

Chapter 9

Resistance in England

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They can't stop this
We can feel it in our bones
The future's ours, yes it is
We can feel it in our bones
(Lyrics from 'Kettling' by Bloc Party, 2012)

Abstract

In recent years there have been expressions of anger and frustration against the Conservative and Liberal Democrat Coalition government and the predecessor New Labour government's neoliberalising¹ policies. The momentum against government policies that immiserate a larger proportion of the population (whilst the income of the super rich globally grows at a staggering rate of 14% per year (Bower, 2013)), may seem to have diminished at present (summer 2013) but it is likely to rise, especially as direct action and local and national demonstrations continue, and as new webs and political formations of and strategies for resistance are created. As Gramsci (1971) observed, hegemony is never won outright, and the continuation of such struggles is important in building class consciousness. Whilst we recognise the powerful and growing penetration of the idea that there is no alternative (TINA) to austerity neoliberalisation, and the concomitant imposition of increasing severe sentences on those who revolt against (and not merely evade) the status quo, we believe that resistance must strengthen at the levels of ideas and activism. This belief impels this chapter. The chapter has four sections. First we outline the current political landscape that has been moulded by the ruling capitalist class embarking on an aggressive policy agenda to expand, accelerate and deepen the reality and ideology of neoliberalisation. We examine expressions and demonstrations of public anger that are resisting the neoliberal and neoconservative status quo. We then, in section two, focus on the accumulation of anger/resistance and government/media responses to this. The third section focuses specifically on anger, activism, protest and resistance in education, at school, further/vocational college level and at university level.² A brief fourth section reports on and analyses the current state of organisation and development of resistance to immiseration capitalism in England.

Activism and Resistance against Neoliberalism and Neoconservatism in Britain

Nearly thirty years ago the organised British working class suffered its greatest post-second world war defeat with the defeat, in 1985 of the year-long 'Great Miners'

Strike' during the course of which two miners were killed on picket lines, 20,000 miners were injured, 13,000 arrested, 200 imprisoned, and almost 1,000 summarily dismissed. (World Socialist Website, 2013). The Thatcher government, which orchestrated the attack on the miners in the first place (Milne, 1994), violently occupied many mining villages (for example, at 'the Battle of Orgreave' in 1984). The government's response to the strike unsurprisingly led to a long period of substantially reduced strike activity in Britain, a drawing back by trade union and Labour Party leaderships, Labour's general and overwhelming rejection of class struggle, and the almost unchallenged acceptance- by all three major political parties in Britain, including Labour- of Thatcherism. Margaret Thatcher claimed that her greatest achievement was, in her own words, "Tony Blair and New Labour. We forced our opponents to change their minds." (Conservative Home, 2008). In subsequent years until and including the present, New Labour has distanced itself from strike action, rejected calls to reverse (Conservative and Liberal Democrat) Coalition cuts in public spending, and has adopted privatising neoliberal policies as well as neo-conservative hard lines on asylum seekers, immigration and welfare benefits. 'New Labour' became a thoroughly neoliberalised, former social democratic, party following the 1994 election to the party leadership of Tony Blair, who proceeded to neuter the party apparatuses (such as the power of local constituency Labour Parties and the power of the national conference) and to symbolically abandon in 1995, with its watering down of Clause IV, perhaps its most fundamental original aims of seeking nationalisation of production, distribution and exchange. At the policy level, New Labour initiated many of the neoliberalising policies, such as the PFI (Private Finance Initiative), that were subsequently expanded by the Conservative- Liberal Democrat Coalition government formed in 2010. This is particularly true of education (Hill, 2001, 2006a). The New Labour government's record in office can be summarised as follows:

Greater equality of opportunity (via targeted spending) is suffocated by neo-liberal and neo-conservative policies. The quiescent, non-critical neo-conservative subject curriculum and hidden/ informal curriculum in schools serves to dampen- but not to destroy- resistance to an increasingly capitalised, commodified and unequal society. This increased capitalisation, commodification and ('raced' and gendered) social class inequality has been deepened by New Labour's extension of Conservative government neo-liberal education policies such as increasing the selective hierarchical market in schooling, and imposing variable university top-up fees. This process of increasing educational inequality is reflected in and amplified by wider social, housing, and fiscal and economic policies, which have resulted in increasing inequalities in the wider society (Hill, 2006a)

Thus, at parliamentary level, and at local level, Labour, unlike at earlier periods of its history (e.g. from the 1920s, with the Poplar 'rates revolt' of 1921, to the 1970s Grunwick dispute and 1980s anti-Thatcher cuts and demonstrations), is largely absent from direct action or parliamentarist (municipal and national) level protest (Even in the earlier periods it usually distanced itself from radical action and direct action, such as with the opposition in the mid-1980s to Liverpool City Council 'Militant' led 'deficit budget' strategy of refusing to implement Thatcher's local government cuts.

The Labour Party under Neil Kinnock then purged / expelled various 'Militant' (forerunners of the Socialist Party) members and other leftists. Currently the Labour Party has only around half the number (14) of 'hard left' Socialist Campaign Group (Elliot, 2011) it had, in the 2005-2010 parliament down from 24 (Nunns, 2007) who could possibly be termed socialist given their ultimate wish to replace capitalism with socialism.

It is only with the post-2008 bankers' bailout and the imposition of austerity capitalism that is creating absolute and increased relative financial/ economic immiseration and cultural degradation/ immiseration, that forces of resistance to neoliberalism and neoconservatism have, and still in a disorganised and sporadic manner, taken to the streets and to marches and innovative forms of resistance. This chapter charts and analyses that resistance in Britain. This resistance has taken place overwhelmingly without the Labour Party, though numbers of rank and file Labour Party members have supported local and national anti-cuts events.

The Banking Crisis, Austerity and 'We're all in this together'

Protest was waning in the UK in the aftermath of the miners' strike defeat and two decades of neoliberal government (under the Conservatives until 1997, and under New Labour after that). Mass protest was rejuvenated when Blair (and Bush) invaded Iraq. There were widespread (global) protests against the invasion of Iraq before and leading up to the demonstration in February 2003, organised in Britain by the Stop the War Coalition (StWC) where between one and two million people marched against the war. That protest, which led to the temporarily successful formation and electoral success of the RESPECT party led by George Galloway, then degenerated as the war was waged.

Gradually organised protest was renewed in response to the then New Labour's handling of the banking crisis that began with the near collapse of Northern Rock in 2007³. This was followed by the collapse of Lehman Brothers in the US in 2008 that impacted on the global financial market, itself built on national government policies that allowed the banking sector to evade regulation. A similar situation emerged in the UK with questionable financial practices at the Royal Bank of Scotland (RBS) (which lost £24.1bn or 2/3 of its value in 2008, the largest annual loss in UK corporate history (BBC, 2009)), followed by similar casino style operations at other banks (The Independent, 2009). Despite an apparent government commitment to a laissez faire economic policy, the then and current government responses to these huge banking financial losses was to intervene and bail out these banks, taking public ownership of their toxic debts; in the case of RBS these debts were 84% of the bank's wealth. The bailouts were paid for by taxpayers through the government initiating austerity cuts which, in 2010, were the largest in the Western world in a century (Ramsay, 2010), and have continued unabated with the mantra that 'we're all in this together'. Despite all of us being 'in this together', bankers continue to receive million pound plus bonuses yearly.

The government's policy has been clearly ideological not logical (Monbiot, 2010; Zizek, 2009). In the UK, tax evasion and avoidance by the wealthiest individuals and corporations totals £95 billion *per annum* —whilst cuts to the public sector comprise considerably less than this at £81 billion *over four years* (PCS, 2011). In one year alone tax collection from the wealthiest individuals and corporations could prevent the need for cuts now being implemented and could lead to the government's £1trillion debt being paid off in approximately a decade. Clearly austerity is a pretext for widening and deepening markets and rolling back the state, rather than a pragmatic solution to the excesses of neoliberalism (see Collini, 2010). What we are seeing is class war from above in which the rich are bailed out by all others (Hill, 2012a; Jones, 2012).

It is hardly surprising given the depth and breadth of these cuts and the concomitant growing polarisation that ever more widely separates the super-rich from all others, that anger about, and resistance against, these cuts has emerged and grown. The reaction to this growing divide could be said to have been initiated by the student protests in autumn 2010/winter 2011 (see Canaan, 2011, Hill, 2010a), against the then proposed and since realised cuts to/elimination of government contributions to university tuition fee costs, coupled with a near trebling of tuition fees as well as the abolition of the Education Maintenance Grants (EMA) that allocated small funds of up to £30 per week to the poorest working class young people who sought further and higher education. These expressions of anger were most notable with mass turnout at student demonstrations, numerous occupations, teach-ins, for example in 'tent cities' and teach-outs (Dazed and Confused, 2010; Hill, 2010b) during autumn 2010 and into winter 2011.

The student actions against quasi-privatisation of university education were preceded and accompanied by flashmobs, which entail a rapid mobilisation of groups of people blocking entry to, or sitting inside, shops owned by major transnational companies that reportedly evade tax payment at a time of government austerity cuts. The first flashmob (organised by the then newly emergent UK Uncut) took place on 27 October 2010, one week after the government proposed "the deepest tax cuts to public services since the 1920s" (UK Uncut, 2010) and targeted Vodafone, which reportedly avoided paying £6 million in corporate tax, and was, followed, within three days, by shutdowns of 30 other Vodafone shops across the nation. Further flashmobs targeted Vodafone and other corporations deemed to have avoided paying corporate taxes. Flashmobs as well as consumer boycotts continue to target major corporations that have been avoiding tax payment up to the present⁴.

Perhaps the largest flashmob to date, a peaceful sit down protest, occurred in the central London Fortnum & Mason shop alongside the 26th March national demonstration against government cuts. Fortnum & Mason was a highly symbolic target. According to UK Uncut (2011), the annual tax avoidance of this shop, renowned for being frequented by the super-rich and royals, is a staggering £10million. Flashmobs in particular, and UK Uncut generally, targeted corporations that government tax (or rather lack of) policies supported, highlighting that their tax

avoidance could have paid for the public services cuts that government deemed necessary to pay for the banking crisis. As UK Uncut (2010) stated:

The brutal cuts to services about to be inflicted by the current Government are unnecessary, unfair and ideologically motivated . . . The cuts will dismantle the welfare state, send inequality sky-rocketing and hit the poorest and most vulnerable hardest. A cabinet of millionaires have [sic] decided that libraries, healthcare, education funding, voluntary services, sports, the environment, the disabled, the poor and the elderly must pay the price for the recklessness of the rich.

Despite the Fortnum & Mason flashmob conducting a peaceful sit-in with reportedly nothing more transgressive than putting ‘some slogans against corporate tax avoidance being carefully wrapped on printed ticker-tape around large stacks of Earl Grey tea’ (Penny, 2012), 145 protestors were initially arrested for reported aggravated trespass, although charges were later dropped against 115 protestors (Penny, 2011a; Malik, 2011). Clearly the government sought to send a message protestors that acts of resistance are illegal and can result in arrest, potentially impacting individuals’ future work prospects. Yet the legal quashing of approximately 75% of these arrests suggests that these arrests were symbolic acts, sending a threat to future potential protestors and representing protestors as seemingly lawless.

Anger against austerity cuts is growing in the UK, hardly surprising given that by April 2013 only 20% of local and national public sector cuts had been made (Tortelano, 2013), with a further tranche of welfare and local government funding cuts following after April. This anger has been expressed in coordinated actions, such as:

marches against council cuts from Newcastle to Southampton, occupations of libraries ... campaigns against closures of hospitals, Sure Start centres and nurseries. Across the country, and especially in the most deprived cities and wards, communities are rising with new found unity to challenge decisions, resist cuts and fight their own corners (Fogg, 2013).

The resistance and rebellion was accompanied by a sense of hope and optimism, especially in the immediate aftermath of the Arab Spring, demonstrations and occupations in state capitals across the US, most notably in Wisconsin, against state government efforts to undermine workers’ rights and cut jobs, and then the global Occupy Wall Street movement (of over 250 global occupations) that started in autumn 2011. The Occupy movement’s slogan of “We are the 99%” (We are the 99 percent) simply and effectively contextualises the ways that an unfettered market in banking and finance for the very few is accompanied by ideologically driven measures of austerity for the many. As Harvey noted (2005), it is the top .01% of the 1% whose wealth is rising meteorically above that of all others. This slogan, and the Occupy movement generally, captures the politics of ‘fuck this’, and seeks to instill a sense of clarity about the huge inequities and injustices that neoliberal and neoconservative capitalism engender.

Whilst the more public face of the Occupy movement seems to have waned in the past year, it has recently changed its tactics to fighting against evictions, low/no pay, waning or absent medical care and immiseration generally. As the next section shows, resistance today can be said to face both growing opportunities and challenges.

Organised Resistance and State Responses

Clearly media and government have sought to advance the idea that ‘there is no alternative’ to the status quo and that ‘we are all in it together’. To reinforce this ideological message, the ruling class have also turned to the repressive state apparatus. Althusser (1971) suggests that the capitalist mode of production turns to repressive state apparatuses like the police and military to maintain its power, especially when it is under, or anticipates being under, threat by popular movements. In Britain today the State is resorting to violence and ideological support of violence to counter the emergence of anti-neoliberalisation movements and activists.

Evidence for this usage of violence and its ideological support (through the media) can be seen in part by the police arresting peaceful protestors sitting in Fortnum & Mason in March 2011, discussed in the prior section. More evidence will be discussed in the section below addressing police treatment of student demonstrators.

Here we focus on police/government treatment of so-called rioters in cities across England in summer 2011. These riots occurred at a time when young people, especially from working class backgrounds, were finding their lives increasingly difficult. Those from minority ethnic backgrounds had, in the first decade of the 21st century, been experiencing growing police intervention without evidence, most notably through being targeted by ‘stop and search’ policies. This is indicated by Section 44 of the Terrorism Act 2000⁵, operating until the European Court of Human Rights deemed Section 44 to be “not sufficiently circumscribed” and lacking “adequate legal safeguards against abuse” (in Peters 2011). The police then used (and still use) Section 60 of the Criminal Justice and Public Order Act (1994) that extended stop and search from individuals to areas (Peters, 2011). The increasing repression that resulted culminated with the police killing of the young black man Mark Duggan on 4 August 2011. Duggan was the fourth person killed in a police custody/incident in Tottenham since 1985 and his death was the 320th in custody nationwide since 1990 (The Reel News, 2011). Uprisings erupted and swept across a number of working class areas in England during the following week. Contributing factors to these uprisings were: government cuts to Further and Higher Education student support; cuts of up to 75% to youth services (Iossifidis and Thomas, 2012) and increasingly high levels of poverty and unemployment.

The police, media and government used the so-called ‘golden hour’ immediately following the uprisings to divide rioters from other youth. Prime Minister David Cameron claimed that there were “pockets of our society that are not only broken, but frankly sick” and in these pockets individuals lacked “proper parenting . . . upbringing . . . ethics . . . [and] morals” (Porter, 2011). Notable in these comments and those of other Cabinet ministers as well as the mainstream media was a focus on *individuals*

with problems that ostensibly contributed to the creation of larger ‘pockets’ of disturbance. It was not until the publication of the ‘Reading the Riots Report’ (The Guardian and London School of Economics, 2012) that the voices of young people involved were heard, and these voices provided social and economic rationales for their actions. Rather than government acknowledging that their prior policy agenda had catalysed these outbursts of revolt, government attempted to criminalise protestors with stiff sentencing and permitting magistrates to work in night courts so as to expedite these sentences rapidly (Rogers, 2012). Guided by David Cameron’s urging for ‘tough love’, average sentences were 16.8 months compared with sentences for similar offenses the prior year of an average one-quarter of this length (Bawden, Lewis and Newburn, 2012). These are clear signs that, when working class ideological struggle grows, the capitalist class employs a strategy of coercion. This strategy has perhaps served as a warning against further resistance (Penny, 2013), but the ember is still burning, as we suggest below.

One of the key challenges of any mobilisation of resistance is that capitalist logic, or ‘capitalist realism’, as Mark Fisher (2009) calls it, has become deeply embedded in peoples’ consciousness. A ubiquitous and competitive, rather than solidaristic, spirit in so many areas of social, cultural and economic life appears natural and not ideological at its root. This strategy normalises neoliberalism, which is hardly surprising given that, as Blacker (2013: 6) notes, neoliberalism “runs smoothest when it’s not noticed as such; this state of being taken for granted, being ‘assumed,’ is where ideology exists at its purest”. Fisher (2009, p. 2) suggests that capitalist realism entails a:

[w]idespread sense that only is capitalism the only viable political and economic system, but also that it is now impossible to even imagine a coherent alternative to it.

Capitalist realism thus seeks to sap the noble effort of resistance, indicating the strength of the ideological state apparatus at present, a time when its logic seems, as Althusser said, axiomatic, “That’s obvious! That’s right! That’s true!” (Althusser, 1971, p. 172. See also, on education as an ideological and repressive state apparatus, Hill, 1989, 2006b, 2013). As we have argued in this section and the last, the obviousness of this logic is currently under threat. We now turn to explore the state of resistance in education.

Activism and Resistance Within Education

Resistance in Higher Education

Laurie Penny, like Len McClusky, General Secretary of the union Unite, wrote that the student movement was “daring to do what no union or political party has yet contemplated—directly challenging the banks and business owners who caused this crisis” (Penny, 2011). Many students responded with immediate outrage to proposed government cuts to university tuition fees of 100% to all but STEM subjects (Science, Technology, Engineering and Maths⁶) and to a concomitant near trebling of university tuition fees to £9000 announced by the Comprehensive Spending Review of October

2010, and the Browne Report on Higher Education one week later, both of which heralded a deepening commodification of education (Amsler, 2011; Canaan, 2011). These were implemented with the parliamentary vote on 9 December 2010 that agreed these cuts later approved by a White Paper on Higher Education⁷ (June 2011).

Student protest in the form of demonstrations and occupations began nearly two years previously in January and February 2009, in response to the Israeli occupation of Gaza (Yafai, 2011; Solomon, 2011). Furthermore, in early 2010, a handful of universities began to introduce cuts to particular departments and disciplines to which students responded. Perhaps most notable was the occupation at Middlesex University during April and May 2010 in response to the university's decision to close its philosophy department—ostensibly because it received a lower banding of state funding for its undergraduate programme than other, higher banded undergraduate programmes at the university. Middlesex had 'one of the largest MA philosophy programmes in the U.K', was the university's best performing research unit with 'some of the country's most eminent Continental philosophers' and had high 'world-leading research, with faculty contributing 'nearly half of their combined earnings ... to the university's budget' (Amsler, 2010a).

Prior to autumn 2010 there were also strikes at London Metropolitan University, whose Vice Chancellor had claimed government funds for fictitious students; in response the university cut academics jobs and strikes ensued. Other universities including Leeds University, Kings College London, Cumbria and Wolverhampton, experienced strikes in response to huge reductions in staff, capacity and/or real estate. Clearly the logic of neoliberalism, prevalent in the U.K. during the prior 40 years now was biting more fiercely and in response students at a number of universities organised against this logic.

But it was proposed cuts to government funding of tuition fees and the near trebling of students' individual contributions that led to autumn 2010 student activism referred to above (see Hill, 2010a,b). The media represented three national demonstrations between November 2010 and December 2010 as indicative of young peoples' supposed mindless violence against property, as indicated by all 10 national newspapers placing on their front page the day after the first national demonstration an image of a young man dressed in black, with a balaclava covering his head, kicking in the windows of Millbank, the ruling Conservative Party's HQ, which was then occupied by several hundred people. Only mentioned in passing in articles was the unexpectedly high number of people (52,000—more than twice as many as expected) on this demonstration. Clearly the ideological state apparatus focused on the seeming 'mindless violence' of a minority of demonstrators.

Protestors' response was to argue that this action was not one of "simple hooliganism [or] wanton violence ... the target was chosen and the meaning was political" (McMahon, 2010). Clare Solomon further contrasted the violence of shattering windows with the government shattering the education system. She noted that "it's very easy to replace a window; it's not so easy to replace an educational system

smashed by ... government” (Newsnight, 2010). Thus the new politics of the student movement broke with the dominant media’s facile binary of a supposedly small but violent minority who spoil a demonstration for the large, peaceful majority. An alternative binary, based on different moral values, juxtaposed young peoples’ violence against replaceable windows with the potentially irreparable damage done by destroying the public university. Thus activists were suggesting that direct action achieved its aim of literally and figuratively dissenting from government and government policy. This generation had “tasted the power and energy that comes with effective rebellion” (Worth, in Aitchison, 2010a). Finally, the occupation of Millbank was made possible by new media’s capacity for facilitating spontaneous action. As Casserley suggested, “with social networking media such as Twitter, Facebook and blogs, we have at our disposal more tools to organise ourselves, more quickly, than ever before” (2011, p.75). Action did not need to be decided in meetings prior to being taken; new ways of acting, spontaneously, collectively, through new media, are now possible.

Occupations of universities immediately followed, starting with the University of Manchester the day after this first demonstration, leading to a total of about 50 university occupations during this time, as well as teach-ins and teach-outs (Solomon and Palmieri, 2011, p.60, Aitchison, 2011, p.431). Perhaps most notable among the latter was the direct action of the ‘University for Strategic Optimism’, whose ‘inaugural lecture’ (given by one of their pseudonymned professors and held in a branch of Lloyds TSB banks taken into public ownership in 2009). As their collectively written inaugural address stated, “[a]s our university buildings are being boarded up we inhabit the bank as public space” (University for Strategic Optimism, 2013). This creative act (and others such as the Kings College student teach-out about education cuts at Kings Cross station during rush hour in January 2011) was videoed and uploaded on to YouTube and viewed by tens of thousands. This action exemplifies young activists’ creative inversion of the ruling class logic and their challenge the separation of public and private space; social media then facilitated their viral spreading. Theoretically, this action epitomizes ‘praxis’, the unity of theory and practice, to envisage and realise possibility.

If the first student in November demonstration was a kind of “call to action and to exposing dissent against government policy”, then the second demonstration two weeks later was partly seen as ‘the cat-and-mouse protest’ especially in London where some students left the agreed route because they believed that the police would ‘kettle’ (protestors called it ‘kidnap’, the police call it containment) them if they followed this route (Haywood, 2011, p 64). This was a day of largely local actions, locally organised with demonstrations held on campuses and in city centres across the country with an estimated 130,000 participants—two and a half times the number on the prior demonstration.

The third demonstration on 9th December, like the first two, was well attended, albeit not as large as previously, but arguably the most strategically coordinated of the three. The march ended with a vigil at Parliament Square in the run up to the Parliamentary

vote that day as to whether or not to pass key elements of the Browne Review introducing fees and cuts into law. The student movement significantly impacted the vote; the government's majority fell from an initially estimated 83 to 21. As Aitchison noted, the student movement helped destroy "the reputation of Nick Clegg and the Liberal Democrats"⁸, exposing the hypocrisy behind their platitudes about 'fairness' (Gilbert and Aitchison, 2012).

Notably school and college students also participated with university students on this demonstration, due largely to the government's proposed cut to the EMA that had enabled an estimated six per cent of working class students, approximately 647,000 students in total (Sessay, 2011), to buy books, lunch and other things for college. Abolishing the EMA contracted working class access to university. Younger students' presence at this demonstration indicated their anger that their opportunity to fulfill the dominant rhetoric of upward mobility was thwarted, even before they would have entered further education. What was very noticeable on these demonstrations was that working class youth, secondary/ high school students and students in colleges of Further Education (vocational colleges) who were faced with losing EMA grants, turned out in their thousands, alongside other supporters, including many university students and lecturers.

Another notable feature of this demonstration was the presence of the 'book bloc', in which students created book/shields with titles and authors of books (Herbert Marcuse's 'One Dimensional Man' and Theodor Adorno's 'Negative Dialectics', for example), instantiating both critique of the present and recognition that books can serve as weapons (Amsler, 2010b). Media representations of this event again portrayed young protestors as mindlessly violent thugs. One common image was of protestors (and unlucky passing tourists) kettled in Parliament Square damaging and graffitiing Treasury Building with slogans such as 'make the rich pay'. A second common image was of Prince Charles and Camilla, Duchess of Cornwall, sitting terrified in their paint-daubed chauffeur-driven vintage Rolls Royce as a stick held by a young person could be seen literally just touching Camilla. Newspaper headlines the next day portrayed this act, accompanied by the cry, 'off with their heads', as one of senseless violence, and the violation of a near taboo. Student activists, in contrast, suggested that this image captured activists' recognition of the profound distance between the still present aristocracy and all others. As Butler (2011) put it, targeting (albeit by serendipity) Charles and Camilla was mindful, aiming at a "disruption of order ... [which] has something to do with both what royalty is and what form protest should take". As Butler (2011) argued, these images were the antithesis of mindless violence, signaling:

the point at which structural inequality, when the whole, stinking, hypocritical con becomes utterly apparent ... and is sitting there in front of you in a chauffeur-driven car.

As with the first demonstration, media savvy protestors read dominant media messages differently than the media intended—as acts exposing class differences that revealed

the lies and lines of power from protesters' perspectives.

Major newspapers also failed to provide much coverage of acts of police violence against protesters at this demonstration. It only later emerged that the undergraduate Alfie Meadows was hit so hard on the head with a police truncheon that he needed emergency brain surgery to survive—and was one of 58 people arrested for violent disorder, the second most serious public order offense that can lead to a prison sentence of up to five years (New Statesman, 2013). Yet Meadows and fellow accused Zak King both claimed that their action was one of defending themselves and other protesters from police violence. Indeed after three trials over two years, both were acquitted of this charge (New Statesman, 2013; Davis, 2013). The legal defender of these two young men, Matt Foot, pointed out that during the prior decade the police made more aggressive use of “Section 2 of the Public Order, violent disorder”, upping the charge from that previously applied of ‘cautions, or tickets, [and] fixed penalty notices’ (in Davis, 2013), indicating that “a clear attack on protest” was now occurring. The police also dragged the disabled student activist, Jody McIntyre, twice from his wheelchair; he was deemed to be wheeling his way towards the police. Nor did the media attend much to the police kettling of hundreds of demonstrators on Westminster Bridge for five hours that, according to a medical officer, was reaching the dangerous level of crowd pressure experienced at Hillsborough football stadium that resulted in 96 deaths. Since this protest the Metropolitan police stated that in the future they would consider using water cannon and plastic bullets at demonstrations. Clearly police aggression against protesters is seriously escalating, indicating that the State is willing to use strong measures to deter protest that threatens the status quo.

This analysis indicates, when protest becomes effective, whether ‘violent’ or not, the ruling class use the police, part of the repressive state apparatus, to incite violence of their own, as well as the legal system, threatening more severe punishments for such acts. A question can thus be raised about what is happening to democratic processes at the present time.

Resistance in Higher Education: Against Privatisation, Bureaucratisation and Marketisation

The privatisation of ‘non-core’ services on university campuses- including cleaning, catering, security, reprographics, bookshops, porters, for example- is well advanced, but with each university becoming increasingly self-governing, it varies from university to university. This has led to some student and staff resistance against threats of privatisation and outsourcing. Through the Spring and Summer terms of 2013 many hundreds demonstrated, for example, at Sussex University where the university management was proposing to outsource more than 230 jobs. Students occupied various administration buildings (Mount, 2013; Poole, 2013). However such student-staff resistance to privatisation is sporadic. Nonetheless, it potentially radicalises and educates politically successive cohorts of students.

The opposition to privatisation is part of a wider opposition to the commodification

and marketisation of higher education, and its importation of New Public Managerialism, new more brutalistic, less collegiate, forms of governance and control accompanied by increased hierarchicalisation of the workforce and bureaucratisation of procedures. As Nisancioglu (2013) puts it,

Ironically then for an ideology obsessed with cutting red-tape, neoliberalism in education begets its bureaucratisation (at Sussex, there has been a radical expansion of managers, with no less than 31 individuals now on six figure salaries). It is the machinations of this coercive intersection of markets and bureaucracy that the students and staff are increasingly coming up against.

Critical Pedagogy and Marxist/ Socialist Education within the University

In schools, colleges, universities, many radical and Marxist critical educators try to affect four aspects of learning and teaching, asking questions about (at least) four aspects (see Hill, 2012b, c).

Some critical educators question the teacher-centred pedagogy, the pattern of teaching and learning relationships and interaction, and try to use democratic participative pedagogy which breaks down patterns of domination and submission and listens to children's, students' and local communities' voices- but not uncritically. Critical Marxist educators engage in critique that frames educational experiences within the conditions of Capitalism and its current neoliberal form. Critical Marxist educators also attempt to utilise different types of pedagogy in teaching, to engage in non-hierarchical, democratic, participative, teaching and research, while by virtue of their role in actually teaching, may maintain an authoritative stance where appropriate. Such approaches are rooted in social constructivist Vygotskian understandings of learning, and are also aimed both at producing co-learning, by teachers as well as taught, and at overtly welcoming and valuing more cultures than are commonly valued in a transmission mode of teaching. Of course critiques of such teacher-centred pedagogy are not restricted to Marxist educators. They are also made by liberal-progressive, child/ student-centred educators and by some conservative educators, concerned about teaching effectiveness and preparation for the workplace.

But critical education is about far more than pedagogy (Hill, 2014). Indeed, it takes place outside schools and universities as well as inside, as the rise of alternatives to the English university discussed in the next section indicates. A second question is about the curriculum- who selected the content and how rigid is it? Even where the curriculum is very tightly controlled, even where it is very rigidly prescribed, there are, as Gramsci, taught us, always spaces, little spaces for us to infiltrate, to use, to colonise. For example this can be seen in the teaching of the three of us writing this chapter, in primary/ elementary schools, secondary / high schools, prison, youth clubs, universities and vocational colleges and in 'tent cities', teach-ins and teach-outs and in emergent alternatives.

Marxist educators, indeed critical educators in general, can, with students, look at the curriculum and ask, 'Who do you think wrote this?' 'Who do you think decided on including this in the curriculum?' 'What do you/ we think should be in the curriculum

that is currently absent?’ ‘Why do you think it is absent?’ ‘Who do you think benefits and who loses from this curriculum?’, ‘What is the ideology behind this book/ task/ lesson/ curriculum piece?’ We believe that this can be done with ten year olds, 16 year olds, 40 or 70 year olds.

However limited the spaces are, within a school, university or educational site, within a curriculum, we can always find some possibility to question and to encourage the children/ students to do this as well so that they are, in effect, developing an awareness of what can be called ‘ideology critique’ (Kelsh and Hill, 2006). And then we can suggest, and seek from students, an alternative, perhaps even if only for five minutes in a lesson/session. We can question existing versions of history. We can ask, ‘Is there a different version or view of the past, the present, or the future?’. So, looking at the work of Marxist and Communist teachers and Critical Educators, we can affect the content of curriculum, or, if that is, at any particular time/space, almost impossible, we can seek to develop ideology critique, an understanding of the Capital-Labour relation, of capitalism and its relationship to education systems, of ideological and repressive state apparatuses, and of how schools and universities are shaped and controlled into producing politically and ideologically quiescent and hierarchically organised and rewarded labour power. Where Marxist educators, and Revolutionary Critical Educators (McLaren, 2005; McLaren and Jaramillo, 2010) differ from more social democratic and liberal critical educators is in the emphasis placed on resistance and socialist transformation (Kelsh and Hill, 2006; Skordoulis and Hill, 2012; Hill, 2014).

A third question in education that critical/ Marxist educators can and should ask is ‘how should children of different social class, gender, and ethnic backgrounds and different sexual orientations be organised within classrooms, within institutions such as schools and universities, and within national education systems? Are some groups in fact labelled, segregated, divided, demeaned? In some countries virtually all children go to the same *type* of school. But children tend to go to schools where their own class predominates. There is also a question of how the education system inculcates a differentiated sense of class awareness in working, middle and ruling class students. And it tries to keep the working class as a working class that is obedient, subservient, individualistic, interested in only themselves not in collectivity, not in community. Marxist educators clearly prefer and work for what in Britain is called ‘comprehensive’ schools, and in India, for example, is called ‘the common school’. But then, even where this happens (as in Finland, where there are only a single handful of private schools, where students up to the age of sixteen are taught in common/ comprehensive schools in ‘mixed ability’ classes) there are internal informal mechanisms, the hidden curriculum of differential (‘raced’, gendered’ and ‘sexually oriented’ expectations and responses to different cultural capitals (Reay, 2006; Hill, 2009, Nayak and Kehily, 2006).

A fourth question Marxist educators ask is ‘who should own, control and govern schools, further education (vocational) colleges and universities? Of course we cannot change the law at a stroke, but we can lead a movement that at some stage- in two

years time, ten years time, twenty years time- the ownership and governance of schools can be changed, made democratic, and secular and can attempt to be egalitarian. Instead of, as in some countries, schools, colleges and universities being run by a religious state, by transnational corporations (Ball, 2012), or by religious organisations themselves, by ‘for-profit’ private companies, by companies that are in theory and public discourse ‘not-for-profit’ (but which reward handsomely their executives and their friends), or schools that are run and governed by rich businessmen or women. Marxist educators (and others, of course) believe that schools, colleges and universities should be run democratically, with education workers and students, as well as elected representatives of local communities, having powers in and over those education institutions, within a secular, democratic national framework. Explicit in this is the assertion that education is a public good and a public right that should not be distorted and corrupted by private ownership- there should be no private schools, colleges or universities. (For an attempt to address these various aspects of education, in developing a socialist policy for education, see Hill, 2010c).

Of course the number of critical, radical, Marxist, counter-hegemonic school teachers and university teachers is limited, and it takes courage to be one, in the face of the repressive aspects (non-promotion, dismissals, harassment by management) of and within the education state apparatuses.

Alternatives to the Neoliberalised University

Whilst student demonstrations and occupations are, at present, sporadic, educational resistance is now taking an additional form: alternatives to the university are now emerging in England as elsewhere. These alternatives indicate one way, in education, that what Holloway calls “the scream of rage that arises from present experience carries within itself a hope, a projection of possible otherness’ (2002:5). That is, the “NO” entails “many Yeses . . . moving against-and-beyond . . . a projection beyond existing society” (Holloway, 2002:218).

Alternatives to the public university embody this “NO” to a greater or lesser degree. These alternatives are, in part, reactions against the Coalition government’s programme of privatising the public university⁹. For example, The Social Science Centre, Lincoln was initiated as soon as the Coalition government came to power (May 2010). It is located outside the university, in the centre of Lincoln, thus indicating a movement beyond the university. The Free University of Liverpool was created explicitly as “a protest” in response to government policy; their mission statement claimed that they would “not sit here and take it anymore. We will rise up and educate each other and ourselves to FIGHT BACK!” Such alternatives carry the conviction that it is possible, here and now, to rework the university against the government’s agenda. Both the Social Science Centre, Lincoln, and the Free University of Liverpool have developed programmes parallel to those of the public university. The former, run as a free, not-for-profit cooperative higher education project, began its programme of study at the equivalent of undergraduate and postgraduate study in autumn 2013. The latter has had a one year equivalent programme to a foundation degree ‘Culture and Performance’, to be followed by the

equivalent to a 'BA degree in Cultural Praxis' for those "who wish the world were otherwise and are willing to take steps to make it otherwise" (The Free University of Liverpool, 2013).

Other initiatives, not modeled on the university, have emerged. The Really Open University operated in alternative spaces in Leeds for nearly two years, whilst Tent City University and London Free University, organised during the occupation of St. Paul's Cathedral, held discussions/courses in alternative spaces for over a year. Presently, Birmingham Radical Education, BRE(A)D, in which one of us is involved, and the Peoples' Political Economy in Oxford, are, as the latter says about itself, educational projects that aim "to help people understand and respond to the crisis affecting us all" (People's Political Economy) The Independent Working Class Education network (IWCE) seeks to reinvigorate working class education in and through trade unions. Out of many of the above groups has come the Free University Network, that, although in its infancy, has generated tremendous hope and drive to realise alternatives to the neoliberal university (Lazarus, 2012).

Resistance in Schools

Teacher trade unions, teachers' pay and conditions

In England teachers are one of the most highly organised groups of workers belonging to trade unions, albeit to a number of competing trade unions. The two largest, the National Union of teachers (NUT) and National Association of Schoolmasters Union of Women Teachers (NASUWT) which have, between them, the overwhelming majority of unionised teachers as members (around 300,000 each), sometimes collaborate in taking industrial action. Following the defeat of the coalminers in 1985 by the Thatcher government, teachers were one of very few unions that successfully stood up to Conservative governments. The National Union of Teachers' boycott of SATs (high stakes tests) from 1993 to 1995 won the end of league tables for seven year olds. (Brown, 2010; Marshall, 2011:33; NUT: und.).

Teachers' unions have long been targeted by Conservative governments and their media backers- in particular *The Daily Mail*. This is a traditionally right-wing Conservative mass circulation newspaper that supported Hitler in the 1930s and also the Blackshirts (Fascists) in England (Fry, 2013). Teachers were punished during Thatcher's premiership by having their negotiating rights abolished nationally. This followed a long pay dispute involving local and national action by teachers' unions over the two years 1984-86. Since 1991 teachers' pay and conditions have been imposed by a government controlled 'School Teachers' Review Body'. Such a denial of free collective bargaining is actually against the International Labour Organisation guidelines/ requirements (Hill, 2006c).

The current Coalition government and its Conservative minister of education, Michael Gove, as set out in Chapter 6 of this volume, have unilaterally imposed a number of very far-reaching changes to the pay and conditions of schoolteachers (as well as pre-privatising thousands of schools as 'academies' and seeking to make major changes to the school curriculum.

Teacher trade unions are now, in 2013, resisting; they are one of very few sectoral trade unions taking strike actions. Justifying strike action is typified by the two quotes below.

Teachers teach because they care about children, so we are always reluctant to strike. However, Gove's latest 'reforms' leave us with no choice but to strike on 27 June; our pay and pensions have been attacked and now Gove wants to sweep away anything and everything that protects us from exploitation in our contracts.

This government has singled out teachers as we are the best organised, most unionised workforce in the country. The fight back begins in the North-West this Thursday. We can – and we will – win! Greg Foster, Secretary, Cheshire West and Chester NUT.

Pay, pensions, workload, holidays, OFSTED, surveillance... the attacks on teachers have never been as severe. In many schools, this Government has created an atmosphere of terror. Managers with no teaching responsibility roam schools armed with clipboards and OFSTED-inspired grids, pouncing on teachers. 'Drop-ins' that turn into capability procedures are the vogue. Peter Glover, Liverpool NUT and NUT National Executive member for Merseyside and Cheshire (National Shop Stewards Network, 2013)

Two thousand seven hundred schools were affected by the June 2013 one-day regional strike by teacher trade unions, the NASUWT and the National Union of Teachers, against government (Harrison, 2013); this strike is part of a rolling programme of regional one-day strikes scheduled to continue in Autumn 2013. These strikes, possibly leading to a national strike, focus on the government imposed changes to their pay, conditions and pensions.

It is not just the NUT and the NASUWT unions that are angered by the Coalition government. The danger that Gove poses to teaching profession has led to the traditionally 'moderate' ATL (Association of Teachers and Lecturers) overwhelmingly passing a motion of 'no confidence' in the Education Secretary for the very first time in its history. In June 2010 the ATL joined other public sector unions in the one day general strike against government state pension plans, making teachers (and other public sector workers) work longer to receive smaller pensions.

Resistance in Schools: Academies

Many teachers, educationalists and observers see the Education Secretary Michael Gove's rhetoric of "we will liberate the strong to help the weak" (Gove, 2009) as a disguise for privatisation through the backdoor that provides the private sector with unprecedented access to shape education and educational policy. There is widespread opposition to Gove's educational reform and as part of a growing campaign against Academies (described in chapter 6), many parents, teachers, academics and members of the community have joined the Anti-Academies Alliance (AAA).

There are many example of resistance led by the AAA, One prominent campaign was at Downhills Primary School, in Tottenham, north London. Downhills was a state school that had been forced to become an Academy despite improving results and 94% of parents opposing the move (Save Downhills, 2012). Parents, staff, ex-governors and local people have resisted 'The Harris Federation' taking over the school, specifically because it "has virtually no experience of running primary schools! It has no connections with Tottenham or North London." (Save Downhills, 2012). The campaigners have also highlighted the nepotism involved in their case. The Harris Foundation, which runs 19 state schools, was handpicked to 'sponsor' (i.e. take over the governance of) Downhills, is owned by Lord Harris, a major financial backer of the Conservative Party, personal friend of the Prime Minister David Cameron-and CEO of Carpetrite plc. The 'Save Downhills' campaign is a grass roots movement not led by the trade unions or 'Trots' as claimed by Gove. Campaigners state that they have:

come together to save Downhills School, our much loved community school in Tottenham, North London, from being forced to become an academy. We've been accused by Michael Gove, the Secretary of State for Education of being 'Trots' and 'enemies of promise.' We are not. We're just ordinary, caring parents who want the very best for our children's education and future. And we want to be listened to, to have a voice (Save Downhills, 2012).

Downhill is just one example of many schools forced to become Academy schools, including: Alec Reed Academy William Parker Sports College, The Littlehampton Academy and Marlow Academy (which has twice been in special measures), where resistance against the government has been strong. The recent revelation that Academies, despite have disproportionate government funding relative to state schools, do not significantly improve standards. Research by the Anti Academies Alliance (2012) shows that only 7 of the primary academies achieved better than the national average results in 2011 (74%). 47% that have comparable results from 2010 saw their results actually decline. Researchers have pointed out that "Ofsted has judged almost half of sponsored academies as inadequate or 'requiring improvement' (formerly 'satisfactory'). It accepts that a lot of the apparent improvement in results came about by reducing the number of disadvantaged pupils and by using easier alternatives to GCSE." (Wrigley and Kalambouka, 2013). However, Gove has claimed that those who oppose the private sponsorship of schools are "ideologues happy with failure" (Shepard, 2012).

In terms of resistance to a government policy, the AAA has been very forceful and has had a number of successes, which can be seen on their website at <http://antiacademies.org.uk/>

Resistance to Changes to the School National Curriculum

A different type of resistance was organised against Gove's plans to 'reform' the schools' national curriculum in 2013. The changes were described (highly approvingly by the right-wing *Daily Mail* as 'Mr Gove's "back-to-basics" shake-up'

which `would see pupils once again studying "the likes of Oliver Cromwell, Lord Nelson and Winston Churchill" instead of "social reformers" like Ms Seacole and Mr Equiano (Petre, 2012).

The criticism of the proposed curriculum by 100 university education department academics (including all three of the writers of this chapter) became headline news. It was unprecedented since the criticism of the original national curriculum in 1987-1988 which had been introduced under Thatcher. The news item in *The Independent* of 19 March 2013 was headlined, `100 academics savage Education Secretary Michael Gove for 'conveyor-belt curriculum' for schools' (Garner, 2013). The letter said

We are writing to warn of the dangers posed by Michael Gove's new National Curriculum which could severely erode educational standards. The proposed curriculum consists of endless lists of spellings, facts and rules. This mountain of data will not develop children's ability to think, including problem-solving, critical understanding and creativity.

Much of it demands too much too young. This will put pressure on teachers to rely on rote learning without understanding. Inappropriate demands will lead to failure and demoralisation. The learner is largely ignored. Little account is taken of children's potential interests and capacities, or that young children need to relate abstract ideas to their experience, lives and activity.

The new curriculum is extremely narrow. The mountains of detail for English, maths and science leave little space for other learning. Speaking and listening, drama and modern media have almost disappeared from English.

This curriculum betrays a serious distrust of teachers, in its amount of detailed instructions, and the Education Secretary has repeatedly ignored expert advice. Whatever the intention, the proposed curriculum for England will result in a "dumbing down" of teaching and learning.

We believe our concerns are widely shared. A recent CBI report argued that "we need to end the culture of micro-management", and (citing the Cambridge Primary Review) that "memorisation and recall are being valued over understanding and inquiry". Further, "we have a conveyor-belt education system that tolerates a long tail of low performance and fails to stretch the able". The new curriculum will only make things worse.

Mr Gove has clearly misunderstood England's decline in Pisa international tests. Schools in high-achieving Finland, Massachusetts and Alberta emphasise cognitive development, critical understanding and creativity, not rote learning.

We urge parents, teachers and other stakeholders to respond to the Government consultation in its few remaining weeks, and demand a fresh start.

The government and its media mouthpieces swiftly fought back, with, *inter alia*, an article by Gove, which was headlined, in *The DailyMail* `I refuse to surrender to the

Marxist teachers hell-bent on destroying our schools: Education Secretary berates 'the new enemies of promise' for opposing his plans'.

Gove wrote 'The new Enemies Of Promise are a set of politically motivated individuals who have been actively trying to prevent millions of our poorest children getting the education they need' and characterised them, indeed us three co-authors of this chapter, as 'the guilty men and women who have deprived a generation of the knowledge they need? Who are the modern Enemies of Promise? ... They are all academics who have helped run the university departments of education responsible for developing curricula and teacher training courses'.

Gove asked, rhetorically,

'What planet are these people on? A Red Planet, if their published work is anything to go by. One of the letter's principal signatories claims to write 'from a classical Marxist perspective', another studies 'how masculinities and femininities operate as communities of practice', a third makes their life work an 'intergenerational ethnography of the intersection of class, place, education and school resistance'.

This was followed by a series of articles, such as that in the *Daily Mail* of 20 March 2013, headlined 'Revealed: Socialist links of academics trying to sabotage Gove's reforms of the school curriculum' which attacked some of signatories by name, including one of this chapter's co-authors (Hill) (Levy and Chapman, 2013) Subsequently, 102 academics, children's authors, education unions, professional associations signed a statement calling on Michael Gove to think again about his proposals. A Press Statement (Politics.co.uk, 2013) by opponents of the government continued the resistance, charging that 'The proposed primary national curriculum will hold back the progress of many children and label others as failures by putting unrealistic and age inappropriate expectations on children'.

'The statement called for a complete rethink of the national curriculum, calling on the government to reduce the amount of prescriptive content and allow teachers greater autonomy over the detail of what is taught'. (ATL,2013). Specific concerns included 'the over-prescription of content', 'an emphasis on facts and rote learning at the expense of understanding and thinking' with calls to

work with teachers and academic experts to create a curriculum which is broad, balanced and age appropriate, allow for further debate on the curriculum content when proposals for its assessment are put forward..., revise the history curriculum to make it more age-appropriate and less narrowly focussed on Britain (ATL, 2013).

The Easter 2013 teacher union conferences also engaged in heavy criticism of government policy. At the NUT conference,

Alex Kenny, a member of the executive, said: 'So what's wrong with Gove's pub quiz curriculum? 'It's a curriculum high on content and low on aims, concepts and skills. 'A curriculum in which the learner is completely absent or just a passive consumer of information or knowledge.'

Martin Allen claimed the curriculum amounted to 'social control', adding: 'Education at comprehensive schools is too successful. Too many children are passing exams. 'He [Gove] wants to reverse that. He wants to lower expectations. He wants to bring in a know-your-place curriculum.'

The motion, which was passed by a large majority, said the changes would 'alienate young people and lead to more school absence'. (Levy, 2013)

This criticism, and the wide publicity it received, particularly over the proposed history curriculum (dubbed 'a posh white blokes' history curriculum' in which 'the only women children learn anything about will be queens' (Newman, 2013) caused Gove to draw back from some of his curriculum and some of his assessment proposals..

Organisation of the Resistance

Three political, ideological and organisational challenges for the Marxist Left.

In this brief concluding section, we examine progress towards, obstacles to and opportunities for an effective broad-based resistance against neoliberalism/ neoconservatism. There are, indeed, hopeful signs/developments for a resistance which is to the left of (the neoliberalised formerly social democratic) Labour Party.

The first problem is a perennial problem for Marxists is the tension and the relationship between Marxist revolutionary forces, analysis/ thought and programme on the one hand, with their theoretically and practically committed (more or less vertically / hierarchically structured) organisations who wish to replace capitalism with democratic socialism, and, on the other hand left reformists, 'revisionists' and social democrats, who wish to 'manage capitalism more fairly'. In Britain these left social democrats would predominantly describe themselves as 'Old Labour', looking back to the times when the Labour Party did redistribute some wealth and income towards the working class and set up and strengthen public services and the welfare state. Their hope is to 'reclaim the Labour Party' (Blackledge, 2013; Griffiths, und., Taffe and Mullins, 2002; Wainright, 2006) .

The challenge Marxists currently face is to develop a critique of austerity policy and action that goes beyond revisionism towards a revolutionary objective. At present the revisionist elements of the left are leading in the resistance movement and the voices of those committed to a socialist future are, relatively, in the minority. For example, the political commentator, Owen Jones, is a key dissenter for the 'Coalition of Resistance' but could be considered a social democrat. For this 'soft left', New Labour is still 'the political wing of the labour movement' and the alternative it proposes remains neo-Keynesian. However, the ideological differences of the revolutionary and the revisionist Left have been put aside on occasions where

alliances have been formed. For example, the 'Peoples' Assemblies' of London and elsewhere are a broad coalition of those against the government's cuts. The London People's Assembly, was attended by 4,000 people in June 2013. This assembly was supported by the CPB (Communist Party of Britain) and by Counterfire, a split-off from the (largest far left, Marxist party in Britain) the Socialist Workers Party, and by leading trade unions. Strategic alliances are one tactic utilised by those on the Left to assert pressure on the ruling elite.

In connection with the Peoples' Assembly (and a similar critique can be made of the Coalition of Resistance), a Marxist critique is

But the organizers and the big union bosses – the stirring orators from Tony Benn to Owen Jones – still persist in their strategy that occasional big protests, one a year at best, small direct actions like setting up food banks in banks, with the addition now of local Peoples Assemblies, run as rallies like the 22 June one, will somehow impose our demands on Labour or at least push them a little to the left.

The CPB, Counterfire, Unite plainly have a wait-for-Labour perspective but meanwhile carry on protesting in the same old way. What they ignore is that the next two years will see a tipping point in the process of the destruction of our health and education . (Workers' Power, 2013).

For the revolutionary Marxist left there is a second problem, one which has surfaced in and with anti-capitalist protests since the banking and austerity crisis started in 2008. That problem has to do with the organisation of the Marxist revolutionary opposition. The long established Marxist parties (in Britain the three largest are Trotskyist- the Socialist Workers Party, the Socialist Party, and, far smaller, Socialist Resistance) are organised in classic Leninist democratic centralist, vertically structured. Ways. The formations that have emerged in this current crisis are far more inchoate, bottom-up and horizontal in terms both of organisation and policy. The UKUncut, the Occupy, the 'movement of the squares' globally, tent cities, teach-ins and teach-outs have often been hostile to 'party' as a concept and an organisational form. This, of course, is a current manifestation of the 150 year old tension between anarchists and communists. But it is more than this, it is more than this—it is an indication of high level dissatisfaction with top down ways of organising only, an understanding that there should be both bottom up and top down ways of organising. This is not just another manifestation of the historic tension between anarchists and communists, but an indication of the need for Marxists and communists to reflect more fully on and adopt more democratic practices, and for Anarchists, in the wake of the dissolution of, attacks on and reversals for mass movements occupying squares to reconsider the need for some centrally organised processes and agreed set of demands,

At some local levels of resistance in Britain, in some cities the local Stop the Cuts Coalitions embrace and include groups of both types, plus trade unions and a plethora of interest and protest groups. (One example, the Brighton Stop the Cuts Coalition, has over 50 groups affiliated, and initial meetings were attended by over 60 people

and organised local marches (See Hill, 2010c for a blog/ report of the October 2010 march). However such co-operation and working together has a long way to go. It can be seen as a problem of 'connectivity', connecting between the different types of groups with differing orientations. It can be seen as a problem of conscientisation as Freire called it, of developing what Gramsci called 'good sense' as opposed to (everyday) 'common sense'. In classical Marxist terms it is a problem of developing class consciousness so that the working class (understood very broadly as those who sell their labour power) acts as a 'class for itself' and not just a class 'in itself'

A response (the form of which has many interpretations) to both of these problems- the relationship between revolutionary Marxism and left social democracy, the relationship between organised cadre party and loosely/ dis-organised more anarchist anti-capitalist formations- is the united front. This is interpreted variously; a current interpretation is the move to 'a Broad Party of the Left', which in Britain means, at present, Left Unity. This was launched on the back of the Ken Loach film, 'Spirit of '45', and rapidly attained 10,000 online signatures of support. The vigorous debates over policy, programme, even nomenclature (e.g. whether to use the word 'socialism' or not) is reflected in the two main platforms for this proto-party/ party in the process of formation, the Left Unity Platform (Left Unity, 2013a), and the Socialist Platform (Left Unity, 2013b) and in the vigorous discussion in the online comments that follow each of those platform.

The third problem for revolutionary Marxists in Britain is the relationship between party, individual members, and trade unions, which are the organised vehicles of working class defence and offense. The formation of the new, 'Left of Labour' party, Left Unity, whose first national delegate conference will be held in November 2013, brings to the fore for the revolutionary left this question of the relationship between a democratic pluralist anti-austerity individual membership party and trade unions. In Britain the current main anti-austerity electoral formation is TUSC, the Trade Unionist and Socialist Coalition, for which one of us (Hill) has stood in a number of elections, locally and nationally).

TUSC has the financial support of the (very militant) RMT union, the personal support of a number of Marxist trade union 'tops', and the organisational muscle of the Socialist Party (plus lukewarm support from the Socialist Workers Party which-electorally – has nowhere else to go) and the critical support of Socialist Resistance (which as an organisation is strongly supporting the Left Unity Platform within Left Unity). The problem is about whether Left Unity should be an individual membership party, or, as the RMT and the Socialist Party prefer, a federal party, with the leadership controlled by constituent organisations (the current situation in TUSC).

The current state of resistance

As we have argued, the so-called banking crisis of 2007-2009 served as a pretext for government in England as in many other countries to literally and ideologically drive through a radical restructuring, indeed privatising, of the public sector and a massive assault on the living conditions, the material conditions of existence, the incomes, the

job security, even the food security, of working people, of the working class.

The Coalition government's usage of the mantra 'we're all in this together' has operated as a rhetorical device to suggest that we all share the 'pain' of austerity cuts—despite growing evidence that this is a bald lie. This lie is now being opened up, as we have suggested, by flashmobs, student strikes/occupations, teach-outs and teach-ins, national demonstrations and riots, the occasional nationally organised trade union rally/ set of rallies, and, as this chapter has shown in respect of education, trade union activism, publicity savvy networking activity, and parental/ activist/ community protest.

There is a resurgence of UK Uncut (2013) which organised a day of direct action in cities across England on 13 April 2013, 'Who wants to evict a millionaire?' in protest against the so-called 'bedroom tax' now being imposed on council residents deemed to have more bedrooms than inhabitants. Such direct action may grow as austerity measures deepen between now and the general election due date in 2015. At the same time, as our third section showed, powerful student resistance against the privatising, commodifying and marketising of the university has been significant, and insurgent . resurgent, albeit often short-lived. There is some hope to be gained from the emergent alternatives to the public university, as they are creating educational processes aimed at praxis.

In addition, on the organised trade union front, there are perennial moves, by, for example the Socialist Party, urging unions to call a 24 hour general strike (e.g. Socialist Party, 2013). This call was recently substantially re-inforced by Britain's largest union, UNITE. (BBC, 2013; Mason, 2013) in submitting to the Trades Union Congress (the federation of British trade unions) a call for a '24-hour general strike against austerity measures' (BBC, 2013). The country's second-biggest union, Unison, which has 1.3 million members, says it supports the idea of a general strike "in principle" (BBC, 2013). There legal difficulties arising firstly from Thatcher era industrial relations legislation, and from the unwillingness of some unions and left groups to support such a call.

We recognise that there is no guarantee that 'our side' will win against the super-rich seeking to plunder the earth and its populace. Austerity cuts to education are now biting with growing intensity As resistance is growing, so are police and legislative repression, so is the use of the repressive state apparatuses. We recognise that much more pervasive, dynamic and organised resistance is essential to combat the widening and deepening class war and concomitant erosion of democracy now occurring in this country as in others, as we have argued above. We believe that education, informal as well as formal, can play a crucial role in building resistance against this class war from above. We are therefore heartened by the recent resistance that has occurred to date within and outside the public university, within trade unions, within school, college and university staffrooms, and within classrooms and lecture halls. And on the streets.

The combination of media savvy networks of academics, of teachers in their teacher unions, parental and community distrust of the Coalition government, both in respect of Academy schools and far more widely in respect of unemployment, cuts in the standard of living and cuts in welfare benefits and pension and employment rights, together with the activities and organisation of vertically organised Marxist parties (such as The Socialist Workers' Party, The Socialist Party, the in-formation Left Unity) and horizontally organised groups (such as flashmobs, Occupy, Tent City, UKUncut) have together, together with trade unions, forged a potentially powerful coalition.

We conclude with Gramsci's oft-repeated comment of the need for pessimism of the intellect and optimism of the will: holding both dimensions of 'the scream' together of negation of what is and building here and now what can be. And we believe that what must be is a just, equitable, sustainable world of, by and for all.

Notes

¹ See Canaan, forthcoming, for a discussion of the rationale for using the term 'neoliberalising' rather than 'neoliberal'.

² Resistance is occurring to government policies in primary and secondary education as well as higher education, at all levels, currently, summer 2013, at the level of schooling, by teacher unions.

³ Northern Rock was taken into public ownership in 2008 and later bought by Virgin Money (The Huffington Post, 2011).

⁴ Most recently protestors targeted Starbucks, Amazon and Google for avoiding UK tax payment in late 2012 and early 2013. According to Murphy (2012) flashmobs and consumer boycotts have had some success, as indicated partly by Starbucks agreeing to pay corporate tax in 2013 and 2014 at least.

⁵ There was a near quadrupling of Stop and Search from 2004 to 2007 alone (Aitchison, 2010a), including one of the authors of this paper.

⁶ These subjects would receive 80% funding cuts.

⁷ Producing a White Paper after rather than before a parliamentary vote reverses the normal protocol of parliamentary votes following scrutiny of proposed changes and suggests a government flouting of democratic procedure.

⁸ The Liberal Democrats had a campaign pledge in the 2010 election not to raise tuition fees. Nick Clegg urged young people to take action if they were unhappy with government policies, a point powerfully made in this link: www.youtube.com/watch?v=tQLOj_-lyZI. This pledge was rejected when Liberal Democrats joined in a coalition with the Conservatives after the election.

⁹ The Really Open University initially emerged in 2009, as they note, 'not only to upcoming cuts to higher education but also to the idea that we should defend the university as is' (<http://spaceproject.org.uk/about-us.html>).

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