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## **Critical Pedagogy as Organizational Praxis: Challenging the Demise of Civil Society in a Time of Permanent War**

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## Critical Pedagogy as Organizational Praxis: Challenging the Demise of Civil Society in a Time of Permanent War

### Comments

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**Critical Pedagogy  
as Organizational Praxis:  
Challenging the Demise  
of Civil Society  
in a Time of Permanent War**

**By Peter McLaren  
& Nathalia E. Jaramillo**

**Dedicated to Rachel Corrie**

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**The Crisis of the Educational Left  
in the United States**

Critical educators today are struggling assiduously to defend the public sphere from its integration into the neoliberal and imperialist practices of the state and the behemoth of globalized capitalism. While no one is seriously talking about seizing the state on behalf of workers struggling against the “petrolarchs” in Washington, there are promising indications that social movements in the United States will become more active in the challenging days ahead. With administration hawks such as Defense Secretary

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Donald Rumsfeld, Vice President Dick Cheney, Deputy Defense Secretary Paul Wolfowitz, Undersecretary of State John Bolton, and Defense Policy Board member, Richard Perle, leading the rabid White House charge for “preventative war,” it is clear that their fanatical allegiance to the imperialist Project for the New American Century is fuelled by U.S. triumphalism, unipolar political consolidation and dominion, and the conquest of new markets. The bacchanalia of patriotism that has overtaken cities and towns throughout the country has blinded U.S. citizens to the thousands of innocent civilians killed in the ‘liberation’ of Iraq. The slogan dripping red and black from anti-war posters that reads “No Blood for Oil” has, if anything, increased in relevance since the U.S. military invasion of Iraq. As it stands, OPEC resides outside the ambit of complete U.S. control. Total U.S. influence over the vast untapped oil reserves would demonstrably change the power equation. Iraqi opposition to the US ‘free market’ looting of their country was a major factor in the Bush administration’s decision to invade Iraq. The drive to obtain ‘free markets’ and to open up investment for U.S. corporations is now accompanied by the most formidable military presence ever known to humankind, one that is fundamentally unopposed. Iraq is now ‘liberated’ for U.S. corporate investment and control, having been ‘pacified’ as a client state. Judging from recent U.S. history, the future will no doubt require that millions more will die in the oil-rich Middle East and elsewhere around the planet on behalf of the U.S. empire. The Bush junta has serious lessons to learn. You can’t bomb democracy into being. Democracy’s universal egalitarian values require the reciprocal acceptance of mutual perspectives.

Just as in the case of the last two centuries, when U.S. troops invaded Cuba, Nicaragua, Guatemala, El Salvador, Haiti, Colombia, Grenada, and Panama, the recent U.S. invasion of Iraq not only tells us a lot about the history of Western democracy and the imperial roots of U.S. foreign policy, but also about the symbiosis between capitalism and imperialism. Aside from the illegality of the invasion and the imperialist ideology that drives the Bush doctrine of “preventative war,” we need only look at the 7,000 years of human history that has been defenestrated, stolen, or otherwise pulverized to dust to understand what kind of democracy is in store for Iraq. Displaying a symbolic violence more wretchedly powerful than when a blue curtain was hung over Picasso’s *Guernica* outside the UN Security Council Chambers so that a photo-op with Colin Powell would not be tarnished by the anti-war masterpiece, or when Laura Bush cancelled a White House poetry symposium when informed by her advisors that some of the poems might reveal anti-war sentiments, the U.S. enthralled the world once again by failing to prevent — some have even said by encouraging — the wanton theft and destruction of 170,000 priceless treasures of antiquity in the Baghdad Archaeological Museum as well as a museum in the northern city of Mosul (treasures that included the tablets of the Code of Hammurabi). Multimillionaire art collectors from the advanced capitalist states wait in air-conditioned anticipation for receipt of priceless artifacts whose planned theft was just another facet of the U.S. invasion of Iraq. Whose secret

office vault now contains the statue of King Entemena, or the Assyrian god Ashur, or the golden harp from Ur? In a move reminiscent of the destruction of Teotihuacan, the Roman pillage of Carthage, or the devastation visited upon Constantinople during the Fourth Crusade, the U.S. has facilitated the liquidation of what is has been called the cradle of civilization. Perhaps the U.S. military leadership could learn something from a senior at Trumbull College, Susannah Rutherglen (2003), who, commenting on the “murder of Iraq’s national museum,” writes:

*The work of art is the bearer of our cultural memory; it is the only trace we keep of the fact that we have lived at all. Long before Sigmund Freud compared the ruins of Rome to the layers of the human unconscious, the work of art came to stand as a lasting storehouse for the ephemeral contents of human lives, a place where we might recover the meaning of our culture and ourselves through time.*

Perhaps the Iraqis would have been better off by placing their museums inside their oil fields which are — by stark contrast — carefully guarded by the U.S. military. While the oil fields were being protected by tanks and armored personnel carriers, thieves were freely looting and burning the National Archives, the Koranic library, the Ministry of Irrigation, the Ministry of Industry, the Ministry of Foreign Affairs, the Ministry of Culture, the Ministry of Education, the Ministry of Planning, the Ministry of Information, and the Ministry of Trade and dozens of other government buildings (not to mention three hospitals). In fact, every one of the city’s ministries has been burned except the Ministry of Interior (with its wealth of intelligence information on Iraq) and the Ministry of Oil as well as UN offices, embassies and shopping malls (Fisk, 2003a; 2003b).

As if the looting and burning of Baghdad were not enough, the citizens of Iraq have been put on lockdown. The command of the 1<sup>st</sup> U.S. Marine Division recently issued its “Message to the Citizens of Baghdad” to “please avoid leaving your homes during the night hours after evening prayers and before the call to morning prayers. During this time, terrorist forces associated with the former regime of Saddam Hussein, as well as various criminal elements, are known to move through the area . . . please do not leave your homes during this time. During all hours, please approach Coalition military positions with extreme caution” (Fiske, 2003). Iraqis are locked up from dusk to dawn in homes without electricity or running water. But mostly the media reported on the cheering Iraqis in the streets, welcoming the conquering heroes. Yet, as Alexander Cockburn notes:

*There’s cheering in the streets now. No big surprise. Saddam was not a popular guy, and anyway, people know which side their bread is buttered on. Never forget, upstanding citizens of Nagasaki sponsored a festive Miss Atomic Bomb context almost at the onset of the US occupation at the end of World War II. As I’m sure Martha Stewart would tell us, the art of living is learning to adjust briskly to changed circumstances. (2003, p. 12)*

Accompanying the cheers of “liberation” are the frenetic and accelerating cries

against a long-term U.S. presence. Only days following the recalcitrant removal of a month-old Saddam Hussein statue whose images flooded T.V. stations across the country, hundreds if not thousands of Iraqis occupied the streets to demonstrate a grim resolve against a long-term U.S. occupation. Greeted by M-16 rifles that left at least a hundred wounded and roughly a dozen dead, the Iraqi people continue to bear signs reading “Occupiers Go Home” and “No US and UK in Iraq” (Keane, 2003).

When Colin Powell was advocating cuts to the U.S. military budget in 2001, he was quoted as saying: “Think hard about it. I’m running out of demons. I’m running out of villains” (cited in Gibbs, 2002, p. 15). A year earlier, Condolezza Rice clearly was pushing for a completely different agenda:

The United States has found it exceedingly difficult to define its “national interest” in the absence of Soviet power. . . . That we do not know how to think about what follows the U.S.-Soviet confrontation is clear from the continued references to the “post-Cold War period.” Yet such periods of transition are important, because they offer strategic opportunities. During these fluid times, one can affect the shape of the world to come.

The opportunities to which Rice was referring could be summed up as transforming U.S. foreign policy into a motor of economic modernization that could move the world inexorably towards economic openness — clearly, Rice was supporting at that time a foreign policy initiative that advocated neoliberal globalization as the means to export democracy throughout the globe. In this regard, she argued that “the United States and its allies are on the right side of history.” It is equally telling that, several years later, Rice would take an even harder line, echoing the unipolar perspective of the administration hawks. In an interview with Nicholas Lemann for *The New Yorker* magazine, she spoke about what the attacks of September 11<sup>th</sup> afforded U.S. foreign policy initiatives:

“‘I think the difficulty has passed in defining a role,’ she said immediately. ‘I think September 11th was one of those great earthquakes that clarify and sharpen. Events are in much sharper relief.’ Like Bush, she said that opposing terrorism and preventing the accumulation of weapons of mass destruction ‘in the hands of irresponsible states’ now define the national interest.... Rice said that she had called together the senior staff people of the National Security Council and asked them to think seriously about ‘*how do you capitalize on these opportunities*’ to fundamentally change American doctrine, and the shape of the world, in the wake of September 11th.” (*The New Yorker*, 1/4/02, emphasis added; this quotation was taken from The Research Unit for Political Economy, 2003)

According to India’s Research Unit for Political Economy (2003), the quotation by Rice reveals that the target of U.S. foreign policy is not terrorism. On the contrary: “The supposed suppression of terrorism worldwide merely offers ‘opportunities’ for the U.S. to pursue its strategic agenda without geographic or temporal limits.” The invasion of Iraq was a shameful attempt to capitalize on the events of September 11, initiating a savage assault on a country weakened by sanctions for over a decade

on the contrived assumption that it posed a threat to the United States. It is therefore no surprise to see the link between neoliberal globalization and an aggressive U.S. military posture, especially when the military-industrial complex has become such an important economic actor (Gibbs, 2001). Military-Keynesianism is back in vogue. As Richard Friedman has pointed out: "The hidden hand of the market will never work without a hidden fist—McDonald's cannot flourish without McDonnell-Douglas, the designer of the F-15. And the hidden fist that keeps the world safe for Silicon Valley's technologies is called the United States Army, Air Force, Navy, and Marine Corps" (Cited in Gibbs, 2001, p. 33-34). Neoliberal globalization gives a powerful competitive advantage to developed countries and benefits the U.S. especially through the liberalization of international finance and the unique function of the dollar in an international economy (Gibbs, 2001). In the process it exacerbates a class and ethnic stratification of the world economy. Grandin offers the following succinct description:

Along with neoliberalism, we have a neo-civilizing mission. The West will deliver free-market democracy, one way or another, to the rest of the world, whether through the proper mix of technology, markets, constitutions, consumer goods or out of the barrel of a smart weapon. (2003, p. 29)

The strategic agenda of the free-market democratic reconstruction of which Bush, Cheney, Rice and the rest of Washington's oil baron junta speak is really another way of describing an assault on the forces that are trying to build a more just and equitable society: the working-classes of the underdeveloped countries. The following observation puts the matter succinctly:

While the apparent targets of the US assault are the *regimes* of these countries, that would hardly make sense, since none of them poses a threat to the US, and in fact some of them, such as Saudi Arabia and Egypt, are its client states. Rather the real targets are the anti-imperialist masses of the region, whom certain regimes are unwilling, and others are unable, to control. It is these anti-imperialist masses of West Asia, not their rulers of whatever hue, who have always constituted the real threat to US domination. The US appears to believe that its overwhelming and highly sophisticated military might can tackle the masses effectively if they come out into the open. That is why it even contemplates *provoking* mass uprisings so as to have occasion to crush them. (Research Unit for Political Economy, 2003)

The case of Latin America offers another convincing example. We are witnessing the recolonization of Latin America through militarization as new U.S. bases are installed in Manta (Ecuador), Três Esquinas and Letícia (Colombia), Iquitos (Peru), Rainha Beatrix (Aruba), and Hato (Curacao). The U.S. is training Latin American militaries from Chile, Brazil, Bolivia, Ecuador, Peru, and Uruguay as part of Operation Cabañas in Argentina. In addition to the infamous Plan Colombia, the U.S. is installing the System of Surveillance of the Amazon that can monitor 5.5 million square kilometers, as well as a mammoth radar facility in Argentina

(Mendonca, 2003). While struggles against U.S.-supported fascist dictatorships by the Latin American left eventually ended in the restoration of constitutional rule in a number of countries, the United States continues to dissuade political parties there from mass mobilization; the U.S. would prefer that these parties adopt a more “modern” democratic politics of “passive representation and elite negotiation” (Grandin, 2003, p. 29). Furthermore, there has been an ongoing assault on direct democracy by curtailing regional and domestic grassroots efforts at regulating the economy:

Washington has crafted a number of antidemocratic measures — such as international treaties that limit the ability of local states to implement regulations, and the establishment of independent central banks that remove monetary policy from public debate — restricting popular will. (Grandin, 2003, p. 29)

While civilians alternatively continue to cheer and to die in Iraq with ominous regularity, a private contractor with close ties to the Republican Party, Bechtel Corporation, has been tapped by the U.S. State Department to be the primary contractor in rebuilding Iraq’s infrastructure, including power facilities, electrical grids, municipal water and sewage systems. This must be seen as good news by Donald Rumsfeld, since Rumsfeld worked closely with Saddam Hussein from 1983 to 1987 to secure an oil pipeline contract for Bechtel. David Moberg (2003, p. 17) writes that a “new report from the Institute for Policy Studies, using previously unpublished government papers, documents how Rumsfeld and other Reagan aides worked closely with Saddam from 1983 to 1987 — after public revelation of his use of poison gas in his war with Iran — in an ultimately failed bid to help Bechtel Corporation construct a new pipeline for Iraqi oil.” The new Bechtel contract is worth up to \$680 million, and the logic here is that the more infrastructure the U.S. destroys, the more lucrative it becomes for the San Francisco-based contractor, whose board includes former Secretary of State, George Shultz. The U.S. Agency for International Development (U.S.A.I.D.) has invited other U.S. multinationals to bid on Iraq’s “reconstruction.” In line with the reconstruction efforts is a focus on ensuring that 8 million Iraqi children return to school in the fall. A for-profit company, Creative Associates International, has landed the \$65 million dollar bid for reopening a battered school system, largely the product of 12 years of U.N. sanctions that led to plunging literacy rates for a country that boasted the highest quality education in the Middle East prior to 1991. Charged with instilling “politically neutral studies” by removing the former Ba’ath party nationalist curricula, Creative Associates International will be under close scrutiny by critical educators who will want to see how politically neutral the curriculum will be towards the U.S. Creative Associates currently enjoys multi-million dollar contracts for “rebuilding” Afghanistan’s school system along with other U.S.A.I.D.-funded “liberatory” projects in Lebanon, Jordan, El Salvador, and Guatemala, leading to an excess of \$200 million in signed contracts.



That capitalism, education, and technology go hand-in-hand is a truism captured — if only symbolically — in the efforts by California Republican Congressman Darrel Issa to introduce a bill that would require the Defense Department to build a CDMA cellphone system (developed by Qualcomm, one of Issa's most lucrative donors) in postwar Iraq that would benefit "US patent holders." According to Naomi Klein (2003), "by the time the Iraqi people have a say in choosing a government, the key economic decisions about their country's future will have been made by their occupiers." Of course, the U.S. will partially privatize the oil industry, and sell off Iraq's oil reserves to ExxonMobil and Shell. Iraqi exiles will be given posts in Iraq's interim government in exchange for implementing privatization "in such away that it isn't seen to be coming from the United States" (Klein, 2003). Klein (2003) writes:

Some argue that it's too simplistic to say this war is about oil. They're right. It's about oil, water, roads, trains, phones, ports and drugs. And if this process isn't halted, "free Iraq" will be the most sold country on earth.

Our point is that the logic of capital itself is what prohibits democracy from being realized as the achievement of individual freedom and self-determination. The free cheese is always in the mousetrap. What we are seeing taking place in Iraq is not the triumph of democracy. Klein (2003) asserts:

*Entirely absent from this debate are the Iraqi people, who might — who knows? — want to hold on to a few of their assets. Iraq will be owed massive reparations after the bombing stops, but without any real democratic process, what is being planned is not reparations, reconstruction or rehabilitation. It is robbery: mass theft disguised as charity; privatization without representation.*

But isn't the current situation in Iraq — and the events which led up to it — precisely a metaphor for globalized capitalism worldwide? The United States is proclaiming victory and advocating struggle for freedom and democracy in Iraq — indeed, a proclamation and advocacy that arcs across the firmament like a Fourth of July Roman candle. Yet the very democracy that it has mandated for Iraq has failed miserably to materialize in the United States. As critical educators, we are not convinced that democracy can be sustained in a world ruled by capitalism's law of value — with or without the imposition of empire. The prospect of democracy looks especially bleak these days, as the Bush administration puts the country on ideological lockdown in an attempt to return to the halcyon days of the McKinley era when the fat cats of industry ran a retrograde financial kingdom that enshrined private property rights and supported the annexation of foreign territories (Greider, 2003).

In a social universe pock-marked by the ravages of capitalism's war against the working-class and people of color, there are few places in which to retreat that the global market does not already occupy. Clearly, the United States has not faced up to capitalism's addiction to injustice, and its politicians have provided little space in educational debates for teachers to question the structurally dependent relation-

ship between the standard of living in developed countries and misery and poverty in the underdeveloped ones. Early in the twentieth century, this country failed to heed the advice of one of its greatest philosophers, John Dewey (1927), who, mindful of “the extended meaning which has been given to the Monroe Doctrine,” warned: “The natural movement of business enterprise, combined with Anglo-American legalistic notions of contracts and their sanctity, and the international custom which obtains as to the duty of a nation to protect the property of its nationals, suffices to bring about imperialistic undertakings.”

Employing a politics that counts on the stupefaction of a media-primed electorate, the Bush administration has marshaled the corporate media in the service of its foreign policy such that the environment is literally suffused with its neoliberal agenda, with very little space devoid of its ideological cheerleading. Where classrooms once served as at least potentially one of the few spaces of respite from the ravages of the dominant ideology, they have now been colonized by the corporate logic of privatization and the imperial ideology of the militarized state. Teachers are left suspended across an ideological divide that separates reason and irrationality, consciousness and indoctrination, as they are reminded by their administrators and government officials that to bring “politics” into the classroom is unpatriotic. Consider the case of Bill Nevins, a high school teacher in New Mexico who faced an impromptu paid leave of absence following a student’s reading of “Revolution X,” a poem that lends a critical eye toward the war in Iraq.

If the President is to be believed, it was Jesus who first approved of the current Pentagon plan to expand the US empire into the Middle East, as Bush *hijo* shamelessly exploits his policy objectives with frequent Biblical references and overtures of solidarity to Christian evangelical fundamentalists. Through direct presidential orders that circumvent congressional debate and bypass public debate, the White House has launched faith-based initiatives which provide millions of dollars in state funds to right-wing Christian groups who run job-training programs requiring a “total surrender to Christ,” or who oversee childcare programs or chemical-dependency recovery programs, or who offer spiritual and moral regeneration to troubled families.

All of this has not gone unnoticed by critical educators. Though they have become used to the academic marginalization that often follows in the wake of attacks by the more churlish and reactionary conservative educationalists among us, proponents and practitioners of critical pedagogy have long feared being cast into the pit of academic hell for being perceived not only as dangerously irrelevant to United States democracy but also as politically treasonous. At this current historical juncture in U.S. history, when fighting a ‘permanent war’ against terrorism, and expanding the American empire while we’re at it, one would think that such a fear is duly warranted. This is partly due to the fact that critical pedagogy earned its early reputation as a fierce critic of U.S. imperialism and capitalist exploitation. However, times have changed. Today critical pedagogy is no longer the dangerous critic of free market liberal education that it once was. Rather, it has become so absorbed by the cosmopolitanized

liberalism of the postmodernized left that it no longer serves as a trenchant challenge to capital and U.S. economic and military hegemony. Of course, we believe that this can change. There are numerous developments on our campuses related to the anti-war and anti-globalization movements that give us hope that the voices of our youth — and among them, those who will attend our teacher education programs — will be much more politicized or open to what Freire called “conscientization” than in previous years. No doubt this has been encouraged by the worldwide mobilization against Bush and his de facto military/oil junta. There will be pressure on critical educators (whom in the United States are mostly liberal, not revolutionary) to respond to the voices of a new generation of politicized student teachers. But it won’t be a simple case of preaching to the converted. There are now more than 80 right-leaning newspapers and magazines circulating on college and university campuses throughout the country. Clearly, there is a concerted effort by conservative organizations to silence progressive voices. There is a need for teacher educators to bring a more radical discourse into the educational literature as well as directly into their teacher education programs. Even in the field of critical pedagogy these attempts have been disappointing.

Written as a counterpoint to the onslaught of neoliberal globalization and its “civilizing mission” for the oppressed of developed and developing countries alike, this article is both a commentary on the domestication of critical pedagogy, and a challenge for revivifying its political roots and role in the civil societarian left. It is meant to initiate a dialogue and conversation among progressive educators. Especially for those of us living in the belly of the beast in *gringolandia*, we are inhabiting a time when citizenship has become marked by a lived historical presence blindingly uncritical of its own self-formation, when residents inhabiting the nation’s multifarious geoscapes are racially marked so as to render them educationally segregated, and when the working-class has become deputized by capital to uphold the neoliberal market ideology of the ruling class against any and all other alternatives — all of which legitimates the subordinate status of the working class within the existing division of labor.

This article is written at a time of permanent war, which is not only a war against the enemies of the United States (which today seems like just about every other country or dissenting organization/persons) but also a war against the working-class, people of color and women (a war that dates back to the violent founding of the country itself). This is not to say that times haven’t changed. For instance, Bush *hijo*, a beneficiary of the so-called ‘good breeding’ of the ‘Episcopacy,’ made it into Yale in the days when ‘character’ (read as the cultural capital of rich white ‘silver spoon’ families) was a singular badge of merit. Today, increasingly egregious forms of ‘testocracy’ — scores from scientifically invalid and unreliable aptitude tests that correlate well with social class, race and linguistic background — serve as the primary route to the academy. The overt racism and class privilege of the ruling elite now enables the bourgeoisie to shirk off the notion of ‘good breeding’ and hide themselves beneath the ‘objectivity’ of high school test scores and university

entrance criteria at a time in which meritocracy is presumed to have been secured. The gilded racism of this position is reflected in Bush *hijo's* condescending and patronizing attitude towards ethnic populations, both at home and abroad. As William Staletan (2003) has pointed out, President Bush likes to use the term “gifted” when addressing the Iraqi people on their TV screens. “You are a good and gifted people,” he conveyed to them while Arabic subtitles appeared below his face during a broadcast that followed in the wake of the destruction of Baghdad. Saletan notes that Bush has used the term “gifted” seven times during his presidency, once to refer to Bill Cosby, once to Martin Luther King Sr., and four times to Iraqis and Palestinians. The other time was when he was reading from a script at an arts award ceremony. He has referred to Iraqis and Latinos as “talented” people. The Chinese have been referred to by Bush as “talented, brilliant, and energetic” while Russians are singled out as possessing “entrepreneurial talent.” Irish Americans betray an “industry and talent” while Cubans display “determination and talent.” Saletan correctly notes that such descriptions is tantamount to the obscenely patronizing and condescending discourse that white people often use to refer to “ethnic” people who need to be told that they are capable. Statelan remarks:

If you're black, Hispanic, or a member of some other group often stereotyped as incompetent, you may be familiar with this kind of condescension. It's the way polite white people express their surprise that you aren't stupid. They marvel at how “bright” and “articulate” you are. Instead of treating you the way they'd treat an equally competent white person — say, by ignoring you — they fuss over your every accomplishment.

At this current historical juncture, as the Bush administration sets its sights on abolishing affirmative action, as the right seizes every chance it gets to replace the social wage with the free market system, and as conservative think tanks game out plans for privatizing what remains of the devastated public sphere, thousands of teachers and teacher educators throughout the country look to the left for guidance and leadership. Stunned by the results of a *New York Times*/CBS News survey that revealed that 42 percent of the American public believes that Saddam Hussein is directly responsible for the attacks of September 11, and that 55 percent of Americans believe Saddam Hussein directly supports al-Qaida, U.S. educators are feeling powerless against the hegemonizing force of the rightwing corporate media. Under cover of democracy, Bush's carney lingo about saving civilization from the terrorist hordes rings the air with a sense of profound hypocrisy. Americans old enough to remember the anti-Communist propaganda of the late 1940s and 1950s are experiencing a political *deja vu*. Millions read the books, *Is This Tomorrow: America Under Communism!*, *Blood Is the Harvest*, and *Red Nightmare*. In 1948, the Chamber of Commerce of the United States published *A Program for Community Anti-Communism* which contained a phrase eerily reminiscent of a remark that President Bush made weeks after the attacks of September 11: “You know that they

hate us and our freedom." Those too young to remember the McCarthy era get to experience the sequel first hand. Some see this as democracy in practice. Not everybody is fooled.

But even when we are detoxicated of the shadowed obscurity surrounding the current war on terrorism and disabused of the calls for the primitive patriotism of flags and bumper stickers that is part of Bush *hijo's* petulant crusade for a decent America (i.e., an America devoid of its critics), there still remains a glaring absence within the liberal academy of challenging capital as a social relation. While there exists plenty of talk about income redistribution, surprisingly little is said about setting ourselves against the deviances and devices of capital's regime of profit-making other than prosecuting a few of the more disposable CEOs of the latest round of corporate offenders. The stunted criticism of the Bush administration's fascist assault on democracy is not so much a refusal of political will among liberal educators as much as a realization that if we persist with an internationalized market economy, the introduction of effective social controls to protect the underclass, the marginalized, and the immiserated will create overwhelming comparative disadvantages for the nation state or the economic bloc that seeks to institute such policies. If, as liberal educators (begrudgingly) and conservative educators (demagogically) insist, there effectively is no alternative to working within with institutionalized market economy, then admittedly neo-liberal policies that champion free market capitalism and that undermine what is left of the welfare state make eminent and chilling sense. And while surely the punishment exacted against the poor can be staggered by parceling out the conditions for mass poverty in more discreet — yet no less lethal — policies and practices, there remains the question of how to cope with the havoc that will eventually be wailingly wreaked on the poor and the powerless in the absence of a socialist alternative. It is in this context — of breadlines, overcrowded hospitals, and unemployment lines longer than those at the polling stations — that the question of organization becomes imperative for the left in a search for a socialist alternative.

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### **The Politics of Organization**

This brings us face-to-face with the thorny question of organization, a problem that has doggedly exercised both the revolutionary left and the progressive left for over a century. Max Elbaum (2002) notes that organisations are crucial in the struggle for social justice. He writes that "[w]ithout collective forms it is impossible to train cadre, debate theory and strategy, spread information and analysis, or engage fully with the urgent struggles of the day. Only through organisations can revolutionaries maximise their contribution to ongoing battles and position themselves to maximally influence events when new mass upheavals and opportunities arise" (2002, p. 335). Yet at the same time, Elbaum warns that we must avoid what he calls "sectarian dead-ends" in our struggle for social justice. Reflecting on

his experiences with the New Communist Movement of the 1970s, he explains that when a movement becomes a “self-contained world” that insists upon group solidarity and discipline, this can often lead to the suppression of internal democracy. The rigid top-down party model is obviously a problem for Elbaum. On the one hand social activists need to engage with and be accountable to a large, active, anti-capitalist social base; on the other hand, there are pressures to put one’s revolutionary politics aside in order to make an immediate impact on public policy. There is the impulse to “retreat into a small but secure niche on the margins of politics and/or confine oneself to revolutionary propaganda” (2002, p. 334). Elbaum cites Marx’s dictum that periods of socialist sectarianism obtain when “the time is not yet ripe for an independent historical movement” (2002, p. 334). Problems inevitably arise when “purer-than-thou fidelity to old orthodoxies” are employed to maintain membership morale necessary for group cohesion and to compete with other groups. He reports that the healthiest periods of social movements appear to be when tight knit cadre groups and other forms are able to coexist and interact while at the same time considering themselves part of a common political trend. He writes that “diversity of organisational forms (publishing collectives, research centers, cultural collectives, and broad organising networks, in addition to local and national cadre formations) along with a dynamic interaction between them supplied (at least to a degree) some of the pressures for democracy and realism that in other situations flowed from a socialist-oriented working-class” (2002, p. 335). It is important to avoid a uniform approach in all sectors, especially when disparities in consciousness and activity are manifold. Elbaum notes that Leninist centralized leadership worked in the short run but “lacked any substantial social base and were almost by definition hostile to all others on the left; they could never break out of the limits of a sect” (2002, p. 335). The size of membership has a profound qualitative impact on strategies employed and organisational models adopted. Elbaum warns that attempts to build a small revolutionary party (a party in embryo) “blinded movement activists to Lenin’s view that a revolutionary party must not only be an ‘advanced’ detachment but must also actually represent and be rooted in a substantial, socialist-leaning wing of the working class” (2002, p. 335). Realistic and complex paths will need to be taken which will clearly be dependent on the state of the working-class movement itself. We cite Elbaum’s insights here not because we adhere to all of his conclusions but because we recognize the importance of the questions that he raises. We believe they are pertinent in building the educational left’s anti-imperialist struggle.

It is axiomatic for the ongoing development of critical pedagogy that it be based upon an alternative vision of human sociality, one that operates outside the social universe of capital, a vision that goes beyond the market, but also one that goes beyond the state. It must reject the false opposition between the market and the state. Massimo De Angelis writes that “the historical challenge before us is that the question of alternatives...not be separated from the organisational forms that this

movement gives itself' (2002, p. 5). Given that we are faced globally with the emergent transnational capitalist class and the incursion of capital into the far reaches of the planet, critical educators need a philosophy of organisation that sufficiently addresses the dilemma and the challenge of the global working class. In discussing alternative manifestations of anti-globalisation struggles, De Angelis itemises some promising characteristics as follows: the production of various counter-summits; Zapatista Encuentros; social practices that produce use values beyond economic calculation and the competitive relation with the other and that are inspired by practices of social and mutual solidarity; horizontally-linked clusters outside vertical networks in which the market is protected and enforced; social co-operation through grassroots democracy, consensus, dialogue, and the recognition of the other; authority and social co-operation developed in fluid relations and self-constituted through interaction; and a new engagement with the other that transcends locality, job, social condition, gender, age, race, culture, sexual orientation, language, religion, and beliefs. All of these characteristics are to be secondary to the constitution of communal relations. He writes:

The global scene for us is the discovery of the "other," while the local scene is the discovery of the "us," and by discovering the "us," we change our relation to the "other." In a community, commonality is a creative process of discovery, not a presupposition. So we do both, but we do it having the community in mind, the community as a mode of engagement with the other. (2002, p. 14)

But what about the national state? According to Ellen Meiksins Wood, "the state is the point at which global capital is most vulnerable, both as a target of opposition in the dominant economies and as a lever of resistance elsewhere. It also means that now more than ever, much depends on the particular class forces embodied in the state, and that now more than ever, there is scope, as well as need, for class struggle" (2001, p. 291). Sam Gindin (2002) argues that the state is no longer a relevant site of struggle if by struggle we mean taking over the state and pushing it in another direction. But the state is still a relevant arena for contestation if our purpose is one of transforming the state. He writes:

Conventional wisdom has it that the national state, whether we like it or not, is no longer a relevant site of struggle. At one level, this is true. If our notion of the state is that of an institution which left governments can 'capture' and push in a different direction, experience suggests this will contribute little to social justice. But if our goal is to transform the state into an instrument for popular mobilisation and the development of democratic capacities, to bring our economy under popular control and restructure our relationships to the world economy, then winning state power would manifest the worst nightmares of the corporate world. When we reject strategies based on winning through undercutting others and maintain our fight for dignity and justice nationally, we can inspire others abroad and create new spaces for their own struggles. (2002, p. 11)

John Holloway's premise is similar to that of Gindin. He argues that we must

theorise the world negatively as a “moment” of practice as part of the struggle to change the world. But this change cannot come about through transforming the state through the taking of power but rather must occur through the dissolution of power as a means of transforming the state and thus the world. This is because the state renders people powerless by separating them from “doing” (human activity). In our work as critical educators, Holloway’s distinction between power-to do (potentia) and power-over (potestas) is instructive. Power-to is a part of the “social flow of doing,” the collective construction of a “we” and the practice of the mutual recognition of dignity. Power-over negates the social flow of doing thereby alienating the collective “we” into mere objects of instruction.

Holloway advocates creating the conditions for the future “doing” of others through a power-to do. In the process, we must not transform power-to into power-over, since power-over only separates the “means of doing” from the actual “doing” which has reached its highest point in capitalism. In fact, those who exercise power-over separate the done from the doing of others and declare it to be theirs. The doers then become detached from the origin of thought and practice, dehumanized to the level of instructed ‘objects’ under the command of those that have assumed power-over. Power-over reduces people to mere owners and non-owners, flattening out relations between people to relations between things. It converts doing into a static condition of being. Whereas doing refers to both “we are” (the present) and “we are not” (the possibility of being something else) being refers only to “we are.” To take away the “we are not” tears away possibility from social agency. The rule of power-over is the rule of “this is the way things are” which is the rule of identity. When we are separated from our own doing we create our own subordination. Power-to is not counter-power (which presupposes a symmetry with power) but anti-power.

Holloway reminds us that the separation of doing and done is not an accomplished fact but a process. Separation and alienation is a movement against its own negation, against anti-alienation. That which exists in the form of its negation — or anti-alienation (the mode of ‘being’ denied) — really does exist, in spite of its negation. It is the negation of the process of denial. Capitalism, according to Holloway, is based on the denial of “power-to,” of dignity, of humanity, but that does not mean power-to (counter-capitalism) does not exist. Asserting our power-to is simultaneously to assert our resistance against subordination. This may take the form of open rebellion, of struggles to defend control over the labor process, or efforts to control the processes of health and education. Power-over depends upon that which it negates. The history of domination is not only the struggle of the oppressed against their oppressors but also the struggle of the powerful to liberate themselves from their dependence on the powerless. But there is no way in which power-over can escape from being transformed into power-to because capital’s flight from labor depends upon labor (upon its capacity to convert power-to into abstract value-producing labor) in the form of falling rates of profit.

We are beginning to witness new forms of social organization as a part of



revolutionary praxis. In addition to the Zapatistas, we have the important example of the participatory budget of the Workers Party in Brazil. And in Argentina we are seeing new forms of organized struggle as a result of the recent economic collapse of that country. We are referring here to the examples of the street protests of the *piqueteros* (the unemployed) currently underway and which first emerged about five years ago in the impoverished communities in the provinces. More recently, new neighborhood *asambleas* (assemblies) have arisen out of local streetcorner protests. Numbering around 300 throughout the country, these assemblies meet once a week to organize *cacerolas* (protests) and to defend those evicted from their homes, or who are having their utilities shut off, etc. The *asambleistas* (assembly members) also co-ordinate soup kitchens to feed themselves and others. This anti-hierarchical, decentralized, and grassroots movement consisting of both employed and unemployed workers, mostly women, has taken on a new urgency since December, 2002, when four governments collapsed in quick succession following Argentina's default on its foreign debt. Canadian activist Naomi Klein (2003) captures the spirit surrounding the creation of the *asambleas* when she writes:

In Argentina, many of the young people fighting the neo-liberal policies that have bankrupted this country are children of leftist activists who were "disappeared" during the military dictatorship of 1976-'83. They talk openly about their determination to continue their parents' political fight for socialism but by different means. Rather than attacking military barracks, they squat on abandoned land and build bakeries and homes; rather than planning their actions in secret, they hold open assemblies on street corners; rather than insisting on ideological purity, they value democratic decision-making above all. Plenty of older activists, the lucky ones who survived the terror of the '70s, have joined these movements, speaking enthusiastically of learning from people half their age, of feeling freed of the ideological prisons of their pasts, of having a second chance to get it right.

A recent report in *News & Letters* adds to this description:

What is remarkable is how ferociously opposed the *asambleas* are to being controlled, and to any hint of a vertical, top down hierarchy. They insist on independence, autonomy self-determination, encouraging all to learn how to voice their opinions and rotating responsibilities. They are explicitly for individual, personal self-development at the same time as they are for fighting the powers that be with everything they've got at their disposal. (2002, p. 6)

The larger *asambleas interbarriales* (mass meetings of the various *asambleas*) elect rotating delegates from the *asambleas* to speak and vote on issues that their local communities generate. In addition, workers have occupied a number of factories and work sites such as Brukman, Zanon, and Panificadora Cinco. Workers have also occupied a mine in Rio Turbio. Clearly, new revolutionary forms of organization are appearing. As Ernesto Herrera notes:

The experiences of the piquetero movement and neighborhood assemblies allow the

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possibility of the construction of a revolutionary movement, a democratic popular power with a socialist perspective. The 'great revolt' has put on the agenda the question of a strategy that links resistance and the struggle for power, representative democracy and/or the principle of revocability, the 'saqueos' as acts of self-subsistence in food. (2002, p. 10)

Currently Brukman, a garment factory composed of 55 female workers, aged 45-50, has proved symbolic in the struggle against the Argentine state. Brukman workers are demanding public ownership of the factory, setting a dangerous precedent for the bourgeoisie. In fact, approximately twenty-five other factories in Argentina are occupied by workers who are also demanding public ownership. Workers in approximately two hundred and fifty other factories are demanding some kind of state intervention for a type of workers' control (such as forming co-operatives, etc.). They have formed a popular front to resist assault from the state. However, assaults from the state continue. Over twenty-five thousand people surrounded the Brukman factory recently to defend workers that had been expelled by the police, leading to numerous injuries and arrests.

Of course, the *asambleas* confront many problems in that they are composed of members of different class fractions, with their many different political agendas. Yet all of the *asambleas* hold the re-stratification of recently privatized industries as a top priority (even as they reject vanguardist parties). At the same time, in this new rise of popular mobilisation, as subjectivities become revolutionized under the unrelenting assault of capitalism, there needs to occur a programmatic proposal for a political regroupment of the radical and anti-capitalist forces. There must be more options available for organizers of the revolutionary left. Herrera writes:

In Mexico, the Zapatista movement could not translate its capacity of mobilization in the Consultas and Marches into a political alternative of the left. There was no modification of the relationship of forces. The theory of the 'indefinite anti-power' or 'changing the world without taking power' has produced neither a process of radical reforms, nor a revolutionary process. (2002, p. 13)

We are more optimistic about the possibilities of the Zapatista movement than Herrera, but we do believe that whatever shape the struggle against imperialism and capitalist globalization will take, it will need to be international. We believe in a multiracial, gender-balanced, internationalist anti-imperialist struggle. What also appears promising are the rise of the Bolivarian Circles in Caracas, Venezuela, a mass mobilization of working-class Venezuelans on behalf of President Hugo Chavez. The Bolivarian Circles (named after Simon Bolivar) serve as watchdog groups modeled after Cuba's Committee for the Defense of the Revolution and function as liaisons between the neighborhoods and the government as well as fomenting support for Chavez. They are important in combating business leaders and dissident army generals whom, with U.S. support, are trying to overthrow the Chavez government. Members of the Bolivarian Circles bang on hollow electricity

poles to warn against mobilizations by the opposition and to rally supporters across the city's working-class neighborhoods. They are an example of self-determination for sovereignty as evidenced by the Bolivarian declaration "*Nuestra America: una sola patria*" (Our America: one motherhood) which rejects an ideological loyalty to "America" as an America defined by a capitalist laden value system that favors imperialism and exploitation for increased profit margins. According to "*Nuestra America*" the people will not succumb to neoliberal modernity at the expense of becoming "scavengers of the industrial extravagance" (translation, Jaramillo). This movement is a clear signal that the present can be rewritten, there is an alternative, and the people can search for their own "America" (*Nuestra America*, 2003). In the spirit of this declaration we urge critical educators to pressure the International Monetary Fund (IMF) and World Bank to open their meetings to the media and to the public and to cancel the full measure of the debt they claim from underdeveloped countries, since such debts were accrued by dictators who used their IMF and World Bank loans to oppress their own people in the service of capital accumulation.

In the struggle against capitalism and its state formations, Alex Callinicos (2003) discusses two options: reformism within the anti-capitalist movement (as a result of the pressure posed by capital flight and currency crises, or in reaction to 'rebellions of the rich' as seen recently in Venezuela) — a move that has witnessed center-left state bodies surrendering without a fight to the Washington Consensus. Here, the state is considered to be a vehicle through which social change can be successfully achieved. Callinicos, however, makes the important point that the state simply can't be used as an instrument of social transformation since it is already too implicated in the social relations of production and the bureaucratic apparatus centered on the means of coercion. Callinicos minces no words:

Recent historical experience thus confirms the judgement made long ago by Marx and Lenin that the state can't simply be used as an instrument of social transformation. It is part of the capitalist system, not a means for changing it. The economic pressures of international capital — reflected particularly in the movements of money across the globe — push states to promote capital accumulation. Moreover, in the core of the state itself is a permanent bureaucratic apparatus centred on control of the means of coercion — the armed forces, police, and intelligence services — whose ultimate allegiance is not to elected governments but to the unelected ruling class.

A second option discussed by Callinicos is the one that is propounded by the autonomist wing of the anti-capitalist movement. This position renounces a reliance on the existing state and also eschews the objective of taking power from capital. Callinicos cites Tony Negri and John Holloway as perhaps the best known exponents of this position. Holloway's position is described by Callinicos as "an extreme form of commodity fetishism, in which all the apparently objective structures of capitalist society are simply alienated expressions of human activity, based on the separation of subject and object... doer and done." Holloway's "movement of negation" or "anti-power" suggests to Callinicos that "any attempt to understand capitalism as a set of

objective structures implies the abandonment of Marx's original conception of socialism as self emancipation. Accordingly, virtually the entire subsequent Marxist tradition is dismissed as 'scientistic' and authoritarian."

Holloway's project of dissolving the fetishistic structures of alienated human activity and liberating the human qualities that are denied by capitalism is regarded by Callinicos as extremely naive and troubling. For instance, he argues that the work of Holloway and Negri is being used in Argentina as a way of justifying "the idea that the small network of factories abandoned by their bosses and taken over by the workers represents the beginning of a new post-capitalist economy." While it is clear that Holloway realizes that the struggle against alienation must not leave productive processes in the control of capital, his approach suffers from a central contradiction. In the final analysis, Callinicos argues that Holloway's cry that "we do not struggle as working class, we struggle *against* being working class, against being classified" really amounts to attempting to abolish capitalist relations of production by pretending that they aren't there. If we are really determined to abolish capitalist social relations, it makes less sense to dis-identify with working-class struggle than to build more effective forms of working-class struggle and organization. The point here is not to remain paralyzed by the fear that capitalism cannot be defeated but to help to cultivate an alternative source of power in capitalist society — what Callinicos describes as "the extraordinary capacities of democratic self organization possessed by the mass of ordinary people." While one route for this is trade unionism, such self organization against capitalism is not the sole preserve of workers' organization. Other possibilities include anti-capitalist, anti-war and anti-imperialist movements. The key to all attempts to organize social movements, argues Callinicos, is to develop and cultivate forms of organization that unite the working-class at local and national levels in the forms of workers' councils (here Callinicos is thinking about the forms of organization that emerge during mass strikes and popular upheavals of the working class). We have seen such forms of organization during the Russian Revolutions of 1905 and 1917, the Spanish Revolution of 1936, the Hungarian Revolution of 1956, the Iranian Revolution of 1978-79, and the rise of Solidarity in Poland in 1980-81. According to Callinicos:

These workers' councils embody a more advanced form of democracy than is practiced in liberal capitalist societies. They are based on rank and file participation, decentralized decision making where people work and live, and the immediate accountability of delegates to higher bodies to those who elected them. The councils represent an alternative way of running society to the centralized and bureaucratic forms of power on which capitalist domination depends.

The overarching goal is to develop the capacity of social movements to challenge successfully the core apparatuses of capitalist state power, and eventually replace the state altogether. Social movements can serve as points of departure and

shed glimmers of hope for an alternative to the governing force of capital. The challenge for us is to recognize that the United States is as much a product of globalized capital as it is a producer of it and to translate social movements incubated within national borders into a widespread movement against capital. As Michael Löwy points out, in an unprecedented time when capital permeates lines of demarcation and casts its oppressive force through institutions such as the World Bank, International Monetary Fund, the World Trade Organization and the U.S. empire, what is lacking "is a network of political organizations — parties, fronts, movements, that can propose an alternative project inside the perspective of a new society, with neither oppressor nor oppressed." The multiplicity of social movements (albeit heterogeneous in composition and diverse in their beliefs on how to combat capital) do identify the same enemy — the transnational capitalist class. They recognize the broad scope of the current crisis, which encompasses a crisis of overproduction, a crisis of legitimacy of democratic governance, and a crisis of overextension that has dangerously depleted the world's material resources.

To address this point, we focus attention on the important work of James Petras and Henry Veltmeyer (2001) who challenge the egregious inequalities produced by transnational corporations and demand living wages for workers, food production for the urban poor, and land reform for peasants. Such a transformation points towards the importance of 'development from below' which can be achieved through the democratization of the workplace by way of workers' and engineers' councils across international borders, accompanied by a 'development from the inside.' This refers to a major shift of ownership of production, trade and credit in order to expand food production and basic necessities to the poor who inhabit the 'internal market.' In order to bring about socialism — what Petras and Veltmeyer refer to as "an integral change based on transformations in the economic, cultural, and political spheres and based on understanding the multidimensional domination of imperialism" (2001, p. 165) — so-called Third World workers will face multiple obstacles that hinder their path. To face this challenge successfully, Petras and Veltmeyer argue that we must move from a globalized imperial export strategy towards an integrated domestic economy. It is important not to delink from world production on the basis of being self-reliant or because one believes it is possible to achieve 'socialism in one country.' It would be equally misguided, they note, to embrace a market socialism because it is unreasonable to assume that market forces, private ownership, and foreign investment directed by the government can build the basis of socialism. All economic exchanges — external and internal — must be subordinated to a democratic regime based on direct popular representation in territorial and productive units.

We argue that what needs to be emphasized and struggled for is not only the abolition of private property but also a struggle against alienated labor. The key point here is not to get lost in the state (nationalized capital) versus neoliberalism (privatized capital) debate. As the resident editorial board of *News & Letters* have made clear, the

real issue that must not be obscured is the need to abolish the domination of labor by capital. Capital needs to be uprooted through the creation of new human relations that dispense with value production altogether. This does not mean that we stop opposing neoliberalism or privatization. What it does mean is that we should not stop there.

One of the major tasks ahead is the breaking down of the separation between manual and mental labor. This struggle is clearly focused on dismantling the current capitalist mode of production and setting in motion conditions for the creation of freely associated individuals. This means working towards a concept of socialism that will meet the needs of those who struggle within the present crisis of global capitalism. We need here to project a second negativity that moves beyond opposition (that is, opposition to the form of property, i.e., private property) — a second or ‘absolute’ negativity that moves towards the creation of the new. This stipulates not simply embracing new forms of social organization, new social movements, etc., but addressing new theoretical and philosophical questions that are being raised by these new spontaneous movements. We need a new philosophy of revolution, as well as a new pedagogy that emerges out of the dialectic of absolute negation (McLaren, in press).

Over the years a small number of critical educators have made modest efforts to revive the fecundity of Marxist critique in the field of education. In contrast to many liberal educators who see Marxist theory as synonymous with much of the hidebound, box-trained, reductionistic discourse produced by the Second International, we believe that Marxist theory, in all of its heteronomous manifestations and theoretical gestation for well over a century, performs an irreplaceable analytical and political function of positing history as the mediator of human value production. Lamenting the death of Marxism or participating in revolutionary nostalgia will do little more than momentarily stir the ghost of the old bearded devil. Clearly, present day left educationalists need to “suspend the stale, existing (post)ideological coordinates” (Zizek, 2002, p. 195) in order to rethink the state as a terrain of contestation while at the same time developing a multiracial, gender-balanced, anti-imperialist and internationalist popular front. We have to keep our belief that another world is possible. We need to do more than to break with capital or abscond from it; clearly, we need to challenge its rule of value. One necessary (but not sufficient) way to proceed, in our view, is to develop a revolutionary critical pedagogy that will enable multiracial and gendered working-class groups to discover how capital exploits the use-value of their labor-power but also how working class initiative and power can destroy this type of determination and force a recomposition of class relations by directly confronting capital in all of its multifaceted dimensions. This will require critical pedagogy not only to plot the oscillations of the labor/capital dialectic, but also to reconstruct the objective context of class struggle to include school sites. Efforts also must be made to break down capital’s creation of a new species of labor-power through current attempts to corporatise, businessify, and moralise the process of schooling and to resist the

endless subordination of life in the social factory so many students call home (Clever, 2000; see also Rikowski, 2001). Rebuilding the educational left will not be easy, but neither will living under an increasingly militarised capitalist state where labor-power is constantly put to the rack to carry out the will of capital. As McLaren (in press) has noted elsewhere, while critical pedagogy may seem driven by lofty, high-rise aspirations that spike an otherwise desolate landscape of despair, it anchors our hope in the dreams of the present. Here the social revolution is not reborn in the aerosal insights of anti-foundationalist scholars which only increases ballast for the reigning liberal consensus, but emerges from the everyday struggle on the part of the oppressed to release themselves from the burdens of political détente and democratic disengagement. It is anchored, in other words, in class struggle (McLaren, in press).

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### Critical Pedagogy and the Civil Societarian Left

We are living at a time in which civil society is being colonized by the bilious sentiments and hawkish political propaganda of right-wing media pundits, many of whom advocate for pre-emptive or 'preventative' war against any country that impedes the continuation of the "American Way of Life" and who regularly denounce anti-war activists as traitors. While the media are often thought to play a key role in defending democracy, it is clear that today the U.S. corporate media largely serve the interests of the ruling elite, crippling what remains of civil society in the process. While Fox Television has been identified in the mainstream press as an 'infotainment' vehicle for promoting and defending the agenda of the reactionary wing of the Republican Party, considerably less controversy has been stirred by the role of Clear Channel Communications, the nation's largest radio chain of about 1, 200 radio stations (50 percent of the U.S. total). In one of his first acts as President, Bush *hijo* appointed the son of Secretary of State Colin Powell, Michael Powell, as chairman of the Federal Communications Commission. Powell controls the agency that regulates the domestic news and entertainment networks at a time when the telecommunications industry is in the throes of unimpeded deregulation following the Telecommunications Act of 1996. And while Powell appears concerned about the possibility of anti-trust violations in the radio industry, the most concentrated ownership of all broadcast media, Clear Channel's acquisitions, led by a former Bush *hijo* business associate, Lowry Mays, continues unabated, despite current congressional investigations of its business practices. According to Stephen Marshall, since 9.11 Clear Channel "has been the most sycophantic and pro-militarist Big Media corporation" (2003, p. 24). All of its radio stations were issued songs to be blacklisted including "Peace Train" by Cat Stevens and "Imagine" by John Lennon. During the invasion of Iraq, Clear Channel began sponsoring pro-war, "support our troops" rallies across the United States which they referred to as "Rally for America" — not so surprising, perhaps, for a corporation that

supports the toxic hyperbole of Rush Limbaugh, but disturbing nonetheless for peace activists and critics of the Bush administration. Marshall reports: "Using its 1,200 stations, Clear Channel pummeled listeners with a mind-numbing stream of uncritical 'patriotism' (2003, p. 24). Marshall further warns that "with Michael Powell, George W. Bush and Clear Channel, the lines between political, military and corporate media power have become blurred into one authoritarian impulse" (2003, p. 24). Of course, other television and radio stations are following this lead. We wish to offer one case in point.

Defending its decision to give a weekly television program to Michael Savage, a controversial radio talk show host who specializes in racist, misogynistic, and homophobic diatribes against various groups, the MSNBC cable network (co-owned by Microsoft and General Electric/NBC) called hiring Savage — whose show premiered on Saturday, March 8, 2003 — "a legitimate attempt to expand the marketplace of ideas" (FAIR, 2003). Among other supreme acts of hatred, Savage has dismissed child victims of gunfire as "ghetto slime," referred to non-white countries as "turd" world nations, and called homosexuality a "perversion" while at the same time violently asserting that Latinos "breed like rabbits." And while MSNBC's formal report declared that its decision to hire Savage "underscores its commitment to ensuring that its perspective programming promotes no one single point of view" (see FAIR, 2003), the network chose to announce that a program hosted by liberal anti-war advocate, Phil Donahue, had been cancelled, even though the show received the highest ratings on the network.

A study commissioned by NBC described Donahue as "a tired, left-wing liberal out of touch with the current marketplace" and as such, he would be a "difficult public face for NBC in a time of war" (FAIR, 2003). The report stressed a fear that Donahue's show could become "a home for the liberal antiwar agenda at the same time as our competitors are waving the flag at every opportunity" (FAIR, 2003).

Savage has publicly asked the government to arrest the leaders of the anti-war movement in the case of war. And he has threatened to use his influence to put those who have complained about his upcoming show in jail. He has said that he would make an effort to have his enemies investigated and that he would use to his advantage the fact that the U.S. has a Republican Attorney General.

As critical educators, we condemn the double standards of the U.S. media, particularly in the case of MSNBC's hiring of Savage. We do not believe in a First Amendment (via the U.S. Constitution) absolutist position — a doctrine of pure, indiscriminate tolerance — that advocates the *de jure* right to express any opinion in public as an abstract and indiscriminate defense of the right of any citizen to express any opinion in any way, regardless of its content or meaning or repressive societal impact. Not only must there be a consideration of content, there must also be standards of rationality (see Reitz, forthcoming). To advocate an "anything goes" approach rewrites anti-racism and anti-sexism as bigotry. We all participate in discussions as rational beings, and this obliges us to know the grounds of our



convictions. Any authentic political culture must presuppose an educational and cultural context that does not try to wrest control of ideas but that honors opposing positions as a precondition for the pursuit of truth (see Reitz, 2003). In the case of Michael Savage, his *de jure* right to express his hate speech is contradicted by the *de facto* condition within the U.S. that left opinions challenging the ruling class are suppressed within the oligopolistic corporate media that “dramatize consciousness” (in the sense used by Raymond Williams) through sanitized abstractions and the management of meaning. Tolerance must become a liberating force, and not a repressive force, and as such pure tolerance of ‘free’ speech must be challenged when it impedes the chances of creating a context in which people can live free of fear and violence. As Charles Reitz (2003) notes, drawing upon Herbert Marcuse, the First Amendment cannot be used to protect the speech and action of those intent upon destroying the right to liberty and civil rights of others. It appears that within the dominant logic of the corporate media and government institutions that support the media, prohibiting the hate speech of Michael Savage is a threat to democracy whereas the crimes of the right — imperialist attacks on sovereign nations, the exploitation of human labor, the support and training of terrorist groups in the name of U.S. interests — are tolerated in the name of democracy.

This brings us to a crucial question: How can critical educators reinvigorate the civil societarian left precisely at a time when we are creating a world where elites are less accountable to civil society than ever before? Takis Fotopoulos writes: “This new world order implies that, at the center, the model that has the greatest chance of being universalized is the Anglo-Saxon model of massive low-paid employment and underemployment, with poverty alleviated by the few security nets that the ‘40 per cent society’ will be willing to finance, in exchange for a tolerable degree of social peace which will be mainly secured by the vast security apparatuses being created by the public and private sectors” (1997, p. 358).

If we persist with an internationalized market economy, the introduction of effective social controls to protect the underclass and the marginalized will create overwhelming comparative disadvantages for the nation state or the economic bloc that seeks to institute such policies. Additionally, if we accept that there is no alternative to working within the institutionalized market economy, then the neoliberal policies of the ruling class make sense to the elites and under these circumstances there is a logic in rejecting the imposition of social controls by the civil societarian left. The only answer is one from without — we need to make our choice between socialism or barbarism. If we choose the later, then we truly have no alternative than to sleep in the neoliberal bed that we have made for ourselves. If we choose socialism, then we must never abandon a vision for the radical transformation of society. Against the Bush regime that reduces politics to utility and instrumentality, we argue for a politics of liberation; against the Bush regime that stipulates that politics can never transcend domination, we argue for a politics of hope; against the Bush regime that locates the popular masses as disaggregated,

inert matter, we view them as disciplined, purposive, and self-conscious subjects of history engaged in self-determination and self-becoming; against the Bush regime that subordinates the popular masses to the ideas of the knowledge aristocracy of the rich, we view knowledge and the knowing subject as one, where the particular finds a pathway to the universal. As critical revolutionary educators who seek to transform the existing capitalist state into a socialist alternative, we can begin by revisiting our notions of democracy, by extending the traditional public realm to include the economic, ecological, and social realms as well as the political realm (Fotopoulos, 1997). Democracy here is seen as a process of self-institution, where there exists no divinely or objectively defined code of human conduct.

A number of positions illuminated by Takis Fotopoulos (1997) on the creation of a revolutionary transition to socialism proves exceedingly instructive here for reconquering the notion of democracy and providing a politically robust concept of social justice. According to Fotopoulos, we need to develop a deeper conception of political democracy or direct democracy that includes economic, political, cultural, social, and ecological democracy. This falls under the rubric of what Fotopoulos calls 'confederal inclusive democracy' and refers to the equal sharing of power among all citizens through the self-institution of society. This means that democracy is grounded in the choice of its citizens, mandating the dismantling of oligarchic institutionalized processes and eliminating institutionalized political structures embodying unequal power relations. Economic democracy must be institutionalized by giving over macro economic decisions to the citizen body whereas micro decisions at the workplace and household are taken over by the individual production or consumption unit. Here, the focus is on the needs of the community and not growth per se; where satisfaction of community needs does not depend upon the continuous expansion of production to cover the needs that the market creates.

Within this model of deep democracy, unequal economic power relations are structurally eliminated by assuring that the means of production and distribution are collectively owned and controlled by a multiracial citizen body. Democracy in the social realm refers to an equality of social relations in the household and in the social realm in general such as the workplace and the educational establishment. Cultural democracy means the creation of community controlled art and media activity. Democracy must also be ecologically sensitive, developing an expanded level of ecological consciousness which will work to create the institutional preconditions for radical change with respect to society's attitude toward nature, making it less instrumentalist and less likely to see nature as an instrument for growth within a practice of power creation. In sum, Fotopoulos's notion of inclusive democracy implies a new conception of political citizenship and the return to the classical concept of direct democracy; where economic citizenship involves new economic structures of 'demotic' ownership and control of economic resources; where social citizenship involves self-management structures at the

workplace, democracy in the household and new welfare structures where all basic needs are democratically determined and served by community resources; where cultural citizenship allows every community worker to develop their intellectual and cultural potential. Here Fotopoulous combines democratic and anarchist traditions with radical Green, feminist, and liberation traditions. In our view, such a reworked notion of citizenship is compatible with building independent working-class political action involving teachers, students, families, and other cultural workers. As the basis of the self-organization of the working class, this transitional stage would include the confederation of workplace assemblies as part of a broader democratic movement directly linked to communities.

For critical revolutionary educators, the struggle for inclusive democracy stipulates working with students to build revolutionary consciousness and collective action as a means whereby we can resist our insinuation in the ugly truth of capital: that it is designed to separate the laborer from her labor. The fetishization and unequal distribution of life chances produced by capitalist social relations of production must be challenged by dialectical praxis. The center-left liberal covenant which enshrines resource distribution as the site of resistance, and seeks to calibrate social transformation according to how easily it can be integrated into a more 'compassionate' capitalism with a human face, must be directly challenged by a coherent philosophy of praxis that directly confronts globalized capital with a socialist alternative. This challenge can be mounted most productively within the framework of an intergenerational, multiracial, gender-balanced, transnational and anti-imperialist social movement. This will not be an easy task, especially at this current moment of political despair that has infected much of the educational left. It will require radical hope.

Hope is the freeing of possibility, with possibility serving as the dialectical partner of necessity. When hope is strong enough, it can bend the future backward towards the past, where, trapped between the two, the present can escape its orbit of inevitability and break the force of history's hubris, so that what is struggled for no longer remains an inert idea frozen in the hinterland of 'what is,' but becomes a reality carved out of 'what could be.' Hope is the oxygen of dreams, and provides the stamina for revolutionary struggle. Revolutionary dreams are those in which the dreamers dream until there are no longer the dreamers but only the dreams themselves, shaping our everyday lives from moment to moment, and opening the causeways of possibility where abilities are nourished not for the reaping of profit, but for the satisfaction of needs and the full development of human potential.

The days ahead will witness furious attempts by the petrolarchs of the Bush administration to justify its political and military occupation. They will say that they are making the world safe for freedom and democracy and providing opportunities for other countries to benefit from "the American Way of Life." This will be accompanied by attempts by the Bush administration to get a whole new generation of nuclear weapons into production in order to meet its expanded

“national security objectives.” And Bush’s neocon advisors will have most of the evangelical Christian communities behind these initiatives. It looks as though the American public will be left out of the debate. But why should Bush care about what the American people think? After all, they didn’t vote for him.

Currently the most important front against capitalism is stopping the U.S. from invading more countries, since the administration’s National Security Strategy of the United States of America establishes an irrevocable connection between U.S. global domination and the neoliberal Washington consensus (Callinicos, 2003a). Callinicos warns that

If the U.S. is victorious in Iraq, then it is more likely to go on the offensive in Latin America, the zone in the south where resistance to neoliberalism is most advanced. Even if the B-52s and Special Forces aren’t directly deployed against Brazilian landless laborers or Argentinian piqueteros, victory for U.S. military power will weaken the struggle against poverty and hunger everywhere.

Commenting on the disturbing growth of imperialistic sentiment among the American people (with specific historical reference to Mexico), John Dewey (1927) wrote that “it is only too easy to create a situation after which the cry ‘stand by the President,’ and then ‘stand by the country,’ is overwhelming. . . . Public sentiment, to be permanently effective, must do more than protest. It must find expression in a permanent change of our habits.” Addressing U.S. imperialism since September 11, 2002, Gilbert Aschar (2002, p. 81) portentously warns: “The real, inescapable question is this: is the U.S. population really ready to endure even more September 11s, as the unavoidable price of a global hegemony that only benefits its ruling class?” Perhaps it’s time to give consideration to comments coming not from the theater of war but the theater of playwrights and actors. Recently, Peter Ustinov observed: “Terrorism is the war of the poor, and war is the terrorism of the rich” (cited in Berger, 2003, p. 34).

We reject the notion, advanced by Foucault and other post-structuralists, that posing a vision of the future only reinforces the tyranny of the present. Similarly, we reject Derrida’s insistence that the fetish is not opposable. It is self-defeating in our view to embrace the advice of many postmodernists: that all we can do is engage in an endless critique of the forms of thought defined by commodity fetishism. In contrast, we believe that we can do more than enjoy our symptoms in a world where the subjects of capitalism have been endlessly disappearing into the vortex of history (see Hudis, 2003). As Peter Hudis (2003) notes, such defeatism arises as long as critics believe that value production within capitalism is natural and immutable. We believe that the value form of mediation within capitalism is permeable and that another world outside of the social universe of capital is possible. We are also committed to the idea that revolutionary critical pedagogy can play a role in its realization.

The voices and actions of critical educators will become more crucial in the days ahead. Whatever organizational forms their struggles take, they will need to

address a global audience who share the radical hope that a new world outside the social universe of capital is possible.

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