the form of party organisation.

I recognise that there are many theoreticians and activists who do not share a preference, an analysis, that leads to privileging the party form of organisation. In the November 2012 edition of the *Journal for Critical Education Policy Studies* Issue 10, 2) there are, for example, two articles arguing/ exemplifying non-vanguardist and non-vetical forms of organisation ( Neary, 2012; Neary and Amsler, 2012). Neary (2012) talks of horizontal non-hierarchical sets of perspectives in his education related writing on (and indeed, participation in) *The Edu-Factory Collective* in Britain and the *Universidad Nomada* in Spain.

In Greece in particular, some Anarchist groups have played and continue to play a major historic and contemporary role in anti-fascist/ anti- racist/ anti- Nazi and anti-capitalist protest, resistance and rebellion. I am not going to rehearse here the considerable debate between the horizontalist form of organisation of the Occupy, Indignados, UK Uncut, Tahrir Square organisation and their strengths and weaknesses. Instead, I counterpose here the party form of organisation. In practice there is and must be cross-dialogue between the different schools of thought on these issues. With Malott (2012) I am in favour of 'building affinity with horizontal, non-

hierarchical anarchists and other radicals who do not believe in party politics or any form of working-class centralization associated with socialist revolution'. This affinity is, of course, built in side-by side struggles against the cuts, against fascists, on the streets, in meetings, in demonstrations.

I do advocate the party form of organisation, with internal party pluralism (Mandel, 1970) to put socialist policies into effect, organisation to seek and to take power. By internal party pluralism a party comprising/ including/ embracing forces coming from different experiences and traditions, and welcoming / facilitating the functioning of internal factions and tendencies – but united firmly on the platform of the transitional strategy and 'permanent revolution' (Trotsky, L., 1931).

The notion of program needs to be linked directly to the notion of strategy – thereby expressing that I am arguing for a system of transitional demands with the aim for the workers to topple the bourgeois state and take power.

On the question of *strategy*, that power may be taken, or won, through direct mass action or, through a combination of both direct mass action on the one hand, and, on the other hand, through electoralism, the 'parliamentary road to socialism'. If we talk about electoralism we have to be clear that we welcome reforms, but from a clear, Marxist, critical position. Thus, in Greece, were Syriza to take office currently (in late 2012) through the electoral system, it would take *office* but not *power*. It might or might not carry out some reforms, some 'dented shield strategy' against the current austerity programme. But it would not be taking *power*. That power would still be held by the national and EU/ international capitalist class and their organisations such as The Troika. It would only be taking power if it were to be accompanied by mass action in support of mass nationalisations, workers control, and control over organs of the state such as the police, armed forces, bureaucracies. One of the criticisms of the major socialist successes of in Venezuela, and one of the lessons to be learned for Europe, is the resilience of national capitalisms and their international alliances and support systems (Denis, 2012; Gomez, 2012). While acknowledging the very major gains by the poor in Venezuela under 14 years of Chavez, this left critique of Chavez notes that 'In the absence of a break with the logic of capital, the main beneficiaries of oil revenues have been the local bourgeoisie and sectors of multinational corporations' (Miranda, 2012).

I want to elaborate on the question of reforms and reformism. In terms of *reformism*, reformist political strategy is one way by which the capitalist class incorporates left forces into capitalism and its institutions and pay-offs and privileges. It is a way for the capitalist class to link the working class to the bourgeois state and capitalist system through parliamentarism. This is clearly a major and century-old bourgeois strategy within the workers movement.

The question of *reform* is a different, though linked, one: in this current period of the intensification of class struggle, and intensification/ clarification of class consciousness and organisation (to different degrees in different countries) it is one of class struggle by revolutionary means to gain any in fact concessions from the crisis ridden capitalist class.

As Kelsh and Hill (2006) summarised,

We support reforms and revisionist political and economic advances that seek to improve the lives of workers, for example, anti-capitalist as well as reformist campaigns and movements such as campaigns for tenants' rights, gender equality, race equality, and campaigns against SATS or the privatization of schools. But, it is crucial to note, we do so *from a critical position*. We believe, along with Marx and Engels (1848/1985), that it is necessary to "fight for the attainment of the immediate aims. . . of the working class" (p. 119). For, as Marx argues, "by maturing the material conditions, and the combination on a social scale of the processes of production, [the fight for the attainment of immediate aims] matures the contradictions and antagonisms of the capitalist form of production, and thereby provides, along with the elements for the formation of a new society, the forces for exploding the old one" (Marx, 1867/1967a, p. 503; Marx explains this in chapters 8 & 9 of *Wage-Labour and Capital*, and chapter 15 of *Capital* volume 3).

Yet we also believe, again following Marx and Engels (1985), that it is necessary to "take up a critical position" in relation to reform movements, and to do so in order to educate the proletariat - that class comprised of all who do not own the means of production and are therefore compelled to sell their labor-power to survive - regarding "the hostile antagonism between bourgeoisie and proletariat" (p. 120). In doing so, we aim to provide knowledges that help enable (in relation to various sectional, local, and single-issue campaigns) the development of class consciousness - knowledge of capitalist social relations - and awareness of the need to transform capitalism into socialism.

On the question of strategy, Trotsky clearly differentiated between three types of programme: the *minimum* (reformist) programme; the transitional programme (or policy that would break capitalism and which seems feasible for layers of workers to support); and a *maximum* programme, towards which we might move, but would

come into force after the demise of capitalism, rather than as a set of immediately realisable aims- (Trotsky, 1938; Hill, 2012a).

For Trotsky (1938, also set out in Hill, 2012a)

The strategic task of the next period – prerevolutionary period of agitation, propaganda and organization – consists in overcoming the contradiction between the maturity of the objective revolutionary conditions and the immaturity of the proletariat and its vanguard (the confusion and disappointment of the older generation, the inexperience of the younger generation. It is necessary to help the masses in the process of the daily struggle to find the bridge between present demand and the socialist program of the revolution. This bridge should include a system of transitional demands, stemming from today's conditions and from today's consciousness of wide layers of the working class and unalterably leading to one final conclusion: the conquest of power by the proletariat.....

The strategic task of the Fourth International lies not in reforming capitalism but in its overthrow. Its political aim is the conquest of power by the proletariat for the purpose of expropriating the bourgeoisie.....

The Fourth International does not discard the program of the old “minimal” demands to the degree to which these have preserved at least part of their vital forcefulness. Indefatigably, it defends the democratic rights and social conquests of the workers. But it carries on this day-to-day work within the framework of the correct actual, that is, revolutionary perspective. Insofar as the old, partial, “minimal” demands of the masses clash with the destructive and degrading tendencies of decadent capitalism – and this occurs at each step – the Fourth International advances a system of transitional demands, the essence of which is contained in the fact that ever more openly and decisively they will be directed against the very bases of the bourgeois regime. The old “minimal program” is superseded by the transitional program, the task of which lies in systematic mobilization of the masses for the proletarian revolution.

### ***PART THREE: Neoliberalism, Neoconservatism and Education for Austerity Capitalism and Immiseration***

Capitalist education plays a major role in maintaining the social universe of capital. Firstly it not moulds and develops the labour power required by Capital, without which Capital could not profit and survive, it plays a very central role in increasing Malott (2012) summarises why:

the productivity of labour. ...has been an increasing necessity of the capitalist class due to *the falling rate of profit*. For Marx (1867/1967), the falling rate of profit is one of the central laws of capitalist accumulation—a system based on perpetual growth and thus movement as capitalists, driven by sheer survival, exist in fierce competition with one another, seek ever higher returns and greater market share. This law stems from “the composition of capital” itself consisting of constant capital (i.e. the means of production such as machinery, land, and

buildings) and variable capital (i.e. human labor power) (Marx, 1867/1967, p. 612).

Marx stressed the importance of understanding that these two elements are internally related. That is, when capitalists (at least the small percentage of successful and/or governmentally subsidized ones) enlarge production by reinvesting profits to expand constant capital, an equal increase in variable capital must be realized to set it in motion. If all relevant variables, such as the supply of wage-workers, in a given economy remain constant, the perpetually increasing demand for laborers by the capitalist class will reach a point when “the demand for laborers may exceed the supply, and therefore, wages may rise” (Marx, 1867/1967, p. 613). Of course, as Marx stresses, capitalists, driven by their own insatiable quest for surplus value, have been shown to withdraw their capital from circulation before investing in a situation where wages completely eliminated profitability. The economic cycle therefore ebbs and flows, correcting itself, not in the interests of society as a whole, but in the interests of the capitalist class always.

Toward these ends, capitalism has a long, complex, and often contradictory history of engaging in many practices to counter *the falling rate of profit*. Of these, we might underscore:

Increasing exploitation by driving down the standard of living through dramatically reducing benefits, such as health insurance and public education

War and other forms of wasteful production, but also war to force open markets and gain access to both constant and variable capital

Immigration has long played a central role in increasing the reserve army of workers needed to keep the supply of variable capital up and thus wages and demand down

Financialization, more recently, has played a central role in creating the appearance of growth, when no real productive growth had occurred

Finally, Marx stresses that in the historical development of capital, and even in the business cycle itself, there comes a point when increasing the productivity of labor becomes “the most powerful lever of accumulation” (Marx, 1867/1967, p. 621)—thereby underscoring the significance of education in the historical development of capitalism.

Education also plays the ideological function of normalising death by starvation amidst a sea of plenty, or normalising immiseration and glorifying extreme wealth and exploitation of labour power, of pretending ‘we are all in this together’. I summarise the specifically neoliberal developments in education across much of the globe since the Thatcher-Reagan era, noting that they are accompanied by the mailed fist, the use of the repressive state apparatuses.

### ***Neoliberalism and/ in Education***

In this section I identify, and briefly summarise, ten salient characteristics of neoliberalism in education. These are very well rehearsed in the literature on neoliberalism and education. (e.g. Hill, 2003a, 2004, 2005, 2006a, 2009a, b; Ross and Gibson, 2007; Hill and Kumar, 2009; Hill and Roskam, 2009; Porfilio and Malott, 2008; Kumar, 2012; Rikowski, 2012). For reasons of space, I will restrict myself here to briefly commenting on the first of these characteristics.

*1. Privatisation/ Pre-Privatisation of schooling and higher education.* For example, in England, Academies- schools paid for by the state but given over to private control; also, in England, 'Free Schools', schools set up by groups of parents, where the schools are funded by the state. In the USA, some 'Charter Schools' are 'for –profit, run by what Glenn Rikowski calls 'Edubusinesses'—national and international education corporations (Rikowski, 2003a, b). There has also been in the USA and the UK, privatisation of national and local para-educational services (cleaning, meals, school inspections). In Britain, where until recently there has been only one private university (all the rest being state universities), a number of private companies and organisations are now being awarded degree awarding powers. Rikowski (2012) writes powerfully on 'the higher education sausage machine' and its ramifications in terms of some of the aspects below, such as intensification of work, commodification, consumerisation. (See also, Callinicos, 2006).

*2. Cuts in Public spending/ salaries/ pensions/ benefits: mass redundancies/ dismissals in universities.* The result is a deterioration in provision for those whom use these state / public services, and an increasing gap between those who use state/ public services on the one hand, and private services on the other.

*3. Marketisation, Competition between schools and between universities* in the name of 'choice' and differentiation. The result is a (racialised/ gendered/ social class) hierarchy of provision.

*4. Vocational education for human capital (except for the ruling class)* with differential funding or 'vocational subjects/ degrees on the one hand, and for an abolition of government funding for Humanities/ Social Science/ Art subjects at universities.



5. *Brutalising Management of the workforce: New Public Managerialism* as represented in growing and huge differentials in pay/ 'packages' and power between senior management of schools and colleges and universities on the one hand, and the 'shop floor workers', the teachers, administrators, manual staff) on the other. This has signified an end to what there was of democratic participative and collegiate management and decision-making in schools and universities, resulting in 'boss rule'.

6. *Competition between workers-- performance related pay/ payment by results*. This is another aspect of the end of collegiality. Teachers and university professors in England and Wales now compete for a restricted range of 'performance related pay'.

7. *Casualisation/ 'Precariatization' of public sector workers*, with the replacement of full-time and contracted fractional appointment staff being replaced by casual academic labour, hourly paid staff with no security of employment, and staff on short-term contracts.

8. *Attacks on trade unions, on workers' rights, on centralised pay-bargaining*. Internationally neoliberal governments wish to 'union bust', to break union power, to break national collective bargaining agreements. This can also include derecognising unions for collective bargaining purposes, withdrawing union facilities, or making union membership illegal.

9. *'Management speak'/ Discourse of the market* e.g. students as 'customers', 'delivering' the curriculum, with the discourse of the market replacing that of social responsibility.

10. *Denigration of/ Ideological attacks on public sector workforce with their pensions, relative job security*. In country after country, schools and universities are accused by neoliberals of having suffered 'producer capture', of being run for the benefit of education workers. Public sector workers are depicted as 'lazy', 'feather bedded', with 'gold plated pensions', of being 'the enemy' of prosperity, and of being 'infected with liberal and socialist ideologies'.

### ***Neoconservatism, Repression and Education***

Where the ideological state apparatuses (Althusser, 1971) don't work effectively enough, the repressive state apparatuses are brought in. State oppression is increased

with intensified use of the repressive state apparatuses and their weapons. One example is that on the Greek General Strike of 15 June 2011 in which I participated-) with tear gas being lobbed by police into Syntagma Metro, clouds of it engulfing Syntagma Square, and with Delta Force police, two per motorbike, clubbing demonstrators hospitalising them. In the USA, in a similar ratcheting up state violence, there was the famous case of a police officer pepper-spraying teargasing seated peaceful protesters at University of California Davis University Occupy encampment, casually strolling along a row of them, and spraying them with pepper spray.

Thus, Neoliberalism is not unaccompanied. It is accompanied- and enforced- with laws, guns, gas canisters, tactics such as 'kettling', by neo-conservatism in its repressive and controlling forms. This control is asserted increasingly strongly over education.

These below are some of the characteristics of neoconservatism in education in various countries.

11. Neo-Conservatism: control of Curricula of schools, teacher education, universities, with the removal of 'dangerous' content. An example is the control of school curriculum in England and Wales, and elsewhere, by a (rigidly policed and surveilled) National Curriculum for schools. Another example is the removal of most sociological, political, and social justice issues from the teacher education curriculum in England and Wales in 1992/1993.

12. Neo-Conservatism: control of Pedagogy: in England and Wales, not only is the curriculum circumscribed, so is pedagogy. The teacher centred methodology of the National Literacy Strategy has come to dominate teacher-student interaction, replacing the student centred methods typical of much primary (elementary) and some secondary (high) school education in the preceding decades, especially during the 'child/student centred, liberal-progressive pedagogy of the 1960s and 1970s.

13. Neo-Conservatism: control of Students: the imposition of heavy university fees, currently up to £9,000 a year, is having the effect of making studying at universities much more instrumental than when there were no university tuition fees. (Fees of up to £1,000 a year, were introduced by the New Labour government in 1998).

14. Neo-Conservatism: control of Teachers/ Professors: in schools and universities there is now much more surveillance of teachers/ professors, a target culture in schools for assessment and exam results, with penalties for 'underperforming teachers and schools, including school closures and schools being forcibly turned into Academies, with many teachers losing their jobs. These 'high stakes tests' penalise (in the USA and England and Wales) schools in working class areas, those whose exam and test results are not as high as in richer areas. There is also punishment of dissidents and union activists in schools and universities. This is not legal, but managements find ways of discriminating against and even dismissing union and radical activists. (I have, arguably, been 'moved on' from 5 of my 7 jobs in teaching, see Hill, 2003b).

15. Appeal to a more 'ordered' and hierarchical past, and to 'traditional' values. This can be and is seen as partially appropriated by Fascist and Nazi parties,

16. Neo-Conservatism: brute force is applied, such as riot police breaking up campus demonstrations in the USA and in England and Wales. Other than the University of California, Davis events mentioned above, police in riot gear with dogs attacked a demonstration at Sussex University in March 2010 (Jack, 2010). And on demonstrations in Greece, police use of tear gas, sound/ stun grenades, and beatings are common, both in the Hot Summer of 2011 and the Hot Autumn of 2012. And, as Smith (2012) makes clear, there are in some countries deep links between the police and Fascist/ Nazi groups. Kostas Tsironis (2012) wrote a savage and damning indictment in *The Guardian* (London) (9 October) about not just the links between the Nazi Golden Dawn part and the Athens police, but the Athens police starting to use Nazi-type brutalising tactics against detainees:

Fifteen anti-fascist protesters arrested in Athens during a clash with supporters of the neo-Nazi party Golden Dawn have said they were tortured in the Attica General Police Directorate (GADA) – the Athens equivalent of Scotland Yard – and subjected to what their lawyer describes as an Abu Ghraib-style humiliation.

Some said they were burned on the arms with a cigarette lighter, and they said police officers videoed them on their mobile phones and threatened to post the pictures on the internet and give their home addresses to Golden Dawn, which has a track record of political violence.....

Last month *The Guardian* reported that victims of crime have been told by police officers to seek help from Golden Dawn, who then felt obliged to make donations to the group....

Dimitris Katsaris, a lawyer for four of the protesters, said .... "This is not just a case of police brutality of the kind you hear about now and then in every European country. This is happening daily. We have the pictures, we have the evidence of what happens to people getting arrested protesting against the rise of the neo-Nazi party in Greece. This is the new face of the police, with the collaboration of the justice system."

Commentators such as Stevens (2012) make similar observations.

### ***The attack on Critical Thinking***

An extreme version of the radical right assault on critical thinking is exemplified by a recent statewide conference of The Republican Party of Texas opposes critical thinking, which passed a resolution opposing critical thinking in education, stating,

Knowledge-Based Education – We oppose the teaching of Higher Order Thinking Skills (HOTS) (values clarification), critical thinking skills and similar programs that are simply a relabeling of Outcome-Based Education (OBE) (mastery learning) which focus on behavior modification and have the purpose of challenging the student's fixed beliefs and undermining parental authority. (Austin Chronicle, 2012)

## ***PART FOUR: Activism in the Education Arena: Critical Pedagogies, Socialist Education***

This strengthening of revolutionary, of Marxist theory and practice needs developing within the arena of education, too. Of course, there have been many hundreds of thousands of Marxist and socialist and critical educators throughout the world over the last 150 years, from barefoot Communist teachers in India, through the ranks of the massacred Tudeh (Iranian Communist) and Indonesian Communist teachers and academic workers, through Russia and Europe and the Americas, drawing variously on theoretical versions of Marxism, from Maoism through Leninism, Stalinism, Trotskyism, (Morgan, 2003) through Freirean inspired educators in Latin America and North America. And there are also those drawing radical conclusions, within particular historical-situational circumstances, from the work of Dewey. There is a huge tradition of Marxist and other Left revolutionary educational theory and practice/praxis. This history is sometimes rendered invisible, lost, in the BANA- Britain, Australasia, North America- dominance / hegemony within English language and

publications, books, reviews, journals, rendered 'high status' through this Anglophone- and specifically, United States, hegemony. Hence, literature searches for critical pedagogy result in a considerable emphasis on the legacy and interpreters of Freire and of Dewey, rather than of Marx. Glenn Rikowski has charted and analysed the development of Marxist educational thought (in the English speaking world. See Rikowski 1996, 1997, 2007. A controversial semi-history of Marxist educational thought-and much criticised for its incompleteness- is Anyon, 2011. For debates around this book, see Malott, 2011; McGrew, 2011; Banfield, 2011).

Thus, it does need noting that many other conferences- and books- which self-identify as 'critical pedagogy', especially in the USA- refer to and propagate non-Marxist versions, focussing on more liberal, more democratic-participative, radical democratic versions of critical pedagogy. Some are even less Marxist, and focus on Critical Thinking, developing the ability to think critically, rather than locating such critical thinking within a metanarrative of social justice, let alone a metanarrative of economic justice and equality. It is the task of Marxists to show critical solidarity with such views and their exponents, with the emphasis being on the critical, with a view to informing, influencing, 'winning', radical liberal, and 'Marxian' colleagues to a Marxist analysis.

Some examples of attempts to develop Marxist education, analysis, understanding, praxis, are in the various conferences on Marxist education and critical education and critical pedagogy, such as the International Conference on Critical Education (ICCE) held at the University of Athens in 2011 and 2012, and due to be held in Turkey in July in 2013. Other such radical, Marxist, conferences on education are the long-standing Rouge Forum Conference in the USA, the longstanding Marxism and Education: Renewing Dialogues (MERD) held at the London University Institute of Education, and the (new) West Chester Conference on Critical Pedagogy, which commenced in 2012. These are the main Marxist education conferences in the English speaking world, and there are, doubtless, many dozens, if not hundreds, that take place outside the English speaking areas known as BANA- Britain, North America and Australasia.

The perspective I take in my own writing is democratic revolutionary Marxist, what I call socialist education (e.g. Hill, 1991; 2007, 2010; Hillcole Group, 1991, 1997; Cole

et al 2001, 2006; Hill and Boxley, 2007). Close to this is the Revolutionary Critical Pedagogy of Peter McLaren and his collaborators over the last 15 years. (See, for example, McLaren, 2005, McLaren and Farahmandpur, 2004).

At the educational/ sociological theoretical level, Marxist educators need to adopt complementary and mutually supportive analyses and activism, complementary- in fact as part of- the broader socio-economic-political struggles. At this level of ideas, at the level of ideology, I adopt classical Marxist social class analysis, contesting those theoretical analyses that take the focus off of, away from, the analysis of class-based exploitation, the defining feature of capitalism, the capital-labour relation.

I suggest that, in education as in the wider polity, at the political level, we should pursue two developments-Firstly to go *beyond critique* into socialist reconstruction, and secondly, to go *beyond social democratic reformism* into revolutionary anti-capitalist Marxism.

We do need democratically discussed programmes for socialist education, as we do for control of the economy, systems of democratic workers control of the economy. I am not talking of imposing a blue-print, or 'Redprint' for education (examples of socialist education suggestions for discussion rather than imposition, are the Hillcole Group's two books book, *Redprint for Education* of 1993, Hillcole Group, 1993), and *Rethinking Education and Democracy: a Socialist Alternative for the Twenty-First Century* (Hillcole Group, 1997). I have been, singly and collaboratively publishing on socialist education for 20 years. I deliberately publish most of my work online since I want it to be accessible). (See also the work of Terry Wrigley, e.g. Wrigley 2003, 2006; Wrigley et al, 2011. For different forms of socialist pedagogy, see Malott, 2012; Neary, 2012).

### ***Questions in Educational Theory: Postmodernism, Identity Politics and Revisionist / Reformist Socialism***

#### ***Social Class and Education***

Marxist analysis of the relationships between social class and education has been discussed by British Marxists Dave Hill, Mike Cole and Glenn Rikowski since the mid-1980s, and in the USA by writers of the Red Collective writing in *Red Critique*, by Peter McLaren and his numerous co-writers since the mid-1990s, by Martha

Gimenez, and more recently, work by Curry Malott (2011, 2012). I am well aware that I am restricting my references to that privileged group in the political economy of higher education, those in BANA (Britain, Australasia and North America). I attempt in a small way to overcome this linguistic imperialism to an extent by deliberately publishing articles from outside of BANA in JCEPS (*the Journal for Critical Education Policy Studies*) that I edit, and in the composition of the international editorial advisory board.

As a classical Marxist, I hold to a binary analysis of class (see Kelsh, 2001; Gimenez, 2001; Hill, 1999; Kelsh and Hill, 2006; Greaves, Hill and Maisuria, 2007; Hill, Greaves and Maisuria, 2009; Kelsh, Hill and Macrine, 2010) but do recognize, of course, the existence of horizontal different strata (for example, unskilled manual, white collar lower level management and supervisory, professional strata) and vertical segmentation (on the basis of gender, 'race' for example) within the working class, which is that class of people who sell their labour power.

While the work of Weberian inspired/ lifestyle classifications used in official government statistics can be highly informative concerning patterns and processes of privilege and underprivilege in the schooling and education (and other ) systems, I am not using the official government/ sociological/ market research, 'Weberian' definitions of social class.

The effect of the widespread use of Weberian/ neo-Weberian/ lifestyle/ consumption-based classifications of social class is debilitating and occlusionary. (Hill, 1999; Hill and Cole, 2001; Kelsh and Hill, 2006). Such classifications 'hide' the capitalist class, hide the relations of production- the source of the Marxist definition(s) of class, and serve to segment and divide the working class- that class of workers (and dependents) who sell their labor-power. The Occupy Wall Street slogans about 99% against 1% are an accurate application of the classical Marxist notion/ analysis of class- the 1% of the population who are the capitalists, exploiting the rest of the population who, whatever the descriptions applied to them, 'middle class', working class, working middle class etc. share the major characteristic of Marxist class analysis of the working class- they are all exploited by the capitalist class which makes profit from the surplus value produced by their labour power.

***Reformism, Accusations of Economism and Reductionism, and Relative Autonomy***

Critics of Classical or revolutionary Marxist analysis within education (and within other social areas) come from a variety of theoretical and political-ideological perspectives. Other than various conservative perspectives, such as neoliberalism and neoconservatism, there are three types of critique that I wish to address here. There share some aspects of criticism of Marxism, but differ on others.

The three types of criticism are, neo-Marxism / revisionist / reformist Marxism; identitarianism; and postmodernism. The connection between education theory and wider social theory is that the principles of each have resonance for, implications for, political action, for questions of organisation, programme and strategy.

I will spend time on '*identitarianism*'. Many of the comments critiques I make of identitarianism relate to critiques of the other forms of anti-Marxism.

Firstly, about social class, 'race', gender, sexuality and religion. It is evident that people are harassed, demeaned, violated, spat upon, attacked, killed, raped, because of their sexuality, sex, 'race'/ ethnicity, religion. It is also evident that- and this is readily apparent and recognised in academic discourse, in political mobilizations, and in homes and streets and workplaces- we have multiple subjectivities, which come to the fore in our own minds and in the actions of others towards us in particular places at particular times.

In my own writing I focus on social class, which I believe is the salient objective (as opposed to subjective) form of exploitation. But I try always to point out that class segmented in two ways. Social class is stratified horizontally by different social class strata or groups- for example, unskilled workers as the bottom stratum, skilled workers as a stratum above, then 'white collar lower middle class sitting, in diagrammatic terms on top of those two groups and so on with layer upon layer of different social class strata on top. These strata / groups are characterised by different levels of reward, power, autonomy. But social class is also segmented vertically by 'race' and by gender, for example.

This Marxist emphasis on the salience of ('raced' and gendered) class exploitation is represented in/ by and leads to vibrant academic and theoretical disputes. In contrast to revolutionary, classical and structuralist Marxists, various analyses see oppressions



of class, 'race' and gender as being equivalent. An example is the 'Equivalence' or 'Parallelism' theory of Michael W. Apple. Other theorists go further in their disavowal of social class as the key structuring of exploitation. Thus, in the case of Critical Race Theory, it is argued that 'race' has not just *equivalent*, but actually has *primary*, analytic and explanatory value in analysing oppression.

I critique David Gillborn and his version of Critical Race Theory (CRT) in Britain (Hill, 2010) over the relative salience of class and 'race' in Britain- and in the USA. Gillborn's view is that the most fundamental form and structuring of oppression in Britain, and the most accurate analysis of state policy (for example on education), is that based on 'race'/ racism/ white superiority, rather than social class exploitation. (Gillborn, 2006, 2008. His reply is Gillborn, 2010. Mike Cole has written very extensively from a Marxist perspective, critiquing Critical Race Theory, as part of a protracted debate between Critical Race Theorists and Marxists (between Gillborn and Cole: e.g. Gillborn, 2008; Cole, 2009; Gillborn, 2009; between Hill and Gillborn: e.g. Hill, 2009c, d, 2012b; Gillborn, 2010; and by Cole and Maisuria, 2007, 2010).

And, the prominent USA radical (neo-Marxist/ revisionist) educator, Michael W. Apple, has also, in a thoroughgoing series of revisionist/ reformist neo-Marxist essays, criticised the views of Dave Hill, Mike Cole, Glenn Rikowski, Peter McLaren, Deborah Kelsh, Gregory Martin, Ramin Farahmandpur, Paula Allman, as economistic, reductionist, deterministic, 'vulgar Marxism'. In this he has support in articles by, for example, Kenneth Saltman and by Ken McGrew. Apple, 2005, 2006. See also Saltman, 2010, 2011; McGrew, 2011. Saltman's online assault (2011) on what he calls 'vulgar Marxists', is very accessible).

This debate is carried out partly in the *Journal for Critical Education Policy Studies*, for example with articles by Farahmandpur, 2004 (see also his 2008); Kelsh and Hill, (2006; Rikowski, (2006; Cole, 2009; Cole and Maisuria, 2007; Hill, 2009c; Banfield, (2011, and Malott (2011) on the one hand, and by Gillborn (2010), and McGrew (2011) on the other.

In particular, Marxists such as Cole and I criticise the *political implications* of what might be termed separatist or non-class based, oppression specific (e.g. gender, 'race'/ethnicity) analyses.

***PART FIVE: The Development of Class Consciousness and Resistance: Revenge, Revolt, and Strategic Activism***

***Revenge***

The desire for revenge against those imposing and benefitting from austerity capitalism and immiseration is justified. The political and economic leaders- bankers, financiers, those driving down living conditions, the rich, the capitalist class billionaires and multi-millionaires- get off free in the current crisis- in fact they get richer, they profit from the crisis- as the empirical data evidenced earlier shows. They need to be brought to account. And where found guilty of crimes, punished. And class justice means the introduction of new laws, laws which redefine social irresponsibility and criminality in terms of knowingly causing deterioration to the lives and wellbeing of the community. ASBOs (anti-social behaviour orders) should be handed out not just to delinquent working class youth as they have been, but need to be redefined so as to target the real, mega-anti-social behaviour.

And where not found guilty of crimes, then, as part of class economic justice and socialisation of the economy, the capitalist class should be subject to nationalisation, and to expropriation with compensation paid only on the basis of proven need. I am not talking of hanging billionaire tax avoiders from lamp posts, or bringing in the guillotine, and I'm not targeting the small and medium businesses. It's the leading members of the capitalist class who need investigating.

As for the poor, and the not so poor, suicides are increasing, as are early deaths and chronic ill-health, homelessness, hopelessness. Neoliberal capitalist policies deliberately causing immiseration, making the poor die young, with children now fainting at school through lack of food, with hundreds of millions of workers forced into poorer and meaner and less happy and more anxiety-ridden lives.

Such social devastation is not just in Greece. It across cities and ghettos and suburbs and small towns and villages of all the countries discussed in this article, and many more beside. It is in the schools we and our communities send out children to. This is not just a form of class exploitation, class oppressions, class suppression, it is, at its extremes which we are seeing in Greece already, a form of class genocide.

And it is not an accident. It is the result of deliberate policy. Policy whose initiators and chief beneficiaries and promoters must be held accountable. This is not 'will of God' or 'Act of God'. It is the deliberate and knowing and in some cases gleeful 'Will of the Capitalist Class' and their political placemen/women/ servants/ collaborators. It is their deliberate, aforethought, weighed up, determined, carefully adjudicated, pontificated on and measured selection of policy and punishment. The poor are to be punished. The disabled to be devastated. The workers in an area of declining wages and increased taxes to have waking nightmares about how to pay the next rent or mortgage, and whether the job will still be there. In contrast, the segregated rich, who do not use our schools, buses, hospitals, pensions, holidays, The rich, the capitalist class, they are rewarded each time they turn the screw on others, on the working classes and our now degraded public services.

Those responsible for and benefitting from these policies – the initiators and chief beneficiaries and promoters - must be held accountable. Revenge and retribution are reasonable and righteous.

The absolute scale of dispossession and depredation by the capitalist class, such as bankers, profiteers from privatization, has been such as to lead to calls for prosecution, for criminal proceedings and for legal punishment. Alongside this is coming a political and economic awareness, with anger and outrage as the soaring levels of inequality and of immiseration and impoverishment, particularly in countries like Greece, are leading to a clamour for redistribution of wealth, power and income, for expropriation of the wealth and assets of the super-rich and of the largest capitalist enterprises such as banks, financial institutions and 'the commanding heights of the economy.

### ***Revolt***

The only too evident changes in the material conditions of hundreds of millions of workers- workers from middle as well as lower strata, are, however, leading to widespread changes in class and political consciousness, and to resistance. The concept of 'immiseration' itself. (Marx & Engels 1848; Marx, 1867) was very much derided and dismissed during years of growth (Greaves, Hill and Maisuria, 2007).

Other concepts such as 'proletarianisation' (Braverman, 1974) 'capitalism' and 'anti-capitalism' are far more widely understood and used, in particular 'capitalism' and 'ant-capitalism', terms rarely used outside the Left prior to the 2008 onset of the current crisis of Fiscal Capitalism, indeed m of the financialisation of capitalism, of capitalism itself.

The concept of 'the ruling class', that group of mega-rich, socially, politically interconnected, is perfectly encapsulated in the phrase and chant and banners on a thousand demonstrations in different countries, 'We are the 99%'. Banners on the student demonstrations in Britain, 'Strike. Occupy. Shut Down the 1%' , and 'Education for the masses, not just the ruling classes (on the various anti-cuts demonstrations in London, of 12 November, 2010, and of 30 November 2011, and the 30 October 2010 demonstration in Brighton, a medium size city of a quarter of a million people). (For my blogspot and photos from these three demonstrations, see Hill, 2010b, c, 2011b).

The neo-liberal, pro-austerity orthodoxy mong political parties, all agreeing, in effect, that it is the workers who must pay for the crisis, has delegitimised parliamentary, electoral politics. In Britain, the Labour Party, the Liberal Democratic Party and the Conservative party are all agree that massive cuts- in services, in the real value of wages/ salaries, in pension entitlements, have to be made. Where the conservative New Democracy party and the traditional social democratic socialist party, PASOK, together with a right split from the (left reformist) Syriza, the Democratic Left, are all united in accepting the 'need' for massive privatisations of public services and massive and unprecedented austerity cuts. And this analysis remains valid in winter 2012, months after the elections.

So there is much more the question, indeed, widescale questioning, of exactly who does Parliament represent. There is much more understanding that Parliament is 'the executive arm of the ruling class'.

and more interest in 'revolution', in major change in the way society is structured., and in concepts, once deemed highly theoretical, but now deemed more realistic, about the creation of 'dual power', the creation of alternative/ oppositional structures of government and administration, from forms of democratic workers' control, to local assemblies, to occupations. And there is resistance on the streets. The spotlight

of revolution and of people's assemblies and occupations has turned from Latin America, in particular Bolivia, Argentina and Venezuela, to Europe on terms of anti-austerity capitalism, as well as to North Africa/ the Middle East.

### ***Revolt in Britain***

In Britain, Students are rebelling (Hill, 2010b, c, d). From the 52,000 strong demonstration in Westminster on Nov. 10th 2010 (which went via a student occupation of the Millbank Conservative Party HQ in London, to disciplined and organized student occupations, sit-ins and teach-ins at various universities, through subsequent Days of Action, to student protests across Europe- Paris, Lisbon, Athens, Dublin. Saying, chanting, acting, demanding, 'No to Education Cuts', 'No to (increased) Charges for Education', 'Education should be Free!' The 10 November 2010 demonstration, organized by the National Union of Students and the college lecturers union, UCU, was the biggest student demonstration in England in a generation. (Englert, 2010; Hill, 2010c; International Socialism, 2011; Robinson, 2011).

This was followed by 130,000 students at universities, further education colleges, Sixth Forms and secondary schools walking out on Weds 24 November, 2010, and demonstrating against cuts and tuition fees, in a national day of action. Some marched on their local Tory party offices, just as 300 students and trade unionists in Barnet marched earlier on the local Tory Party HQ in Finchley. Students were/ are saying and chanting 'Students and Workers Unite and Fight', 'We are Part of a Wider Struggle!' Facebook sites such as 'School and FE students Against the Cuts' have basic, bold slogans- 'Education for the masses not just for the ruling classes!' Student protests influenced, and were followed by a national public sector workers' strike on November 30, 2011, (Hill, 2011b) the closest Britain has got to a general strike since the 1926 General Strike.

Even closer to a return to the general strike of 1926 is the 20 October 2012 'Anti-Austerity Demonstration' called officially by the TUC, the (national) Trades Union Congress, with potentially a million marchers in London, Glasgow and Belfast. Left unions such as the RMT (The National Union of Rail Maritime and Transport Workers) and the PCS (Public and Commercial Services Union) as well as Marxist and Trotskyist parties / groups such as the SWP (Socialist Workers Party), the SP

(Socialist Party) and SR (Socialist Resistance) are urging that the 20 October 2012 demo be the springboard for subsequent 24 hour or 48 hour general strike action by the around 6 and a half million members of trade unions affiliated to the TUC. The SP / placard/ slogan for the march, for example, is 'TUC Name Next Strike Day'. (In Britain, the TUC is the only national organisation of trade unions. A number of unions are outside the TUC).

### ***Revolt in Ireland***

Ireland had five austerity budgets prior to the 2011 general election. But the resistance has been at a markedly lower level than in Greece or Britain. As Derwin writes, 'Whereas the Greeks already had a large militant left, the Irish received this shock on top of 30 years of social partnership that had drained the fight from the trade unions' (Derwin, 2011. See also Keating, Morrison and Corrigan (2010)). There were three large trade union marches (though not in working time) and a one-day public sector strike 'after which the unions entered into the Croke Park Agreement (June 2010), a deal cooperating with the shrinkage of the public service' (Derwin, 2011).

The response was mainly at the local level and on particular issues. At the level of direct action, there was Occupy Dame Street, the main Irish emulation of Occupy Wall Street. (Sheehan, 2012) Here, though, a phenomenon of various Occupy movements was their inability and hostility to co-operate with trade unions and 'traditional' left parties/ organisations. Dublin Trades Council reached out to Occupy Dame Street (ODS), but the ODS refused to join in the trade union protest march DCTU march. (See also Sheehan, 2012, for her comments on the nature of the Occupy Dame Street movement and its hostility to organised forces on the Left. When I spoke at the Occupy London 'Tent City' feeder march on 10 November, 2010 (Marcus, 2011), I was assailed by some of the Occupy demonstrators, objecting to my saying I was representing TUSC (the Trade Unionist and Socialist Coalition) and SR (Socialist Resistance).

The response was also at the ballot box, where, in the 2011 general election, the United Left Alliance, a loose coalition of socialist and Marxist national and local organisations, in a "riot at the ballot box", dealt a near mortal blow to the ruling Fianna Fáil party. Fiana Fáil dominated Irish politics since the 1930s, reducing its seats in the Dáil from 71 to 20. The Labour Party (seen then as an alternative) went

from 20 to 37 seats and the Sinn Féin contingent expanded from five to 14 TDs. Five TDs (members of the Irish parliament) were elected for the (avowedly socialist/Marxist) United Left Alliance. Rather like the remarkably successful SSP (Scottish Socialist Party) in Scotland in the early years of the 21<sup>st</sup> century, and rather like the second coming of Respect Party and George Galloway as an MP in Britain in 2012, the ULA quickly fell foul of aspects of personality politics on the one hand, and the different aims of the broader coalition (in this case, the ULA) and some of its constituent parties) on the other. The ULA basically collapsed in late 2012.

### ***Revolt in Greece***

The 'hot summer' in Greece of 2011 saw workers' occupations of ministries, factories, banks, schools, universities, a steel works, a newspaper, together with the operation of around a hundred local assemblies, open, democratic assemblies in the localities, sometimes attended by hundreds of people. Some of these continue, such as the steel strike. In Greece, sacked journalists have taken over a newspaper (Eliftheria), doctors and nurses have taken over health centres. In acts of solidarity, there are also popular and social food kitchens, feeding the rapidly increasing numbers of homeless.

The largest 'occupation' was in Syntagma Square, until dispersed by clouds of gas (my blog report is at Hill, 2011a). So, we have seen nascent, early and partial forms of these organisational forms in the Greek resistance of summer 2011, the first in Western Europe for many decades.

The 'quiet period' around and immediately following the two Greek general elections of 2012 ended abruptly with the general strike of 27 September with up to 200,000 on strike and between 70,000 and 100,000 demonstrating in Athens alone, chanting 'We won't submit to the troika!' and 'EU, IMF out!', the start of 'a hot autumn' characterised by tear gas, repression, street battles between police and strikers/protesters. This was followed by the mass protests against the visit to Greece of Angela Merkel on 9 October, 2012, with the next general strike being called for 18 October, 2012.

What has been happening in Greece since 2008, including its 18 general strikes, has been, arguably, a pre-revolution from below. An outburst of rage and anger and

despair and fury coming from the streets and the squares that is without parallel in Europe since the events of 1968. And a situation of intense class polarisation, of strengthening of Marxist and socialist organisation and understanding among wider and wider layers of the population. So there is the strengthening of revolutionary praxis, the interaction between theory/ analysis/ understanding on the one hand, and practice, action, organisation on the other.

Of course, in a period of social catastrophe, other forces, such as Fascist/ Nazi-type parties have also increased their strength, organisation, and implantation. The capitalist class, as in the period of the rise of Hitler in Weimar Germany, is willing to hold the Fascists/ Nazis in reserve for street violence when 'the reds' get too strong for their liking.

As Sotiris (2012c) notes 'For more than two years Greek society has been the testing ground for aggressive neoliberal social engineering but also a laboratory of struggle, collective experiences, and radical proposals. It has the potential to become not only the symbol of resistance, but also an example of a radical alternative'.

***Analysis and Strategic Activism: Electoralism and Direct Action historically and in the current period***

In terms of electoralism, in Greece, the Syriza coalition (variously termed 'Far Left', 'Radical Left', though, in my analysis, Hill, 2012a, it is essentially 'left reformist', see also Dreier, 2012b; Kloke, 2012c, d) was close to achieving a Radical Left majority in the 16 June 2012 Greek parliamentary elections. In this same year, Jean-Luc Melenchon polled 11% for the Front de Gauche in the first round of the French Presidential election, and in Portugal, Germany, the Netherlands and Denmark, parties considerably to the left of the current neoliberalised social democratic parties have been polling, on various occasions, more than 10% of the vote. These 'Broad Parties', (see, e.g. Bensaid et al, 2012) and alliances are combinations or coalitions of left social reformist and Marxist revolutionary- often Trotskyist, sometimes Maoist- groups and parties. They are often fissiparous, because of these internal contradictions, but are, with varying degrees of prominence accorded to the electoral process by their various internal components, committed to electoralism, with electoralism taking as great, or greater priority than mobilising/ direct action. And some of these 'Broad Parties' are broader, or narrower, than others, and more, or less,



willing to take part in local or regional governments (even where this means voting for cuts, as with Die Linke in Berlin) or for war credits in Afghanistan (as with Rifondazione Comunista) (See Callinicos, 2008).

Indeed, through elections, Social democratic governments throughout the world, after winning elections, have, of course, introduced pro-working class legislation, fiscal policies, labour laws, welfare and social policies. In Britain the (left reformist, social democratic) Labour Party won the 1945 general election and in a period of economic crisis, carried out major pro-working class measures, such as introducing free secondary education for all (high school education), undertaking a series of major nationalisations, and implanting the National Health Service. And Hugo Chavez in Venezuela has been repeatedly elected and re-elected and carried out major reforms, even attempting a sort of dual power/ parallel local organisations. Marx and Lenin themselves talked of the necessity for reforms. For example, with respect to 'revisionist', or social democratic reformism/ reforms, it is important to note that Marx and Engels in *The Communist Manifesto* recognize that it is necessary to "fight for the attainment of the immediate aims of the working class" (Marx and Engels, 1848/1985, pp. 119).

However, in times of capitalist crisis, when workers' living wages, benefits and standards, are deemed too high and expensive by the capitalist class in general, then a more 'moderate', or 'liberal' or 'labor' party can be brought in, supported by sections of capital and their media, for people to vote for a 'a lesser evil'. It's what millions voted Labour for at the June 2010 general (parliamentary) election in Britain, and why votes for the Irish Labour Party and Sinn Fein leapt in the Feb 2011 Irish general election. Claiming to speak for workers and minorities these former/ quasi social democratic workers' capitalist parties, or liberal versions of the capitalist united front are the more successful in suckering those workers and minorities and disabling their rebellion.

And across Europe, even left social democratic/ revisionist/ reformist (pro-capitalist/ willing to manage capitalism) parties- such as Syriza in Greece, The Front Gauche/ Left Front in France, Die Linke/ The Left in Germany, the victory of George Galloway and the Respect Party in a by-election in Bradford, England, in 2012 are

proposing heavier taxation on the wealthy and heavier taxes on profits, albeit within a capitalist system.

Such left social democrats, revisionist/ reformist parties, and mixtures/ coalitions of revolutionaries with left social democrats, such as Broad Parties of the Left (Bensaid, 2010, Bensaid et al, 2011) propose taxing the wealth and income of top capitalists more heavily, in contrast to Revolutionary Marxist groups and Parties, which call for expropriating, nationalising that capital and wealth, and calling for the socialist transformation of society/ economy/ polity (see, for example the blogspot of the Fourth International Revolutionary Marxists, at <http://4thinternational.blogspot.co.uk/>, in particular for revolutionary analysis of the Greek situation).

This division on the Left is expressed in Britain by the neoliberalised Labour Party, the Left social democratic Respect Party, and the revolutionary left parties and groups such as the Socialist Party and the Socialist Workers Party, currently working with leading trade unionists and some members of Socialist Resistance in what might be termed (another) attempt at revolutionary Marxist unity within the Trade Unionist and Socialist Coalition (TUSC). In France the neoliberalised social democratic party is the Parti Socialiste, the left social democratic (i.e. pro- a 'fairer', more redistributive) capitalism, the Parti de Gauche, and the revolutionary Marxist Left represented by groups such as the NPA, the Nouvel Parti AntiCapitaliste. In Greece, the neoliberalised (former) social democratic party is PASOK; the Radical Left Coalition, a Broad Party combining left social democrats and various types of revolutionary Marxist, is Syriza; and the revolutionary anticapitalist Marxist coalition is Antarsya. In Hill, 2012a, I set out the respective programmes of the Syriza and Antarsya coalitions, the former for example, wishing to renegotiate the debt and (for the time being in the election and immediate post-election period, to have a Parliamentarist strategy, to act as 'a responsible opposition'.

Antarsya differs in both *programme*, urging a Marxist nationalisation of the main institutions and companies, together with a refusal to pay, a repudiation of ,the debt, and leaving the (straightjacket of) the Euro, and the Eurozone. In terms of *strategy*, while (most constituent parts of) Syriza in this current (Autumn 2012) period were staying (for the most part) off the streets, until the October general strike and anti-

Merkel demonstrations, anyhow, playing the part of 'a responsible parliamentary opposition'. In contrast, the strategy of Antarsya is to rely on street activism, occupations under workers' control, the development of neighbourhood assemblies, and the gradual development of systems of dual power.

Thus, to talk about direct action, extra-Parliamentary action, there is an argument that workers' power is not possible through the existing state and its organs, that an activist strategy in various circumstances should be won through dual power- the setting up and implantation of alternative and oppositional organisations, while not eschewing elections to the various electoral / representative for a of the bourgeois state.

Sotiris (2012a) summarises

That is why must not limit the discussion on power in Greece to electoral politics only. Power is not only about who holds the offices of government. It is mainly about who actually decides about economic policy, about the banking system, about education and health priorities. It is a material balance of forces within society, production, the State, and a question of collective representations, attitudes and everyday practices. In this sense, having a government of the Left only opens the question of power, does not resolve it.

Without a strong social and political movement 'from below', without strong trade unions and student movements, without all forms of popular self-organization and solidarity, any change in the balance of forces at the governmental level will be in constant risk of failure and defeat. A possible victory of the Left in the elections should not be seen as a simple electoral mandate but as the beginning of a new and more intense phase in the struggle.

And this is so, very much so, after the likely collapse of the current government, with the possible election of a Syriza led government in 2014 or 2015, or, indeed with any electoral victory of any anti-austerity coalition/ party following the mass demonstrations and strikes across southern Europe and Britain..

### ***'What could be' and 'What should be'***

In this current period of Immiseration Capitalism, of Austerity Capitalism, impoverishing and immiserating millions, immiserating in an *absolute* sense, no longer just a *relative* sense, then the gains of historic social democracy, the historic gains of the working class and its organisations, in education as in other sectors, are

being stolen away by the capitalist class, which like vultures, are picking at the carcass of the welfare state, free education, as well as free health services, and the dreams hopes and, lives of the working class.

In such a catastrophic situation, the rule, the dictatorship of capital, the nakedness of the rule of capital are opening the eyes of tens of millions to 'what could be' and to 'what should be' in terms of the organisation of human affairs. As alternative dystopias to rapacious capitalism the 'what could be' could be Fascist, or it could be military dictatorial rule. Or it could be the continued exponential increase in inequalities, and the immiserating impacts of neoliberal *cum* neo-conservative/ new authoritarian capitalism

But, with the energies, the analysis, the anger, the strategic activism, the organisation, programme and focused strategy of activists, including teachers, professors, students, combining with other workers, the 'what could be' could be the 'what should be' - a democratic Marxist re-ordering, reconstruction of the of the social apparatuses of the state, such as education, within the context of and as part of the wider revolutionary socialist and democratic reconstruction of the economy, society and polity.

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### **Author Details**

Dave Hill is Research Professor of Education at Anglia Ruskin University, Chelmsford, England, Visiting Professor of Education at Middlesex University, London, England; Visiting Professor of Education at the University of Athens, Greece; and Visiting Professor of Critical Education Policy and Equality Studies, University of Limerick, Ireland. He founded in 2003 and chief edits/manages the free online peer-juried journal, the *Journal for Critical Education Policy Studies*, [www.jceps.com](http://www.jceps.com). Dave co-organises the International Conference on Critical Education, held in Greece in 2011 and 2012, and due to be held in Ankara, Turkey, 15-17 May 2013. He has published 18 books and around a hundred chapters and academic articles. Dave Hill is a socialist political activist in different countries.