

Neoliberal and Neoconservative Immiseration Capitalism in England: Policies and Impacts on Society and on Education

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Abstract

In this article we firstly set out the facts about the current stage of capitalism, the Immiseration stage of neoliberal capitalism in England. We note its relationship with conservatism and neo-conservatism. We identify increased societal inequalities, the assault by the capitalist state on its opponents, and proceed to describe and analyse what neoliberalism and neo-conservatism have done and are doing to education in England- in the schools, further education, and university sectors. We present two testimonies about the impacts of neoliberalism/ neo-conservatism, one from the school sector, one from the further / vocational education sector, as a means of describing, analysing, and then theorising the parameters of the neoliberal/ neoconservative restructuring education and its impacts. We conclude by further theorising this. With the election of a Conservative majority in the 7 May 2015 general election in the UK, the policies and processes of neoliberalisation and neoconservatisation are being intensified.(1)

Key Words: immiseration, neoliberalism, neoconservative, education, policy

Introduction

Neoliberalism—marked, *inter alia*, by the marketisation, commodification, degradation of public services, managerialisation and privatisation/ preprivatisation of public services (Giroux, 2004; Harvey, 2005; Hill, 2013a, b; Hill and Kumar, 2009; Hill and Roskam, 2009)—does not come unaccompanied. It has a twin- and a sometimes fractious relationship with – neo-conservatism. Britain, together with the United States, is and has been one of the centres of neoliberal/neo-conservative transformation of economy, society, and of education globally.

PART ONE: The Neoliberal/Neoconservative Social and Economic Revolution in England and its Impacts

An Oxfam report (Haddad, 2012) called it the perfect storm':

rising unemployment and declining incomes, increases to the cost of housing and living, cuts to public services, welfare and benefits, and weak labour rights. In today's Britain thousands of children go to school hungry and come home in winter to dark or candlelit rooms, for it costs too much to turn on the lights. In the second decade of the C21st, in one of the world's richest and most developed economies, perhaps half a million people are reliant on foodbanks.

When the charity Save the Children surveyed 1500 children aged 8 to 16 from the poorest income –groups in 2012 , they found, ` 52% agreed that not having enough money made their parents unhappy or stressed, and 43% `agreed' or 'strongly agreed' that their parents were cutting back on things for themselves such as clothes or food. (Whitham, 2012:2)

The government's own statistics (Cribb, Joyce and Phillip, 2012) show how the poor get poorer in absolute terms and how average incomes have dropped by near-record amounts since the recession. At the same time, the very rich continue to secure staggering `bonuses' and enjoy a light regime of personal taxation.

After the longest and deepest recession since World War 2, study after study reveals shocking levels of income-inequality, health inequality and absolute poverty across the country. The neo-liberal policies pursued by successive Conservative governments in the 1980s and into the 1990s did more than reverse the small narrowing of income inequality that began to manifest itself in the 1970s. Those policies unleashed a dramatic intensification in income-inequality, the social consequences of which are with us still. The New Labour administrations after 1997 managed at best to stabilise the situation for adults. The Conservative/Liberal-Democrat Coalition government of 2010-2015 gave a further boost to inequality of all kinds. Cuts to welfare and other public spending, and harsh pay and pension policies, have hit the most socially-vulnerable at the same time as executive pay and bonuses have returned to levels comparable with those which characterised the months preceding the great financial crash of 2007/8.

Since 2008 the proportion of people living on an income less than the level necessary for a minimum acceptable living standard has increased year on year. In 2015, the definition of minimum income threshold assumes a single person of working age needs an income of £16,284. It suggests in the case of a couple with two children, each needs to reach an income threshold of £20,400. This amount is defined as the income required to have not just food, shelter and clothes, but also to be able to be a participant in society. It includes, for instance, the ability to pay for a week's holiday in the UK, or a second-hand car for families with children. It assumes no cigarettes or visits to the pub. The level was decided after discussion with the public through focus groups and has been used in the past as a benchmark for the living wage (Wintour, 2015). The latest research shows that families with children are at greatest risk of having an inadequate income with more than 1 in 3, or 8.1 million parents and children, falling into this category, up by more than a third since 2008. Those families headed by lone parents are under the greatest pressure, with 71% (2.3 million individuals) living below the required level, up from 65% (2.2 million) (Joseph Rowntree Foundation, 2015).

Increasing Inequality

Immiseration, both relative and absolute, has once more taken hold. “The 1,000 richest people in Britain became 30 % richer in the last year. That’s a £77 billion rise in wealth—enough to wipe out around half the government’s budget deficit” (Dorling, 2010a. See also Dorling 2010b). Whereas, for the masses, ‘Cuts push UK workers’ living standards back 30 years’ (Shaoul, 2012). ‘Working families struggling to make ends meet are worse off than they were 30 years ago’. Lansley points out that for workers,

In the year to June 2010, average real pay fell by 3.6 per cent, and then by a further 3.8 per cent in the year to June 2011. ...A significant minority of the workforce has suffered a mix of pay cuts and worsening conditions of work, including longer hours, cuts in fringe benefits such as car allowances, and reductions in holiday entitlement and maternity and paternity leave. (Lansley, 2012:29).

Reports by organisations such as The Joseph Rowntree Foundation (2014; full version at McInnes et al, 2014)) testify to the parameters/ aspects of poverty, low pay, reduction in welfare benefits. In the words of an *Independent* headline, (Morris, 2015) ‘Britain’s divided decade: the rich are 64% richer than before the recession, while the poor are 57% poorer.

the average wealth of the best-off, one-fifth of families rose by 64 per cent between 2005 and 2012-13 as they put more money aside as a buffer against future shocks. They have average Savings and investments of around £10,000 compared with £6,000 seven years earlier.... However, the SMF found the poorest 20 per cent are less financially secure than they were in 2005, with their net wealth falling by 57 per cent and levels of debt and use of overdrafts increasing. Meanwhile, the inter-generational gap in incomes and wealth has widened significantly. The wages of those aged 26 to 35 fell steeply and they are far less likely to be property owners, with the proportion in this age bracket who are buying a home falling from nearly three-quarters in 2005 to just over half in 2012-13.... On average, they have less than a week’s income in savings, owe 45 per cent more money than they did in 2005 and are increasingly running up overdrafts to pay their bills. (Morris,

2015, reporting on the May 2015 report by the Social Market Foundation, *Wealth in the Downturn: Winners and Losers*).

In addition to the hunger, stress and despair which are the fruits of such an unequal society, these widening gaps in income and wealth, accompanied as they are by the decline in services, welfare and labour benefits, will result in the poor dying even earlier on average than the rich.

The Neoliberal/ Neoconservative attack on its 'enemies'.

The Attack on Elected Local Councils/ Local Authorities

A hall-mark of neo-liberalism and new public managerialism in Britain has been the stripping of local authority powers to directly provide, manage and control education services. Colin Copus (2001:479) describes British local government as "constitutionally unprotected from the political ideologies, policies, priorities, and, indeed, caprice of central government. Nowhere is this more evident than in the provision of education.

In 1902 local education authorities (LEAs) replaced school boards and took on responsibility for technical education. Their role expanded (school meals in 1906, medical inspection in 1907) until the 1988 Education Reform Act. This introduced local management of schools and independence for polytechnics and colleges of higher education. This was followed by the transformation of further education colleges into corporations in 1993. Subsequent education policies have put a further distance between councils and direct provision of education (Parish et al., 2012:5). Power, both financial/ budgetary and policy making have been wrest from local authorities and national government has established stand-alone institutions, such as Academy schools, Further Education Colleges and Universities with 'freedoms' that weaken accountability to communities. (Under the 1944 Education Act- which was replaced by the 1988 Education Reform Act and its successors- directly elected local councillors had representation

on and some powers over the policies of schools, colleges and universities, though less so with universities).

Local authorities (LAs) have accepted or resisted central government's re-shaping of their role, to differing degrees and with regional variations. Their statutory responsibilities have narrowed to ensuring sufficient supply of school places, facilities for children and young people with special education needs, post-16 participation and minimising the number of young people not in education, employment and training. The neo-liberal journey since the 1980s, has led down a marketised and competitive road, with a customer/client split imposed across public services, competitive tendering and the substitution of commissioned rather than directly provided services. The effects on education have been incremental, as successive governments have driven the agenda forward towards a fragmented system, ripe for privatisation and sale. (Parish et al., 2012)

The Attack on Trade Unions and Education Workers' Rights.

The Conservative-Liberal Democrat Coalition government of 2010-2015, as do governments in general, understand that organised workers can mount the most potent defence of the poorest in society. Uniquely positioned under capitalism because they are organised at the point of production, such workers have the power to disrupt for sustained periods or to halt the process whereby capital expands. Hence the desire on the part of the government to keep and strengthen existing anti-trade union laws, and further to weaken trade unions. Union-density in the UK has halved from a high of some 13 million members in 1979. Around 26% of the workforce, or 6.5 million people, currently belong to unions in the UK, the same number as in the early 1940s. There has been a declining trend historically, though union-membership in the private sector has increased in each of the past two years (to 2.6 million).

In terms of defending the welfare state and fending off immiseration, the main problem has less to do with the sheer number of union-members or the density of membership in particular sectors, and more with the depressed level of class-consciousness. The residual effects on trade union leaders of, firstly, the defeats inflicted by the Conservative administrations between 1979 and 1997, in particular the government defeat of the National Union of Miners in 'The Great Miners; Strike' of 1984-1985) and secondly the maintenance by New Labour of draconian anti-trade union laws, has also played a part in weakening the overall labour movement and sapping its self-confidence. An important aspect of the impact of neo-liberalism on workers' organisation- on trade unions- is the intense fragmentation of services with a multiplicity of employers. Over 80 per cent of the workforce was covered by collective bargaining in the 1970s whereas now (2015) it is just over 20 per cent. Together with anti-trade union legislation, casualisation, and the break-up of industries, it has made organising labour a much more difficult task than previously.

Additionally, sustained high levels of unemployment, combined with widespread under-employment (as workers are forced by economic circumstances to accept shorter hours and worsened conditions) have laid the ground for varieties of super-exploitation, notably through intensified casualisation.

The spread of 'zero-hours' contracts offers one example. Of these, a 2013 Guardian report comments:

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

In the period from April to June 2014, an estimated 622,000 people in Great Britain were on zero-hour contracts. The majority of these were: female; young 9 aged between sixteen and twenty-four); working part-time; working in

Accommodation and Food Services or Health and Social work; and working an average of twenty four hours a week (compared to thirty seven hours for all workers) (Office for National Statistics, 2014).

The scope and contentious nature of zero-hours contracts was acknowledged by the UK government who ran a public consultation on the subject from December 2013 to March 2014 (Department for Business Innovation and Skills, 2013). However, the consultation was limited to the concerns around the transparency of the contracts and the inclusion of exclusivity clauses. Following the consultation the only reform in the use of zero-hour contracts has been to ban the exclusivity clauses, as announced by the then Business Secretary, Vince Cable, in a press release that also emphasised their importance in offering flexible working opportunities (Department for Business Innovation and Skills, 2014).

A government report on the issue of zero-hours contracts in Scotland, however, acknowledges much wider problems: that the flexibility of the contracts benefit only employers, and workers are too fearful of dismissal to not accept proffered work, no matter how inconvenient; many employers are either ignorant of zero-hours workers' rights, or are wilfully blocking access to them; it is unrealistic to expect low-paid workers to challenge unscrupulous employees through an expensive legal system. The use of zero-hours contracts is creating a two-tier workforce; at present there is no legal definition of zero-hours contracts and, although this is necessary, it should not be enshrined until there is legislation minimising the use of such contracts, and ensuring workers' rights; and that the alarming increase in the use of zero-hours contracts must be reduced as a matter of urgency (House of Commons Scottish Affairs Committee, 2014). None of these concerns were publicly acknowledged by the Conservative- Liberal Democrat Coalition government of 2010-2015, or by the Conservative government since its election in May 2015.

Even among some of those with the sharpest interest in seeking to revive and sustain global capitalism it is argued that the unprecedented growth in income inequality is not a sign of underlying strength but a key driver of instability. A recent IMF working-party report presented a revealing analysis:

This paper makes both an empirical and a theoretical case that increases in income inequality tend to lead to increases in current account deficits in developed economies. Our stylized facts and cross-sectional econometric evidence are strongly supportive of this hypothesis. They suggest that the magnitude of the effect is large, to the point that for the United Kingdom it can approximately explain the entire current account deterioration experienced between the late 1970s and 2007. (Kumhof et al., 2012: 25)

In the 2015 general election campaign (in which one of us, Hill, was a candidate for the Trade Unionist and Socialist Coalition) (VoteDaveHillFacebook, 2015) the issue of zero hours contracts became a prominent issue. The then Labour Party leader, Ed Miliband promised to abolish most such contracts. By 2015 there were 'an estimated 1.8m people in Britain on zero hours contracts and Labour's new pledge would give 90 per cent of them the right to move to a regular contract if they wished' (Grice, 2015). The then, and current, Department of Work and Pensions Minister, Ian Duncan-Smith, on the other hand, 'thinks zero-hours contracts aren't that bad, they just have an image problem' and said in TV interviews that zero-hours contracts 'were "wrongly named" and should be re-branded "flexible hours"' (Elgot, 2014).

Regarding Trade Unions, following their election victory in 2015, one of the very first policy announcements of the new government was that there will be new legislation, restricting the ability of trade unions to go on strike. The new law 'will outlaw any strike not voted for by at least 40% of eligible union members. But in the case of 'essential' public services – health, education, transport and fire services – 40% of those voting have to have voted in favour. In other words, 80% Turnouts must reach 50%. And 'current "scab" laws that ban employers

from hiring temporary agency staff to fill in for strikers will be abolished. (Toynbee, 2015). As Toynbee further notes,

Britain already has among the toughest strike laws in the EU. Unions must give seven days' notice before a strike ballot and then wait another seven days before striking. Rules about ballots are so complex that it's easy for employers to take out injunctions for small infringements. .. A 40% threshold is remarkably high, since David Cameron's government rules on just 24% of the electorate, with only 66% turning out (Toynbee, 2015)

PART TWO: The Neoliberal/Neoconservative Education Revolution in England and its Impacts

Education, together with other public services in Britain, has been subject to neoliberalisation since at least the Thatcher governments of 1979-90, the most far-reaching through the Education Reform Act of 1988, the fruit of many years' work by hard-right elements to construct "an education-system which is divisive, elitist and inegalitarian' (O'Hear, 1991:38; Hill, 1997). Neoliberalism, in the form of taking away education institutions from democratically elected control and placing them as stand-alone institutions, occurred with the separation of Further Education Colleges and Universities from Local Education Authorities in the early 1990s.

This established classic neoliberal policies of prompting the marketisation of schooling (through "parental choice" and through "league tables" of schools ranked by published test results.) It also (together with the 1986 Education Act and subsequent legislation) changed the composition of school-governing bodies, adding "business" governors, and reducing the numbers and influence of governors appointed by locally democratically elected councils. And under the "Local Management of Schools" (LMS) section of the 1988 act, local authority/school district influence was further weakened, when budgetary control was partially handed to school head teachers, principals and governing bodies, taking most budgetary control away from the democratically elected local education authorities (LEAs) (Ball, 1990; Hill, 1997, 2001).Full

delegation of funding to individual schools began in 2001 and has been a gradual process reaching its apotheosis with the Academy funding agreements that bypass LEAs altogether, with direct funding from the (national) Education Funding Agency. In the further education and the higher education sectors, LEAs were also estranged significantly from education in 1992 when polytechnics became universities, and in 1993 when Further Education Colleges and Sixth Form Colleges became corporations, no longer under the control of LEAs.

Thus, Conservative policy aimed by granting budgetary autonomy to set schools 'free' from local democratic oversight, to re-managerialise schools colleges and universities (through what has been called 'new public management' characterised by often brutalist, top-down control), to establish conservative curricula, to mobilise inter-school academic competition through high stakes testing and the establishment of 'league' tables, and to increase control and surveillance over teachers (and university staff). Again, a classic mix of neoliberal and neoconservative policies, the combination of what Andrew Gamble (1988) termed 'The Free Economy and the Strong State'.

Successive Conservative (1979-87), New Labour (1997-2010), Conservative-Liberal Democrat Coalition (2010-2015) and Conservative (2015) governments have intensified the neoliberalisation of schools, colleges and universities dramatically, alongside cuts in funding. One notable recent cut was (from September 2011) that of EMAs, education maintenance allowances, paid to young people aged 16-19 from poor families, of (usually) £30 a week, to encourage them to stay on at school. One of us (Dave Hill) benefited from a similar scheme in the 1960s; one of Dave Hill's grandsons received an EMA, 2006-2009. Most EMA recipients were in college, which is where two-thirds of 16-19 year olds are. For university students the free university education that, for example, the writers of this article received (other than the younger in age, Julia Carr) received has been replaced by the imposition of annual university tuition fees of (usually) £9,000

per annum (see Hill, 2010a). The New Labour—i.e., neoliberalised Labour government of Tony Blair—abandoned free university education and introduced tuition fees in 1998. It was the Blair New Labour government of 1997-2007 that introduced the Academy Schools, state schools handed over to private chains and corporations to run, as yet, in England, on a non-profit making basis, in the neoliberal ideological belief that 'private business knows best', and can run/ manage public services better than can the public sector.

Ideologically these neoliberal developments can be interpreted as "the businessification" of education, the softening up, the preparation for the wholesale privatisation of schools, vocational colleges (called, in Britain, Further Education colleges; sixth form colleges and university technical colleges (academies), and universities.

Following the election of a majority Conservative Party government in the 7 May 2015 general election in the UK, replacing the previous Conservative-Liberal Democrat Coalition government of 2010-2015, the Conservative government has announced plans to considerably extend the number of Academy Schools, up to 1,000 schools judged 'inadequate' by the school inspections body, Ofsted, and to abolish the right of parents, teacher and local communities to be involved in the decision making process. The new law will force councils and governing bodies to convert struggling schools into academies (Vaughan, 2015).

Such policies continually fail to ensure that educational needs are everywhere met. Even in the matter of the provision of school-places the neo-liberal approach cannot guarantee adequate supply. The National Audit Office predicted a shortfall in school-places of 256,000 by 2014-15, rising to perhaps 440,000 at the end of the decade (NAO, 2013:7).The vast majority of this shortfall will manifest itself in the primary phase, where classroom-overcrowding is already significant.

Marketisation and High Stakes Testing and their Impacts

With schools in England, there is now a system of market competition between individual schools. Under the 1944 Education Act, which the Thatcher 1988 Education Act replaced, local authorities and school districts, which were directly elected, had allocated children/students to schools, sometimes taking into account a degree of parental choice, but sometimes attempting to ensure that within a largely comprehensive or all-ability intake of students, there was a mix of students of all "bands" of ability or attainment (Hill, 1997, 2001), what in the US is termed all "tracks" of students. In many local education authorities/ school districts there were, in the 1960s, 1970s and 1980s, distinct attempts at social mixing.

Neoliberalism requires that in a market, it is necessary to be able to test the efficiency and value of the products. In England there is now a very rigid system of testing children at different ages, even when they first enter the schools. That could be at either age four or five. As result of the exam results of the children, of the assessment results of the children, there becomes a league table in every municipality; in every part of the country, in every area, there are league tables of schools. It is middle-class parents who have the means, the cars, the ability to pay transport costs, to take the children to the schools that have higher results, which may be some distance away.

The Conservative governments in Britain, those of Thatcher (1979–1990) and of John Major (1990–1997), introduced and extended what they termed "school choice," or, more specifically, "parental choice." However, in such systems it is not the parents who choose; it is the (more prestigious, high-attaining) schools that choose the children/students, the "preferred" children/students being those with high test scores and "acceptable" (high status, "middle class") cultural capital (Gewirtz, Ball, & Bowe, 1995; Gillborn & Youdell, 2002; Sellgren, 2013; Weekes-Bernard, 2007). This has led to considerably increased hierarchy and elitism within the state

education system, elitism that is social class based and also based on ethnicity(Weekes-Bernard, 2007).

This leads to much increased hierarchy and elitism within the state education system, elitism that is “raced” and social class based. The Academies Commission Report of January 2013, *Unleashing Greatness* (Academies Commission, 2013), says it has received numerous submissions suggesting that “academies are finding methods to select covertly,” that some academies may covertly select pupils by using extra information on families or holding social events with prospective parents (Sellgren, 2013). The report says it has received evidence that some popular schools, including academies, attempt to select and exclude pupils—despite the fact that the government admissions code says that schools cannot interview children or parents or give priority to children whose parents offer financial or practical support (Sellgren, 2013).

That is one aspect of the neoliberalisation in schooling, a class-based increased hierarchicalisation of schools. And this choice is facilitated by the creation of the league tables of schools and of universities, schools of schools and universities sorted by high-stakes exam results. It needs noting that this discussion is about state schools, that is, publicly funded schools. In the UK, 93% of school students attend state schools, with 7% attending private schools.

Academies, the Pre-privatisation of Schools, and Covert Selection of Pupils/Students

The concept of an ‘academy’ was originally a New Labour idea, inspired by the Conservative attempt to establish City Technology Colleges in the 1980s. Homage was duly paid when the first tranche of these new establishments were labelled City Academies. They were designed ‘to make a difference to areas of disadvantage’ by allowing private sector sponsors to take over allegedly-underperforming or ‘failing’ state secondary schools (*Some of the early ones were all-*

through, 3-18.) schools with tax-payers' money. Sponsors were given freedoms to run the schools more like businesses. These freedoms included being exempt from local authority oversight. This process built on the earlier 'Local Management of Schools' (LMS) section of the 1988 Act, whereby budgetary control over money allocated to a school by the LEA was handed to school Headteachers/ Principals and Governing Bodies, weakening local authority (LA) or school district influence. (Ball, 1990; Hill, 1997, 2001)

The Academies and latterly the Free Schools programmes (Free Schools are a variety of Academy, that can be set up by a group of parents) are major components of the gradual re-configuration-cum-dismantling of State educational provision. They are state funded schools that are taken out of local authority control, and are run by private control, usually by a chain of academy schools. Thus, in the school sector, state-funded schools are actually being handed over to private companies, to chains of schools, to a variety of religious organisations, to become academies. They were formerly known as City Academy Schools (Beckett, 2007; see also Anti-Academies Alliance, n.d., Benn, 2011).

When the Conservative-Liberal Democrat Coalition came into power in May 2010, there were just over 200 Academies. Now, in 2015, over half of England's state secondary schools are Academies. As of June 2015, there are 4,676 academies open in England. There are hundreds more in the pipeline (BBC News, 2015) including more than half of secondary schools—have taken on academy or free-school status (Syal, 2014). Since the Conservatives came to power in 2010, they have 'given away over 3000 schools to unaccountable private sector interests for free. That is over £10 billion (\$16.4 billion USD) of publicly owned property given away for free to unaccountable pseudo-charities, several of them operated by Conservative party donors'. (Clarke, 2014).

Sponsors, governance and control

Some 'philanthropists' have brought controversy with their sponsorship. One such is Peter Vardy, millionaire car dealer and evangelical Christian. He established the Emmanuel Schools Foundation to manage his education interests, including academies. The teaching of creationism in the Doncaster academy hit the newspaper headlines as well as another principal's attitude to homosexuality. "The bible says clearly that homosexual activity is against god's design. I would indicate that to young folk", Nigel McQuoid told the Observer. In 2007 a Vardy academy was in the press again, when a teacher, himself a Methodist lay preacher, reported to the local newspaper in Teesside that an interview at the academy had been more about theology than teaching. He reported being asked if he believed in Noah's Ark.

Other millionaires have sponsored academies: the world's biggest conference organiser, Lord Irvine Laidlaw; property magnate, car importer and scientologist, Bob Edmiston and Roger de Haan, of Saga holidays. Lord Harris of Peckham, the carpet magnate, sponsors a chain of academies, based in south London. He was the subject of a Times Higher Education Supplement report as the principal benefactor of an Oxford college, Harris Manchester, where there were questions over finance and governance in 1999.

A number of academies have used the language of Thatcher's notoriously homophobic Clause 28 when drawing up policies to do with the teaching of Sex and Relationships, so that such policies prohibit the 'promotion' of homosexuality (Gaystar News, 2013). As Gaystar News reports, 'many more UK schools are found to have banned the promotion of 'gay' issues in schools, an echo of Section 28 from the 1980s. Gay Star News revealed earlier today academies are using Sex and Relationships Education policies to ban the promotion of homosexuality. Since the article was published, more schools have been found with anti-gay policies'.

There has been concern that academies are employing the services of companies linked to their sponsors. In August 2004, Times Education Supplement (TES) reported that West London Academy had spent £180,964 for training and personnel services to businesses and a charity linked to its sponsor, Alec Reed of Reed Executive Plc. £290,214 had also been paid by King's Academy to organisations linked to Peter Vardy for marketing, recruitment and educational advice. There was no evidence that contracts had been put out to tender or three quotes obtained as required in community schools and by European Union regulations. In 2007 it was reported that Bob Edmiston's Grace Foundation had awarded three contractsworth £281,000 over two years for payroll and management services for the Grace academy, to the IM group, owned by Edmiston. It also paid £53,000 for management services to his foundation, Christian Vision. The coalition academies and free school model with their purchasing power and 'freedoms' may be more appealing to private companies. The increasing number of academies may offer economies of scale in a £100 billion market. The New Schools Network was awarded £500,000 by the DfE in June 2010 to oil the wheels of school-based industry.

The sponsors of academies have grown significantly; Oasis Learning grew from a £3 million concern in 2006 to £70 million in 2010, while Absolute Return for Kids (ARK) academy chain reached £117.5 million from the same £3 million starting point. The chains require an extra layer of often highly paid management. Bruce Liddington of E-ACT was paid a salary of £265,000 with an infamous expense account, exposed by whistleblowers in April 2010. Multinational consulting and business companies, like Mouchel, provided services for BSF and have interests in school buildings, ICT, back offices functions and managing academies.

At January 2012, there were 117 single academy sponsors, but 570 academies in chains of three or more. The education system is becoming a market of complex contractual and

governance relations. Some sponsors may be driven by the best of intentions, but there are no mechanisms for differentiating them from those who are not.

Academy schools, such as those run by the E-Act chain, which runs 35 schools, are characterized by “extravagant expenses claims, first-class rail travel and ‘a culture of prestige venues’ for meeting” (Clarke, 2014). A high-profile example is Academies Enterprise Trust (AET) (which pays six figure salaries to 20 of their staff, paying some of them more than the British prime minister, and salaries far in excess of those in the state non-academy sector, and “which has been procuring ‘services’ from their own directors and trustees to the tune of half a million pounds, none of the contracts agreed under competitive tender” (Clarke, 2014).

Syal (2014) comments that “taxpayer-funded academy chains have paid millions of pounds into the private businesses of directors, trustees and their relatives, documents obtained from freedom of information requests show.” To take one example, in July 2013 the UK’s “largest taxpayer funded chain, the Academy Enterprise Trust, came under fire following revelations of almost £500,000 worth of payments made to private businesses owned by its trustees and executive” (Syal, 2014). A more recent example (Weale, 2015) is that of Sir Greg Martin, head of the Durand academy in Southwell, who ‘faced questions about his earnings, alleged to be more than £400,000, made up of his head’s salary plus income from a firm called GMG, which runs the London Horizons leisure facilities on the Stockwell school site’.

At the end of January 2015, a cross party House of Commons education select committee report found no evidence that academies raise standards, either for disadvantaged students, or overall (Weale, 2015; NUT, 2015) . A recent NAO report (2014) evaluated the Academies programme as follows: ‘The Department for Education has not demonstrated the effectiveness of the different interventions it and others make

in underperforming maintained schools and academies', The House of Commons Select Committee on Education 's report of January 2015 (Weale, 2015) said that `although it was clear that academisation led to greater competition which helped drive improvement in schools, there was not yet proof that academies raised standards either for disadvantaged children or overall' and `called on the government to stop exaggerating the success of academies'.

Less than a week later the Education secretary, Nicky Morgan, announced a new, punitive policy in her self-proclaimed war on illiteracy and innumeracy. Primary schools in England with a percentage of eleven year olds who fail to pass times tables and writing tests will be forced to become academies (Adams, 2015). With no evidence that academy status will lead to improvements for pupils, it would appear that the only perceived benefit of this punitive policy is to promote neo-liberal ideology? And, following his re-election as Prime Minister of a majority Conservative government, David Cameron announced his belief that `every school should become an Academy'.(BBC Education, 2015)

Pay and Conditions in Academies

Academies are free to employ staff on their own pay rates and conditions of service. Although regulations provide some protection for staff transferring from community schools to academies, new staff can be employed on inferior conditions. In 2007, a TUC report suggested that competition for teachers was preventing major deviation from national agreements. It referred to Ofsted, which suggested that in a number of academies high levels of staff turnover had resulted in the recruitment of large numbers of newly qualified staff. It also said that staff were experiencing a loss of autonomy. PWC reported in 2008 that academies employ more teachers without qualified teacher status (12 per cent) than community schools (five per cent). This was despite the fact that funding agreements for their sample required teachers to be qualified; something that they no longer do. In 2007 the National Audit Office (NAO) noted that academies find it hard to retain good

teachers. The (now abolished) General Teaching Council (GTC) expressed concerns that teachers at academies did not have to register with it. This meant that a teacher banned for misconduct could be employed by an academy. After concerted lobbying, it was agreed that academy teachers should register with the GTC, but this only applied to new appointments. The coalition government abolished the GTC and central government took on the role of regulator. There were also reports of staff being asked to sign gagging clauses in contracts, which stopped them talking about academy decisions or questioning them. The NAO noted that there is an emphasis in academies on strong or perhaps heroic leadership. This has led to inflation in salaries with principals earning between £18,000 and £32,000 more than headteachers in community schools. Support staff are even more vulnerable than teachers as their terms and conditions are LA-based with no national grades. When schools have become academies there has been a need to start at square one with negotiations on terms and conditions for new staff and some conditions of service, such as sick pay, have worsened significantly.

Covert Selection

There are a number of reports, such as Walker (2013) that describe the forms of covert selection used by Academy schools in their pursuit of getting a 'higher quality' intake of students. The programme has been radically expanded via the Academies Act 2010 (rushed through *The House of Lords* by the Education Secretary using emergency powers) to allow *those schools rated outstanding*, primary or secondary, and not only schools that are 'underperforming', to become an Academy. Some schools can also be required to convert to academy status.

Academies were also exempted from a requirement to teach the National Curriculum, and from adhering to national pay and conditions legislation for staff. The premise was that injecting competition will improve standards.

Following the necessary changes to primary legislation (which a re-elected Conservative government can easily put forward following its majority win at the May 2015 general election) at the stroke of the Ministerial pen such schools could become fully independent, fully-private schools, offered for sale on the market as assets comprising buildings, land, facilities, staff and clients. One model for this is the USA where some Academy-style Charter schools—still supposedly state schools—are run ‘for profit’ by multinational and national-capital companies.

A public policy without public consent

Academies in their first incarnation were a New Labour government policy, which sat against a background of increasing opposition from a wide range of organisations and individuals. When sponsorship money did not materialise, the rules were changed to dispense with it. When not enough schools were showing interest, establishing an academy became a required part of Building Schools for the Future (BSF) and targeted schools were forced to change to academy status. Existing City Technology Colleges and even independent schools were invited to become academies. When business sponsors did not show enough interest, public sector organisations were encouraged to step forward.

At change of government in 2010, when the Conservative-Liberal Democrat Coalition came into power, the academy programme was expanded significantly. ‘Outstanding schools’ were fast-tracked to ‘converter’ academy status with liberalised funding agreements and sweetener finance. The local authority was distanced from academies and targeted schools were pressurised into conversion regardless of local wishes. Any obstacles to mass academy conversion were swept away. And, as has been noted above, the new Conservative government of 2015 will force many more schools to become Academies.

Opposition to Academies

The Anti-Academies Alliance (AAA) has been in the forefront of opposition and has supported local campaigns against the

establishment of academies. It has grown into a broad-based pressure group with union backing and community links. There have been various local campaigns led by parents, with councillors, community groups and trade unions, to fend off the establishment of a local academy.

The people of Islington mobilised against the establishment of two academies in their area. One scheme ran into difficulty because the proposed site was too small, but the other was subjected to a significant community campaign. The sponsor, ARK, hedge fund tycoon, Arpad Busson, backed by Goldman Sachs, withdrew after there had been a lobby outside its offices and sustained local media attention. The Corporation of London later opened an academy in Islington. Parents, children and school staff in Coventry protested against the proposed establishment of two academies at a council meeting in January 2006. The plan was to form an academy from a merger of two existing schools and to turn a third school into an academy sponsored by Bob Edmiston. He proceeded to open academies in Coventry and Solihull. Sometimes, campaigns have seen off a sponsor, only to be replaced by another. Jasper Conran withdrew his sponsorship of an academy in Waltham Forest, London, after strong local opposition from parents and unions. The government sought an alternative sponsor in ULT and Jasper Conran expressed an interest in sponsoring an academy somewhere less resistant. New wave academy conversion has drawn strong parent opposition from Chorlton to Brighton and notably in Haringey, the first high profile resistance to forced conversion of Downhill's Primary School. The Save Downhill's Campaign was a broad alliance which forced the Secretary of State to halt the conversion and concede a new Ofsted inspection.

Curriculum and Exams

The main aspects of neo-conservatism as they relate to education can be seen as:

1. Control of Curricula: of schools, teacher education, universities, the removal of dangerous content;

2. Control of Pedagogy: teaching methods, pedagogic relations between teacher and students;
3. Control of Students: through debt and through actual or fear of unemployment;
4. Control of Teachers and Professors: through surveillance and through a culture of having to meet targets, punishment of dissidents and union activists;, dismissals and closures of schools, closures of university departments

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

Margaret Thatcher herself looked at some of the original curriculum proposals presented by the hand-picked Conservative subject committees and rejected them as 'too liberal'. As I have written elsewhere (Hill, 1997) she changed the curriculum. That represents an element of state control, control of the free market, and an example of where neoliberalism, 'free choice', is accompanied by state supervision/ control.

Regarding curriculum content, in Britain in 2014, the centenary of the start of the First World War, the neoconservative (and neoliberal) secretary of state for education, Michael Gove, attempted to insist that schoolchildren be taught that the war was a grand patriotic war fought to "protect little Belgium" from German aggression. He decried the antiwar sentiments of television programs such as *Blackadder* and films such as *Oh What a Lovely War* that showed the war as senseless slaughter resulting from a quarrel between the ruling families of Europe, tied in with a clash of imperialisms and imperialist expansionism, particularly in Africa

Former Secretary of State for Education (2010-2014), Michael Gove, was vocal in his belief that education is one of the hallmarks of a civilised society, binding society together whilst allowing individuals to write their own life story (Gove, 2009). An unproblematic, and somewhat unexceptional belief, until he propounded his ideas on what the education system should look like in order to deliver these aims. His vision was based on his personal experience of, and regard for, a traditional, subject-based, rigorous grammar school education.

The injustice perpetrated by the tripartite system was, at least, transparent. Today's complex tangle of academies, community schools, foundation schools, grammar schools and free schools obscures the ongoing injustice of a traditional, subject-based curriculum which overtly offers social mobility, whilst covertly reinforcing the status quo.

Since summer 2014, the new Secretary of State for Education, Nicky Morgan, whilst keeping a much lower public profile than her predecessor, has continued with his promotion of a traditional, subject-based curriculum and has re-iterated Gove's pronouncement, shortly before he left office, that children should be taught "British values".

Teachers in Schools and Colleges: Pay, Conditions and Performance related Pay

The Education Secretary (2010-2014) Michael Gove put his department on what he himself described to *The Times* newspaper in December 2012 as 'a war footing'. He maintained a pay-policy which resulted in a pay-cut of 13% in real terms over three years. He also significantly increased required pension-contributions. He goaded teachers' union leaders, calling them ideologically-driven and out-of-touch with their members, and advanced plans for regional, as opposed to national pay scales. From Sept 2013 teacher pay increases and progression up the pay spine has been dependent on headteacher appraisals, with all the scope this allows for local injustices.

Related to the latter, since September 2013 teachers' pay has been related to performance, 'Performance related Pay' (PRP). The removal of national, predictable pay-increase pay scales will further demoralize teachers, with payment by result being seen as essentially de-professionalising the profession. It will inevitably mean that teachers will be more coerced to teach to the test, neglecting the real focus, which should be learning and teaching. Christine Blower, General Secretary of the National Union of Teachers, the largest teachers' union, denounced the reform (National Union of Teachers, 2013) arguing that:

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

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

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

Managerialism and Surveillance of Teachers and Lecturers

Stevenson continues, describing a relentless drive to raise productivity, teachers have often found themselves the victims of unwelcome change in which they have had their professional judgment curtailed, witnessed the increasing managerialisation of the educational process, and been subjected to ever more

forensic scrutiny of their work by external agencies (Ball, 2003).

These developments have inevitably affected the work pressures on teachers and resulted in an intensification of the labor process of teaching'... `(Smyth, Dow, Hattam, Reid, & Shacklock, 2000)'.

The view of one teacher, James, (cited in Hill, 2013c) view is that

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

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

James continues,

I'm not suggesting that as teachers we are not accountable for students' attainment in our lessons, but there is a limit on our ability to be accountable, and certainly a limit on how that accountability is tracked; lesson plans, intervention documentation by teachers—what have you done about student x, y and z? Why are they still failing?! Documentation on each student, and each aspect of a student accounted for on your lesson plan (such as average reading age; SEN status; Gifted and Talented status; preferred learning style (VAK), learning goal; current grade.

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

The voices of the Unions are quieter than they once were in schools, there are still those brave enough to speak out on behalf of those who must not be named to senior management, even though they do ask 'and who thinks that?' but more recently it has had to be a case of safety in large numbers. We had a Joint Union meeting of the NUT (National Union of Teachers) and NASUWT (National Association of Schoolmasters/Union of Women Teachers) where we agreed on 'work to rule' principles the unions had set out, but the added pressures being placed on staff meant that we signed a petition. One member of staff set it up, and had to guarantee at least 60 signatures before he would show it to the head. Staff feel they can be got rid of so easily now. Having spoken to a Union leader in the school, she said staff are just too afraid to speak out now, because they know that if senior management want rid of you, they can do it now.

Senior management can observe you with their performance management duties (in some schools this may be once a year, in this, once every term). There are the 'learning walks' where they can 'pop into' your lesson (for how ever long they choose—this may have a different label, but it has the same effect on their view of your teaching, and your anxiety levels). There are also 'book looks', which have always been done, but now they must be standardised (making sure there are comments on how students can improve, and asking a 'Learning Development Question', which the students must answer. This is to tick another box in case Ofsted arrive). And the over-riding view of the reasons for many of these quality initiatives, is that if Management want you out, they will force you out with the amount of pressure they will place on you from the observations, or you will slip up in an observation, which can then be used against you.

I was observed on a learning walk by a member of senior management, she came in as the class were doing an activity, there was music on in the background, I was sat at my desk looking over a student's book. The member of staff left after a few minutes. At the end of the day I received an email from my head of department, who had received an email from the senior management observer. It was a complaint that I hadn't got up and gone over to greet her at the door. She didn't see the reason why I was playing that music and so therefore thought it questionable. The fact I was sat at my desk also gave her cause for concern, especially as another member of staff had also seen me sat at my desk once when they had walked past my classroom and looked inside through the window in the door.

This type of micro management is something you may expect from working in a cubicle in an office. How teachers relate to students, how they engage them, is being written out in a memo, so Ofsted can tick it off. (cited in Hill, 2013c)

Neoliberalism, Managerialism and Vocational/ Further Education colleges

Further Education colleges exhibit neoliberal policy and its impacts starkly. These are working class institutions, staffed by working class people, teaching predominantly working class students. They have a much lower unit of funding per student than do schools or universities. They have 3 million students a year, twice as many 16 to 18 year olds as there are in schools, 100,000 14 -15 year olds, apprentices, and two million adults trying to upskill. They still deliver 85 per cent of Higher National Certificates (HNCs) and 68 per cent of foundation degrees. (Association of Colleges, 2015).

The following is a written report, previously unpublished, written in summer 2013 by two experienced further education teachers. It is included here because it encapsulates and highlights aspects of managerialisation and financialisation of education in England. The following is their experience and reflective analysis of what happened in one 'sixth form college' (state funded college for 16-19 year olds):

Once upon a time there was a happy team of people who worked hard, and enjoyed their jobs. They were teachers in a sixth form college. They were well qualified, enthusiastic, professional individuals who were keen for their students to do well. But all of this changed in 2005 when the principal of the Sixth Form College declared that a new college was to be established by himself and the principal of a local Further Education college. He was keen to emphasise that this was not a merger. He explained that 16 - 19 year olds in the area would benefit from a broader and more exciting curriculum, which in turn would lead to raised revenue. Higher quality buildings and resources would result in higher student numbers and the future of the college would be secured. Marketisation arrived uncompromisingly in our classrooms. 'Greater choice for the consumer, combined with raised standards through enforced competition' with other colleges. It quickly became apparent that

we were obliged to value what we monitored rather than monitor what we valued.

Staff on the sixth form site were reassured that their sixth form contracts would be honoured and tutors from the FE college would enjoy enhanced pay and conditions. Life continued with small, almost imperceptible, changes for a year or two. Gradually, however, staff groups which had taken the lead on policy decisions were dispensed with, and consultation became a thing of the past. In-Service Education for teachers, professional development became a meaningless exercise organised by the college's HR (Human relations Department) with little or no reference to pedagogy or reality.

The greatest change occurred when a new principal was appointed. Standing before the college for the first time clad in shiny new pearls, the new Principal announced that the college was a business, that the business interests of the college would determine and override all. The Principal soon demonstrated that never condescending to discuss the issues at staff meetings and preferred to hold so called 'Talk to the Top' sessions, during which staff comments, suggestions and questions were dismissed in an offensive and bullying manner. The Principal adopted the Thatcherite catchphrase from the 80s "There is no alternative" whenever anyone questioned the vision for the future being put over. Clearly a new era had arrived for the sixth form college.

A shiny new £ multi-million building was opened one Saturday morning but this event was overshadowed by dire rumours of massive debt, with its origins rooted in changes to funding and a subsequent mortgage which was proving difficult to re-pay. E mails from the Principal announced that a quarter of the staff would be sacked, even the staffroom biscuit ration would be cut. "There is no alternative!" the Principal insisted.

Redundancies were announced. Staff who had dedicated years to the college were told they "had served their purpose" Staff were required to sign new contracts or be sacked. Salaries were cut by thousands -for it was the generosity of previous contracts, declared the new Principal, which had bankrupted the college -holiday entitlement cut by ten days, and although it may have been possible to climb higher on the incremental ladder, this would only happen after an immediate plummet in pay. The Unions tried to put forward an alternative but were told there wasn't one. A grim new future had begun for the college.

As the crisis deepened, one day it was suddenly announced that Ofsted was about to descend upon the college. Staff who were already losing sleep fearing for their jobs now faced the

additional stress of an inspector in their classroom. During inspection week the Principal's tone softened: no more talk of the college being a business, 'Talk to the Top' sessions were suspended. The Principal spoke of sunshine and a glowing future for the college. No sooner had the inspectors left the building, then redundancies and an inferior contract once again moved to the top of the agenda.

Some staff decided they would not sign new contracts, and were told they would be dismissed without redundancy pay. Others opted quickly to take a modest package and get out while they could. Many staff felt that if they questioned or challenged the new policies and strategies, or suggested that the students' education would be harmed by them, their own jobs would be at risk. Some staff were not even allowed the dignity of serving out their full notice period, and were told three weeks before the beginning of the new academic year that they would not be required in September.

The promised land of equality and diversity became a distant dream. Marketisation reared its ugly head through formula funding (another ERA reform) and the happy band of teachers was no longer able to contribute to the profession they had loved so much. More than two dozen staff left the college unable and unwilling to face the bleak new future. These staff were unacknowledged in end of term ceremonies. More than two dozen staff stripped of what they did best. Many more were made compulsorily redundant, unable to return even if they wanted to. As jobless staff left the shiny new building for the last time, the new management announced a party to celebrate the "achievements" of the old management. The new Principal announced her sorrow at how things had turned out for the staff, but there really was no alternative, for business is business.

The Impacts of Neoliberalism and Neoconservatism on Schools and Colleges

Hierarchicalisation of schooling

As result of the exam results of the children, of the assessment results of the children, there becomes a league table in every municipality, in every part of the country, in every locality, there are league tables of schools. And, of course, it is middle class parents who have the means, the cars, the ability to pay transport costs, to take the children to the schools which have higher results, which may be some distance away.

As a result of 'parental choice' and published/ public league tables, there has been a big increase in differentiation between the high achieving schools and low achieving schools. In Britain 13 percent of children have 'free school meals' (FSM), the poorest 13 percent have free dinners at school. One of us (Hill) did when a schoolboy. If we look at two maps in England the map showing who receive free school dinners, and the map of exam results, the maps are very similar. We know that the map showing assessments at tests and exams, the map of high and low attainment in school tests, mirrors the map of the existing income inequality. (In addition, from September 2014, all three years of infants classes have universal free school meals)

Counting the costs of fragmentation

The fragmentation and incorporation of education is an expensive option as economies of scale are lost and resource-heavy monitoring and regulatory agencies are established. Unlike LAs that are elected, regulatory and policy quangos are chopped and changed by successive governments at significant expense. Though tightly holding to the previous Conservative government's public spending plans in its first term, New Labour increased education spending in its second term (2001-2005) by six per cent, focused on schools, the under-fives and further education. According to Chowdry et al (2010) the UK was a 'big spender' on early years, including the Sure Start programme and children's centres. The spending was geared towards economic as well as educational aims. The largest increase (12.9 per cent) was in school capital spending and the Building Schools for the Future (BSF) programme. This was a £55 billion plan (BBC, 2011) to rebuild or refurbish every secondary school in England but with pretensions to initiate a step-change in children's education. The school estate was in desperate need of rebuilding, but the opportunity was taken not only to stimulate the construction industry and other parts of the private sector, but also to impose privatisation on LAs. It was also a feeding-frenzy for business consultants and its delivery agent was Partnership for Schools; a joint venture company. Authorities were asked to declare their 'vision', were

encouraged to use the Private Finance Initiative (PFI), had to outsource their ICT often at much higher costs and were expected to open at least one academy.

The chaos created by the Academies free for all, with schools competing with each other for students and able to unilaterally set their age range means there is no central planning. As a result jobs are lost and parents are left with no clear idea of what is best for their children. Academies are not about school improvement. They are about destroying the state community comprehensive education system. Only the sponsors who charge for services provided and the various private agencies offering cleaning and management gain.

To take the example of one Local Authority, Leicestershire, education in Leicestershire is now so fragmented by the government's efforts to get schools to become independent, privatised Academies outside of Local Authority management that there is no overall structure, no agreed system of admissions or age ranges across the county and in practice no consideration of what is in the best interests of students across Leicestershire. What there is now is the educational equivalent of 'dog eats dog' as schools try to seize pupils from their neighbours.

Conclusion

Ideologically the neoliberal developments described, analysed and critiqued in this paper can be interpreted as 'the businessification' of education, the softening up, the preparation for the wholesale privatisation of schools, vocational colleges / Further Education Colleges and Sixth Form Colleges, and universities. In the school sector, state funded institutions are being handed over as Academies to private companies, to academy-chains of schools, and to a variety of religious organisations (Beckett, 2007; see also Benn, 2011; and Anti-Academies Alliance, nd.). These schools are taken away from democratically elected Local Authority/ School District oversight and residual funding, to become quasi-

independent schools, actually receiving their funding directly from central government through individually-arrived-at confidential funding-agreements.

The purpose of schooling and education is becoming more and more, and more clearly class-delineated and biased, with increased (`raced' and gendered) social class stratification in education provision and results. Schooling and education are more and more geared to the extraction of direct and indirect profit, and the production of socially quiescent, hierarchically tiered and rewarded labour power- education for human capital, education for capitalism.

At the same time, the mailed fist of neo-conservatism is establishing authoritarian control over curricula, teachers, and education institutions. Opposition is little tolerated. We have now, in England's education system- despite the resistance of teachers, education workers, parents, students and communities/ trade unions- what can be termed, `Free Market Stalinism'.

NOTES

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