Critical Introduction: From Innovation to Reform – A Framework for Analysing Change

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Innovation and change in education is the theme and central concern of this book, whose author has been, and continues to be, a prominent commentator on, and contributor to, the quest for a better quality of educational life for all those who are compelled by the state to spend 15 000 hours of their growth in the institutions we call schools.

For those of us in the West, perhaps particularly those of us in the UK and USA, the word 'innovation' already has a dated feel. It seems to belong to a chapter of our post-war history that has closed. Reform is now the banner headline of the politicians who have seized upon the alleged failure of the innovators so as to take control of the process of change and, in the UK at least, to make the central issue one of relations rather than relationships. There is an ambiguity in the rhetoric of the reformers that should not escape our notice, and that helps to explain why the most unlikely of bedfellows, elitists and egalitarians, can be found among their ranks. It is not always clear whether they are claiming to be able to achieve the same objectives as the innovators by more effective means, i.e. crudely speaking by the exercise of power, or whether the allegation is that innovation has been successful but regressive, so that what is required is a restoration of former virtues that are threatened by abuses introduced and fostered by meddling and muddle-headed professionals. The point is important – indeed it is crucial – because it turns upon the issue of the impact of the innovation movement over the past three or four decades. This is the issue I wish to address.

The time is opportune. There has been a great deal of hand-wringing of late (see Fullan, 1989, for the latest instance) about the various inadequacies of the various strategies of change that have been devised and employed to cajole, seduce or pressurize schools into doing better by their charges, all such strategies fit only for consignment to the dustbin of history. The gloom is pervasive, the sense of impotence understandable as the space vacated by the self-incriminating pathologists of the innovation bubble is filled by those whose educational obligations are less compelling than their political imperatives. Jean

Rudduck's account is hardly of this ilk, although her nostalgia for the false dawn of the 1960s and her somewhat downbeat conclusion do give the impression of a terminal decline of the prospects for the kind of professional, communal and fraternal culture that is the core of her advocacy. In this she is far from being alone, either in her pessimism, or in her conviction that the civil rights to educational opportunity at least particularly realized by the raising of the school leaving age in 1972 can only be converted into intellectual rights by the development of a collaborative culture of schooling based on respect for persons.

. That there is a long way to go can hardy be denied – black children are every day denied those rights and that respect in schools up and down the country, truancy among the recently enfranchised is on the increase, the proportion of poor people's children entering higher education has not risen in 40 years. That the current legislative framework is hostile to such a culture is publicly denied but cannot seriously be doubted: the Education Reform Act of 1988 promises the restoration of stratification in all its forms on a bogus notion of merit and choice – the social segregation of schools, the reification of streaming, greater differentiation of roles and rewards for school personnel, and the standardization of curriculum and performance assessment to disguise the distributive injustice of economic selection. It's a 'fixed' market, driven by the values of possessive individualism and negative interdependence, a competition in which the winners are known in advance, the losers left with only their own apparent shortcomings to blame. It is the economic liberal's revenge on the 'permissive' 1960s (in the perspective, denunciation replaces nostalgia) and in particular on the comprehensive school.

Yes, it is difficult to be optimistic in such circumstances but it is not impossible, as I hope to demonstrate. In doing so, I have to say that my remarks are not assumed to have global application. They are confined to one case, one country, one experience of post-war educational development through the medium of systematic innovation. I leave to others the more problematic task of extrapolation.

The getting of wisdom

Any collection of chapters, such as those that follow this Introduction, runs the risk of demarcating the trees at the expense of the reader's grasp of the wood, which may remain implicit or subject to only fleeting glimpses in passing. Although the author in this case has minimized the risk by writing pieces specifically for this publication and by careful editing of previously published items, the risk is still evident, particularly for readers who may come to this book with a sketchy knowledge of the context in which the kinds of understandings and insights displayed by the author were developed. In choosing only her most recent works for inclusion, the evolution of understanding is understated, although its roots in the past are stressed by the author herself.

It may be helpful, therefore, if I offer a brief depiction of the learning curve

that lies behind these accounts of innovative experimentation. Although I know the author well, I would not presume to offer this in the sense of a personal profile, but rather as a generalized summary of professional learning about the possibilities and the conditions of school improvement on the part of those, like Jean, whose continuous involvement over a long period of time in a significant educational movement has been marked by perceptual leaps and strategic adaptations as the complexity of the task unfolded.

It is very difficult for those outside the schools to improve the quality of provision within them. That we now know. Twenty-five years ago, we thought differently. We thought then that the combination of money and good ideas, invested in external agencies, would quickly and easily transform our schools in line with the post-war transformation of our economy and our social life. It was not to be. There are no easy solutions. As Jean Rudduck points out, it was not enough, as we discovered in the 1960s, to supply teachers with better books and packaged pedagogies, although good materials and supportive advice do matter. It is the quality of the teachers themselves and the nature of their commitment to change that determines the quality of teaching and the quality of school improvement. Teachers are, on the whole, poor implementers of other people's ideas. Teacher development therefore – and this is one of the main themes of her writing – is a precondition of curriculum development, and teachers must play a generative role in the development of better curricula. Their understanding, their sense of responsibility, their commitment to the effective delivery of educational experience for their pupils, is significantly enhanced when they own the ideas and author the means by which ideas are translated into classroom practice.

This finding, now commonplace within the professional culture, but very slow to crystallize and emerge from the first decade of national curriculum reform, had its major impact on the in-service education of teachers in the 1970s. While the government continued to pursue national initiatives, varying their approach in a search for the optimum combination of central prescription and grassroots initiative, many of the large number of individuals who had played central roles in curriculum development projects set about a different strategy based on this finding. Throughout the 1970s, in-service education became a revitalized source of curriculum change, where the concept of a new kind of teacher, the fully fledged 'professional', was increasingly nurtured. While pre-service educators continued to emphasize established competences, in-service tutors began to equip teachers to engage in the curriculum research, development and evaluation activities that during the previous decade had been the domain of the specialist. The 'teacher as researcher' and the 'action research classroom' were prominent among the slogans that energized the new phase of intervention that operated without *ad-hoc* central government support, which continued to emphasize content priorities through categorical funding.

From that period, as a result of some of the difficulties of engaging individual teachers in the process of curriculum development, emerged another important insight. Partly, admittedly, as a consequence of the growing accountability movement, which put pressure on schools to be more accountable to their

constituencies, but due also in no small measure to a realization that the profes-sionalization of teachers had implications for the organizational form of the institutions in which they worked, a further shift of thinking took place. It became clear that the unit of teacher development ought to be the school. Individual teachers could not get very far without running up against the con-straints of collective practice and institutional habits. As we entered the 1980s, new notions of school-based self-review, self-evaluation and self-development became more prominent in curriculum planning and innovation theory.

There were, then, essentially three main stages (and I am here formalizing and making explicit the different sequences of experience and insight presented in this book): from package development to teacher development to school development. But there were other lessons from the experience of curriculum development. These lessons had to do with levels and locations of decision making, and about the spread of ideas and practices. In general, it was con-cluded that local enterprise is more likely to impove quality than national enterprise, especially as local support had proved to be much more important in achieving change than had been initially assumed, and psychological support just as essential as material support. National authorities, it seemed, should set policy in broad terms, but leave localities to mediate and modify in the light of local needs, and invite schools and teachers to invent appropriate curriculum responses. This would maximize the deployment of talent, spread the sense of ownership, and allow a needed flexibility within a given range of tolerance. The relationship between participants in the curriculum development en-terprise will be more effective if it derives from the notion of a professional, diversely accountable community rather than from linear, hierarchical dir-ection. During the 1970s, spurred by a growing sense of disappointment in curriculum reform efforts and a demand for a better knowledge of schooling on which to base new strategies, there was a great deal of research and evaluation that focused closely upon attempts to identify the conditions under which better schooling might be achieved. One clear and consistent implication of this research was the need to take account of particular circumstances, varying between schools as well as between localities, in planning for improvement. Jean Rudduck's distinctive contribution here was to underline the importance of pupils' responses to what they experienced as 'imposed' change: she urged teachers, bearing in mind the conditions of recent curriculum history in their schools, to try to bring pupils in on the logics of school and classroom policies for change. With regard to the spread of ideas, it was also noted that lateral rather than vertical lines of communication are more effective in transmitting ideas and practices, a point of considerable relevance to the concept of teacher, school and community collaboration.

Finally, to complete this thumbnail sketch of innovation theory, there was support for the view that the degree of professional autonomy implicit in some of these recommendations could only be justified if it was matched by a professional commitment to public accountability and responsiveness to public critique. The work of professionals must be open to public influence and informed public judgement.

This getting of wisdom seems in retrospect to have been painfully slow, and will still seem to many to be woefully inadequate, imbued from start to finish with political and sociological naivety. There are worse crimes, but those liberal humanists who engaged the system and sought to mend its ways had to suffer a lot of sniping from the sidelines, especially from the new sociologists of education, whose dominance/submission certainties tended to mock the very notion of engagement, let alone to decry the evolving focus of the innovators as teacher protectionism. But they too have enjoyed a learning curve. In *Education and Power* (1982), Michael Apple argues powerfully for agency and involvement in concrete, not just theoretic work: 'It is at the level of our daily lives where the cultural, political and economic spheres are lived out in all their complexity and contradictions . . .' In summarizing the learning of the innovators, I have confined myself to those learnings of direct utility to the discretion and opportunities available to them. I shall return later to the issue of political consciousness.

Careers and continuity

The chapters in this book chart the course of a professional biography in England from the early 1960s to the late 1980s. Jean Rudduck began that period as a classroom teacher and finished it as a university professor. So did I, and so did many others whose careers in education were carved out of the opportunity structure that opened up as the innovation industry recast the credentials of personal advance. It is amusing now to recall, from those early days, some anxiety expressed to me by officials of the Schools Council about the future prospects of their project directors. Plucked from nowhere by an unsystematic trawling procedure on the part of entrepreneurial administrators who took for granted the need to manipulate the clumsy bureaucracy of innovation that embodied the political settlement of the time, these men and women 'of ideas' were then basking in the limelight of national attention, the epicentre of the centre-periphery model. But what was to happen to them after their 2, 3 or 5 years of curriculum messiahship were over? Would they be left to pack up their tents and return to whence they came? Hardly a fair return for the leading edge protégés of patronage, let alone a sensible response to the need to conserve and keep on tap a new and valued commodity – expertise in curriculum development.

Keep in mind that very few of those involved had been drawn from the university sector. There was no equivalent here of the 'leading scholar' approach in the USA, whereby it was hoped that the prestige and authority of the curriculum package would ensure an easy passage to the classroom. In England, it was largely the lower reaches of the education system that constituted the recruiting grounds of innovation – the colleges of teacher training and the schools themselves. For these upwardly mobile but academically underqualified recruits, there was no ready-made entry into the discipline-based heights of the institutional order. The universities had not been party to the political settle-

ment that saw the ministry, the local authorities and the teacher unions sink their differences over curriculum control in the tri-partite Schools Council.

Thus it was that the patrons and minders of the early innovators, or at least of the more eminent members thereof, saw the need to secure a future for them. Wheels turned and deals were struck. One of them led to the setting up of the Centre for Applied Research in Education (CARE) at the University of East Anglis, which (and this was thought to be a blessing at the time) had no school of education. This kind of package deal (tenured university posts for four people who didn't have two PhDs to rub together) implanted in higher education the seeds of its reconstruction – in my view, the totally unintended but most significant and lasting impact of the curriculum development movement. Had it depended on the negotiating power of the Schools Council (the bait dangled before the universities was the promise of continued Council funding at a point in time when they were beginning to sense the coming financial squeeze), then the impact would have been limited. Outfits like CARE would have remained, as they were initially seen, as paying guests in an otherwise indifferent establishment. But in fact the anxieties felt by project managers were to prove utterly misplaced.

The curriculum development projects of the 1960s (by the end of the decade some 200 national initiatives had been funded) led, in the 1970s to a restaffing of a still expanding system (the school leaving age was raised to 16 in 1972) on a new basis – the experience of change. It was not only the schools that sniffed the spoor of government favour or sensed the threat of marginalization posed by a new and independent industry within their domain. The scenario that then unfolded is not without its irony, as the bruised and battered veterans of what was already being seen as a massive failure at classroom level began to reap the rich career rewards of their endeavours. They poured into the departments of education in the universities and the polytechnics, the local authority advisory services, even the national inspectorate and senior school positions, bringing to their new responsibilities a hands-on knowledge of the practice of schooling that would breathe new life into those atrophied institutions by challengingg their traditions and offering them a new role. The beachheads of an unfamiliar academic territory were rapidly established in higher education, increasingly under the title of 'curriculum studies'. The theoretical tradition of education based on derivative disciplines began to give way to the new theorists of educational practice whose theory was based on the close observation of new curricula in action, grounded theory of school life whose conceptual catholicity and seemingly casual disregard for the carefully constructed authority of the social sciences had to meet and survive accusations of amateurism and naive ignorance. But survive and flourish they did, not least because, supported by their colleagues in the local authority advisory services, they exerted an increasingly decisive role in the reshaping of in-service education for teachers, taking that opportunity to draw their students into the process of field-based enquiry into school problems and practices. That opportunity was extended as more and more colleges of initial training were incorporated into the institutions of higher education.

So when Jean Rudduck writes in the later pages of this book about the important need for continuing the partnership between higher education staff and teachers and student teachers, what gives meaning to her concerns and explains her aspirations is, I think, the historical location – in higher education settings – of the curriculum innovators and their camp followers (the curriculum evaluators), with all their close-up understanding of the process of change in schools and school systems. Their own 'logic in use' offered an upstart challenge to the reconstructed logic of the social sciences – long dominant in departments of education – which had assumed and emulated the natural sciences in their search for a parallel form of objectivity-based certainty.

It was in this context that the curriculum innovators and the evaluators at the time, and for the most part largely innocent of these seismic rumblings in the groves of academe, engaged in the unholy methodological improvisation that came to characterize their pursuit of useful knowledge in the circumstances of innovative action. They were helped, at least initially, by a sponsoring establishment of civil servants, themselves the product of a gifted amateur tradition, pragmatically inclined and dismissive in any case of the utility of university-based research practices. They had to invent a research they could do. And, when finally they carried that research baggage into the commanding heights of the system, they found more fertile ground for legitimacy than they could possibly have anticipated.

I am aware as I write of giving an exaggerated impression of the impact at this level, an impression of transformation that would not be substantiated by detailed documentation of practice across the country. What would be difficult to exaggerate is the responsiveness of students to the new style courses, whether these students are experienced teachers whose known scepticism about the value of their initial training is rooted in its failure to address the theory/practice divide, or whether they are more assorted groups of aspirants to academic honours who increasingly demand the opportunity to employ the methodologies of field-based enquiry in pursuit of research credentials. One index of the change in client orientation is the fact that in the early 1980s, at a national conference of research degree supervisors organized by the British Educational Research Association, one of the major concerns expressed by those in attendance was the difficulty of supervising students who wanted to do research that could not readily be confined within the single discipline frameworks in which many of their supervisors were qualified.

The result was that, far from being inducted as novitiates into the exclusive realms of discipline membership as the price of admission, and thus detaching themselves from the theatre of practical action, the Curriculum Innovators found themselves free, not only to continue their mission, and not only to apply their wisdom through an avenue (teacher development) that corresponded with their perception of need, but also to construct a new authority for the extension of formal knowledge construction – the building of a multi-professional researching community – to those who had formerly been confined to the role of research consumption. I have no doubt that the crisis of confidence in the social sciences contributed substantially to the

democratization of the right to research that flowed from the influx of the innovators into the universities in the early and mid-1970s. I am not, of course, denying for one moment that the currently dominant political ideology has checked the advance of these important gains, and continues to do its utmost not only to restore but to stratify even further the traditional research establishment. What I am saying is that the alternative tradition has taken root, will not go away, and is sustained by student demand. The innovators who began in the classrooms have now penetrated the institutional order and are beginning to reshape the infrastructure of schooling.

Failure revisited

We seem to have forgotten something. It takes 50 years for a new social practice to become widely established. So concluded Miles in 1964, at a point when the problem of curriculum obsolescence had already led to substantial federal investment in the USA in the fledgling innovation industry and in the UK to the setting up of the Schools Council for Curriculum and Examinations. What's more, added Miles, we don't know much about the process or how to accelerate it. Miles' book, *Innovation in Education*, was much admired and totally ignored. Would-be innovators, both before and after his sobering reflections, have been lucky to get 5 years to accomplish the job. It isn't enough.

Why 5 years? I remember asking a senior civil servant who chaired the steering committee of a national curriculum initiative, 'What does the Minister want to know about the Programme?' He replied, 'Two things. Will the Programme transform education? Will the Programme transform education before the next election?' Political time-frames are short in electoral democracies and the need to show quick results is a paramount condition of investment.

After three decades of attempts at the quick educational fix (see p. 000), a period during which this preoccupation with the development of schooling has become widely shared by countries around the globe, we should not be surprised that in 1989 Michael Fullan should pronounce that 'All reform efforts to date have failed.' Although he bases this conclusion largely on North American experiences, many school-watchers around the world would nod their heads in substantial agreement (Jean Rudduck quotes some on p. 000). The post-war experience of systematic attempts to improve the quality of educational provision has been a history of failure, at least in terms of meeting short-term professional hopes and political expectations.

Of course 'improvement' and 'transformation' are value-loaded concepts whose meanings are both temporally and contextually unstable. Social concerns fluctuate, ideologies rise and fall. Because schooling is assumed to shape minds as well as competences, it is a battleground for competing visions of how social 'goods' (in both senses of the term) should be realized, distributed and protected. Education is both a moral and a technical discourse. Engineers and philosophers vie with elitists and egalitarians for a piece of the action that sets

the framework within which teachers deliver their service to the young. Magnates keep a watchful, and parents a fearful, eye on the proceedings.

What does it mean, in this context, to say that all reforms have failed? It means something very precise. It means that no form of substantive discontent (with the quality of suitability of curriculum provision) that is sufficiently influential to attract publicly funded *ad-hoc* remediation, has been eliminated, or even diminished, by targeted intervention. Jean Rudduck uses different words, but the import is the same: the curriculum interventions did not manage, on the whole, to engage with the 'deep structures' of schooling that hold habits and values in place. But at other levels too, the curriculum development movement was seen as having failed to deliver. The result, at least in the USA and UK, is a marked shift in control and legitimacy from the professionals to the politician, in strategy from facilitation to coercion, and in vision from an expansionist to a reductionist view of schooling. In the USA, the federal government, constitutionally restricted to a policy of investment-led voluntarism, has largely withdrawn from direct involvement in school improvement, to be replaced by prescriptive state centrism. In the UK, the teacher-dominated Schools Council has been closed, a national curriculum introduced for the first time, and a system of criterion-referenced achievement tests in being added to the traditional public examinations to assure compliance, productivity and accountability.

An economic model of schooling, and its evaluative correlate the performance indicator, is now firmly entrenched. Schools have annual targets, managed workforces, and an ideal of 'effectiveness' to aspire to. There is no place for curriculum development or variation. Standardization is a prerequisite of competitive comparison, performance replaces provision as the basis of consumer judgement and market choice.

Now let us compare that 'outcome' of 30 years with the original agenda of the Schools Council. These extracts are taken from Working Paper 2, *Raising the School Leaving Age*:

> The problem is to give every man some access to a complex cultural inheritance, some hold on his personal life and on his relationships with the various communities to which he belongs, some extension of his understanding of, and sensitivity towards, other human beings. The aim is to forward understanding, discrimination and judgement in the human field – it will involve reliable factual knowledge, where this is appropriate, direct experience, imaginative experience, some appreciation of the dilemmas of the human conditions, of the rough-hewn nature of many of our institutions, and some rational thought about them. (Schools Council, 1965, para. 60).

> All of this may seem to some teachers like a programme for people who have both mental ability and maturity beyond the reach of most who will leave at the age of sixteen. The Council, however, thinks it is important not to assume that this is so, but rather to probe by experiment in the classroom how far ordinary pupils can be taken. (Schools Council, 1965, para. 61)

Not all of the curriculum missionaries let loose by Schools Council sponsorship in the 1960s set out with that agenda, and few put it seriously to the test. One of those who did, and whose 'experiment' in the classroom evoked a passionate responsiveness in teachers fed up with the deadening routine and the moral vacuum of their occupational practice, was the late Lawrence Stenhouse, the acknowledged inspiration of the work reported in this book. I was in charge of the evaluation of the Humanities Curriculum Project. A few years ago, I was asked to provide a summary comment on the project for a book concerned with pupil perspectives on schooling (Schostak and Logan, 1984). I wrote as follows:

> At the core of Lawrence Stenhouse's Humanities Curriculum Project was quite a radical proposition – that quite ordinary kids were capable of the kind of intellectual life historically achieved by a small elite. The problem was how to release them from the contrary and self-fulfilling assumption embodied in institutional and pedagogic practice. The project did this by promoting a style of classroom discussion in which the proactive role of the teacher and the reactive role of the pupils was reversed – the teachers were forced to shut up and listen, and the pupils to move into the vacuum. Both were deskilled, both found themselves starting from scratch. Most of them couldn't stand the strain, and soon relapsed. Some made quite remarkable breakthroughs. I vividly recall one occasion when a conference of very senior personnel in the education system was introduced to the project via a videotape I had made of a group discussion in a secondary modern school. The discussion was of such quality that some of those present simply refused to believe that this was a group of so-called Newsome children. But that was Stenhouse's point, and in my view there were enough instances of this kind to suggest that the kind of teaching of which they are capable may be mutually exclusive activities.

There is ample evidence in the chapters that follow to support Stenhouse's proposition – and my thesis about the gap between potential and the realization of that potential. What is clear is that contemporary political prescriptions of the form and function of schooling does not bear analysis in these terms, but rather constitute a denial of both the aspirations and the possibilities they reveal. I have argued, however, that increasingly sophisticated notions of the kind of schooling that could realistically advance such aspirations are alive and well in the British system, that they constitute a thriving counter-culture, and that they are ready to make a comeback when the extraordinary political regime under which we now labour is dead and buried. I base this view on an unintended effect of a policy decision taken by the Schools Council in its early days. This decision is referred to by Stenhouse (1980) himself in these terms:

> As I interpret it, the Schools Council was generally hostile to the designation of curriculum development as a professional idea: that is, it did not encourage directors to undertake successive development projects or to

regard themselves as career curriculum specialists. This was associated
with its general policy of seconding teachers to staff curriculum develop-
ment teams.

The Council could not remotely have foreseen that such a policy would carry a
practice-oriented culture of enquiry, theory and development into the far
reaches of the professional system and fundamentally disrupt its compart-
mentalization.

The impetus of the movement in this phase helped to transform both the
focus and the methodology of educational research (reinforced no doubt by the
availability of new microtechnology and by the renaissance of ethnographic
sociology), creating the basis for an educational theory of educational practice.
Teacher education began to take on a more collaborative, active and investiga-
tive character concerned with school-based problem solving rather than theo-
retic sophistication or familiarization with the latest curriculum trends. I would
hazard that the popularity of this change with its clientele can in part be
attributed to the impact of the curriculum development phase on teacher
culture, the process dynamics generated by its forms and values, the widespread
experience of participation that at its height was offered to teachers and schools.
Although the curriculum materials and pedagogies that resulted from such
collaboration were not widely adopted (and hence the accusation of failure),
that experience was both valued (as well as valuable in career terms) for the
thousands of teachers involved.

These are consequences of great import, particularly within as 50-year
perspective. In so far as House (1974) is correct in asserting that the school is an
institution 'frozen' in the order of the institutions, this thawing of its own
immediately embracing institutions could reasonably be seen as a necessary if
insufficient precondition of school improvement.

There are, of course, other institutions, some barely mentioned to this point.
Schools are, of course, political constructions, constrained by economic doc-
trines, powerful interests, organized ideologies. Professionals act on licence,
under varying conditions that define the extent to which they can fulfil their
'implicit' contract. If Hamilton (1989) is right in claiming that schooling is
simultaneously a site of social regulation and a site of social redefinition, it is
time now to turn to the backcloth of political regulation against which the
drama of the innovation movement has been played out.

We, the innovators, began under benign and supportive government and
saw the problem largely as a technical one, under professional control. Along
the way, as economic failure put an end to the bi-partisan educational expan-
sionism of successive governments and to political detachment from the man-
agement of schooling, we have become politicized as we have become
marginalized. This is just as well, as it has helped us to understand the limits of
what can be accomplished by schools alone, and to get a better sense of what
else has to change before schools can.

In this sense, Thatcherism (and I think I may have created some sort of
record by not mentioning the lady's name until now) has been particularly

helpful. Her seemingly effortless dismantling of an assumed democracy has politicized all of us, and revealed how fragile and inadequate are the checks and balances we fondly believe protect us against what one of her own ministers called an 'electoral dictatorship'. Words like 'dominance' and 'reproduction' now have a much wider currency in educational discourse as an enforced, non-negotiable and educationally indefensible model of schooling gets underway.

The development of a political consciousness in education was delayed by 30 years. The post-war expansion of schooling was powered by a political consensus around the notion of Keynesian social democracy (Marquand, 1988). Throughout that period, it seemed that economic buoyancy would finance the agreed goals of full employment, adequate social services, and the co-existence of public and private enterprise. In 1970, expenditure on education exceeded expenditure on defence for the first, but last time. The writing was now on the wall (and the Schools Council under severe political attack as the warning signs were taken heed of) and recession looming. The consensus collapsed under Labour in the mid- to late-1970s in a massive failure of adaptation to the new economic realities. The truce was over, as was the indulgence. The politics of moderation were out, the politics of extremism in. The sense of a failing society (with schooling, of course, a favourite target) was pervasive and of a failing socialism conclusive. In an extraordinary ideological coup (not least of her own party), Thatcher seized the opportunity to introduce and implement a version of economic liberalism not seen since the nineteenth century – the undistorted market. That she has remained in power for a record period of continuity in office, winning three successive elections in the process, is testimony to the persuasiveness of conviction politics in a society that has lost its way, to her ruthless command of party allegiance, and her exploitation of the unrestrained power that our form of democracy offers even a government chosen by a minority of its citizens.

As Margaret Archer's (1984) historical and structural comparison of state educational systems implies, only the maximization of state power and its unconditional application could possibly have achieved in a decentralized system like the UK the degree of systematized uniformity that is now embodied in the legislative framework of schools. Archer characterizes such systems as unresponsive to central manipulation, subject to internal disjuncture, but offering multiple opportunities for internal innovation to their professional networks. The question then is, what happens next? The legislation has still to be substantially implemented, the networks largely hostile, the Thatcher government tottering as its over-reach begins to hit the 'haves' as well as the 'have nots'. Marquand (1988) argues that neo-liberalism will fail for the same reasons as neo-socialism failed in the 1970s, because they both lack the basis of a moral appeal beyond individual or sectional interests. He foresees (optimistically) their succession by the politics of negotiation, interests moderated by an acceptance of the common good.

Well, forecasting is a tricky business, and events make fools of those who venture. At this point in time, with Mandela out, the 'Wall' down, and the military/industrial complex reeling from its first major setback since the

Second World War, I hesitate to stick my neck out. To be sure Thatcher will go. I'd like to think she will flounder on the bedrock of our biological sociability, but suspect her economics will bring a reckoning first. With respect to this book and what it has to say, I would like to see the emergence of a new political framework in which, to the discourse about liberty and equality, is added a discourse and a practice that is about fraternity. That is what this book, and the practices it describes, are essentially about, the conditions of community. And these are the conditions under which schooling might – just might – become educational for all its inhabitants.

Schooling cannot deliver us from poverty in all its forms, but these forms are interrelated, and schooling can do more than Coleman (1966) concluded. To deny the agency of the school is to deny the possibility of change, and to ignore the evidence.

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