

## Chapter 4

### Neoliberalism in England

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#### Abstract

*In this chapter we firstly set out the facts about the current stage of capitalism, the Immiseration stage of neoliberal capitalism in England. We briefly note its relationship with conservatism and neo-conservatism. We identify increased societal inequalities, the assault by the capitalist state on its opponents, proceed to describe and analyse what neoliberalism and neoconservatism have done and are doing to education in England- in the schools, further education, and university sectors. We present two testimonies about the impacts of neoliberalism/neoconservatism, one from the school sector, one from the further / vocational education sector, as a means of describing, analysing, and then theorising the parameters of the neoliberal/ neoconservative restructuring education and its impacts. We conclude by further theorising this 'revolution' and, as with the other four countries specifically addressed in this book, there is a separate chapter on resistance to Immiseration Capitalism- and to Capitalism itself.*

### Neoliberal Capitalism in England

In essence, neoliberalism is based on the systematic use of state power, under the ideological guise of 'non-intervention', to impose a hegemonic project of recomposition of the rule of capital at five levels: domestic resource allocation, international economic integration, the reproduction of the state, ideology, and the reproduction of the working class. (Saad-Filho, 2011).

In more detail, neoliberal capitalism is marked, *inter alia*, by the marketization, commodification, degradation of public services, privatization/ preprivatization of public services, by cuts in public funding (Giroux, 2004; Harvey, 2005; Hill, 2006a, 2009, a, b, 2013a, b; Hill and Kumar, 2009; Hill and Roskam, 2009; Saad-Filho and Johnston, 2005; Saad-Filho, 2011), by increased relative and absolute immiseration (Hill, 2012) and by increased forms of surveillance and control in society, such as, for example, by the importation into public services such as education of 'new public managerialism'- more brutalistic, finance-driven, authoritarian forms of management (Deem, 1998; Beckman and Cooper, 2004; Beckmann, A., Cooper, C., and Hill, D., 2009). Public services such as schools and universities, are increasingly run in accordance with the principles of 'new public managerialism... based on a corporate managerialist model imported from the world of business. As well as the needs of Capital dictating the principal aims of education, the world of business also supplies the model of how it is to be provided and managed. (Beckmann and Cooper, 2004).

## **Neoconservatism**

Neoliberalism does not come unaccompanied. It has 'a twin' - and an often fractious relationship with - neoconservatism. Neoconservatism here, refers firstly to 'order and control' and secondly to 'traditional morality'.

'The systematic use of state power' referred to by Saad-Filho, is the use by governments of the repressive state apparatuses such as law, the police, the judiciary, the security services, the armed forces, and the controlling and intimidatory forms of management control within institutions and places of work. As Althusser (1971) noted, the repressive state apparatuses have ideological functions and impacts - and these currently reinforce the individualistic, competitive, 'common-sense' pro-capitalist ideology (Gramsci, 1971) and serve to 'naturalise' capital, rendering capitalist economic relations and capitalist social relations, the Capital- Labour relation seem 'only natural'.

Concerning the 'traditional morality' aspect of neoconservatism, this varies from country to country. It generally, but not always, includes a veneration of the family and, heterosexual relationships. This varies, so for example, the current British prime minister is socially liberal, in contrast to his predecessor, Margaret Thatcher, and in contrast to Erdogan, the current, conservatising prime minister of Turkey.

However, a second aspect of conservatism and neo-conservatism is that, universally, it involves and seeks to enforce an acceptance of elitism and hierarchy - and of one's place in that hierarchy. That hierarchy is 'raced' and gendered, a racial hierarchy, and a gender hierarchy as well as a social class hierarchy (Cole, 2014, Hill, 2013a).

In this first section of the chapter, we focus on the main impacts and effects of neoliberal capitalist policy in England. These are, increasing inequalities of wealth and income, unemployment and degraded work conditions, immiseration and impoverishment. We then focus on the neoconservative assault, the neoliberalising governments' attack on 'enemies' of neoliberalising capitalism, trade unions and directly elected local authorities/ councils/ municipalities neoliberalism

Subsequent sections of this chapter examine and analyse what neoliberal capitalism (accompanied by neoconservatism) are doing to schools further education colleges (vocational colleges for 16-19 year olds), and to universities. Final sections of the chapter concern the impacts of such policies, and theorise what is happening. As with the other four countries specifically addressed in this book, there is a separate chapter on resistance to neoliberalism.

## **The impact/ effects of neoliberal (and neoconservative) policies on England** **Increasing Inequality- 'The Perfect Storm'**

An Oxfam report of June 2012 (Cribb et al, 2012; BBC, 2013) called it 'the perfect storm', consisting of rising unemployment and declining incomes, increases to the cost of housing and living, cuts to public services, welfare and benefits, and weak labour rights'. The report continued that in today's Britain, 'thousands of children go

to school hungry and come home in winter to dark or candlelit rooms, for it costs too much to turn on the lights' and continued, 'in the second decade of the twenty-first century, in one of the world's richest and most developed economies, perhaps half a million people are reliant on foodbanks'. The charity Save the Children, surveyed 1500 children aged 8 to 16 from the poorest income –groups in 2012, they found '52% agreed that not having enough money made their parents unhappy or stressed, and 43% 'agreed' or 'strongly agreed' that their parents were cutting back on things for themselves such as clothes or food'. (Whitham, 2012:2).

After the longest and deepest recession since World War 2, study after study, such as those by Oxfam and Save the Children, and those referred to below in the more detailed section on increasing inequalities in Britain, reveal shocking levels of income-inequality, health inequality and absolute poverty across the country. The neo-liberal capitalist policies pursued by successive Conservative governments in the 1980s and into the 1990s, and carried on by the Blair and Brown New Labour governments of 1997-2010, unleashed a dramatic intensification in income-inequality. The social democratic redistributive policies of New Labour administrations after 1997 were overwhelmed by their neoliberalism (Hill, 2006b, c). The current Conservative/Liberal-Democrat Coalition government, known as the ConDem government, elected in 2010, has given a further boost to inequality of all kinds. Cuts to welfare and other public spending, and harsh pay and pensions policies, have hit the most socially-vulnerable at the same time as executive pay and bonuses have returned to levels comparable with those which characterised the months preceding the great financial crash of 2007-8. (Sikka, 2013).

Immiseration, both relative and absolute, has taken hold, for the first time since the Great Depression of the 1930s. As Sikka put it, in July/ August 2013

The official UK unemployment count now stands at 2.52 million. In addition, nearly 1.4 million workers work part-time because they cannot find full-time employment. Nearly a million young people aged 16-24 are unemployed, taking the rate to a depressing 21.2%. In 2007 there were 1.89 million part-time workers under 30, but by the end of 2012 the numbers have risen to 2.1 million. The number of young people on zero hour contracts has doubled from 35,000 in 2008 to 76,000 in 2012. Zero contract hours are jobs which provide no guarantee of regular work or pay and have become the preferred mode of employment for some 23% of UK employers. Many miss out on rights such as sick pay, pension and paid holidays. ... The unemployed and their families are more likely to suffer from stress, depression, sickness and social exclusion. Yet the state's response is to withdraw and weaken the social security cushion.

In terms of the rich getting richer, 'the 1,000 richest people in Britain became 30 % richer in the last year (2009). 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). Whereas, for the masses, 'cuts push UK workers' living standards back 30 years' (Shaoul, 2012). 'Working families struggling to make ends meet are worse off than they were 30 years ago'. Lansley points out that 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). In contrast, 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'. (Lansley, 2012:29).

Similarly, Ramesh (2010) points out that 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. (Ramesh, 2010).

Sikka notes that:

Most of the people in jobs are facing wage freezes and loss of pension rights. The income/wealth inequalities in the UK have been increasing at more than the average for major industrialised nations and are regressing towards the disparities of the 19th century era. Since the Thatcher years, workers' share of the gross domestic product (GDP) has been ruthlessly driven down. In 1976, wages and salaries paid to employees, expressed as percentage of GDP, stood at 65.1% of GDP. Now it stands at barely 53%. A June 2013 survey by the TUC estimates that between 2007 and 2012, workers failed to keep pace with inflation and the average pay packet suffered a cut of 7.5%. While ordinary people are facing wage freezes,

In stark contrast, Sikka notes that,

a recent survey by analysts Manifest and pay consultants MM&K shows that in 2012 the remuneration of FTSE 100 chief executives increased by 10% to an average of £4.25 million. In 1998, the average pay packet of FTSE 100 chiefs was 47 times the average earnings of an employee, but in 2012 it reached a multiple of 133. Another survey by the International Labour Organisation (ILO) has reported that in Britain, CEO pay is equivalent to 238 times average employee earnings. (Sikka, 2013).

In addition to the hunger, stress and despair which are the fruits of such an unequal society, these widening gaps in income and wealth, accompanied as they are by the decline in services, welfare and labour benefits, are part of the relative and the absolute immiseration in terms of income and in terms of the degradation of public health and welfare services.

### **The Neoliberal/ Neoconservative attack on its `enemies': Elected Local Councils/ Local Authorities: Stripping of local government democracy and funding**

A hall-mark of neo-liberal capitalism in Britain has been the stripping of local authority powers to directly provide public services, such as, for example, education services- schools, further education colleges, universities. Copus (2001:479) describes British local government as, `constitutionally unprotected from the political ideologies, policies, priorities, and, indeed, caprice of central government'.

With respect to education, in 1902 local education authorities (LEAs) replaced school boards and took on responsibility for technical education. Their role expanded (school

meals in 1906, medical inspection in 1907) until the Conservative government of Margaret Thatcher enacted the 1988 Education Reform Act. This Act introduced local management of schools and independence- taking out of local authority control- for polytechnics and colleges of higher education. This was followed by the transformation of further education colleges into corporations in 1993. Subsequent education policies have put a further distance between councils and direct provision of education (Parish et al, 2012:5). This is paralleled across as other local government provision such as 'council housing' (social housing owned by local councils), and some aspects of provision for the elderly. Power, both financial/ budgetary and policy making, have been wrested from local authorities and national government has established stand-alone education institutions, such as Academy schools, Further Education Colleges and Universities with 'freedoms' that weaken accountability to communities. Under the 1944 Education Act- replaced by the 1988 Education Reform Act and its successors- directly elected local councillors had had representation on and some powers over the policies of schools, colleges and universities, though less so with universities.

Local authorities (LAs) have accepted or resisted central government's re-shaping of their role, to differing degrees and with regional variations. With respect to education, their statutory responsibilities have narrowed to ensuring sufficient supply of school places, facilities for children and young people with special education needs and minimising the number of young people not in education, employment and training. The neo-liberal journey since the 1980s, has led down a marketised and competitive road, with a customer/client split imposed across public services, competitive tendering and the substitution of commissioned rather than directly provided services. The effects on education have been incremental, as successive governments have driven the agenda forward towards a fragmented system, ripe for privatisation and sale. (Parish et al., 2012).

### **The Attack on Trade Unions**

The capitalist class understands very well that organised workers can mount the most potent defence of the poorest in society. Uniquely positioned under capitalism because they are organised at the point of production, workers have the power to disrupt work for sustained periods or to halt the process whereby capital expands. Hence the desire on the part of the government to keep and strengthen existing anti-trade union laws, and further to weaken trade unions. Union-density in the UK has halved from a high of some 13 million members in 1979. Around 26% of the workforce, or 6.5 million people, currently belong to unions in the UK, (Department for Business, Innovation and Skills, 2013) the same number as in the early 1940s. There has been a declining trend historically. 'Over the period 1995 to 2012, the proportion of employees who were trade union members in the UK has decreased 6 percentage points, from 32 per cent in 1995 to 26 per cent in 2012' (Department for Business, Industry and Skills, 2013:5).

In terms of defending the welfare state and fending off immiseration, the main problem has less to do with the sheer number of union-members or the density of

membership in particular sectors, and more with the depressed level of class-consciousness. The effects on trade union leaders of, firstly, the defeats inflicted by the Conservative administrations between 1979 and 1997, and secondly the maintenance by New Labour of draconian anti-trade union laws, has also played a part in weakening the overall labour movement and sapping its self-confidence- at least until the onset of 'Austerity Capitalism' (see Chapter 10 in this volume for how sections of the trade union movement have rediscovered their militancy and direct action). Additionally, sustained high levels of unemployment, combined with widespread under-employment (as workers are forced by economic circumstances to accept shorter hours and worsened conditions) have laid the ground for varieties of super-exploitation, notably through intensified casualisation/ 'flexibilisation'.

The spread of 'zero-hours' contracts, referred to above by Prem Sikka (2013) offers one example. Of these contracts, (Elliott, 2013) comments:

those on zero-hours contracts earn less than those on staff or on fixed-hours contracts. They have no rights to sick pay. Holiday pay is often refused. And there is plenty of anecdotal evidence to show that if they turn down work when it is offered – even if it is to take a child for a medical appointment – they will be pigeon-holed as not suitably "flexible". The choice to refuse work is, in reality, no such thing (Elliott, 2013).

### **Education and the Neoliberal/Neoconservative Revolution in England**

Neoliberalisation of education can be interpreted as 'the businessification' of education (Rikowski, 2002, 2003, 2007), the softening up, the preparation for the wholesale privatisation of schools, vocational colleges and universities.

In the school sector, state funded institutions are being handed over as Academies to private companies, to so-called academy-chains of schools, and to a variety of religious organisations (Beckett, 2007; see also Benn, 2011; and Anti-Academies Alliance, nd.). These schools are taken away from democratically elected Local Authority/ School District oversight and residual funding, to become quasi independent schools, actually receiving their funding directly from central government through individually-arrived-at confidential funding-agreements.

This new model of 'service delivery' advocated by the Confederation of British Industry (CBI) 'involves companies running schools, education services in schools, various layers of school management or allied schools services (e.g. school improvement, and equal opportunities) on a contract with the aim of making a profit' (CBI, 2007, cited in Rikowski, 2007). Rikowski (2007) notes that,

The implications for schools are that business play a greater role as providers of educational services in schools within a system where competition and markets predominate. The role of Local Authorities (LAs) would be to commission these services: run competitive tendering processes, assess the quality of bids, make decisions on these and negotiate contracts. LAs would have a role in monitoring the performance of businesses running schools services (terminating contracts where performance fell short), providing

information to bidders and ensuring a 'level playing field' in the bidding competition, and providing data to public to hit the community accountability agenda also advocated by the CBI ...). The legislative framework for this would need to be developed, but the outcome would be that companies would play an increased role in running schools for profit. The CBI also sees a more significant role for voluntary organisations (charities, foundations) and also social enterprises too.

Education, and other public services in Britain, have been neoliberalised since the Thatcher Conservative governments of 1979–90 and the John Major Conservative governments of 1990–1997, in particular with the Education Reform Act of 1988.

This Act was the fruit of many years' work by hard-right elements to construct 'an education-system which is divisive, elitist and inequalitarian'. (O'Hear, 1991:38) In describing the Act as such, right-wing ideologues such as O'Hear (and also, in an earlier period, the 'Black Paper' writers of the 1960s and 1970s, and the Hillgate Group of the 1980s were thoroughly in approval, and influential on government. (Hill, 1989, 1997.)

It was a post-war turning-point, established classic neoliberal policies designed to establish the provision of schooling as a market, and to reconfigure education and educational-provision in market terms. It aimed by granting budgetary autonomy to set schools 'free' from local democratic oversight, to re-managerialise schools and universities (through what has been called 'new public management' characterised by often brutalist, top-down control), to establish conservative curricula, to mobilise inter-school academic competition through high stakes testing and the establishment of 'league' tables, and to increase control and surveillance over teachers (and university staff). Again, a classic mix of neoliberal and neoconservative policies, the combination of what Andrew Gamble (1994) termed '*The Free Economy and the Strong State*'. The Act established classic neoliberal policies of prompting the marketization of schooling (through "parental choice" and through "league tables" of schools by published test results.) It also (together with the 1986 Education Act and subsequent legislation) changed the composition of school-governing bodies, adding "business" governors, and reducing the numbers and influence of governors appointed by locally democratically elected councils. And under the "Local Management of Schools" (LMS) section of the 1988 act, local authority/school district influence was further weakened, when most budgetary control was handed to school head teachers/principals and governing bodies, taking most budgetary control away from the democratically elected local education authorities (LEAs) (Ball, 1990; Hill, 1997, 2001).

Since then, successive Conservative (1979–87), New Labour (1997–2010) and Conservative-Liberal Democrat Coalition (2010– ) governments have intensified the neoliberalization of schools, of further education colleges (vocational colleges for 16–19 year olds) and of universities dramatically, alongside cuts in funding. One notable recent cut was (from September 2011) that of EMAs, education maintenance allowances, paid to young people aged 16–19 from poor families, of (usually) £30 a

week, to encourage them to stay on at school. One of us (Hill) benefited from a similar scheme in the 1960s; a Hill grandson received an EMA, 2006–2009. For university students the free university education that, Hill, for example, received has been replaced by the imposition of annual university tuition fees of (usually) £9,000 per annum (see Hill, 2010). (The New Labour-i.e., neoliberalized Labour--government of Tony Blair abandoned free university education and introduced tuition fees in 1998).

### **Marketisation and High Stakes Testing**

A system of market competition exists between schools. Under the 1944 Education Act, which the 1988 Education Act replaced, local authorities/ school districts-allocated children/ students to schools, sometimes taking into account a degree of parental choice, but sometimes attempting to ensure that within a largely 'comprehensive'/ all 'ability' intake of students, there was a mix of students of all 'bands', or 'tracks' of ability/ attainment (Hill, 1997, 2001). In many local education authorities/ school districts there were distinct attempts at social mixing.

The Conservative governments in Britain in the last quarter of the twentieth century, those of Thatcher (1979-1990) and of John Major (1990-97), introduced and extended something they termed 'school choice', or, more specifically 'parental choice'. But, with high status, 'high achieving schools in particular, it is not the parents who choose, it is the schools which, in many cases, choose the children/ students, preferring children/ students with high test scores and possessed of highly valued (i.e. middle class) cultural capital (Gewirtz et al., 1995; Gillborn and Youdell, 2002; Weekes-Barnard, 2007; Sellgren, 2013). This has led to considerably increased hierarchy and elitism within the state education system, elitism which is social class based, and also based on ethnicity (Weekes-Barnard, 2007).

The Academies Commission Report of January 2013, *Unleashing Greatness* (Academies Commission, 2013) says it has received numerous submissions suggesting that 'academies are finding methods to select covertly', that some academies may "covertly" select pupils by using extra information on families or holding social events with prospective parents' (Sellgren, 2013). The report says it has received evidence that some popular schools, including academies, attempt to select and exclude pupils.' despite the fact that the government admissions code says that schools cannot interview children or parents, or give priority to children whose parents offer financial or practical support (Sellgren, 2013).

### **Curriculum and Exams**

Despite the several revisions to it undertaken since its inception at the end of the 1980s, the National Curriculum for state-schools remains quite rigid, and remains a conservative curriculum. It was never a 'National' curriculum, since private schools were always exempt from its provision. (In Britain, approximately 7% of children go to private schools).

Margaret Thatcher herself looked at some of the original curriculum proposals and rejected them as 'too liberal'. As one of us has written elsewhere (Hill, 1997; 2006c) she personally intervened in curriculum matters, as she did in radically conservatising



the teacher-education curriculum. That represents an element of state control, control of the free market, and an example of where neoliberalism, 'free choice', is accompanied by state supervision/ control.

Current education Secretary Michael Gove plans to 'reform' the schools' national curriculum are set out in Chapter 10 by Canaan et al. The changes were described (approvingly by the right-wing *Daily Mail* as 'Mr Gove's "back-to-basics" shake-up' which 'would see pupils once again studying ' Oliver Cromwell, Lord Nelson and Winston Churchill' instead of 'social reformers' like Ms Seacole and Mr Equiano (Petre, 2012). It was criticised by a hundred academics (Garner, 2013) as consisting of 'endless lists of spellings, facts and rules.'

The letter signed by the hundred academics from university departments of education (including two of this chapter's writers, Hill and Maisuria), argued that 'this mountain of data will not develop children's ability to think, including problem-solving, critical understanding and creativity' and that 'this will put pressure on teachers to rely on rote learning without understanding' ' and noted that '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 signatories concluded that 'this curriculum betrays a serious distrust of teachers'.

In response to almost universal criticism of his proposal, Gove withdrew some aspects of his plan for a new more conservative national curriculum for schools, notably in relation to History.

### **Academies and the Pre-privatisation of Schools**

The concept of an 'academy' was originally a New Labour idea, inspired by the Conservative attempt to establish City Technology Colleges in the 1980s. Homage was duly paid when the first tranche of these new establishments were labelled City Academies. The government allowed private sector sponsors to take over allegedly-underperforming or 'failing' State secondary schools with tax-payers' money. Sponsors were given freedoms to run the schools more like businesses. These freedoms included being exempt from local authority oversight. This process built on the earlier 'Local Management of Schools' (LMS) section of the 1988 Act, whereby budgetary control was handed to school Headteachers/ Principals and Governing Bodies, weakening local authority (LA) or school district influence. (Ball, 1990; Hill, 1997, 2001). Academies were also exempted from a requirement to teach the National Curriculum, and from adhering to national pay and conditions legislation for staff. The premise was that injecting competition will improve standards.

The Academies and latterly the Free Schools programmes are major components of the gradual re-configuration-cum-dismantling of State educational provision. Academies have been a central plank of the current government's agenda. The programme has been radically expanded via the Academies Act 2010 (rushed through Parliament by the Education Secretary using emergency powers) to allow any school, primary or secondary, and not only schools that are 'underperforming', to become an Academy. Schools can also be required or forced to 'convert'. When the Coalition

came into power in May 2010, there were just over 200 Academies (Sellgren, 2013, RSA, 2013). By November 2012 there were 2,456 (RSA, 2013). To continue this expansion the Education Secretary Michael Gove initially offered significant financial incentives, overspending on the programme to the tune of £1 billion (Syal, R. (2013).

Before the next election in Britain in 2015, it is likely that a *majority* of secondary schools will be academies. The loosening of the regulations controlling colleges and the market pressures on universities are convincing many commentators that outright privatisation of the education system is on the horizon unless there is spirited opposition (Hill, 2007; Rikowski, 2007)..

Following the necessary changes to primary legislation (which a re-elected Conservative government is likely to table after 2015) at the stroke of the Ministerial pen such schools could become fully independent, fully-private schools, offered for sale on the market as assets comprising buildings, land, facilities, staff and clients. One model for this is the USA where some Academy-style Charter schools—still supposedly state schools—are run ‘for profit’ by multinational and national-capital companies (Ball, 2007, 2012; Saltman, 2005, 2011; Giroux, 2013; Ravitch, 2011, 2013).

### **Sponsors, governance, control and policy**

Some ‘philanthropists’ have brought controversy with their sponsorship. Francis Beckett’s book, *The Great City Academy Fraud* (Beckett, 2007) contains a chapter, ‘Faith in the Curriculum’, Chapter 5, which details the creationist and anti-gay ethos and practice in some academies controlled by evangelical Christians. The examples below are taken from that chapter. One evangelical is Peter Vardy, millionaire car dealer and evangelical Christian. He established the Emmanuel Schools Foundation to manage his education interests, including academies. The teaching of creationism in the Doncaster academy hit the headlines with its attitude to homosexuality. “The bible says clearly that homosexual activity is against God’s design. I would indicate that to young folk”, Nigel McQuoid proclaimed, while he was headteacher of Kings Academy. In 2007 a Vardy academy was in the press again, when a teacher, himself a Methodist lay preacher, reported to the local newspaper in Teesside that an interview at the academy had been more about theology than teaching. He reported being asked if he believed in Noah’s Ark. Beckett, in this chapter, writes of a religious conspiracy to once again control (some) schools. A number of academies have used the language of Thatcher’s homophobic Clause 28 when drawing up policies to do with the teaching of Sex and Relationships, so that such policies prohibit the ‘promotion’ of homosexuality. Clause 28 banned teachers in lessons from “intentionally promoting” homosexuality, a form of words that critics denounced for discriminating against gay pupils. The clause was reversed by Tony Blair when he became Prime Minister, but in mid-hillit was found that a number of academy schools (and some others) still ‘stress in their sex-education guidelines that governors will not allow teachers to “promote” homosexuality, or are ambiguous on the issue’. (Morris, 2013). Such a publicised revelation caused a number of schools to ‘re-examine’ their guidelines. (Morris, 2013).

There has been concern that academies are employing the services of companies linked to their sponsors. Academies are continuing to do a substantial amount of business with companies linked to their sponsors. Shaw and Paton (2008) report that 'accounts for the first 17 academies show that four made payments totalling hundreds of thousands of pounds to organisations their benefactors had interests in'. Shaw and Paton note that 'the main sponsor of the King's academy in Middlesbrough is Sir Peter Vardy, a major shareholder in the Vardy car dealership group and founder of the Emmanuel Schools Foundation'. They continue, 'Accounts show the academy was invoiced £72,858 by the Vardy Group, most for the purchase of minibuses and the rest for publicity materials and security hire'.

Grace Academy in Solihull awarded three contracts totaling £281,000 over two years for payroll and management services to the IM Group, a company owned by Bob Edmiston, the sponsor of the Academy. Grace Academy also paid £53,000 to Christian Vision for management services. This organisation had been involved in circulating teaching resources on creationism to schools. (Evans, Cookson and Taylor, 2007). 'Bob Edmiston has been quoted as stating that Evolution is a theory that "came from one guy called Darwin" and says his teachers must subscribe to "Christian values". He also insists his schools will not stock JK Rowling books'. (Evans, Cookson and Taylor, 2007).

The sponsors of academies have grown significantly; Oasis Learning grew from a £3 million concern in 2006 to £70 million in 2010, while Absolute Return for Kids (ARK) academy chain reached £117.5 million from the same £3 million starting point, again, for the same period 2006-2010. (Stewart, 2012; Millar, 2011). The income of E-ACT increased from £15.5m to almost £60m between 2009 and 2010 (Millar, 2011).

The chains require an extra layer of often highly paid management. Some academies are paying unprecedentedly high salaries to the Directors of the companies that own them. Shephers and Mansell (2007) report that Crest boys' academy in Neasden, north-west London, owned by E-Act, a private company, paid E-Act's director general, Sir Bruce Liddington, a salary of £265,000. Liddington had also claimed £1,436 for two nights in luxury hotel suites. At the same time, seven teachers were declared redundant, dismissed. (This was met with strike action) by virtually the whole staff). As Shepherd and Mansell note, 'the sackings will raise fresh questions about the financial arrangements of academies which receive state funds but are privately sponsored and run independently of local authorities'

### **Pay and Conditions in Academies**

Academies are free to employ staff on their own pay rates and conditions of service. Although regulations provide some protection for staff transferring from community schools to academies, new staff can be employed on inferior conditions. In 2007, a TUC report (TUC, 2007) suggested that competition for teachers was preventing major deviation from national agreements. It referred to Ofsted, which suggested that in a number of academies' high levels of staff turnover had resulted in the recruitment

of large numbers of newly qualified staff. It also said that staff were experiencing a loss of autonomy. Allen et al (2008) in a report for the Department for Children, Families and Schools, reported that academies employ more teachers without qualified teacher status (12 per cent) than community schools (five per cent).

### **Teachers in Schools and Colleges: Pay, Conditions and Surveillance**

Education Secretary Michael Gove put his department on what he himself described to *The Times* in December 2012 as ‘a war footing’. He has maintained a pay-policy which has resulted in a pay-cut of 13% in real terms over three years. He has significantly increased required pension-contributions. He has goaded teachers’ union leaders, calling them ideologically-driven and out-of-touch with their members, and advanced plans for regional pay. From Sept 2013 teacher pay increases and progression up the pay spine will be dependent on headteacher appraisals, with all the scope this allows for local injustices. Such policies, accompanied by such a provocative stance, will see in Autumn 2013 the first national teachers’ strike for almost thirty years.

Related to the latter, from September 2013 teachers will pay will be related to performance. PRP, Gove claims, will reward those teachers who are successful. However, the removal of pay scales will further demoralize teachers, with payment by result being seen as essentially de-professionalising the profession. It will inevitably mean that teacher will be coerced to teach to the test, neglecting the real focus, which should be learning and teaching. Christine Blower, General Secretary of the National Union of Teachers, the largest teachers' union, denounced the reform arguing that:

PRP is increasingly discredited elsewhere as a means of motivating employees and there has never been any evidence that it motivates teachers or improves their performance. These changes could deter graduates from entering teaching, restrict serving teachers’ ability to move jobs and cause many to leave teaching if they are unfairly deprived of pay progression by decisions which ignore their contribution to their school but focus instead on funding pressure or whether the teacher’s face fits.

Stevenson (2007) is one of many analysts (see also, Lewis, Hill and Fawcett, 2009) who notes that,

A key feature of current school-sector reform in England is the restructuring of teachers’ work and the increased use of support staff to undertake a range of activities previously undertaken by teachers. Supporters speak of a new teacher professionalism focused on the “core task” of teaching. Critics fear deprofessionalization through a process of deskilling, work intensification, and labor substitution.

Stevenson continues, describing a:

relentless drive to raise productivity, teachers have often found themselves the victims of unwelcome change in which they have had their professional judgment curtailed, witnessed the increasing managerialization of the educational process,

and been subjected to ever more forensic scrutiny of their work by external agencies (Ball, 2003)'... . These developments have inevitably affected the work pressures on teachers and resulted in an intensification of the labor process of teaching'... '(Smyth, Dow, Hattam, Reid, & Shacklock, 2000)'.

### **Vocational/ Further Education colleges**

In 1993 Further Education colleges in England and Wales were effectively privatised under the guise of "Incorporation". Local Authority ownership and control of Further Education (vocational education) was removed. Land and buildings occupied by the colleges became the property of the new corporations. Direct responsibility for colleges was placed in the hands of unelected Boards of Governors. This legislation 'signalled a wholesale attack on the wages, terms and conditions of FE staff. Working hours were lengthened with many staff being forced to sign new contracts that included up to 25 hours per week in front of classes' (Cozens, 2012).

The 2011 Education Act further substantially deregulated colleges. Colleges can now easily change their instruments and articles of governance after consultation. This has manifested in colleges, like Brighton City College, in a bid to reduce the number of governors including staff representatives from 2 to 1. The conversion of colleges from community educational facilities for predominantly working class people of all ages into Small and Medium Enterprises (SMEs) servicing the local economy is almost complete. The impact on staff is significant. Sick pay is under attack and Isle of Wight College for example, has proposed an increase in working hours, cuts to leave, maternity, paternity and parental leave back to statutory minima, no sick pay scheme and an across the board pay cut (Wright, 2013) .

### **Neoliberalism and Higher Education**

Higher education (HE) in England is characterised by rising tuition fees and the resulting student debt), high levels of graduate unemployment, intensification of teachers' work, new public managerialism and its accompanying 'accountability', form filling and appraisals, the attack on staff pensions, and, in some universities, jobs, the withdrawal of funding for arts and humanities HE courses, the dominance of finance factors in decision making, the pressure on performance for the research assessment exercises, privatisation of 'non-core' activities, and the promise of further privatisation. Increased marketisation, commodification and hierarchicalisation are the leitmotifs of university life. Brecher (2011) forecasts that 'the arts, humanities and social sciences, in the few élite institutions in which they remain, will function as finishing schools for the wealthy, taught ... by their own'. He also forecasts that

by encouraging the élite universities to go private in frustration if for no other reason, forcing the 'bottom of the range' into the hands of commercial companies such as Kaplan and BBP and slowly strangling the rest as any sort of public institution.

Alex Callinicos' *'Universities in a Neoliberal World'* (2006) asserted that neoliberalism in universities 'means that ... [the] ... logic of competition is

internalised deep into how universities work... this serves to ensure that they teach growing numbers of students and perform increasingly vital research as cheaply as possible" (2006:11). Class sizes in non-elite universities grow larger and larger, and the proportion of 'flexible' staff- on hourly paid and temporary contracts grows, leaving the diminishing number of full-time greater supervisory, managerial and co-ordinating pressures. Accompanying the greater marking load consequent on larger class sizes, there is diminished administrative and secretarial support. Side by side is the ever growing number of managers, in particular, in 'Human Relations' departments, as regularly lampooned by Lawrie Taylor on the back page of the weekly *Times Higher Educational Supplement*, in connection with the fictitious 'Poppleton University'.

The key function of contemporary universities is the social production of labour-power, the capacity to labour. Rikowski (2012) points out that 'the concept of 'employability' is a euphemism for labour-power whilst the concept of human capital is the form that labour-power takes in capitalist society: the human as a form of capital (Rikowski, 2000b, c and 2002).' He continues, 'employability refers both to the capacity of someone to obtain a job (the labour market aspect) but also to transform their labour-power into actual labour'. And this labour -power will be non-critical. As Brecher (2011) critiques, other than the arts, humanities and social sciences taught in elite universities, 'everything else - from engineering to physics to business to design - will become bereft of critical content, taught - again if that is the right word - by people who understand themselves to be 'delivering' quantifiable commodities to their customers'.

### **Privatising Universities**

Currently (2013) there are very few private universities in Britain, but degree awarding powers have been granted to a number of other organisations, and the current (2013) Conservative- Liberal Democrat coalition government in Britain is planning more private universities. It is, indeed, likely that in the fairly near future, some, currently public/ state universities in Britain will become private, bought and sold on international stock markets by transnational corporations and hedge funds . Ball (2012) is very clear on such developments, regarding schools, colleges and universities, a development warned about/ foreseen by Rikowski (2003) and by Hirtt (2004). Hirtt warned, in 2004, about state education provision and state health provision being 'the last great El Dorados' for. Capitalist privatisation and profit from public sector provided services.

Changes in the higher education sector have been rapid. Until recently the key driver for government policy in the UK was to encourage the expansion of higher education to increase participation with an express aim of creating a more educated workforce. However, a combination of funding and policy directives are forcing universities to reassess the way they are managed and promoted to ensure maximum efficiency, sales and 'profits'. The result will be a corporate higher education system that is divided, elitist and stratified. In June 2012, the government lowered the number of full-time

students required to be a university from 4,000 to 1,000, which made small institutions eligible. This change followed a recommendation by the rightwing think tank Policy Exchange, which called for a US-style market in higher education in its 2010 report *Higher Education in the Age of Austerity*. It argued that private operators should get the right to call themselves universities, award degrees, get easier access to taxpayer funding and even take over failing universities.

A further challenge is presented by a generation of companies that has emerged specialising in taking over the running of public services, employing staff and financing infrastructure. In the context of tight public funding in higher education, university managements are being encouraged to seek private sector involvement and investment. The key players in the new field of providing English language and foundation courses for overseas students are a group of education businesses and media conglomerates, often financed and owned by private equity funds and venture capitalists. (NUS and UNISON)

In 2012 the University of Central Lancashire (UCLAN) announced that it would be seeking the approval of the secretary of state to change its legal status from being a higher education corporation (HEC) under the 1992 act to becoming a company limited by guarantee. Management claimed that this would give them greater autonomy and independence in managing their own affairs. The proposed changes would have made it easier to slim down governance structures and possibly regroup some or all of its assets into a for-profit subsidiary company. Following a strong campaign led by UNISON with the other campus unions the university decided not to pursue the proposals.

### **Working conditions for staff**

Dismissal notices are to be issued against 2,803 staff at the University of Liverpool and rehire them on inferior contracts. This represents 54% of the University workforce. The University is seeking to use this method to force flexible hours contracts upon all of these staff. (Grove, 2013). Were the University to succeed in pushing this contract through, the effect would be to allow them to make staff work at weekends and on any bank holiday, all year round without any appropriate compensation.

In addition, the attempt to impose worsened terms and conditions with no negotiation, through the use of mass dismissal notices represents a new kind of industrial relations practice in higher education and one we believe to be thoroughly disreputable.

### **Neoliberal Capitalism, Commodified Education and the Value-Form of Labour**

Rikowski (2002) extends beyond policy analysis and critique, by suggesting that neoliberal globalisation requires that 'our labour takes a particular social form - the value-form'. Rikowski notes that this is a historical process, that it 'deepens as the capitalisation of social life - the turning of all and any activity into a commodity that

incorporates value - takes hold. The value-form of labour entails the creation of value so that profit can be drawn off from the surplus value created’.

He continues, with respect to the world of education,

It is value (not *values*) that becomes crucial. Old traditional modes of working, professional values, notions of public service and putting community needs before the drive for profit - all become liabilities for capital accumulation as educational institutions shift from becoming public goods to private commodities. Community needs are placed within the context of the *market* and profit making potential. They are reconfigured.

The implications and impacts of this intensified capitalist social life consequent on the commodification of education on the work-lives and on the material and ideological conditions of sample, but typical, teachers, is exemplified in the stories of one high school teacher and of two further education teachers, below.

The first story highlights the impacts of micro-surveillance and micro-management, of extreme forms of ‘tick-box’ accountability, of fear and control, of new public managerialism and managerial authoritarianism, of the neoliberal capitalist reconfiguring of institutional aims from public good, from students’ well-being, from community needs, to institutional needs within a competitive school market. The view of one teacher, James, (Hill, J. 2013, cited in Hill, D. 2013**b**) is that

It seems to me the ability (time/insight) to inspire is taken up with filling in tracking data, data in-putting, filling in spreadsheets when homework has been set, making sure your room is not untidy for fear of senior management noticing and ‘having a word’. The extra work that teachers now have to do has very little to do with the delivery of lessons, but ticking the boxes which senior management feel they should have ticked, in case Ofsted come calling. There is a lot of talk among heads of department about ‘how can we show this?’ and ‘where’s our evidence for that?’, and as a result, we don’t hear as much of ‘I think I’m going to try this with that group of students’.

This view exemplifies research carried out by McBeath in 1995 (p. 12), not long after the National Curriculum and its testing and surveillance regime came into operation. McBeath quotes a student teacher as saying “I used to feel that this school cared about how well I was doing. Now I just think it cares about how well *it’s* doing.”

James talks not just of the intensification of accountability, but of a managerial culture of control and fear:

The voices of the Unions are quieter than they once were in schools, there are still those brave enough to speak out on behalf of those who must not be named to senior management, even though they (management) do ask ‘and who thinks that?’ but more recently it has had to be a case of safety in large numbers. We had a Joint Union meeting of the NUT ‘(National Union of Teachers)’ and NASUWT ‘(National Association of Schoolmasters/Union of Women Teachers)’ where we agreed on ‘work to rule’ principles the unions had set out,



but the added pressures being placed on staff meant that we signed a petition. One member of staff set it up, and had to guarantee at least 60 signatures before he would show it to the head. Staff feel they can be got rid of so easily now.

I was observed on a learning walk by a member of senior management, she came in as the class were doing an activity, there was music on in the background, I was sat at my desk looking over a student's book. The member of staff left after a few minutes. At the end of the day I received an email from my head of department, who had received an email from the senior management observer. It was a complaint that I hadn't got up and gone over to greet her at the door. This type of micro management is something you may expect from working in a cubicle in an office. How teachers relate to students, how they engage them, is being written out in a memo, so Ofsted can tick it off. (Hill, J, 2013 cited in Hill, D., 2013**b**)

The second 'personal testimony' on the impacts on education workers of the commodification of education draws out similar issues to those raised by James, above, but within the context of the further education sector. The following is a written report, previously unpublished, written in summer 2013 by two experienced further education teachers.

It is included here because it encapsulates and highlights aspects of managerialisation, fear control and sackings/ job dismissals, marketisation and financialisation of education in England. The following is their experience and reflective analysis of what happened in one 'sixth form college' (state funded college for 16-19 year olds):

Once upon a time there was a happy team of teachers in a sixth form college. They were well qualified, enthusiastic, professional, keen for their students to do well. But all of this changed in 2005 when the principal of the Sixth Form College declared that a new college was to be established by himself and the principal of a local Further Education college. Marketisation arrived uncompromisingly in our classrooms. 'Greater choice for the consumer, combined with raised standards through enforced competition' with other colleges. It quickly became apparent that we were obliged to value what we monitored rather than monitor what we valued.

Gradually, staff groups which had taken the lead on policy decisions were dispensed with, and consultation disappeared. A new principal was appointed. Standing before the college for the first time, the new Principal announced that the college was a business, that the business interests of the college would determine and override all. The Principal never condescended to discuss the issues at staff meetings and preferred to hold so called 'Talk to the Top' sessions, during which staff comments, suggestions and questions were dismissed in an offensive and bullying manner. The Principal adopted the Thatcherite catchphrase from the 80s "There is no alternative" whenever anyone questioned the 'official' vision for the future.

A shiny new £ multi-million building was opened, an event overshadowed by rumours of massive debt, its origins rooted in changes to funding and a subsequent mortgage which was proving difficult to re-pay. E-mails from the Principal announced that a quarter of the staff would be sacked. “There is no alternative!” the Principal insisted.

Redundancies were announced. Staff who had dedicated years to the college were told they “had served their purpose”. Staff were required to sign new contracts or be sacked. Salaries were cut by thousands -for it was the generosity of previous contracts, declared the new Principal, which had bankrupted the college -holiday entitlement cut by ten days. Some staff decided they would not sign new contracts, and were told they would be dismissed without redundancy pay. Others opted quickly to take a modest package and get out while they could. Many staff felt that if they questioned or challenged the new policies and strategies, or suggested that the students’ education would be harmed by them, their own jobs would be at risk.

The promised land of equality and diversity became a distant dream. More than two dozen staff left the college unable and unwilling to face the bleak new future. They were unacknowledged in end of term ceremonies. The new Principal announced her sorrow at how things had turned out for the staff, but there really was no alternative, for business is business.

The testimonies above show very clearly the impacts on staff of neoliberalisation in schools, in further education colleges, in higher education are the intensification of work, tick-box management, surveillance and appraisal systems that are geared to meeting departmental or faculty demands even where these conflict with personal desire and staff desire to put students’ first. These are worsening material conditions of work and life. They show too, the narrow vocationalism, the decritiquing, of curricula in each of these sectors of education- the school further education, and university sectors. What is also happening is the strengthening, the intensification of the class divide in the school and higher education sectors. In England there is increasing social apartheid. The capitalist class, the rich, travel, shop, eat, live, holiday differently than the rest of society. And they get educated differently, too. Their children go to private schools, to elite universities, to different curricula. Neoliberalism increases social class differences. It serves the purpose of the hierarchical reproduction of labour via and within the education system.

But one impact is resistance, resistance to the rule of capital in schools and colleges and universities, resistance to the capitalisation of humanity, to the narrow production of labour power. As Rikowski has noted, ‘(in) the world of education, it is value (not *values*) that (with capitalism) becomes crucial. But it is support of different, more solidaristic, more altruistic, less commodified, less competitive values, valuing critique, valuing ‘notions of public service and putting community needs before the drive for profit’ that have propelled hundreds of thousands onto the streets since 2009- a story that is taken up in the chapter on ‘Resistance in England’.

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