

## Class Consciousness and Teacher Education: The Socialist Challenge and The Historical Context

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This essay traces the emergence and decline of class-consciousness within the U.S. as it coincides with the historical developmental of capitalism. I begin this essay in the third period of capital's historical development. Robinson (2008) characterizes this period of the development of global capitalism—the third period—as beginning in the 1870s and marked by the corporate form of capitalism and class struggle, and the subsequent emergence of widespread class-consciousness. As a result, this period is also the beginning of large-scale, compulsory common schooling, which the capitalist class eventually came to understand to be a necessary cost of production needed for social control.

Marx's historical work on the development of capital is crucial here as it laid the foundation for a tradition of revolutionary class-consciousness from Lenin, to Vygotsky, to Freire, respectively. Drawing on these insights regarding class-consciousness, I outline the debilitating tendencies of a Weberian conception of social class in U.S. teacher education programs and beyond situated in the current context of neo-colonialism/neoliberalism, that is, the most current period of global capitalism.

In the final section I expand on the argument for a revolutionary education, not as a prescription, but as a place of departure for the vast diversity of global contexts within the ever-expanding, ever-deepening social universe of capital. Within this context I argue that Joe L. Kincheloe's idea of the epistemological bazaar and his postformal approach to educational psychology are particularly relevant (Malott, 2011a). That is, because the challenges for creating a 21<sup>st</sup> century global socialism are so intense and immense (see for example, Callinicos, 2010), such a multifaceted, complex approach is needed where anarchists, feminists, critical race theorists, critical postmodernists, animal rights activists, Earth First! eco-pedagogues, critical indigenous sovereignists, orthodox Marxists, neo-Marxists, humanist Marxists, and others, are able to build a genuine challenge and alternative vision and practice to global capitalism. However, this is much easier said than done as many of our differences are fundamental, making it difficult, at times, to find common ground (Malott, 2012). Through this struggle and movement, revolutionary change agents are able to develop, in radical communion and solidarity with others, the ontologically necessary feeling of *relevancy*, having become a genuine contributor/participant/transformer: against the property relations of capitalist production that negate humanity's *species being* (see Kelsh and Hill, 2006, for a discussion on the central significance of property relations within Marx's theory of and against class); against the white-



stream settler-state (Grande, 2004); against the monoculturalism of capitalist society (Darder, 2011); these, as I argue below, are all parts of the larger, totalizing, social universe of capital. Again, this Hegelian Marxist position places me in sharp contrast with many people on the Left I consider comrades. The solution to this dilemma is still very much a hotly contested debate.

### **The Second Industrial Revolution, the Creation of a Working-Class, and the Emergence of Class Consciousness**

As suggested above, the *period* of the historical development of capitalism that has had the largest influence on the contemporary era began during the second industrial revolution around 1870. Before this period, in the U.S., the country (acquired from many indigenous Native American nations through unintentional genocide from infectious diseases, intentional genocide through military conquest including the slaughtering of non-combatants such as women, the elderly and children, and biological warfare, and from deceptive legal maneuvers and the breaking of treaty agreements) was largely rural, and land, at least within the white-male settler-state, was relatively evenly distributed. Wealth, as a result, was also not so dramatically unequal (unless you were an enslaved African, indentured European servant, or a member of a displaced Native American nation). However, the ruling class, and therefore the country, *was* capitalist and thus governed by a highly educated, elite ruling class paternalistically overseeing the largely uneducated population.

What led to this period of U.S. capitalist expansion and the co-existence of extreme wealth and poverty—a period American author Mark Twain coined the *Gilded Age* because it looked beautiful from the outside, but was in fact rotten and diseased at the core—is a mix of equally important factors: immigration, urbanization, Westward Expansion, mass schooling, and the advances in science that made the technological innovations a reality. It was during this period that the labor movement emerged and the first real crisis or breakdown in the cycle of capitalist production, called a depression, transpired. At the heart of what influenced the labor movement and caused the depression—the tendency of capital toward over-accumulation—is the same force that has led to the most recent crisis of capital and the flowering of an international anti-capitalist movement (*i.e.*, Occupy Wall Street, the Arab Spring, the Party for Socialism and Liberation USA, the Socialist Workers Party England, the Communist Party of Greece, the Chavistas of Venezuela, the Zapatistas of Mexico, etc.).

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As we enter our discussion of the second industrial revolution, let us pause for a moment and briefly explain that our discussion here is based on Marx's recognition that the primary difference between the European feudalist system that was *torn asunder* by capitalism is that feudalism is an economic system based on simple reproduction whereas capitalism is a model based on perpetual growth and expansion—two to three percent annual growth for a capitalist economy to be considered *healthy*, somewhat of an oxymoron. From this early history, as Marx and Engels (1848/1972) remind us, the capitalist class has positioned itself as doing workers a favor by liberating them from feudalism. This paternalism continues—a paternalism where the capitalist class advances a discourse that portrays labor as dependent on the generosity and assumed superior intelligence of the bosses to create and provide jobs. It is, therefore, not surprising that the dominant version of history fails to give much importance to the fact that

under feudalism the means of production, or the land, is not fully owned by the feudal lords rendering sizable regions in the hands of the peasant class. Under capitalism, these commons, or common lands that peasants supplemented their incomes with under feudalism, are violently abolished and turned into private property controlled by the capitalist class transforming, with deadly force, the peasant classes into a working class.

Challenging the dominant view that portrays the emergence of capitalism as a favor that raised the standard of living for all of humanity, the transition from feudalism, from a Marxist perspective, represents “one of capitalism’s first major conflicts with the existing feudal system” driven by “the quest for labor” (Klobby, 1999, p. 13). Making this point in the opening pages of *The Manifesto of the Communist Party* (1848/1978) Marx and Engels note that “the modern bourgeois society that has sprouted from the ruins of feudal society has not done away with class antagonisms. It has but established new classes, new conditions of oppression, new forms of struggle in place of the old ones” (p. 474).

Laying these foundations for the capitalist property relations of production, a series of *enclosure acts*, alluded to above, were passed throughout Europe, making it nearly impossible for people to remain on their ancestral lands. That is, disconnected from the land, and therefore with nothing left to survive on but one’s ability to labor, the peasant is forced to relocate to urban areas to sell his or her labor power for a wage far less than the value it produces. No longer in control of one’s own creative capacities, the alienated wage slave is born, paving the way for the creation of large reserve pools of labor needed to create competition between workers for a scarcity of jobs as a way to keep wages low and returns or profits high. For example, in *People’s History of the United States* Howard Zinn (2003) notes that “between 1860 and 1910, New York grew from 850,000 to 4 million, Chicago from 110,000 to 2 million, Philadelphia from 650,000 to 1 ½ million” (p. 254). Again, the majority of this population explosion was the result of European peasants seeking a means of survival after being disconnected from their traditional European land-bases.

While capitalism is not possible without a large pool of potential workers with no land and thus no means to survive other than their ability to labor, the large-scale manufacturing of the second industrial revolution would not have been possible without particular advances in science and the necessary engineers to put them to work for industry. Summarizing this period of rapid expansion, Foner (2009) notes:

Between the end of the Civil War and the early twentieth century, the US underwent one of the most rapid economic shifts any country has ever experienced. There were numerous causes...Abundant natural resources, a growing supply of labor, an expanding market for manufactured goods, and the availability of capital for investment. In addition, the federal government actively promoted industrial and agricultural development. It granted land to railroad companies to encourage construction, and used the army to remove Indians from Western lands desired by farmers and mining companies. (pp. 557-558)

At the center of this innovation is arguably the Bessemer process of turning iron into steel, reducing what could be accomplished in an entire day to fifteen minutes (Zinn, 2003). Summarizing this history, which is the history of how steel and oil propelled machines to new heights, Zinn (2003) comments:

Between the Civil War and 1900, steam and electricity replaced human muscle, iron replaced wood, and steel replaced iron...Machines could now drive steel tools. Oil could lubricate machines, light homes, streets and factories. People and goods could move by railroad, propelled by steam along steel rails...Machines changed farming. Before the Civil War it took 61 hours of labor to produce an acre of wheat. By 1900, it took 3 hours...in 1860, 14 million tons of coal were mined; by 1884 it was 100 million tons. More coal meant more steel...(p. 253)

Of particular importance during this time, as alluded to above by Zinn, was the role of not only the increased availability of steel, but the role the railroad played in bringing raw materials, including food, from around the U.S.—the Great Plains and the mid-west in particular—to Eastern centers of manufacturing. The newly created working class, manifested as a population explosion that moved to North American urban centers from Europe, needed new food sources to fuel its labor power that was being exploited in the burgeoning manufacturing centers. It is, therefore, not surprising that investment capitalists moved quickly to profit from this expanding market.

However, this market would not have been as ripe or open as a source of fortune generation without the federal government intervening in the economy on behalf of capitalists. That is, in the 1860s, the federal U.S. government gave millions of acres of stolen Native American land to Union Pacific and Central Pacific railroad companies. The Central Pacific Railroad, for example, “spent \$200,000 in Washington on bribes to get 9 million acres of free land and \$24 million in bonds, and paid \$79 million, an overpayment of \$36 million, to a construction company which really was its own” (Zinn, 2003, p. 254). At the same time, the Union Pacific got:

12 million acres of free land and 27 million in government bonds. It created the Credit Mobilier company and gave them \$94 million for construction when the actual cost was \$44 million. Shares were sold cheaply to Congressmen to prevent investigation. This was at the suggestion of Massachusetts Congressman Oaks Ames, a shovel manufacturer and director of Credit Mobilier, who said: ‘There is no difficulty in getting men to look after their own property.’ (Zinn, 2003, p. 254)

So much for the common myth that the U.S. Empire was built from the honest, hard work, and ingenuity of the Master Race *free* to excel in a *free* market. Not only were millions of dollars and acres of land given to two major corporations, the cheap labor that built the railroad primarily came from Irish and Chinese immigrants.

One of these profiteers, for example, “Cyrus Holliday, founder of Topeka, Kansas, pushed his Atchison, Topeka & Santa Fe line west to Dodge City. Holliday was determined to tap the growing cattle market by running his railroad nearer to the cattle country of Texas, Colorado, and New Mexico” (Smith, 1984, pp. 97). Consequently, when Kansas Pacific began shipping cattle out of Abilene, Kansas, in 1867 they started with twenty carloads of longhorn the first year. A year later that number rose to 1,000 carloads, and by 1871, it had exploded to 700,000 carloads (Smith, 1984). The working-class tradition of Philly Cheese Steaks in Philadelphia, PA, can be traced back to this time. Of course, the romanticized American hero, the *cowboys*, contrary to Hollywood characterizations, were not the already-Americanized, ruling-class-supporting, white males, toiling in the interests of their own self-direction, but rather

tended to come from the most oppressed segments of society, from Irish immigrants, escaped and recently freed African Americans, and Mexican nationals displaced from their homelands as a result of the Mexican-American War, and were therefore low-paid wage earners who, collectively, have played a counter-hegemonic role in the history of labor activism.

Early in this process of industrialization and westward expansion, the federal government invested in universities to fulfill the purpose of making such advancements in the technologies of economic innovation and capitalist expansion (i.e., the railroad). Making this point in their introductory text, *American Education: A History, Urban and Wagoner* (2009) note that the “largest universities...were translating [the] latest scientific advances into technology that would support America’s new industries” (pp. 274). For example, the Morrill Acts of 1862 and 1890 granted states land for agricultural, mechanical, and military colleges. Similarly, the Hatch Act of 1887 funded agricultural experiment stations for research on farming, animal diseases, and so on (Foner, 2009; Smith, 1984; Urban & Wagoner, 2009). New Mexico State University in Las Cruces, NM is one of the institutions playing a significant role in both agricultural science and military science. So committed to policing the official pro-capitalist purpose of the university, the institution has developed an “NMSU Position on Animals in Research and Emergency Preparedness Plan.” The following excerpt is telling:

An important part of the mission of a land-grant university is to conduct appropriate research to optimize the use of animals in the service of man...NMSU defends the right of free speech...regarding the use of animals in research...however, coercion, intimidation, and unlawful acts will not be allowed...Any organization using animals should be prepared for various protests...from animal rights’ groups...Appropriate steps will be taken to limit disruption of NMSU activities.

What this policy alludes to is the interconnectedness between the technologies of capitalist expansion (i.e. military science and agricultural science and engineering) and the technologies of social control (i.e. controlling the ideas of labor through ideological indoctrination as well as physically censoring ideas through policy and police). Economically integrating the North American continent from East to West required not only the methods of social control and other university-inspired technologies and a capitalist worldview informing the railroad and the human labor-power to make it a reality, but also the subjugation of the Plains Indians. Making this connection in *The Rise of Industrial America: A People’s History of the Post-Reconstruction Era*, Page Smith (1984) notes that:

The principle obstacle to peace on the Great Plains was the issue of the railroads bi- and trisecting their hunting grounds. On this issue...there could be no compromise. The rails must run their irresistible way through the heart of Indian country. (p. 89)

Consequently, the discourse of Manifest Destiny, that is, the idea that it was God’s will to spread European civilization (i.e., capitalism) from the East coast to the West coast of the U.S. and across the world, became a fundamentally important tool in convincing labor to willingly do the military work of westward expansion. That, and the promise of free land denationalized from Native Americans.

During this period of rapid growth in industrial output, there were virtually no regulations restricting capital’s ability to extract surplus value from human labor power. As a result, “by

1890 the richest 1% of Americans received the same total *wealth* as the bottom half of the population and owned more property than the remaining 99%” (Foner, 2009, pp. 567). During this time, the life of the working class consisted of long hours, low wages, no pensions, no compensation for injuries, and the most dangerous working conditions in the industrial world with more than 35,000 deaths a year between 1880 and 1900 (Foner, 2009). In this context, the labor movement was born, first emerging in Philadelphia. The membership of the Knights of Labor exploded during this time. However, this more mainstream or *nativist* (i.e., U.S. born whites) branch of labor had a reputation for being anti-Chinese (Urban & Wagoner, 2009) as they had not been able to overcome their own supremacist indoctrination as white, male Americans. The Industrial Workers of the World, on the other hand, represented a more counter-hegemonic, and thus anti-racist, branch of the revolutionary labor movement (discussed below). What is particularly striking about this early era of labor organizing is its vast militancy and revolutionary fervor. Placing this militancy in a larger context, Marx highlights the inherent savageness of competitive, market capitalism.

Dramatizing the barbarism of capital’s insatiable quest for profit and the speed at which the first and second industrial revolutions subsumed the social universe within which they emerged (i.e., the accumulation of surplus value or unpaid labor hours) in *Volume 1 of Capital: A Critical Analysis of Capitalist Production*, edited by Frederick Engels, Karl Marx (1867/1967), in chapter four, focuses on the length of the working day, which he divides into two components: “...the working-time required for the reproduction of the labor-power of the laborer himself” (p. 232) and the amount dedicated to the capitalist class’s accumulation of surplus labor. Marx (1867/1967) hones in on the struggle between the capitalist class and the working class’s determination for the length of the working day because at the dawn of the second industrial revolution “the capitalist has bought the labor-power at its day-rate” (p. 232). This is significant because when the laborer sells his commodity (i.e., his labor power) on the market to a capitalist, he forfeits control of this commodity (i.e., himself) during the time purchased. If the working day is three times longer than the amount of time needed to reproduce himself, then he or she can protest that they are being robbed of two thirds of the value of their commodity, their own capacity to labor (Marx, 1867/1967).

Because the capitalist is driven by the need to perpetually expand the rate of profit obtained from the purchasing of commodities such as labor power, it is in capital’s interest to extend the length of the work day as long as possible. Asking, “what is the length of time during which capital may consume the labor-power whose daily value it buys?” Marx (1867/1967) observes that, “it has been seen that to these questions capital replies: the working-day contains the full 24 hours” (p. 264). As a result, the laborer is “nothing else, his whole life, than labor-power,” and all his or her time is, therefore, dedicated to “the self-expansion of capital” leaving no time for “education, intellectual development, for the fulfilling of social functions and for social intercourse, for the free-play of his bodily and mental activity” (Marx, 1867/1967, p. 264) and even for the necessary time to rest and rejuvenate the body for another day’s work. The historical development of capitalism, especially during the second industrial revolution, has proven unequivocally, that “capital cares nothing for the length of life of labor-power” (Marx, 1867/1967, p. 265). Communicating this destructive impulse of capital, Marx (1867/1967) summarizes:

The capitalistic mode of production (essentially the production of surplus value, the absorption of surplus-labor), produces thus, with the extension of the working day, not only the deterioration of human labor-power by robbing it of its normal, moral and physical, conditions of development and function. It produces also the premature exhaustion and death of this labor-power itself. It extends the laborer's time of production during a given period by shortening his actual life-time. (p. 265)

Marx (1867/1967) reminds us that this impulse toward barbarism has nothing to do with the specific personalities of market profiteers/capitalists. That is, it is not a matter of the “good or ill will of individual capitalists,” but rather, “free competition brings out the inherent laws of capitalist production” (p. 270) trumping any generous impulse a human capitalist or CEO may or may not possess. What determines then the length of the normal working day or the rate of exploitation in an hourly wage system is “the result of centuries of struggle between capitalist and laborer” (Marx, 1867/1967, p. 270). The key factor determining the course of history in capitalism is, therefore, class-consciousness.

It was within this context of industrial capitalist barbarism and working-class awakening that Horace Mann set out on a Protestant-inspired crusade for a system of Common Schooling. Mann, working as the Secretary of the Massachusetts Board of Education in the 1840s, saw educating the working class as an effective way to discipline laborers and prevent rebellions and other “crimes.” Mann, in fact, wrote reports outlining the merits of educated versus uneducated workers. His primary audience was industrial capitalists from whom he had to gain skeptical approval. Essentially, Mann sought to convince them that a basic or common education was a necessary cost of production more effective in controlling labor than police, that is, physical force. In school, workers would learn “respect for property, for the work ethic, and for the wisdom of the property owners” (Urban & Wagoner, 2009, p. 121). Because of the need to discipline labor and with the emergence of science as a theory of everything, the managers of industry and academics sought to develop a human science as effective at predicting and controlling human behavior as biology and physics were at conquering the natural world. From here, it makes sense why teachers' colleges would open to ensure future teachers were sufficiently trained with the most up-to-date techniques of social control and behaviorist pedagogy. Zinn (2003) accurately describes teachers, managers, engineers, and other constructors and regulators of the system as “loyal buffers against trouble” (p. 263).

These college-educated *middle buffers against trouble* have been vital to the perpetuation of the ruling class because of the cyclical nature of crisis at the heart of the internal laws of accumulation. That is, because capitalism is driven by an insatiable appetite for wealth, the capitalist manager or corporate CEO is forever searching for new ways to reduce the cost of production. The variable cost of labor historically has been one of the areas from which capitalists have sought to cut costs or extract more wealth. As a result, there is a built-in drive that pushes wages down, deeper and deeper, until labor is no longer able to purchase the commodities flooding the market place. At the point when the potential value embedded within commodities is not realized, the cycle of capitalist production breaks down and the system goes into crisis. It is at these moments of increased suffering and hardships within labor that the potential for revolutionary change heightens. Often, it is technological innovation that leads to major reductions in the cost of labor by eliminating the cost of labor.

For example, one of the factors leading to the first major crisis in the globalizing

capitalist system of production in the 1890s was the mechanization of harvesting grains, mentioned above. While it took over sixty-one man-hours to produce an acre of wheat, with machines that number was slashed to fewer than three hours. Between 1870 and 1890 the number of farms in the U.S. increased 80% due to the Homestead Act of 1862, which essentially gave millions and millions of acres of Native American lands to European immigrants disconnected from their European ancestral lands as a result of the transition from feudalism to capitalism. However, while mechanization doubled the output of grains, the population grew by only three quarters. Coupled with international competition, grain prices dropped to half the cost of production, leaving thousands of small farmers bankrupt, thus contributing to the emerging crisis and additionally paving the way for the corporate farm (Foner, 2003; Smith, 1984).

Against this context of urban squalor and suffering and rural poverty and displacement, a strong tradition of revolutionary fervor and a spirit of transformation emerged that rocked the capitalist class to their core. The Industrial Workers of the World (IWW) rose and nearly overturned the negative relationship between labor and capital at the heart of capitalism. We now know that the B of I (later changed to the FBI) waged a secret illegal war against the IWW, arresting leaders on trumped-up charges and costing the organization hundreds of thousands of dollars in legal fees, which effectively bankrupted the IWW. The federal government went as far as bombing buildings and leaving anarchist literature at the crime scene to damage the favorable reputation of the revolutionary-oriented industrial labor movement in the public's eye.

During this era, the Haymarket Massacre happened. That is, on May 4, 1886, the Chicago Police Department opened fire on a crowd of anarchist and socialist labor activist revolutionaries rallying in support of striking union members. Apparently, what started the bloodbath was that an unknown protestor lobbed a dynamite bomb at the police, eight of whom died in the ensuing gunfight, mostly from friendly fire. Consequently, five activists were arrested, charged, and convicted of murder, and were subsequently executed. What is particularly striking about this incident is that the defendants were executed despite the fact that the prosecutor acknowledged that there was no evidence connecting the bombing to any of the defendants. These events, in part, are what have inspired the international day of observing the lives and sacrifices of labor, that is, May Day.

This state-inflicted violence and the tendency to persecute labor only intensified after the first major depression of 1893. During WWI, for example, the creation of a new propaganda machine legitimized this repression, designed as it was to demonize any opposition to capitalism and war as un-American. Supporting this move against labor, the U.S. federal government passed the Alien and Sedition Acts in 1798. The Alien Act was designed to expel foreign radicals from the country while the Sedition Act made illegal "false, scandalous, or malicious" writing against the U.S. (Foner, 2009; Smith, 1984; Zinn, 2003). Drawing on the Sedition Act during WWI, the anti-war movement, which was intimately connected to the labor movement, was criminalized. That is, the IWW and other radical, left revolutionaries had spread the analysis that soldiers were doing nothing more than performing a job designed to benefit the capitalist class at the expense of labor, both in terms of all possible outcomes of the said conflict and in terms of the loss of life or the casualties of war. Protesting war was, therefore, part and parcel of challenging the domination and exploitation of the ruling class. In 1918, for example, socialist presidential candidate and labor leader, Eugene Debs, was arrested and imprisoned for ten years for an anti-war speech in which he challenged the working-class to engage in revolutionary

struggle against capitalism and for socialism. This example, to some, may seem like an extreme and rare case, in November of 2011, through the National Defense Authorization Act, which has a budget of more than \$662 billion, which overwhelmingly passed legislation bypassing due process for U.S. citizens suspected of being enemy combatants or un-American. Bill Van Auken (2011), writing for the *International Committee of the Fourth International*, connects this recent legislation to the example of Eugene Debs:

In 1918, the socialist leader Eugene V. Debs was thrown into prison under the draconian Sedition Act for delivering a speech opposing the First World War and calling for the working class to take power and carry out the socialist transformation of society. Even then, however, the government had to try him before a jury. The legislation passed Thursday renders such democratic niceties superfluous. Now such an offense would be punishable by disappearance into a military-run concentration camp. (para. 12)

This recent increase in state-sanctioned repression can best be understood within the context of growing poverty and an international crisis in the global capitalist system (see below). After the first crisis (i.e., depression) of 1893, which was partially overcome by the U.S.'s small role in WWI, but was never really resolved, was more or less displaced until the even greater crisis of the Great Depression of 1929. By then, government economic intervention on capital's behalf became more widespread. During the New Deal era, the government put unemployed surplus labor to work building roads, bridges, and schools, that is, the infrastructure that capital needed to expand. While these efforts were able to partially help capital recover to continue exploiting human labor power through accumulation, they were not sufficient by themselves. That is, the shift into a full-scale war-economy during WWII also allowed the American capitalist to survive to exploit and plunder another day. This shift subsidized industrial production, transforming manufacturing from civilian consumer items to death and large-scale warfare machinery. For the capitalist, it is not the commodity's content that matters; it is the rate of return at the end of the business cycle, and death has proven to be one of the most stable and lucrative investments. After all, capitalism, as an ever-expanding system, is driven by an internal need for new markets and, thus, deadly competition (i.e., war) for access to profitable markets and resources.

After WWII, the U.S. emerged as the sole capitalist superpower since many other major industrial production centers in Europe and Japan had been nearly bombed out of existence. The U.S., therefore, experienced a postwar boom in industrial output and growth. However, around the 1970s, most of Europe and Japan had recovered and were thriving centers of industrial output. The post-war Fordist compromise, therefore, became too costly for the U.S. capitalist class and was subsequently abandoned as a sustainable policy. Abandoning Fordism, or the idea that a livable wage will be guaranteed in exchange for the obedience and loyalty of labor, meant, of course, abandoning the American working-class and their wages; these were nearly the highest in the world by the 1970s, and abandoning them triggered a new down-turn or crisis in the cyclical nature of the capital's historical development.

What continued and advanced during the subsequent neoliberal era was capital's policy of military intervention in the so-called Third World in order to ensure that any equitable economic practice, like democratic socialism, was not successful. The U.S., therefore, has a long history of toppling democratically elected governments from Chile to Haiti, to see to it that puppet-dictatorships are in place to discipline labor and guarantee profits flow to the West

(Chomsky, 1999). This enabled U.S. corporations to not just reduce the cost of labor a little, but to nearly eliminate it. Transnational trade is trade where centers of production and centers of consumption and management are divided by national borders. The policies that made transnational trade profitable are policies made by organizations such as the World Bank and the International Monetary Fund that eliminated many of the regulations that imposed taxes on corporations moving capital and goods across borders. The North American Free Trade Agreement was one of the most famous of these, as it led to the indigenous Zapatista uprising of central Mexico. More recently, the U.S. has signed a new series of free trade policies with Columbia, South Korea, and Panama, which will lead to further reductions in the middle-class. Understanding how capitalism, under its normal operating conditions, is a form of class warfare and terrorism means seeing how education consistently manipulates the ideas and worldviews held by the population.

We might, therefore, conclude that the current purpose of public schooling—that is, to reproduce the working and middle classes—was forged during the second industrial revolution as Horace Mann saw the rising tide of working-class discontent that threatened the elite class from which he came. Colleges and universities, many of which in the U.S. were founded during this time, embodied a related purpose: that is, advancements in the technologies of social control. In this contemporary context of increasing capitalist indoctrination, Marx’s approach to class-consciousness and a serious discussion about a socialist alternative is imperative.

### **Marx and Class Consciousness**

After Marx the theorization of consciousness became deeply embroiled with the question of revolution. (Carpenter & Mojab, 2011, p. 125)

It is commonly believed that Marx viewed Hegel’s dialectics as a decontextualized, non-materialist form of idealism that fails to challenge concrete reality because it reduces freedom to a mental act. Marxist professor Peter Hudis (2005) argues this belief is fundamentally wrong. In “Marx’s Critical Appropriation and Transcendence of Hegel’s Theory of Alienation,” Hudis (2005) argues that, “Marx does not critique Hegel for failing to deal with reality” (p. 2) but rather is fundamentally influenced by Hegel’s deep interest in labor and the alienation that engenders a self-consciousness that is “at home in his other-being as such” (Marx, 1988, p. 158). According to Hudis (2005), one of Marx’s primary objections to Hegel was not that he failed to grasp reality, but that he abandons it, concluding that the absolute essence of reality is the Idea belittling the object of the idea as “merely external” (Marx, 1988, p. 167) and thus inferior to the absolute idea or God. Consequently, in abstracting thought from reality, and failing to reunite abstraction to the sensual world, Hegel stops short of the last act:

The man estranged from himself is also the thinker estranged from his *essence*—that is, from the natural and human essence. His thoughts are therefore fixed mental shapes or ghosts dwelling outside nature and man. Hegel has locked up all these fixed mental forms together in his *Logic*, laying hold of them first as negation—that is, as an *alienation of human thought*—and then as the negation of the negation—that is, as a superseding of this alienation, as a *real* expression of human thought. But as even this still takes place within the confines of the estrangement, this negation of the negation is in part the restoring of these fixed forms in their estrangement; in part a stopping-short at the last act—the act of

self-reference in alienation—as the true mode of being of these fixed mental forms; and in part, to the extent that this abstraction apprehends itself and experiences an infinite weariness with itself, there makes its appearance in Hegel, in the form of the resolution to recognize *nature* as the essential being and to go over to intuition, the abandonment of abstract thought...devoid of eyes, of teeth, of ears, of everything. (Marx, 1988, pp. 164-165)

Again, we might therefore summarize Marx's central critique of Hegel in the following way: the Hegelian dialectical movement begins with the recognition of an initial negation—the negation of human subjectivity—which stems from the realization that the human is alienated from herself as a result of abstract knowledge; this first negation leads to the conscious or deliberate negation of the cause of the alienation; however, Hegel's negation of the negation, the dialectical movement, ends with the reaffirmation of the alienation from consciousness by positioning the abstract idea as the ultimate essence or truth, rather than nature or the physical objects external to the Idea of it.

Marx's reconfiguration of Hegel's dialectic, therefore, serves as a decisive outline of how we might understand historical change as a collective, all-encompassing, material and ideological development where the economic base of capitalism serves as the primary source of human negation giving way to a complex and contradictory cultural context of false consciousness and critical consciousness (i.e., racism, sexism, homophobia as well as counter-hegemonic, revolutionary social movements with well-established traditions of artistic, musical, discursive, and tactical approaches). For Marx (1988), then, a naturalistic interpretation of the negation of the negation can be expressed as follows: "communism is humanism mediated by itself through the annulment of private property" (p. 161). In other words, not *stopping short* as Marx accuses Hegel of, means abandoning abstract thought (i.e., fixed ideas and categories) or the absolute idea in exchange for a perpetually moving and shifting natural world and the revolutionary implications of negating the property relations of capitalist production, which includes the social universe of capitalist society in its entirety because it is at the root of alienation and human suffering. From this totalizing perspective, it is impossible to separate the historical development of the working classes and the capitalist classes from racial and gender politics and the international relations of competing capitalists from the economic base of the capitalist mode of production—it is the social universe of capital that alienates humanity from itself.

In his summary of the intellectual roots of Marx's historical materialism, Alex Callinicos (2011) argues that for Hegel (1993), contradiction lies at the heart of all change and movement and therefore propels history since all entities embody contradiction. In the opening paragraphs of Hegel's (1993) *Science of Logic*, the German philosopher sets the parameters of this basic contradiction as "pure being and pure nothing are the same" (p. 82) but are also "absolutely distinct." Consequently, they are "inseparable and that each immediately vanishes in its opposite. Their truth is, therefore, this movement of the immediate vanishing of the one in the other: becoming a movement in which both are distinguished, but by a difference which has equally immediately resolved itself" (Hegel, 1993, p. 83). Callinicos (2011) describes this relationship between being and nothing using the example of the acorn and the oak tree. Consider:

The acorn, in becoming an oak, has itself ceased to be. The oak is different from the acorn. The oak is *not* that acorn. Hegel would say that the oak is the *negation* of the acorn. Yet implicit within the acorn is the potential to become an oak. The

acorn contains within itself its own negation, and is thus *contradictory*. It is this contradiction...that allows it to grow...Hegel then takes this a step further. When something negates itself it turns into its opposite. (p. 63)

Applied to society, as alluded to above, capitalism is not the end, but a stage in the development of humanity containing within it its own contradiction and thus negation. In capitalism, the central contradiction is the relationship between labor and capital, which simultaneously constitute a larger whole of antagonistically related parts. The two parts dissolve into the other; the more labor toils, the stronger and more powerful capital becomes. But when one breaks free, the other ceases to exist as such. Again, it is labor who suffers under capital as a commodified and thus alienated and exploited being, whose collective negation as labor, a free and non-alienated class for itself, becomes its opposite, not capital, for labor *is* capital, but the opposite of capital, democratic socialism.

Where Hegel abstracted consciousness from the sensual world of suffering and exploitation, Marx reunited knowledge to the body disputing the notion that *truth* only exists in the realm of pure thought unhindered by the sensual experience of the material world. Hegel achieved his abstraction by replacing that which is concrete with the idea of it, discursively transforming that which is finite into the infinite. Summarizing this tendency in Hegel's thought, Marx (1843/1978) notes how he "...gives the predicates an independent existence and subsequently transforms them in a mystical fashion into their subjects" (p. 18). The implications of Marx's revision of Hegel is an awareness that it is not only ideas that prevent *men and women* from achieving an assumed *absolute truth* and their subsequent full potential and that the struggle against oppression does not exclusively exist at the level of discourse. Marx and Engels (1932/1996), making this point, comment that the "phrases" Hegelians fight "...are only opposing other phrases, and that they are in no way combating the real existing world when they are merely combating the phrases of this world" (p. 41).

In order to combat *the real existing world*, Marx held that it was necessary to rescue consciousness from the world of Hegelian abstraction and examine its internally related nature in the context of actual material existence, which, for Marx (like Hegel), begins when humans first began to *produce* their own means of subsistence, when they begin to create their own material reality based on their immediate geographical surroundings. What humans are therefore first and foremost is defined by *what they produce* and *how they produce* it. Hegelian abstraction, while conscious of this historical development, disconnects consciousness from the *material* reality of the labor/capital relationship forever in motion. Summarizing Marx's conceptualization of consciousness, Carpenter and Mojab (2011) note that,

Marx is entering the German Idealism debate about the relationships between matter and consciousness. He is demonstrating how consciousness is dialectically related to social organization of life and exists in both subjective and objective forms. (p. 127)

We might therefore note that, for Marx, class-consciousness involves being aware of one's structural/material location within capitalism (Cole, 2011; Kelsh and Hill, 2006; McLaren, 2005). Allman, McLaren, and Rikowski (2005) argue that, "Marx takes great pains to explain that it is not the type of concrete labor one performs that determines one's class position, but rather one's internal/dialectical relation with capital" (p. 145). Reflecting on the place of

educators within the social universe of capital as a prelude to an extended discussion of Marx's conceptions of class and class consciousness, Deb Kelsh and Dave Hill (2006) begin by clarifying that the working class/labor consists of all those "who do not own the means of production and are therefore compelled to sell their labor power to survive" (p. 2). In explaining the relationship that education has with capital, Marx conceptualized two kinds of labor, both of which are embodied in all labor: labor that manufactures other commodities or services and labor that produces labor as a commodity (i.e., teachers) (Allman, McLaren and Rikowski, 2005).

Whatever type of work one does, it remains constant that "a central feature of the worker's life under capitalism is alienation, or the removal of one's labor from one's self," (p. 88) as Faith Agostinone-Wilson (2010) reminds us. Making her point in the context of the family, Agostinone-Wilson (2010) quotes Marx (1867/1967) from *Capital, Volume 1*:

They alienate from him the intellectual potentialities of the labor process in the same proportion as science is incorporated in it as an independent power; they deform the conditions under which he works, subject him during the labor process to the despotism the more hateful for its meanness; they transform his life-time into working time, and drag his wife and child under the juggernaut of capital. (p. 88)

Again, even pro-capitalist, mainstream economists are beginning to concede that given the current downward spiral of capital, Marx seems to have been correct on many key issues, such as the alienating nature of wage labor. For example, Umair Haque (2011), author of *The New Capitalist Manifesto: Building a Disruptively Better Business*, argues in "Was Marx Right?", which appeared in the Harvard Business Review (September 7, 2011), that while he is a "staunch supporter of capitalism" (p. 1), he acknowledges that there are some relevant insights in Marx's analyses of the dangers of industrial capitalism. Regarding the alienating nature of capitalism Haque (2011) comments:

As workers were divorced from the output of their labor, Marx claimed, their sense of self-determination dwindled, alienating them from a sense of meaning, purpose, and fulfillment. How's Marx doing on this score? I'd say quite well: even the most self-proclaimed humane modern workplaces, for all their creature comforts, are bastions of bone-crushing tedium and soul-sucking mediocrity, filled with dreary meetings, dismal tasks, and pointless objectives that are well, just a little bit alienating. If sweating over the font in a PowerPoint deck for the mega-leveraged buyout of a line of designer diapers is the portrait of modern "work," then call me—and I'd bet most of you—alienated: disengaged, demoralized, [and] unmotivated. (p. 2)

Clearly, Haque (2011) is referring here to work typically classified as "middle-class." If the most privileged wage labor is alienating, then we can say with certainty that there are no exceptions or safe-havens within capitalism—it is all, to one degree or another, alienating. The teaching profession as well has become increasingly deskilled and mechanized, although, as outlined above, teaching has always been implicated in the programs and interests of the ruling-class. While it is clear that racial disparities and discrimination are exacerbated during times of crisis, and the continued stagnation of capital is going to have the most devastating consequence for people of color, the creation of jobs within capitalism can only take us to the next crisis. Revolution and a post-capitalist society are our only hope FOR?

I'm risking unnecessary repetition, but I think it is therefore extremely important for teacher education programs to develop within their students a Marxist class-consciousness, as I have argued throughout. More specifically, this Marxist class-consciousness must also be situated in a global context. That is, William I. Robinson (2005), outlining the parameters of a *critical globalization studies*, makes this point, noting that "social arrangements in the early twenty-first century must increasingly be understood—indeed, can only be understood—in the context of global-level structures and processes" (p. 12). However, because not all global thinking and practices are critical (i.e., not all promote progressive or revolutionary transformation), our global class-consciousness must transcend the mainstream global perspective that encourages teacher education students to become technologically savvy and multiculturally sensitive in order to compete in the global market for a shrinking supply of middle-class-paying professional career opportunities. Rather, the global class-consciousness of teacher education programs must be informed by the insight that the increasing poverty in the U.S. is connected to the increasing poverty globally and the neoliberal policies of the World Bank, the International Monetary Fund, and the resulting practices of multinational mega-corporations. This awareness must also be coupled with a dedication to overcome such structural poverty, which requires pushing beyond the limits of reform efforts and abandoning capitalism and a market economy in general.

Again, because labor tends not to be class conscious, working-class workers with middle-class culture and white privilege have a tendency to discriminate or disrespect colleagues of color who do not possess middle-class cultural capital, which implicitly includes whiteness. Consequently, notions of what it means to be articulate are firmly grounded in the cultural capital of middle-class whiteness. Reflecting on her own experiences with middle-class workers as a self-identified working-class woman of color, Antonia Darder (2011) notes that, "middle class liberals...seem to love our presence, but are often ambivalent about our participation, particularly when our expressed concerns fall outside of the exceptional notions of the ideal" (pp. 6-7). Essentially, Darder (2011) documents the tendency of white, middle-class colleagues to commodify colleagues of color as either evidence of the existence of meritocracy or as remarkable exceptions to the usual stories of failure. Such dominant social views are unable to situate the experiences and journeys of individuals in a larger historical context of European empire, colonialism, slavery, institutional white privilege, and neoliberal capitalism. This phenomenon can be best understood within the history of whiteness as a mechanism employed by the seventeenth century plantocracy to build a larger base of support for themselves, ensuring the perpetuation of the basic structure of class power. Whiteness has worked brilliantly, in the most devious, deceitful sense, in ensuring the hegemony of capitalism. Consequently, white middle-class workers, embodying the false consciousness that leads them to believe their interests are one and the same as capitalists, manifests itself in the ways Darder (2011) explains above.

It has been documented that middle-class professionals have internalized a capitalist class identity so thoroughly that there is a tendency for them to actively seek to maintain their place of privilege by emerging as the primary supporters of oppressive educational devices, such as testing professionals. Situated in the context of a shrinking middle-class (Pressman, 2007; 2010), these professionals, whom Au (2009) traces back to the emergence of the social efficiency model advanced through Taylorism (see also, Malott, 2010), it is not surprising that "the professional and managerial new middle class not only justify their own existence within educational

processes and policies and maintain their own social and economic upward mobility, but they also create the room to align themselves with the interests of neoliberals” (Au, 2009, pp. 58-59). However, Au (2009) makes this argument to challenge the position that the primary driving force behind the neoliberalization of education is the capitalist class. While it is clear enough that middle-class workers independently advocate for their own survival and necessity without external coercion from the capitalist class, a more useful interpretation, in my opinion, would be that this is simply the product of how workers’ identities are informed by capitalism and how whiteness is designed to encourage white workers to see that their own interests are one and the same as the capitalist class, especially middle-class workers whose intellectual and managerial labor is significantly less physical than the workers whose work is designed to control and manage. In order to transcend this middle-class indoctrination and the false sense of class position it fosters, what follows are some major points that outline what a class conscious educator might look like in practice.

### **The Class-Conscious Educator in the Twenty-First Century**

Foremost, the class-conscious educator understands that capitalists have traditionally valued the existence of a middle-class because it serves their own interests. For example, Steven Pressman (2007), making the case for the survival of the middle-class and seemingly writing from a global middle-class perspective, argues that, “a large and vibrant middle class is important to every nation. It contributes to economic growth, as well as to social and political stability” (p. 181). Making no mistake about his own alignment with the capitalist class, Pressman (2007) argues that,

The middle class helps mitigate class warfare. Marx believed that economic history was a class struggle between haves and have-nots, and that the have-nots would eventually band together and overthrow the capitalist system. What Marx missed was that a middle class might arise and serve as a buffer between the poor and the wealthy. (p. 181)

A class-conscious educator is able to identify the errors in Pressman’s (2007) arguments, aware that Marx was intimately conscious of the division of labor and labor’s role in self-reproduction, that is, in management’s role in policing and enforcing the laws and policies accepted by capital. A class-conscious educator is also aware of the fallacy behind one of the primary reasons that has been put forth for supporting the middle class, which is that “people do care about their relative standing and that relative standing is correlated with subjective assessments of well-being” (p. 181). Educators with a critical point of view are also aware that the middle-class has traditionally served the function of not only racially dividing workers through white privilege, but that the middle-class is needed so the cycle of capitalist production can be completed. That is, without a large pool of active consumers to purchase the commodities made by unknown workers in unknown foreign lands, value realization—the last stage in the cycle before accumulation—would not happen, which leads to over-production and economic crisis, as we are currently experiencing.

Class-conscious education workers also know that the system of mass compulsory education that middle-class workers have designed and supported has always been intended to serve the interests not of pupils or teachers, but of the capitalist class for which students are trained to obediently serve. This helps to explain why the captains of industry, as noted above,

supported it since Horace Mann's crusade for mass schooling in the mid-1800s. For example, these educators know that Mann's crusade to educate the masses of peasant immigrants from Ireland, Germany, Italy and other European countries, was successful because the industrial capitalists of the time needed a more regimented and subdued pool of labor power to fuel the booming industrial revolution, so they supported him. Critical educators also understand that the Indian Boarding School Project was an extended government-funded effort designed to both disconnect Native Americans from their ancestral lands by obliterating Native American cultures, customs, economies, and languages, and replacing them with a worldview conducive to industrial capitalism. That is, the effort to *kill the Indian and save the man inside* was an effort to disrupt the Native American systems of cultural and social reproduction by creating consenting low-level wage workers. Industrialist politicians supported the funding of Christian-based schools instead of sending the military to exterminate Native American communities outright because it was deemed less costly; that is, they made not a moral decision but rather one based upon cost-effectiveness. The model of education for African Americans after the Civil War, designed to transform enslaved Africans into law-abiding low-level wage earners, is a history many critically class-conscious educators are also well aware of (Malott, 2008; 2010).

What is more, education workers who are intimately aware of their class position within capitalism understand with precise clarity that they are increasingly used as scapegoats to turn public education dollars over to for-profit management companies eager to cut costs (i.e., lowering teacher wages and/or increasing productivity—longer hours, same pay). Educators who know that high-stakes, standardized exams degrade the control they have over their own labor power and damage the possibility for critical, rigorous thought, are conscious of how their occupation is being increasingly implicated in serving the needs of capital and are thus class conscious.

These class-conscious educators, quite simply, know they are part of the working class, which is why they depend on a wage to survive, that is, because they do not own the means of production and the private property it represents. Critical educators are also conscious of the fact that in North America, the resource-rich land that has fuelled industrial capitalism and enriched not only industrialists, but investment bankers and profiteers in general, for the past three hundred years, was acquired through brutal militarization, violent conquest, and the vast tradition of deception and cultural genocide previously mentioned—a process Marx (1867/1967) referred to as *primitive accumulation*.

Aware of how educators are implicated in this process, Marxist teachers realize that the forceful acquisition of resources is more than just an early stage of industrial capitalism. It is an on-going requirement of capital since human labor power alone is not enough to fuel the ever-expanding model of capitalist accumulation. The value-production process is one that enriches capital and exploits labor in an ever-deepening downward spiral of crisis, since the laws of capital drives capitalists toward perpetual expansion and leads to schemes to drive down the cost of production by neoliberalizing trade laws that enable capitalists to globally drive down wages, reduce environmental regulations, and privatize the commons. Meanwhile, the inevitable resistance against capital by labor is an ever-expanding problem and a concern for capitalists. It, therefore, follows that capital requires a system of social control and reproduction to ensure the ongoing existence of the most important commodity needed for both primitive and wealth accumulation, that is, labor willing to be purchased for both war and commodity/service

production. Capital, therefore, needs teachers to be part of the process that indoctrinates students with the fundamentalist worldview that claims capitalism is inevitable and the backbone that makes democracy and civil rights possible. I use the notion of fundamentalism here in the sense of blindly and uncritically accepting universal truths, because there is plenty of evidence that more than suggests capital is anything but inevitable. Educators with class-consciousness understand that their own consent in reproducing labor, ultimately, prevents their own liberation (along with the rest of labor) (Allman, McLaren, and Rikowski, 2005).

Where Marx laid the material foundation for a concrete understanding of consciousness, Lenin, on the other hand, situates the notion of consciousness in terms of developing a “political agenda necessary for revolution” (Carpenter and Mojab, 2011, p. 127). Underscoring this line of reasoning Carpenter and Mojab (2011) elaborate,

...To be “conscious” is to have the kind of consciousness that relates to revolutionary practice. Lenin is moving into the theorization of how to organize thinking and ideas in a revolutionary manner based on the dialectical theorization of Marx. (p. 127)

From this point of view it is clear that the state of being conscious, for educators and labor in general, refers to a critical, class-consciousness conducive to revolutionary transformation. However, for Lenin (1902/1975), the conscious struggle toward *revolutionary social democracy* or socialism is not likely to emerge within the working-class’s spontaneous uprisings and rebellions without outside intervention. Lenin (1902/1975) argues that the experience of being exploited as a waged worker or a peasant by itself is not enough to stimulate a critical awareness of class and its historical development and transformation. Because of the ruling class’s use of ideological indoctrination as a form of social control and because the ruling-class’s ideology or worldview is far older and more completely developed and entrenched than socialist ideology, the labor movement, when operating independently, has tended toward the reformist tradition of trade unionism, negatively referred to by Lenin (1902/1975) as *economism*.

At the same time, Lenin (1902/1975) acknowledges that it is not only labor who is systematically miseducated. That is, “the entire younger generation of the educated classes has been systematically reared for decades on...[the] turn towards bourgeois criticism of all the fundamental ideas of Marxism” (Lenin, 1902/1975, p. 13). Because socialist ideology has been developed by intellectuals, the revolutionary leaders, or the vanguard (those at the front of the class struggle), are most likely to come from internal resistance within the *propertied class*, according to Lenin (1902/1975). Lenin (1902/1975) comes to this conclusion because he is convinced that there are only two ideologies, bourgeois and socialist, therefore rendering the possibility of a “middle course” impossible because “mankind has not created a ‘third’ ideology” (pp. 28-29). Consequently, “to belittle the socialist ideology in any way, to turn aside from it in the slightest degree means to strengthen bourgeois ideology” (Lenin, 1902/1975, p. 29).

Lenin (1902/1975) discounts the history and legacy of anarchist theory and practice here, thereby setting himself up for critique. By arguing that there are only two ideologies, Lenin (1902/1975) also affirms the Western idea that the world’s indigenous peoples are in fact primitive with underdeveloped backgrounds, and thus constitute no non-Western ideologies of their own. Let’s set this critique aside and assume there is any legitimacy to the conclusion that socialist leaders will most likely emerge from intellectuals. After all, since the post-WWII years in the U.S. when capital needed a more highly educated and trained working-class to manage and

expand the industrial machine, a significant portion of the labor class entered universities. Consequently, thousands upon thousands of workers came into contact with the philosophical traditions of academia. Because higher education has always been designed to serve capital's interests and needs, much of this new middle-class became "loyal buffers against trouble" (Zinn, 2003). However, a sizable segment of this new intelligentsia, coming from the working class rather than from the propertied class, have played an important part in developing Marxist theory through the shifting nature of capital. To say "there can be no talk of an independent ideology formulated by the working masses" (Lenin, 1902/1975, p. 28) is even less true today than it was in 1901.

At the same time, to say that those who rely on a wage to survive are not likely to develop a socialist consciousness on their own, which was Lenin's position, should not be interpreted as a disdain for labor, which has been a common reason to reject both Lenin *and* Marx. The very existence of critical pedagogy and critical theory more generally, from critical race theory to postmodernism, is testament to the need for externally introducing critical analysis and class-consciousness to workers (from teachers and professors to store clerks). However, Lenin, drawing on Marx, rejects eclecticism (i.e., drawing on many theories) because that could only mean moving away from socialist and toward bourgeois ideology. Embracing Joe L. Kincheloe's postformalism, as I have done above and elsewhere (Malott, 2011a), means that we must contribute to socialism and never endorse the reformist drive of bourgeois ideology.

Another common critique of Lenin is that his pedagogy is authoritarian and thus anti-democratic. However, in "The Tasks of the Youth League," Lenin (1920/1975) argues against the mindless banking model of capitalist schooling and makes the case for socialist theory to always be represented in revolutionary practice. While Lenin (1920/1975) supports the revolutionary position that "the old schools" should be done away with, he warns that they do contain some knowledge useful to the building of socialist society, such as the knowledge of agriculture, engineering, and so forth. Unlike the old schools, however, Lenin (1920/1975) argues that these doctrines should be assimilated critically. Summarizing his position and vision of a socialist education, Lenin (1920/1975) notes,

...We must realize that we must replace the old system of instruction, the old cramming and the old drill, with an ability to acquire the sum total of human knowledge, and to acquire it in such a way that communism shall not be something to be learned by rote, but something that you yourselves have thought over, something that will embody conclusions inevitable from the standpoint of present-day education. (p. 666)

Lending legitimacy to this work and legacy of Lenin, in a groundbreaking essay demonstrating how Vygotsky's socially situated interpretive framework is based on Lenin's Marxist conceptualization of the development of class consciousness, Au (2007), in this instance, extends the arguments for Marxism in the twenty-first century. Lenin's interest in a Russian revolution led him to analyze how the working class becomes conscious of their position within capitalism, reflecting upon the St. Petersburg strikes of 1896 as an example of what he called *spontaneity*. These studies led Lenin to acknowledge how spontaneous consciousness and thought can be encouraged and developed into deliberate, revolutionary consciousness. Lenin described examples of spontaneous consciousness, where labor, in acts of *frustration and revenge*, rose up in riots and destroyed the machinery of production. Theorizing this

phenomenon, Lenin described it as an emergent class consciousness. The more planned out and organized actions of the working class against capitalists, such as strikes, Lenin described as “the class struggle in embryo” (Lenin quoted in Au, 2007, p. 276). Similarly, Vygotsky theorized the dialectical relationship between “everyday” concepts (i.e. Lenin’s spontaneous) and “scientific” concepts (i.e. Lenin’s conscious) where the complex interchange between the two, with the assistance of an intervening educator (or revolutionary), could result in purposeful growth and development (Au, 2007, 2009). Evoking Vygotsky’s famous methodological construct, the zone of proximal development (ZPD), Au (2007) argues that Lenin’s theorization of these two types of consciousness was intended to identify and limit the distance between spontaneous revolt and purposeful revolutionary struggle against the commodification of human labor power and the creation of abstract labor.

Au (2007) stresses the significance of Vygotsky’s concept of *conscious awareness* and the ZPD as informing his whole framework. Where Lenin was interested in the working class understanding the whole system in order to transform it, Vygotsky stressed the importance of one being conscious of one’s consciousness situated in a larger social context. Following Vygotsky and Lenin’s Marxism here, the heart of Paulo Freire’s critical pedagogy is the process of becoming conscious of one’s own consciousness as one of the first and on-going processes of developing a class consciousness and becoming an active participant in revolutionary movement building (Malott, 2011a). Freire’s (2005) reliance on Vygotsky is brought to light in *Teachers as Cultural Workers: Letters to Those Who Dare Teach*, wherein he comments that, “it is undeniably important to read the works of...Vygotsky” because he understands “the relationship between reading and writing” as “processes that cannot be separated” and should thus be “organized” by educators “in such a way as to create the perception that they are needed for something” (pp. 43-45) because knowledge is not separate from the social worlds in which it emerges. That “something” Freire refers to, of course, is class-consciousness. That is, reading and writing are important for developing critical lenses and uncovering the ways we are shaped by capitalist schooling, and then recognizing a place of departure for getting to more purposeful, organized, planned out, tactical revolutionary struggle against what Freire calls domestication or indoctrination where workers see their own interests as one and the same, since capitalists lead labor to support their own on-going exploitation and commodification as abstract labor.

### **Weber and Teacher Education**

While Marx’s focus on class-consciousness has had a lasting impact on revolutionary education into the twenty-first century, as alluded to above, Marxism’s transformative potential has been stunted by the dominance of a Weberian conception of class and the outright ridicule and belittling of Marxist work in general. These trends have been especially severe at the center of contemporary imperialist power—in the United States in particular (Cole, 2011; Hill, McLaren, Cole, and Rikowski, 2002; Kelsh and Hill, 2006; Malott, 2011b; McLaren and Jaramillo, 2010). The most deleterious aspects of the use of Max Weber’s sociological conception of class can be summarized as follows:

- In their previously mentioned essay, “The Culturalization of Class and the Occluding of Class Consciousness: The Knowledge Industry in/of Education,” Deb Kelsh and Dave Hill (2006) offer an enlightening comparison between Marx and Weber. They begin their investigation, noting that for both writers, “class determination involves property” (p. 5). However, Marx’s conception of how

property determines class position is based on the realization that those who do not own property or the means of production are forced out of necessity to sell their labor for a wage while those who do own property live off the profit or surplus value extracted or exploited from labor. Weber, on the other hand, does not connect his theory of property to capital, but to consumption patterns and culture (Kelsh & Hill, 2006).

- We might, therefore, say that unlike Marx's theory of class, Weber's is not relational. That is, Weber does not situate class in the context of one's relation to private property. Making this point, Kelsh and Hill (2006) conclude that, "Weberian-based formulations of class serve the interests of the capitalist class...insofar as they erase both the proletariat and the capitalist classes as antagonistic entities unified in the contradictory and exploitative social (property) relations of capitalist production" (p. 6).
- Again, because Weber's theory is not relational, it conceals the antagonistic relationship between the working class and capitalists.
- Weberian conceptions of social class, therefore, present class as a series of disconnected categories determined by one's skills, market appeal, and institutional privilege.
- Failing to grasp the root of inequality under capitalism, Weberian approaches only appear radical because they mention class and *transforming* capital. However, transforming is *not* overthrowing. Consequently, because this model is reformist and not revolutionary, some have argued that it, by default, supports capitalism by creating an opportunity to become more multicultural and equal in its exploitation (Kelsh & Hill, 2006; McLaren & Jaramillo, 2010).
- Social class, for Weber, is therefore not a tool to *explain* one's relationship to capital, but rather a way to *classify* and manage different classes whose *life chances* are determined by *market situation* (Kelsh & Hill, 2006, p. 7).
- The significance here resides in the fact that Weber's theory of class leads to pseudo-radicalism and confusion about what the problem is and what needs to be done to end class oppression and exploitation. Weber's theory can only ever lead to reform when it is revolution that is needed.

Following these insights, it seems reasonable to argue that the major limitation of multicultural foci on white privilege and consumption patterns resides within the fact that they are informed by a Weberian conception of social class, thereby treating capitalism as something to *equalize access to* rather than something to *overcome*. As a result, teacher education students tend not to be challenged to situate white privilege in a larger historical context that demonstrates that even the most privileged "middle-class" ranks of labor would be far better off, psychologically, emotionally, cognitively, and even economically (especially considering the rapid deterioration of this exalted subset of the working class), in a democratic socialist life after capital. In solidifying this analysis, it is necessary to restate the fact that one's class position is not determined by the type of work one does, but rather by one's relationship to capital—if a person must sell labor for a wage to survive, that person is not a capitalist; he or she is part of the

working class, even if he or she has white privilege and middle-class consumer culture. The system of institutionalized white privilege was created to maintain the system of class exploitation by convincing poor Europeans that their interests were the same as the capitalists rather than with workers whose identities fell outside the conceptual boundaries of whiteness. It has worked extraordinarily well. However, while the human mind can be conditioned, it is never predetermined or fixed, leading to a complex series of fractures and counter-hegemonies, rendering the hegemonic-building project a never-ending process.

Critically, class-conscious educators know that middle-class privilege and middle-class consumer culture are elaborate schemes designed to ensure the continued support for capitalism by a significant proportion of the working-class. A Weberian conception of social class with its over-emphasis on disconnected categories represents a significant barrier to class-consciousness.

### **Teacher Education and a Revolutionary Class Consciousness**

What Marx's historical analysis of social development is particularly good at, as demonstrated by the likes of Peter McLaren, is revealing the shallowness of socially-acceptable notions of *social justice* in places such as the center of the global capitalist empire, the United States of America. That is, while it is *safe* to speak mildly of social justice, it tends not to be deemed as harmless when the discussion ventures into notions of *economic justice*. Teachers are, therefore, not permitted by democratic institutions to question the economic system in which they live and work (McLaren & Jaramillo, 2007). It is, therefore, not surprising that Weber's conception of social class dominates teacher education, leading, as argued above, to a widespread lack of class-consciousness in classroom teachers, teacher educators, and teacher education students.

Despite the lack of support from democratic institutions, Marxist educators, such as Peter McLaren, Deb Kelsh, Dave Hill, Glenn Rikowski, Ramin Farahmandpur, Antonia Darder, Gregory Martin, Rich Gibson, Faith Agostinone-Wilson, Shahrzad Mojab, the contributors of this volume, and others, have named the destination for humanity in the twenty-first century *democratic socialism* for a post-capitalist society. Mike Cole, for example, notes that while this goal may seem prescriptive, and while there is opportunity for "making concrete suggestions for practice in educational institutions that might move the project forward," "Marxists do not have a blueprint for the future" (pp. 41—44). For these educators, decolonizing education means, paraphrasing McLaren (2005), refusing to ensure the supremacy of international financial capital; troubling the investment and market prerogatives of transnational corporations; and putting corporations under the popular control of the people. Revolutionary education here is informed by a deep understanding that education is always political, and it is of the utmost importance that students be provided the experiences where they can truly imagine a life outside the laws of capital and the social reproduction of abstract labor; where students can debate the shortcomings of past revolutions and tactics; and where educators and students can discuss and experiment with the notion of capacity building where the quest is for social institutions, human relationships and other arrangements that are best suited for human growth and development, enabling us to reach our full potential (McLaren & Jaramillo, 2007). Because of capital's alienating nature, which suppresses human creativity and capacity and leads to psychological health issues and other disorders, a new life-affirming system is needed which may very well be a sort of democratic, post-capitalist socialism.

Challenging students to consider a Marxist-informed analysis of labor situated in a historical and contemporary global context is one of the first steps in engaging them in the process of becoming class conscious and, therefore, a future anti-capitalist educator. This becomes a matter of self-preservation and not a paternalistic gesture, thereby avoiding the pitfalls of Weberian examples of reformist social justice *service* work. Because there are only two ways in which one can be situated in relation to capital—as its creator or its accumulator—there are only two classes in capitalist society. The middle-class is a ruse. Again, a class-conscious educator understands that a false sense of security and belonging and the consumer privileges that have historically accompanied it have seduced the working class into striving to achieve its ranks.

Marxist educators have dedicated a tremendous amount of time and energy over the past twenty years to combat the Weberian plague sapping the revolutionary potential from the educational left, leaving progressive educators unable to locate their own position within capitalism. Through two of his most recent books, Mike Cole (2009; 2011) has made tremendous strides in challenging not only the Weberian mistakes mentioned above, but challenging the false separation of race from class and the retreat from class that has dominated the advent of critical race theory (CRT). Cole's work here has been far more constructive than simply dismissing CRT. Rather, Cole rigorously highlights the many valuable contributions of CRT while challenging its weaknesses regarding Marxist analysis. In the process, Cole (2009, 2011) presents a thoroughly global analysis of capitalism and the hegemonic role that race has traditionally played. Consequently, Cole's socialist alternative is grounded on a vision of a post-capitalist, anti-racist, democratic socialism. Making the case for the possibility of socialism has required Marxists to challenge the idea that capitalism is inevitable. It is, therefore, not surprising that Cole (2011) and many other Marxist educators have been outspoken proponents of President Hugo Chavez of Venezuela and Castro's Cuba because their very existence and their headway toward democratic socialism provides strong evidence against the "inevitability of capitalism" thesis.

While the work of Cole and others reminds us of what is possible by pointing to that which exists, the work of Freud helps labor understand why it suffers so frequently from psychological ailments; this reminds the most privileged workers immersed in middle-class consumer culture that life after capital is a destination not just for the most oppressed or excluded. Again, these insights have been and continue to be of major importance and value to critical pedagogy.

Writing and conducting research in the midst of the Great Depression of 1929, and therefore witnessing, even if he never fully named it as such, the psychological damage of an alienating capitalist system that views the individual, and ultimately the student, as passive receiver of commands and direction, and thus expected to repress fundamental human drives of creativity directly connected to the production and creation of life through the natural employment of ones' own human labor power. Freud (1938/1995) calls his work here, "the theory of repression" (p. 907).

Consequently, we might say that *repression*, in the Freudian sense, is the idea that in a capitalist society, which, by definition, demands obedience in work and other relationships, certain *natural* human drives and desires, such as the creative and free use of language and labor, are subjugated, rendering the individual alienated from self, other, the natural world, and their

own labor. As a result, the sources of labor's repression remain buried in the subconscious because the individual is "trying to repress" something to which they "object" (Freud, 1938/1995, p. 190). That is, the realization that to be driven, out of necessity, to sell one's labor power for a wage far less than the value it produces renders one exploited and dehumanized—externally commanded and, therefore, creatively repressed. The worker, therefore, represses this realization and resists any external attempt to bring it to the surface, that is, confronting one's material conditions. Leaving the repressed wage earner a psychological way out of mental, and ultimately material, enslavement, Freud (1938/1995) acknowledges that within the repressed individual, the "psychic mechanism" that allows "suppressed wishes to force their way to realization," despite indoctrination and oppression, "is retained in being and in working order" (p. 256).

For Giroux (2009), "Freud's metapsychology provided an important theoretical foundation for revealing the interplay between the individual and society," and therefore, "the antagonistic character of social reality" (p. 41). The significance of Freud here, argues Giroux (2009), is that he reveals the processes through which "society reproduced its power in and over the individual" (p. 41). Giroux outlines how these insights informed members of Germany's critical Frankfurt School, such as Marcuse and Adorno, around WWII and after, to help them understand how both capitalist and socialist societies operated according to authoritarian principles of governance and enforcement. Frankfurt School scholars argued, in their more liberatory moments, that only through a detailed understanding of how power is reproduced psychologically could it be subverted and transformed. Herbert Marcuse (1964), for example, in *One-Dimensional Man: Studies in the Ideology of Advanced Industrial Society*, observes that, "Freud's fundamental insight that the patient's trouble is rooted in a *general* sickness which cannot be cured by analytic analysis," and the suggestion that "the patient's disease is a protest reaction against the sick world in which he lives" (p. 183) was a ground-breaking insight that paved the way for more contextualized understandings of mental illness.

Again, Freud argued that whenever human desires and drives, such as the creative use of language and labor, are suppressed or subjugated, people suffer, become psychologically and physically ill, and develop disorders. This holds true for segments of the working-class that are the most privileged and, therefore, part of middle-class consumer culture as well as the most exploited and oppressed parts of labor. As the middle-class shrinks, especially the white middle class, and as they increasingly fall victim to the housing market crash that African American and Latino families have been subjected to for far longer, the sense of stability and security of middle-class families suffers, leading to stress, obesity, and a plethora of ailments. Even in times of relative prosperity, the middle-class's satisfaction with life tends not to be significantly higher than workers who are not able to sell their labor power for as high a wage. Other recent studies support this conclusion, finding that the correlation between income and happiness is primarily an unfounded myth (Pressman, 2010).

The call for a democratic socialist future is, therefore, not only a call for a relatively high, constant standard of living globally, but it is a call for the sense of security and peace of mind that comes with knowing one's voice actually has equal weight in the important decisions concerning economics and politics that are currently monopolized by a handful of multinational corporate entities/capitalist governments.

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While there is widespread consensus among much of the radical left (a small subset within an already marginal left) that capitalism is a deeply flawed and inherently unequal and pathologizing system that must be abolished, there is little agreement about how this might happen. One of the age-old centers of debate, traced back most famously to Marx and his anarchist rival Mikhail Bakunin, is the role of the state in a post-capitalist revolutionary society. Marxists argue that in the transition from capitalism to socialism, the working class must not only take control of the means of production and the schools, but the nation or government as well. The idea is to use the capitalist state to destroy itself as well as to transition out of a market economy.

Anarchists, on the other hand, argue that government itself is an inherently repressive apparatus or tool, and any attempt to take control of it will inevitably lead to the reproduction of some form of oppression. Predictably enough, it is most commonly Stalinism, that inescapable stain that has irrevocably attached itself to the history of Marxism, that anarchist scholarship has focused on as a reason to reject the idea of the possible role of the state in creating real, paradigm-shifting change. That is, Stalinism's history of executing and sentencing peasants to labor prison camps in the name of progress for the Communist Party and educating its citizenry to support uncritically the state and even to sacrifice their lives for it, has led to great skepticism among the world's post-WWII left regarding seizing control of the state and even the means of production as outdated forms of revolutionary practice or pedagogy. Similarly, pro-capitalist forces draw on the 1989 fall of Soviet Communism as evidence against the relevancy of Marx's work.

However, offering a more complex understanding of the failure of the Russian Revolution (as well as Mao's China) in *Why Marx was Right*, Terry Eagleton (2011) begins by reminding his pro-capitalist readers that capitalism "was forged in blood and tears" (p. 12) just as deeply, and perhaps more so, than Stalin's Soviet Union or Mao's Communist China. In other words, while capitalism has worked "some of the time," it has done so, like Stalin and Mao's projects, "at a staggering human cost" (p. 15). Consequently, capitalism has "proved incapable of breeding affluence without creating huge swaths of deprivation alongside it" (Eagleton, 2011, p. 15). Global capitalism, since the second industrial revolution, outlined above, has therefore created a world of elite wealth and widespread poverty. Explaining the global structural reasons behind the failure of the Soviet Union, Eagleton (2011) notes that, "Marx himself never imagined that socialism could be achieved in impoverished conditions" (p. 16). Not only Marx but Lenin and Trotsky, according to Eagleton (2011), were quite aware that:

You cannot reorganize wealth for the benefit of all if there is precious little wealth to reorganize... You cannot abolish social classes in conditions of scarcity, since conflicts over a material surplus too meager to meet everyone's needs will revive them again... All you will get is socialized scarcity. If you need to accumulate capital... from scratch, then the most effective way of doing so, however brutal, is through the profit motive. Nor did Marxists ever imagine that it was possible to achieve socialism in one country alone. The movement was international or it was nothing. This was a hardheaded materialist claim, not a piously idealist one. If a socialist nation failed to win international support in a world where production

was specialized and divided among different nations, it would be unable to draw upon the global resources needed to abolish scarcity...The outlandish notion of socialism in one country was invented by Stalin in the 1920s, partly as a cynical rationalization of the fact that other nations had been unable to come to the aid of the Soviet Union. It has no warrant in Marx himself. (pp. 16-17)

Eagleton goes on to point out that global isolation and the resulting poverty are not the only barriers to socialism. That is, he argues that for socialism to emerge, what is required is a highly educated and “politically sophisticated” citizenry with “enlightened liberal traditions and the habit of democracy” (p. 18). Given that much of the world, to one extent or another, has been under colonial rule for the past 500 years (since Columbus washed up on the shores of what is now Haiti and the Dominican Republic in 1492), and, therefore, indoctrinated through capitalist schooling, religion, and/or authoritarian regimes with uncritical dogmatic thinking, the possibility for a global socialist future seems, to an extent, dependent upon the current effectiveness of critical pedagogy challenging the capitalist present.

Consequently, this debate is no longer purely theoretical but now has a complex history of failed states to inform it. British Marxist Alex Callinicos (2010), in *Bonfire of Illusions*, summarizes this debate brilliantly. Making a case for the use of government in working-class, anti-capitalist revolution, Callinicos (2010) argues that the state, since at least the 1930s (the Great Depression of 1929), has played an increasingly interventionist role in the economy, both on behalf of capital, and when labor can demand it, on behalf of workers or the vast majority. Callinicos (2010) then looks to the global South, as it were—that part of the world generally agreed upon by today’s left that has been the center of the global anti-capitalist movement since at least the 1990s, and possibly since the end of WWII (Chomsky, 1999)—as especially conscious of the expanding complexity of the global capitalist system and the subsequent necessity of an expansion of state intervention.

This movement has been significant and has led to the nationalization of the hydrocarbon industry in places such as Bolivia under Evo Morales due to his connection to the real demands of the organized, indigenous population that put him in office. However, Callinicos (2010) argues that it has, nevertheless, “often seemed reluctant to see an expansion in the state’s economic power” (p. 135). Placing this tendency in context, Callinicos’ (2010) insights are instructive: “Behind the suspicion of nationalization lies the memory of the bureaucratic state ownership introduced by Stalinism in the East and social democracy in the West” (p. 135). However, Callinicos (2010) argues that more recently, the theory of “autonomism” has posed the biggest challenge to nationalization because it is based on the belief that “we should forget about the state and try to develop localized alternatives to neoliberalism” (p. 135). While it seems reasonable that some degree of government intervention will likely be necessary in the transition out of capitalism, without the simultaneous anarchist or Indigenous community-building embodied in autonomism, indigeneity, and critical pedagogy more generally, then a truly democratic socialist life after capital will not likely emerge. Consequently, I would agree with Callinicos (2010) that by itself, autonomism is “hopeless” because it is not able to provide a solution to reversing “the privatization of hydrocarbons,” for example, which, in Bolivia, was the will of the people. However, I would also argue that nationalization too is hopeless without sufficient autonomous movement work and community building to counter the ways our identities have been shaped by capital. For Callinicos (2010), this debate focuses on the question of who will own particular industries when the people liberate them from corporate control. He

(2010) concludes that there is no alternative to nationalization because “the state is a national organization with both the coercive power and political legitimacy to carry through with something as ambitious as the takeover of the hydrocarbon industry” (Callinicos, 2010, p. 135). If this is true, then in the nationalization process, we must never lose sight of our *Anarchist Pedagogies* (Haworth, 2012).

Proceeding cautiously, however, Callinicos (2010) does warn against not repeating “the old mistake of traditional social democracy and identify the existing state as the main agency of progressive social change” (p. 136) because the bureaucratic, hierarchical state will “seek to maintain the domination of capital” even after nationalization. Consequently, “nationalization is not enough” (Callinicos, 2010, p. 136). Offering a framework for a revolutionary pedagogy, Callinicos (2010) explains:

Indeed, really to break with the logic of capital, any extension of the boundaries of state ownership would have to involve the introduction of forms of democratic self-management through which the workers of the nationalized industry together with the consumers of the products could collectively decide on how it should be run for the common benefit. Seriously addressing this question means breaking another taboo and talking, not just about state ownership, but also about planning. (pp. 136-7)

From here Callinicos (2010) briefly outlines some of the work being done that attempts to theorize what a possible global life after capital could actually look like in practice as a reason to bring up the issue of planning. For example, Michael Albert’s anarchist work on what he has called Participatory Economics or Parecon is outlined. Callinicos (2010) argues that while Albert’s work is part of a very important discussion about planning or a planned economy, his proposal still represents a market approach and will nevertheless eventually fall victim to the same kind of austerity measures any competitive capitalist system will always tend toward. What a post-capitalist society will look like, of course, depends on the values and assumptions about human nature and what desired relationships inform it. This, in turn, will depend on how strong or weak the democratic impulse OF? is. A truly post-capitalist society will therefore depend on maximal participation. Critical pedagogy, therefore, still has lots of important work to do assisting people in becoming *conscious of their own consciousness* that has been shaped by the *social* institutions of capitalist *society*, from schools to the mass corporate media.

If nothing else, what I hope to be clear about the complex, enormous task at hand—transcending a market economy and state—is that the challenges posed by creating a socialist alternative demands that the global left embrace all critical tools from anarchists, feminists, critical race theorists, critical postmodernists, animal rights activists, Earth First! eco-pedagogues, critical indigenous sovereignists, orthodox Marxists, neo-Marxists, humanist Marxists, and others. This is no small feat since many of our approaches are theoretically at odds with each other. For example, the call for the democratization of culture and reforming capitalism is theoretically at odds with challenging capitalist property relations, as I argued throughout this chapter. How we might come together despite our many ideological differences will not be easy, especially for those of us who are *academics* with our *egos* and senses of self-importance and righteousness. The importance of self-reflection is that it raises *consciousness* and thus makes apparent the ways in which we are shaped by schooling.

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