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**`Education, Education, Education', or  
`Business, Business, Business'? The Third  
Way ideology of New Labour's educational  
policy in England and Wales**

**Dave Hill**

University College Northampton, England [dave.hill@northampton.ac.uk](mailto:dave.hill@northampton.ac.uk)

Hillcole Group of Radical Left Educators

Institute for Education Policy Studies [www.ieps.org.uk](http://www.ieps.org.uk)

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## INTRODUCTION

This purpose of this paper is to categorise New Labour's education policy ideologically. Is it centrist, liberal (in the late nineteenth century British sense), centre-left, updated social democratic, centre-right, Thatcherite, post-Thatcherite, neo-conservative or neo-liberal? Is Labour's education ideology inchoate and contradictory- a mixture of ideologies?

These are significant questions. Is there a 'Third Way' in New Labour policies- in education and elsewhere? Or does New Labour's much vaunted policy priority of 'education, education, education' represent, in fact, the triumph of Thatcherism, subservient to the interests of 'business, business, business'?

In *Part One*, I summarise various interpretations of New Labour's ideology across 'the big picture' of government policy in general. In *Part Two*, I set out forty-five of New Labour's education policies and identify their eight guiding principles. In *Part Three*, I briefly describe key aspects of various other ideologies in education. In *Part Four*, I identify specific aspects of New Labour's continuity and discontinuity with neo-liberalism, neo-conservatism, social democracy and its discontinuity with both liberal-progressivism and the Radical Left. In *Part Five*, I categorise New Labour's overall education policy as a mixture of ideologies, but one which is essentially neo-liberal, where social democratic and neo-conservative policies and rhetoric are used only insofar as they do not conflict with a neo-liberal imperative.

Education policy does not exist in an ideological vacuum. It affects and is affected by other areas of policy, not least financial policy. It is a major, though not *the* major, part of overall policy. Hence, *pace* the discontinuities and disarticulations recognised above, an analysis of New Labour's education policy can and should serve to inform analyses and judgements about New Labour's overall ideological trajectory.

## PART ONE: THE BIG PICTURE: 'NEW LABOUR' CHANGING POLITICAL, SOCIAL AND ECONOMIC IDEOLOGY IN THE 1990s

### The New Labour Project

Prior to examining *education* policy and ideology, I firstly examine the bigger picture of New Labour's 'Project'- the overall ideological change from social democracy to New Labour since Tony Blair's election as Labour Party leader in 1994. (1). Lister, for example, argues that a paradigm shift has taken place in new Labour's thinking on the welfare state, moving 'from a concern with equality to a focus on social inclusion and equality of opportunity, together with an emphasis on social obligations rather than social rights' (1998: 215).

#### *The Blairite analysis.*

Tony Blair has described New Labour variously as:

- 'social democrat' (Blair, cited in White 1996);
- 'the radical centre. a new era.... strong on ideals, not on ideology.... a politics going beyond left and right' (Blair 1997) (2);

- 'the Third Way' (Blair 1998), in which we can have 'patriotism *and* internationalism', 'entrepreneurial zeal' *and* 'social justice', liberalism *and* socialism (cited in *New Statesman* 1999). In this Blair draws on Giddens (1994, 1998 and is supported by educationalists such as Halpin (1999a.b).
- 'new and modernised social democracy'. This is characterised by 'support (for) a market economy, not a market society' (Blair and Schroeder 1999:2), where social conscience cannot be measured by the level of public expenditure' (idem), where 'public expenditure as a proportion of national income has more or less reached the limits of acceptability (ibid. p.4). This echoes Blair's (1996a) emphasis on both stakeholding and economic efficiency. Thus, 'social justice, the extension to all of a stake in society, is the partner of economic efficiency, and not its enemy' (p.vi) (3).

### ***Updated social democracy***

Some supporters and apologists for New Labour have described it as:

- 'updated social democracy' (Gray 1996a) (4);
- 'post-revisionist social democracy' (Shaw 1996:103), in which Labour's ideological revision has involved the 'dilution or renunciation of Keynesian social democratic tenets' (ibid: 201);
- a combination of Thatcherite economics with social democratic political radicalism (Marquand 1997);
- 'radical and modernising' (Gould 1999), where New Labour's period in office so far,

has been the most successful and possibly radical first two years of any Labour government' based on 'three central modernising assumptions...a new electoral coalition centred on the middle class but not exclusive to it, effectively a middle-down coalition...broad enough appeal to reach out to middle class voter and beyond and be flexible and modern...new forms of contact with the electorate...focus groups and opinion polling;

- communitarian, stressing responsibilities as well as rights (e.g. Blair 1996b, which reads very similarly, in its philosophy, to Etzioni 1995).

### ***Post-Thatcherism***

Other analysts broadly sympathetic to the Blair project, describe it as,

- 'post-Thatcherism' (Driver and Martell 1998) where,

Blair rejects what he sees as the rights-claiming culture of social democracy, as well as most of the policies of the post-war Labour Party such as Keynesian economics, nationalisation and planning, and egalitarian tax and spend policies...it is evident that New Labour has become more Thatcherite, if that is taken to mean the party is committed to free trade, flexible labour markets, sound money and the spirit of entrepreneurial capitalism, not to mention self-help and private initiative in welfare (p2).

The reason for their judgement that New Labour is *post-Thatcherite* rather than *Thatcherite* is, they consider, that Blair rejects the anti-community, selfish, individualistic message of

Thatcherism and its neo-liberal economic individualism. They suggest that in education, 'the difference' (between New Labour and Thatcherism) 'perhaps is the idea that standards can be raised in the last instance by government rather than by market forces' (p.100). New Labour, for Driver and Martell, shares with conservatism, and neo-conservatism, (but not with Thatcherism) a one-nation inclusive opposition to neo-liberalism. This stress on 'community', on 'stakeholding' on combating social exclusion and replacing it by a policy of 'social inclusion' are, for Driver and Martell, together with other commentators such as Giddens (1998), and Mandelson (1997), and for Blair, essential features of New Labour, differentiating it from Thatcherism and neo-liberalism.

### ***Thatcherite/neo-liberal***

A common critical analysis, put over, *inter alia*, by the Radical Left, depict New Labour as conservative.

- These analyses range from depicting New Labour as 'right of centre' (Benn 1995; Livingstone 1997), 'Thatcherite', 'sub-Thatcherite' or 'neo-Thatcherite' (5). Other commentators describe it as 'neo-liberal' (Heffernan 1997), Hatcher and Hirrt (1999). Chitty comments, 'Cynics might suspect that the Third way is a term to disguise a clear continuity between Thatcherism and the Third Way' (Chitty 1998:81).

Numerous press articles during the 1997 General Election campaign noted that 'Similar policies leave voters baffled' (Wainwright 1997). A sample cartoon in this vein was Steve Bell's in *The Guardian* (10 April 1997) depicting Tony Blair's election slogan (in the cartoon) as 'I can't believe I'm not Tory' (Bell 1997).

Cliff and Gluckstein (1996), writing from a Trotskyite (Socialist Workers Party) perspective, suggest that 'New Labour' is more right wing than at any other time in its' (i.e. the Labour Party's) 'history'. 'While it has always been a 'capitalist workers' party' (p.2), now it has abandoned reformism and is attempting to stifle such aspirations in a working class wedded to reformism' (p. 418).

From the Right, the (influential neo-liberal) Adam Smith Institute held a 'Victory for the Free Market' party on general election night 1997 without TV sets or other news reports because the result was 'irrelevant'; 'Whoever wins the poll, the free market has triumphed', a spokesperson said (cited in Ainley 1999).

### ***Liberal***

Some observers describe New Labour's policies as,

- 'Liberalism'. White (1996) claims that 'shrewdly, some critics ask, is he (Blair) ... a throwback to the muscular New Liberalism of Asquith and Lloyd George'? For Ashdown, the Third Way 'is liberalism, or at least that is what it will become. Which is why', according to Ashdown, 'some in the cabinet secretly call Mr. Blair 'the Liberal' (cited in White and Ward 1999). From the Trotskyite newspaper *The Socialist* (1999) there is the analysis that 'Tony Blair is well down the road in his undisguised political ambition- to turn New Labour into a pro—business party based on the political and economic doctrines of Gladstone's nineteenth century Liberal Party. It quotes Blair as saying in 1998, 'my vision for the New Labour Party is to become as the Liberal Party was in the nineteenth century, a broad coalition of those who believe in progress and justice'.

### ***Socialist***

Other commentators, from both the right and from the Labour Party, describe New Labour as,

- ‘socialist’. From the right, for example, Margaret Thatcher claims that ‘Blair’s New Labour is just a mask’ (cited in Hughes 1999), and Willetts (1999) criticises ‘the command and control model... centralising tendency’ of New Labour’s education policy. The Radical Right accuses New Labour of traditional socialist policies, such as hostility to the market, of over-zealousness in government and bureaucratic control (6).

Labour Minister Peter Hain has also claimed, following the poor Labour results in the Welsh Assembly and Scottish Parliament elections (May 1999), that ‘we need to spell out to voters that Labour is following a socialist programme... The new deal, the minimum wage, the increased public spending should all appeal to our supporters. But we need to spell out that we are following a radical socialist programme’ (cited in Richards 1999).

## **PART TWO: NEW LABOUR AND EDUCATION**

Having summarised a range of views on New Labour’s ideology, I now examine its principles in education, both prior to and since the 1997 general election. In particular, as exemplars of policy in the different sectors of education, I examine its policy on schooling and on initial teacher education (ITE). Hence, my analysis of policy in further education and in higher education is restricted to the delineation of New Labour principles in education and the detailed breakdown of forty-five policies.

### **New Labour Principles in Education**

New Labour’s six ‘promises’ in the 1997 general election manifesto were to: cut class sizes to 30 or under for 5, 6 and 7 year olds; provide nursery places for all four year olds; attack low standards in schools; provide access to computer technology; provide lifelong learning through a new University for Industry; and to spend more on education as the cost of unemployment falls (Labour Party 1997).

In his ‘mid-term statement’ of 19 July 1999 David Blunkett identified the following four key policy areas:

1. ‘modernising the comprehensive system’ (with reference to secondary schooling);
2. ‘raising standards’ (with reference to pupils’, students’ and teachers’ standards);
3. developing pre-school education;
4. developing social inclusion’ (BBC 1999:2).

Below, I set out and analyse what seem to me New Labour’s eight guiding principles in education. I then list the forty-five education policies that, in practice, exemplify these principles. These are the means by which the ends, the principles, are achieved.

### ***Table 1: New Labour Principles in Education***

1. <i>Standards and Control</i>
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- e.g. emphasis on 'standards not structures', with increasing use of compulsory testing, of setting measurable targets; centralised control of the school and ITE curriculum; of surveillance and monitoring of pupils, and teachers and those involved in 'initial teacher training'; punishment for 'failing' teachers, schools, Local Education Authorities (LEAs), teacher training departments, and for 16-18 year olds who do not participate in 'the New Deal' (of education, training, voluntary work or work);

## 2. *Managerialism*

- e.g. focus of policy on 'Improving Schools' (and LEAs) and on managerialism, for example the focus on School Effectiveness strategies to raise standards; proposals to restructure and stratify the teaching workforce, such as proposals for Performance Related Pay (PRP) and for 'superteachers' (7);

## 3. *Competitiveness and Selection*

- e.g. continuation of most of the structural aspects of the 1988 Conservative Education Reform Act in terms of the macro- structure and organisation of schooling, with its principles of competition between schools, (in effect) selective schooling; local management of schools (budgets and staffing);

## 4. *Privatisation*

- e.g. introduction of Privatisation into the management/ control of schools and LEAs; and Education Action Zones; replacing the Further Education Funding Council (FEFC) and Training and Enterprise Councils (TECs) by a Skills Council, strengthening the role of business; extending the Private Finance Initiative (PFI)-private funding for and ultimate control over new schools and colleges;

## 5. *Traditionalism*

- e.g. continuation (*pace* the 1999 Review of the National Curriculum) of the eurocentric and traditionalist Conservative National Curriculum of 1995; continuation of assault on liberal-progressive education (e.g. attacks on mixed ability teaching, a concentration on 'back to basics' in the curriculum with the Literacy Hour and Numeracy Hour in Primary schools); reintroducing the traditional academic/vocational curriculum and schooling;

## 6. *Technoideology*

- a concern with technoculture-an Information Technology driven 'knowledge society' with schools at the forefront; emphasis in IT learning in initial teacher education, where Information and Communications Technology (ICT) are particularly specified for Primary teachers (together with English, Maths and Science); schools linked up to a 'National Grid for Learning', IT strategies prominent in many EAZ bids.

## 7. *Social Inclusion*

- e.g. some increases in spending targeted at areas of Social Exclusion; focus on increased resourcing for inner city and other areas of social exclusion, in terms of rhetoric/discourse and in terms of finance, through a wide range of initiatives, such as Education Action Zones, and Education Maintenance Allowances for poor 16-18 year olds; Increased funding

for schools and LEAs capital and revenue budgets (for example to reduce Primary class sizes and to repair and improve schools buildings).

8. *Low public expenditure*

- strictly controlled spending on education within a regime of low public expenditure; use of Private Finance Initiative funding to keep down public expenditure, instead of sole use of local or national state finance

### **New Labour and education prior to the 1997 General Election**

Changes in policy since what some have termed the 'Old Labour' days have been dramatic- as has the reaction to them of those who disagree with the changes. These include not only Labour MPs and rank and file members from the 'Old Left', socialists and Marxists within the Labour Party, such as the Campaign Group of MPs but also the former social democrats such as Roy Hattersley, influenced by such social democratic writers as Crosland and Tawney. These two groups, different- and historically opposed to each other as they are- are said to comprise 'Old Labour' (8). However, both groups labelled as 'Old Labour' agree with Hattersley's comment (1996) that the ideological lodestar of any Labour policy should be whether or not it will lead to 'equality of outcome' as opposed to the 'equality of opportunity' argued for by New Labour Chancellor of the Exchequer, Gordon Brown (1996, 1997)- an equality of opportunity to become unequal.

With respect to schooling, New Labour policy has been attacked over issues of selection and comprehensivisation- for example over New Labour's acceptance, (albeit in modified form), of Opted- Out (Grant Maintained) schools, and selective Grammar schools. At the December 1995 public launch of the Labour Party policy on education, *Excellence and Diversity*, the Shadow Education Secretary David Blunkett, in another reversal of Labour policy, refused to commit a Labour Government to comprehensivisation - i.e. abolition of grammar schools, a refusal maintained since then. This acceptance of a hierarchical diversity in schooling has exposed major divisions in the Party. This was exemplified, in the reactions surrounding the decisions of Labour Leader Tony Blair (in 1995) to send his son to an opted out school and of shadow cabinet member Harriet Harman (in 1996) to send one of her sons to a selective grammar school. The existence and intensification of social class based selection in secondary schooling, through the mechanism of 'choice' has been graphically illustrated by Nick Davies' series of articles in *The Guardian* (9).

In commenting on what he would regard as 'Old' Labour's 1994 policy document, *Opening Doors to a Learning Society* Michael Barber, arguably New Labour's most influential education adviser, stressed Blair's criticism of the traditional idea of comprehensive schooling because 'it did not come to terms with the diversity and flexibility of provision needed to meet the diverse needs and talent of all our people' (Barber 1994). This was to prove a forerunner of a number of sharp changes to traditional Labour policy on both schooling and on teacher education.

Press reception of the December 1995 education policy statement, *Excellence for Everyone: Labour's Crusade to Raise Standards*, widely noted the difference between what was described as 'Old Labour' and 'New Labour' on the one hand, and the similarities between 'Conservatives' and 'New Labour' in respect of policies on teachers, on tests, on failing schools and, to a lesser extent, on Local Education Authorities (e.g. Carvel 1995). *The Times Educational Supplement* was not alone in noting that 'both Labour and Conservatives declare education their national priority. Many of their policies also now bear striking similarities' (TES 1995). According to Hackett, 'a mark of how far Labour has shifted is that Dr Madsen Pirie of the right wing Adam Smith Institute can claim that the party has taken bold steps in adapting its policies on the need to close failing schools and its stress on the need for parental responsibility', (Hackett 1995, in an article headlined 'Labour accused of "teacher-bashing"').

A summary of New Labour policy on education in general **(10)** is as follows:

**Table 2: Forty-five New Labour government education policies**

- |   |
|---|
| <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• <b>1. Standards and Control</b></li> <li>1. 'naming and shaming' schools; 'to drive up standards'<b>(11)</b> and retaining Chris Woodhead as Chief Inspector of Schools and of 16-19 education in Sixth Form and Further Education Colleges;</li> <li>2. Retaining a focus on 'standards not structure' by stressing the Ofsted inspections of schools and measurable targets <b>(12)</b> and Ofsted inspections of FE colleges, ITE providers, and LEAs. <b>(13)</b>.</li> <li>3. Powers to close 'failing schools' more quickly <b>(14)</b>.</li> <li>4. Powers to dismiss 'failing teachers' more easily.</li> <li>5. Ensuring all student teachers from all routes into teaching are subject to the same 'standards' for qualification, and for their induction year <b>(15)</b>.</li> <li>6. Tightening still further the national curriculum for initial teacher 'training', through a more prescriptive set of 'standards' to be achieved than that proposed by the then Conservative government <b>(16)</b>.</li> <li>7. Introduction of outcome tests for student teachers in numeracy, literacy and information and communications technology (ICT) prior to the award of Qualified Teacher Status (QTS)</li> <li>8. Ensuring a curriculum in schooling, further education and initial teacher education which is skills based and which leaves little space for critical reflection and critique <b>(17)</b>.</li> <li>9. Seeking to standardise, for the first time, a core curriculum for each subject at higher education level, through the Quality Assurance Agency.</li> <li>10. The 'New Deal' for 16-18 year olds, with financial benefits curtailed for those who fail to engage in education, training, voluntary work, or work.</li> <li>• <b>2. Managerialism</b></li> <li>11. Stressing the managerialist nature of the role of school managements, and, in particular, the key, indeed, transformatory, role of headteachers in creating 'effective schools'..</li> <li>12. Proposals for a restructured, hierarchicalised and segmented teaching force, via PRP (performance related pay) for schoolteachers, and for more highly paid 'superteachers' <b>(18)</b>.</li> </ul> |
|---|

13. Expanding the number of classroom assistants **(19)**.
  14. Setting up a General Teaching Council (GTC) as a national teachers' regulatory professional organisation
  15. Restructuring teaching and teacher education as technical labour rather than professional labour, with teachers/lecturers delivering a highly standardised curriculum **(20)**.
- **3. Competitiveness and selection**
16. Extension of 'magnet' (specialist) schools which may be selective **(21)**.
  17. Grant Maintained Schools have had to choose between becoming foundation or voluntary schools, and have lost the financial privileges they received under the Conservative government, but they have retained their right to continue a degree of selection **(22)**.
  18. Introduction from March 1999 of parental ballots that may result in some of the 164 remaining selective Grammar schools remaining selective or becoming comprehensive (petitions seeking such a change must be signed by twenty per cent of 'eligible' parents.
  19. Introducing 'value added' league tables through Ofsted's Panda (performance and assessment data) scores (i.e. taking into account the number of pupils taking free school meals and the proportion speaking English as an additional language).
- **4. Privatisation (23)**
20. Education action zones which can bypass local education authorities and which can be led by private enterprise/ companies **(24)**.
  21. Private companies to run some schools **(25)**.
  22. Private control of some LEAs and aspects of LEA work **(26)**.
  23. Weakening LEAs and strengthening school governors' and school managements' powers by allocating more education funding directly to schools and less to LEAs.
  24. Planning the Skills Council, 'an agency with a budget of more than £5 billion to plan and supervise all post-16 education and training', with increased business influence **(27)**.
- **5. Traditionalism**
25. Substantially retaining a eurocentric and traditionalist Conservative national curriculum (revised version of 1995) and assessments, weakening the role of the foundation subjects in primary schools and introducing 'literacy hour' and 'numeracy hour' into primary schools as part of a 'back to basics' curriculum. Some minor changes due to be implemented in 2000 such as freeing up some of the subject structure of the secondary National Curriculum so that 'citizenship' and other cross-curricular skills and attitude development may take a higher priority **(28)**.
  26. Allowing and encouraging schools in Education Action Zones (which are all in working class areas) to experiment and disapply the national curriculum in order to focus on work based training.
  27. Proposing allowing disaffected 14 year olds to spend one day a week in the workplace **(29)**.
  28. Pressuring schools and those involved in 'teacher training' to drop a commitment to mixed ability teaching **(30)**.
  29. Ensuring all trained teachers from all routes into teaching are graduates.
- **6. Technoideology: (31)**
30. Schools linked up to a 'National Grid for Learning';
  31. IT strategies prominent in many EAZ bids.
  32. Emphasis in IT learning in initial teacher education, where Information and Communications Technology (ICT) are particularly specified for Primary teachers (together with English, Maths and Science);

- **7. Social Inclusion**

33. More money for schools compared with Conservative spending plan (32).
34. Proposals to increase the number of higher education places.
35. Proposals to widen participation in further education (33).
36. Nursery education on demand (34).
37. Abolition of the Assisted Places Scheme (35), with the savings going towards paying for
38. Smaller class sizes for 5-7 year olds (36).
39. More resources for schools in deprived Education Action Zones (37).
40. In addition there are a range of other schemes, such as the catch-up classes, or 'booster lessons' for 11 year olds that need extra help with English and Maths. Many of these schemes are part of 'Excellence in Cities' programme involving funding for eighty high-tech learning centres, learning mentors, learning support units for disaffected and disruptive youngsters in ten of the country's most deprived areas over three years, staff training and a new curriculum to stretch the top 10% of 'gifted and talented children'; and new beacon and specialist schools initiatives (38).
41. Introduced pilot schemes (from September 1999) for Education Maintenance Allowances for 16-18 year olds from poor families going in to further education (39).
42. Started to resource 'Lifelong Learning' plans (40).

- **8. Low public expenditure**

43. Increased use of Private Finance Initiative (PFI) for funding school/college buildings.
44. Students in higher education charged tuition fees in addition to continuing the Conservative government's policy of student loans replacing student (41);
45. Less spending on education *as a proportion of national income*, (though not in real terms) than under John Major. Education spending dropped from 4.9% to 4.4% of national income in (the Blair government's) first two years, and even with its extra £19 billion will only rise to 5.1% in the next three years- still below the 5.3% in Major's first year (42).

## **New Labour and teacher education**

David Blunkett signalled substantial agreement with the direction of Conservative government changes in Initial Teacher Education (ITE) in his reaction to Conservative proposals in September 1996 to institute a highly prescriptive National Curriculum for Teacher Training. He criticised the delay in implementing it (King 1996). 'They have taken 17 years to come up with proposals on what is taught in teacher training colleges. Most people will be amazed that there is not already a core curriculum' (Blunkett cited in Barber 1996).

The message given by Blair and Blunkett was that,

the Labour Party intends to launch a back to basics drive in the classroom if it wins the next election. More emphasis on basic skills, classroom discipline and whole class teaching will become part of a drastic overhaul of teacher training. The plan has been sparked by the party's dissatisfaction with the quality of newly qualified teachers (*Times Educational Supplement* 31 May 1996).

However, in addition to replicating some aspects of (Radical Right) Conservative Policy, a number of long standing traditional Labour/ social democratic policy proposals still remained.

In this section I itemise ten such changes from Conservative policy and signify those changes by an asterisk (\*). Thus, Barber reiterated that,

\*Blunkett... has consistently emphasised his commitment to partnership between schools and higher education. Labour would presumably aim to develop a national curriculum for teacher education, which inspires both sides of the partnership (idem).

This is a clear departure from Conservative policy that was highly hostile to the role of higher education in 'teacher training'.

### *New Routes into teaching*

Labour's two new schemes for attracting over-24s are the Graduate Teacher Programme (GTP) and the Registered Teacher Programme (RTP) (TTA, 1997). They retain the same features as those proposed by the Conservative Government in October 1996 and March 1997, other than in two respects. These are \*' firstly that trainees should be at least 24 years old unless they are already fully-qualified to teach in another country; and \*secondly that those who are not already graduates should study for a degree while they train (TTA, 1997), thereby reaffirming its belief (unlike the Conservatives') that teaching should be an all-graduate profession.

In a further departure from Conservative Party policy, the consultation document on the GTP and RTP (TTA 1997), stresses that \*'the same standards are required for the award of QTS whether trainees follow an employment-based route or any other course of Initial Teacher training (ITT)' (TTA 1997:1).

However, in a move which perpetuates the exclusion of higher education from a part of ITE, the 'Recommending Body' (RB) for organising and running the scheme, as with the Conservative Government's School-Based Initial Teacher Training (SCITT) schemes, can be a school or consortium of schools with no HE input in course design, validation and monitoring.

The Labour GTP/RTP document is permissive when it suggests that such trainees 'may profitably experience teaching in at least one other school' (than their training school) (idem: 4, para 22-23). This does not recognise that student teachers need to benefit from a variety of school ethos and approaches in order to evaluate the effectiveness of their own and of others' and of schools' practices. These same points were made in relation to the Licensed Teachers' Scheme, and, to an extent, the Articled Teachers' Scheme (43).

The GTP proposals, as with the Licensed Teacher and Articled Teacher schemes and the SCITT schemes, minimise the opportunity for developing HEI based critical reflection. Although the new document *Standards for the Award of Qualified Teacher Status* is, quite rightly, to apply to the GTP and RTP routes into teaching, there is the particular possibility with school-based routes of denigrating, denying or omitting the critical, comparative and theoretical aspects of Initial Teacher Education (44). However, the overwhelming emphasis remains on phonics.

### *New Labour's national curriculum for 'teacher training'*

With respect to the National Curriculum for Teacher Training, 'New Labour' has made a number of minor changes to the Conservative proposals. These are in the areas of the overall nature of teaching ability; the recognition of cultural diversity and underachievement; and the recognition of the variety of ways of teaching reading- that it is not solely phonics (45), although this is where the overwhelming emphasis lies.

Unlike the Conservative document, *Consultation on Standards for the Award of Qualified Teacher Status* (DES 1997a) the 'New Labour' version (DfEE 1997b, 1998d) *does* confirm degree status for all teachers; emphasise that teaching is an intellectually and managerially challenging profession. \*A (very marginally) less mechanistic view of teaching is presented than the Conservative proposals, and \*'New Labour' avoids the implication in the Conservative document that discrete assessment of each competency standard would be required. New Labour has, however, retained the nomenclature of 'teacher training' as opposed to 'teacher education'.

New Labour is also slightly more vocal on equal opportunities issues. The Conservative document did include standards:

D a iii, which required student teachers to have a working knowledge and understanding of 'anti-discrimination legislation'

B2 k xiii, requiring student teachers to set 'high expectations for all pupils notwithstanding individual differences, including gender, and cultural and linguistic backgrounds';

B2 l which required student teachers to be 'familiar with the Code of Practice on the identification and assessment of special educational needs' and associated matters.

'New Labour' goes further. As well as extending the first of the standards above, and keeping the latter two standards above, as the same numbered standards B2 k xiii, B2 l, it adds to the Conservative proposals in a number of ways. These are as follows.

Standard 2 a v requires student teachers to be able to identify 'pupils who are not yet fluent in English'. The word *yet* is an addition to the Conservative formulation, and is a recognition, albeit minimal, of the needs, and, perhaps the advantages, of children/ school students whose English is emergent.

There is still, in 'New Labour' policy, very little recognition of the needs and advantages of those whose Home Language is not standard English, such as, for example, Haringey Black English, or Bengali, or Portuguese. In standards A1 (the numbering of these two standards are the same in both Conservative and 'New Labour' documents), the use of non-standard English, and of Home Language, is alluded to but is not spelt out.

In metalinguistic terms it can be very useful to have a detailed knowledge and use of more than one language. Both Conservative and 'New Labour' documents fail to encourage bilingual (or, as I experienced in my teaching in Tower Hamlets, trilingual or quadrilingual) pupils to continue to use their own domestic language (46). This is despite the social and cognitive advantages of so doing. In neither the Conservative nor the 'New Labour' document is there any reference to the advantages of pupils' exposure to oral language in their mother tongue. If a child has little command of English, then it is in the mother tongue that such children will be exposed to oral

language, with the advantages that brings for E2L children to develop cognitively and to catch-up.

Standard D a ii specifies, *inter alia*, knowledge not just of the requirement that student teachers 'have a working knowledge and understanding of teachers legal liabilities and responsibilities relating to ....anti-discrimination legislation', but specifies the Race Relations Act 1976, and the Sex Discrimination Act 1975 (47). However, with respect to standard D f. concerning teachers' pastoral responsibilities, there is no mention here of equal opportunities with respect to 'race', gender, social class background, sexuality or disability. Such a mention, as part of a list to extend the reference to 'bullying' would have served to give greater legitimacy to these issues (48).

Standard B3 D d requires that student teachers 'are committed to ensuring that every pupil is given the opportunity to achieve their (sic) potential and meet the high expectations set for them'. Standard B3 D g specifies that student teachers need to 'recognise that learning takes place inside and outside the school context.....'. Both of these standards are additions to Conservative proposals. They require, and create spaces for, the inclusion within the ITE curriculum of the sociological and political contexts of schooling.

### **PART THREE: EDUCATIONAL IDEOLOGIES**

In order to analyse New Labour's ideological orientation in education, in Part Four I compare its policy with the key aspects of the other ideologies. Here, therefore, I briefly describe these other ideologies as expressed in ideological principles and resulting policies.

#### **Principles of Social Democracy**

Labour in government 1945-51, 1964-70 and 1974-76 (if not from 1976-79) can be considered to have broadly been pursuing social democratic policies in the terms described below. (Some policies may be described as Radical Left, such as the wholesale nationalisations of 1945-49, and the local enterprise boards of the 1970s. Other policies, spurred by international capital, acted against social democratic policy). For Kavanagh, the 'six central pillars' of what he terms 'the edifice of (post-war) consensus' were full employment, the mixed economy, active government, social welfare provision, the conciliation of the trade unions, and the cult of 'expertise' (Kavanagh, cited in Hay 1996).

The main principles of social democracy are, according to Heffernan, full employment, the welfare state, redistributive taxation as a positive social good, and what he calls 'a mixed pseudo-Keynesian economy'. Heffernan disagrees with those who see 'New Labour' as the natural successor to the social democracy of Anthony Crosland and Hugh Gaitskell, with their belief in egalitarianism, (in the sense of rather more equality of outcome), progressive taxation, the redistribution of wealth and state intervention (Heffernan 1997). Gray adds, as a feature of social democracy, 'support for and co-operation with a strong Labour movement as the principal protectors of workers' interests' (Gray 1996b)

Hattersley quotes from Tony Crosland's (1956) *The Future of Socialism* to encapsulate what he calls democratic socialism (but which can more commonly be seen as social democracy) as demanding more equality of outcome- 'equality of opportunity, though it leads to the most

admirable distribution of intelligence, is not enough'. Crosland did not believe in a meritocracy, but 'the distribution of rewards and privileges so as to diminish the degree of class stratification, the injustices of large inequalities, and the collective discontents which come from too great a dispersal of rewards' (Hattersley 1996).

Ian Aitken depicts the difference between social democracy and socialism. He sees social democracy as 'limited kind of egalitarianism- which was to be delivered via the tax and benefit system'. He depicts socialists as believing that because inequality springs from the private ownership of capital, it required extensive public ownership to correct it (Aitken 1997).

The ideological orientation of the Labour Party in its education policy, as in its wider policy has historically been social democratic (Benn and Chitty 1996, Hillcole Group 1997), although some, such as Lawton, consider that,

attempts by the Labour Party since 1945 to develop a comprehensive and coherent set of policies on education...show that far from being dominated by ideology the Party has suffered from a lack of ideology (1992:30).

Key aspects of social democratic policies on schooling and teacher education such as the 1944 Education Act, comprehensivisation, and targeting of funds (for example via the Educational Priority Areas) derive are as follows:

***Table 3: Social Democracy and education***

1. comprehensive schooling;
2. expansion of educational opportunities and provision (e.g. expansion of higher education, the Open University);
3. local community involvement in schooling, further and higher education;
4. local community control over schooling further and higher education (through democratically elected and accountable LEAs);
5. a commitment to policies of equal opportunities;
6. a degree of positive discrimination and redistribution of resources within and between schools;
7. a curriculum and education system which recognises issues of social justice and which aims at producing a technically efficient, but fairer, capitalist society;
8. the teacher as authoritative but relatively democratic and anti-authoritarian;
9. a desire to develop a contextual (or situational) type of teacher reflection;
10. the aims of education to include the flourishing of the collective economy and society as well as the flourishing of the individual.

### **Liberal-progressivism and education**

Prior to the ascendancy of the Radical Right under the Conservative governments of 1979-1987, one of the two dominant paradigms in Primary schooling and ITE in England and Wales, in addition to social democracy, was the liberal progressive one. Based on the philosophy of the Plowden Report (CACE 1967) it owed much to Piagetian and Brunerian psychology. In ITE this educational ideology affected and informed most Primary and significant sections of

Secondary ITE courses (c.f. Maguire 1993). A summary of the characteristics of liberal-progressive ideology in education is as follows (c.f. Silcock 1999):

**Table 4: Liberal-Progressivism and education**

- |   |
|---|
| <ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. child-centredness, in terms of the individualistic and individualised nature of the curriculum;</li> <li>2. 'readiness' (e.g. reading readiness);</li> <li>3. a curriculum emphasis on interdisciplinary topic work;</li> <li>4. the curriculum organised in an 'integrated day';</li> <li>5. a curriculum emphasis on 'relevance' (e.g. of the curriculum to working class children in general and to Asian, black and other ethnic minority group children in general);</li> <li>6. the teacher as a guide to educational experiences rather than a distributor of knowledge;</li> <li>7. the non-authoritarian teacher as friend and guide;</li> <li>8. 'discovery learning';</li> <li>9. little competitive testing;</li> <li>10. an emphasis on individual and group co-operation and group work rather than competitiveness;</li> <li>11. a desire to develop a contextual (or situational) type of teacher reflection;</li> <li>12. a schooling system the aim of which is the flourishing of the individual.</li> </ol> |
|---|

Neville Bennett set out thirteen characteristics of 'Progressive Teachers' and contrasted them with 'Traditional Teachers' in tabular form thus:

**Table 5: (Liberal-)Progressive Teachers and Traditional Teachers**

<b>Progressive</b>	<b>Traditional</b>
1. Integrated subject matter	Separate subject matter
2. Teacher as guide to educational experiences	Teacher as distributor of knowledge
3. Active pupil role	Passive pupil role
4. Pupil participation in curriculum planning	Pupils have no say in curriculum planning
5. Learning predominantly by discovery techniques	Accent on memory, practice and rote
6. External rewards and punishments not necessary	External rewards and punishments used
7. Not too concerned with conventional academic standards	Concerned with academic standards
8. Little testing	Regular testing
9. Accent on co-operation and group work	Accent on competition
10. Teaching not confined to classroom	Teaching largely confined to classroom
11. Emphasis on team teaching	Emphasis on individual

12. Open plan layout

13. Accent on creative expression

teaching

Closed classroom layout

Little emphasis on

creative expression. (Bennett, 1976:38)

### **The Radical Right: neo-liberal principles and neo-conservative principles**

It is possible to identify sixteen wide (societal level) ideological themes recurring in Radical Right ideology, principles and policy. There appear to be six neo-liberal themes- *individualism, privatisation/ private enterprise, market competition/consumer choice, surveillance of public services, cost reduction of public services, and anti-producer power* the. There appear to be six neo-conservative themes- *tradition and traditional family, 'back to basics', nation, monoculturalism regarding 'race', authority, order and social control, elitism and hierarchicalism*. And there are a number of themes appropriate to both neo-liberalism and neo-conservatism. The four identified are: *derision, distrust and disrespect for: public services, socialist/Marxist egalitarianism; liberal-progressivism; and for the theory purporting to underlie what the Radical Right see as essentially practical activities* such as teaching and Initial Teacher Education. The concomitant therefore of the anti-theoretical bias of Thatcherism is an emphasis on *practice*. This list of sixteen themes is not an exclusive list. However they do seem, to me, to be the dominant themes with respect to education. (Lawton 1994 and Giddens 1998, have similar, though not identical lists).

The uneasy co-existence between neo-liberalism and neo- conservatism has been widely documented (e.g.Chitty 1989, Jones 1989, Hill 1997b).

### **The Radical Left and education**

The principles and policies below are expressed in the following policies put forward by socialist and Marxist groups and writers. They are based on basic principles of equality (of outcome), of comprehensive provision, of democratic community control over education, and use of the local and national state to achieve a socially just, (defined as egalitarian) anti-discriminatory society.

#### ***Table 6: The Radical Left and education***

1. more resources and funding for education through higher rate of tax on profits and the rich, and by spending less on defence, thus, for example, smaller class sizes;
2. an end to selection in schooling and the development of fully comprehensive schooling and further and higher education system e.g. a change in the structure of schooling;
3. an end to the competitive market in schooling and its associated publication of 'league tables';
4. commitment to egalitarian policies aimed at achieving more equal outcomes regardless, for example, of factors such as social class, gender, 'race', sexuality and disability. Egalitarian redistribution of resources within and between schools, via both positive discrimination for under achieving individuals and groups;
5. a curriculum which seeks to transform present capitalist society into a democratic socialist one;

6. opposition to some key aspects of liberal-progressive education, such as non-structured learning and assessment of pupils/school students and reliance on the Piagetian concept of 'readiness' (see Epstein 1993).
7. an anti-elitist formal and informal (hidden) curriculum.
8. the teacher as authoritative but as democratic, anti-authoritarian and engaging in critical pedagogy, with a commitment to developing critical reflection, the teacher as political activist, committed to struggling for social justice and equality inside and outside the classroom.
9. local community involvement in the schools and colleges;
10. increasing local community democratic accountability in schooling and further and higher education (e.g. LEA powers) and *decreasing* those of 'business' and private enterprise;
11. supporting the redistributive and quality control functions of democratically accountable Local Education Authorities with increased political and financial power, engaging, inter alia, in the development and dissemination of policies for equality (e.g. anti-racist, anti-sexist, anti-homophobic policies and policies seeking to promote equality for the working class and the disabled);
12. a schooling system, the aim of which is the flourishing of the collective society, the community, as well as the flourishing of the individual;
13. fostering democratic, egalitarian and collaborative cultures within the classroom and within school and further education and higher education workplaces-i.e. to replace what is sometimes a brutalist managerialist culture with a more open and democratic one;

Marxist and socialist arguments and policies such as the above are published by the Socialist Teachers Association, the Hillcole Group of Radical Left Educators. Some examples are: Hillcole Group 1991; 1997; Cole, Hill and Shan 1997, Hill and Cole 1999, Hill 1994d; 1997;) and regular articles in *Forum for comprehensive Education, Socialist Teacher; Education and Social Justice*. These are in addition to articles in the more general left Press such as *Tribune, The Socialist, Socialist Organiser, Socialist Worker* and *Socialist Outlook*. Furthermore, some articles in *Multicultural Teaching, Education for Today and Tomorrow*, and, very occasionally, *The Guardian*, also set out Radical Left policy for education.

## **PART FOUR: LABOUR'S EDUCATIONAL IDEOLOGY**

### **New Labour and initial teacher education**

In order to ascertain 'New Labour's' ideological position on ITE it is instructive to list what I have elsewhere identified as fifteen policy principles of the Radical Right *specifically on ITE*, together with the sixteen Radical Right (society wide) ideological themes. It is thereby possible to identify the degree of congruence between 'New Labour' and the Radical Right.

In these charts, I also seek to identify social democratic, liberal-progressive and Radical Left positions on these themes, based on their key principles in education, and thereby establish New Labour continuities and discontinuities with them as well.

***Table 7: Fifteen Radical Right Policy Positions in Initial Teacher Education. New Labour's ideological positioning in comparison to other ideological perspectives***

	RADICAL	NEW	SOCIAL	LIBERAL	RADICAL
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	RIGHT	LABOUR	DEMOCRATIC	PROGRESSIVE	LEFT
(i). Pro-Emphasis on Practical Classroom and Discipline Skills	√√	√√	√	XX	O
(ii). Anti-Progressivism/ Child-centredness	√√	√√	X	XX	√?X?
(iii). Pro-Teacher as Authority Figure in terms of both expertise and in terms of discipline	√√	√√	X	XX	XX
(iv). Pro-Traditional Curriculum Content and Methods	√√	√√	O	XX	XX
(v). Pro-Traditional Morality	√√	√	X	X?X	XX
(vi). Anti-Changing Society to secure more social justice	√√	√	X	X	XX
(vii). Anti- Multiculturalism	√√	X	X	X	X
(viii). Anti-anti-racism	√√	O?	X	√	XX
(ix). Priority for Subject Knowledge and Practical Skills	√√	√√	O	XX	O
(x). Anti-Educational Theory in ITE	√√	√	X	XX	XX
(xi). Anti-HEI Involvement in ITE	√√	O	XX	XX	XX
(xii) Pro-setting up a competitive market in routes into teaching	√√	√√	XX	X	XX
(xiii). Pro-Totally School Based ITE Routes	√√	√	XX	XX	XX
(xiv). Pro- Cutting Cost of ITE	√√	√√	O	X	XX
(xv). Pro-Regulation of ITE via tightly defined and monitored Competencies or Standards	√√	√√	X	XX	XX

Key    √√    strong agreement  
        √     agreement  
        O     equanimity  
        X     disagreement  
        XX    strong disagreement

As a summary to this table, when compared to the (Conservative) government's Council for the Accreditation of Teacher Education (CATE) Criteria of 1984 and 1989 (DES 1984, 1989), and when set in the context of what could have been done to promote critical reflection and a more egalitarian curriculum for ITE, the 'New Labour' proposals are modest indeed-, in this respect, a catalogue of missed opportunities. The Conservative proposals, based as they are on a neo-Conservative cultural nationalism and authoritarianism and a neo-liberal competitive, individualist anti-egalitarianism, have been adopted, *almost in toto*, by the 'New Labour' government.

### New Labour and schooling

This analysis is based on what appear to me to be New Labour's key forty-five policies in education since taking office and on speeches and writings of Tony Blair, David Blunkett and Michael Barber, together with press releases and other publications by the Labour Party.

**Table 8** identifies New Labour policy, as expressed in legislation and rhetoric, in terms of its agreement with and adoption of the following sixteen key Radical Right themes. It is instructive, too, to compare the degree of New Labour's take-up of these themes with what I consider to be positions held by traditional Labour/ social democrats, and those held by the Radical Left. The relative- though not total, closeness of New Labour to the Radical Right can then be gauged in comparison to its distance from both traditional Labour/social democracy and the Radical Left.

**Table 8: Sixteen Radical Right Ideological Themes showing endorsement by 'New Labour' in its Education Policy**

	RADICAL RIGHT	'NEW LABOUR'	SOCIAL DEMOCRATIC	LIBERAL-PROGRESSIVE	RADICAL LEFT
1. Pro- Individualism	√√	√√	X	√√	XX
2. Pro-Privatisation and Private Enterprise, anti-Public Sector	√√	√	X	O	XX
3. Pro-Market Competition and Consumer Choice	√√	√√	X	√	XX
4. Pro-monitoring, measurement and surveillance of public welfare, social and educational services	√√	√√	?	XX	?
5. Pro-Cost Reduction/ profit/ cheapness/reducing costs of products and public services	√√	√√	X	X	XX
6. Anti-professional 'producer power'	√√	√	XX	XX	X
7. Pro-Tradition and Traditional Family	√√	√	O	XX	XX

8. Pro-Back to Basics	√√	√√?	√	XX	XX
9. Pro-Nationalism and 'Britishness'	√√	√?√	O	O	XX
10. Anti-anti-racism	√√	O	X	√?O?	XX
11. Pro-Authority, Order and Social Control;	√√	√√?	O	XX	XX
12. Pro-Elite (Social, Cultural, Economic)	√√	√?	X	√	XX
13. Pro-Hierarchy and Social Differentiation	√√	√?	X	O?	XX
14. Anti-liberal progressivism	√√	√√	XX	XX	X
15. Anti-socialist/Marxism	√√	√√	√	√√	XX
16. 'Practical' Anti-theoretical bias and emphasis	√√	O	XX	XX	XX

### **Categorising New Labour's education policies ideologically**

New Labour education policies can be placed in the four categories below. The lists below are not exhaustive. Furthermore, some policies, it might be argued, could fit into more than one category.

#### ***Social democratic policies***

Some New Labour policies may be seen to be in the social democratic tradition of redistributive policy and financing through the agency of the local and national state. Examples of such policies are:

***Table 9: New Labour's social democratic education policies***

- |   |
|---|
| <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• nursery education on parental demand</li> <li>• reduced class sizes for 5-7 year olds</li> <li>• a policy focus on reducing social disadvantage in schooling through a variety of funded schemes</li> <li>• education maintenance grants for further education students from poor backgrounds</li> <li>• proposals to increase the number of students in further and higher education</li> <li>• increased expenditure in Education Action Zones (EAZs)</li> </ul> |
|---|

- increased expenditure in respect of 'Excellence in Cities' targeted at areas of particular social need
- planning an overarching post-16 agency to control competition between institutions and replace it by co-operation

***2. Continuation of Conservative government policies which are not identifiably/particularly neo-liberal, neo-conservative or Thatcherite***

While the market in schooling and privatisation are clearly neo-liberal, it is not clear at all whether some policies pursued by Thatcherism- such as centralised government control over curricula, a regime of assessment and a focus on 'the basics' literacy and numeracy are *essentially* Thatcherite. I would contend that these are not *necessarily* neo-liberal or neo-conservative, even though they were introduced and supported by Conservative governments. Of course, from a functionalist Marxist perspective these developments, widespread across the Western capitalist world, (see Apple 1989, 1993, 1996; Hill 1990; Hatcher and Hirrt 1999) are geared towards economic competitiveness in a neo-liberal world economy and can therefore be deemed neo-liberal. Blair and Schroeder (1999) are quite clear that education and training policy- life-long learning, improved standards in literacy and numeracy- are located within the section and macro-policy that 'an active government...has a key role to play in economic development' (p.8). However, I am not sure how productive it is to depict as neo-liberal, *en bloc*, all those policies aiming at technical efficiency. Hence, I have included the second category above. This does also serve to isolate those policies that have a clear neo-liberal, neo-conservative, and/or Thatcherite ideological provenance from those policies intended to measure or control the throughput of those policies.

***Table 10: Continuation of Conservative policies which are not identifiably/particularly neo-liberal, neo-conservative or Thatcherite***

- a regime of testing and assessment
- tightening the 'standards' to be attained by student teachers and by primary schoolchildren (via the Literacy and Numeracy hours)
- policies which are related to techno-ideology, to an information technology rich schooling system

***Continuation/acceptance of ideologically neo-liberal, neo-conservative or Thatcherite policies***

Other New Labour policies appear to be a continuation of, an unwillingness to change Conservative policy. Examples are:

***Table 11: Continuation/acceptance of ideologically neo-liberal, neo-conservative or Thatcherite policies***

- the competitive market in schooling (albeit with some minor modification), and the accompanying mantra of
- 'standards not structures'
- increasing the focus on 'the basics' in the school curriculum

- the neo-conservative, utilitarian national curriculum in schooling and in Initial Teacher Education and in Further Education
- lack of locally elected democratic accountability across much of the education system (albeit in a modified form with some extra powers given to LEAs and an increased number of parent governors on school governing bodies)
- 'naming and shaming' 'errant' LEAs and schools, and the accompanying
- closures of 'failing' schools
- stressing managerialist solutions as opposed to financial/intake/curricula solutions
- restricted financing of education, which despite publicised 'improvements' and targeting, met Conservative public expenditure limits 1997-1999, and whose planned increase is, overall, notably meagre

***New Labour extension of ideologically neo-liberal, neo-conservative or Thatcherite policies***

Finally, there are a number of policies, some major areas of policy, where New Labour actually goes beyond- deepens- Conservative policy. Had a Conservative government been re-elected in May 1997, it would seem likely that it would have pursued its radical right ideology by deepening its neo-liberal policies and neo-conservative policies, for example in the direction of more privatisation and more 'back to basics'. New Labour, instead, is carrying out such extensions to ideologically neo-liberal, neo-conservative or Thatcherite policies

Examples of these New Labour policies are:

***Table 12: New Labour extension of ideologically neo-liberal, neo-conservative or Thatcherite policies***

- the attack on mixed ability teaching;
- the impending implementation of PRP (Performance Related Pay) for teachers, and the accompanying
- proposals for superteachers
- extending para-educational, more lowly paid and trained teaching assistants in the classroom
- extending , and more highly funding specialist (i.e. to an extent selective) magnet and specialist schools
- introducing fees for undergraduate courses, in addition to student loans
- the introduction of private company control over schools in EAZs
- the introduction of private company control over 'failing' LEAs
- the introduction of private contracting out of particular schools
- the extension of the Private Finance Initiative (PFI)- whereby private companies build schools, lease them to LEAs- but thereafter own them outright increasing the focus on 'the basics' in the school curriculum (50).

These last four policies may be seen as the beginning of the privatisation of the education system (51), as a semi-privatisation of the state sector (Ainley 1999).

**PART FIVE: DISCUSSION: NEW LABOUR'S NEO-LIBERALISM**

To what extent does the ideological analysis of New Labour's education policy accord with- substantiate- general observations and analyses of New Labour's overall ideology?

Analysis of one or two areas of policy, the operation of one or two ideological state apparatuses, might be instructive in determining a government's ideological trajectory. However, such an analysis needs to be set within the bigger picture of state policy (see Hill and Cole 1995). It may, or may not be the case that one particular set of state apparatuses such as the education state apparatuses, accord with the operations of other state apparatuses, or with the overall direction of state policy under a particular government. State theories take cognisance of the disarticulations and inconsistencies in policy production and implementation. This is so both vertically levels (in the 'chain of command' from Ministry level to shop floor/classroom level), and horizontally- for example in disagreements that might occur between the Prime Minister, the secretary of State for Education and Employment and the Chancellor of the Exchequer (Hill and Cole 1999: *ibid*).

However, having recognised these that disarticulations do occur, the analysis with which I conclude is that education policy does appear to be congruent with, and an important constituent part of the overall ideological thrust of New Labour policy.

New Labour is criticised by both traditional Labour and the Radical Left for its refusal to use the language of equality and implement egalitarian policies. Hatcher notes that the Labour Party (in, for example, its 1994 Green Consultation Paper on Education 'is extremely weak on the issue of tackling inequalities of gender, "race" and class .... it assimilates the issue of social class inequalities into the general rubric of raising standards' (Hatcher 1994). Unlike the 1980s (for example the Swann Report), and unlike the Labour Party documents as late as 1994, 'continuity is more with Conservative education policy of the 1990s than with the egalitarian reform movement of the 1980s' (*idem*).

Hatcher quotes 'Cohen's (1994) observation that in its quest to occupy the supposed middle group of British politics, Labour is abandoning even its traditional moderate goals. It represents an important accommodation to conservative education discourse of the 1980s.' He quotes Walter Secada, describing a similar situation in education in the US, who says that 'equity has become little more than trickle down excellence' (Secada 1989: 3) where 'the original concern for the education of women, minorities and individuals from lower socio- economic background was submerged to a concern for improving education for 'everyone' (*ibid*: 2).

In addition the concern with social inclusion and social exclusion in New Labour policy and rhetoric disguises, hides and rhetorically replaces the existence of social class inequality **(52)** New Labour is determinedly not egalitarian, having turned its back on its rhetoric, for example in its 1976 Programme, that,

Our programme is founded on the principles of democracy and socialism. At its head is a basic socialist priority: to bring about a fundamental and irreversible shift in the balance of power and wealth in favour of working people and their families (Labour Party 1976: 10).

With respect to school improvement and school effectiveness, while these may be desirable, (who wants declining or ineffective schools?), the concepts of school effectiveness and of school

improvement have, intrinsically, nothing whatsoever to do with the concept of equality. Nor might they have empirically, however much the life chances of tens of thousands of working class school pupils/students be improved by the Herculean or increasingly effective and improved efforts of their teachers and schools. Making the trains run on time does not engineer, or structure, the uses to which the railways are put, whether it be, for example deportation or mass subsidised holidays, whether they be run as a social and public service, or as a profit making service. Making the trains run on time does not, in itself, advance the social, political or economic uses to which they are put (53).

New Labour policy, and discourse on education- and, in particular, schooling and initial teacher education- displays both continuities and differences with Thatcherism. . The major continuity is the maintenance of a selective and exclusionary education system, (albeit, unlike under Thatcherism) glossed over with a concern to overcome 'social exclusion' by contradictory efforts to 'include' the excluded in a system that excludes at every level (54). This market system is becoming ever more selective and exclusionary (Davies 1999a,b,c). New Labour is actually spreading the frontiers of neo-liberalism in education, in its promotion of the business ethic and privatised control over schooling and education. This contrasts with the lack of continuity between 'New Labour' and both traditional Labour/ social democratic, and with Radical Left policy on ITE. While there are numerous examples of traditional social democratic 'big state' interventions, and while there is targeted socially redistributive expenditure, these have to be set within the contexts of maintaining the bulk of Thatcherite neo-liberal and neo-Conservative restructuring of education, and, indeed deepening them.

As for New Labour being 'socialist', the government displays deep hostility to the Radical Left, and the Radical left's beliefs in challenging, in a root and branch fashion, the underlying class-based, exploitative, individualist and consumerist hegemony of capitalist societies.

In the field of ITE, 'New Labour' policy is, essentially, continuing the previous government's neo-liberal and neo-conservative policies. It is, however, modifying some of them slightly in classically social democratic fashion, in a way in which, arguably, spaces for theoretical and equal opportunities work has been re-legitimated. New Labour has also (as suggested with respect to its policies in general, by Giddens (1998) and Driver and Martell (1998)) re-legitimated the role of the state in promoting technical efficiency, and in promoting a greater degree of social inclusion, 'New Labour' has also, thereby, (albeit in the name of equal opportunities and a recognition of cultural diversity), opened some minor space for the development and implantation of egalitarian and critical teaching. Critical pedagogy and critical reflection have, for example, been facilitated via citizenship in the National Curriculum (see Hill and Cole 1999a), and via modified requirements for student teachers (see Cole 1999a). These spaces were virtually closed down by the 1992/93 CATE criteria, and would have been even more so in the putative Conservative Party National Curriculum for 'Teacher Training'. However, to reiterate the analysis of this paper, 'New Labour' has, *to an overwhelming extent*, accepted the Radical Right revolution in schooling and initial teacher education, as it has in schooling, scarcely amending the Conservative legacy in terms of routes into teaching or in terms of the curriculum.

Yet it has done this by claiming to be beyond old ideologies, beyond left and right to be guided instead by principles of technicist and technological and managerial efficiency. Blairism,

lauded by theorists such as Giddens and Halpin, and by neo-liberal think tanks such as the Adam Smith Institute, stifles debate about the ends and purposes of policy, and concentrates instead on more efficient and technologically advanced means. What might be termed 'technoideology' - where ideology and technicism meld into one- (Rikowski 1999) is set within an unproblematised- indeed embraced- theory of accepting globalisation, stimulating competitiveness and raising the quality of UK plc labour power (see Cole 1998, 1999; Hatcher and Hirrt 1999) in education as elsewhere, regardless of its effect on traditional Labour intentions to equalise (to an extent) both opportunities and outcomes. In education, policy is clearly attempting to establish a 'technoculture' in schools and colleges- a futurised IT driven culture, within the educational parameters and structures set by the preceding Conservative government

To return to the various analyses of New Labour's ideological position set out in the introduction, it would appear that New Labour is not 'a politics going beyond left and right' (Blair *Channel Four News*, 29<sup>th</sup> May 1997), nor can it claim the title of being social democratic, whether 'revised', 'updated' or 'modernised'. The rhetoric and exhortations of Blair's reforms appear to be attempts to make capitalism more humane, and more meritocratic. As such, some of the policies, in education as elsewhere, will make a difference, albeit in many cases modest, to millions of lives. They are, in many cases, improvements on Conservative government policies.

In an overall determination of the New Labour government's education ideology, some of the forty-five policies analysed and categorised are more overarching, more influential than are others. Of the seven most important, overarching, policies, two might be deemed social democratic (targeted funding at the poorest areas; use of the state in addition to the market to raise standards); and one neo-conservative (the neo-conservative curriculum in schools and teacher education/training). However, in its four policies of privatisation, of Performance Related Pay (PRP), of relying on the grossly socially divisive selective market in schooling, and in the overall low level of public expenditure on education, New Labour education policy is dominated by neo-liberalism.

To depict New Labour as social democratic, updated, revised, modernised, or as centrist, whether radical or not, when the wholesale adoption and furtherance of neo-liberal policies are submerging and setting strict limits on traditional social democratic principles and policies, is clearly unwarranted.

Such improvements as there are, are located within a grossly unequal and neo-liberal- and increasingly unequal and neo-liberal- economic, social and political system. Furthermore, it is constrained by highly restrictive public spending plans. And so, despite the social democratic gloss of isolated examples of targeted spending, and of the mechanism of the state replacing that of the market, New Labour's education policy remains that of a determined Thatcherism, in both its neo-conservative and, in particular, its dominant neo-liberal form.

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## NOTES

1. There have been a number of competing claims. Blair (1996), Cliff and Gluckstein (1996) Hatcher and Jones (1996), Jones (1996), Mandelson and Liddle (1996), Perryman (1996), Cole and Hill (1997), Cole (1998), Driver and Martell (1998), Giddens (1998), Gould (1998) and Cohen (1999) discuss the emblematic and policy shifts in the Labour Party's ideology, with varying degrees of approbation (Blair, Driver and Martell, Giddens, Gould, Mandelson and Liddle, Perryman;), and disapprobation (Cliff and Gluckstein; Cohen, Cole, Cole and Hill, Hatcher and Jones).
2. *Channel Four News* 29 May, 1997; see also *The Guardian* 30 May, 1997.
3. See Webster (1999) and Sylvester (1999) for a commentary.
4. See also Marquand (1991, 1996:154) and Gray (1996b).
5. This last is the interpretation placed on 'New Labour' by *Tribune* (1995), Livingstone (1997), Cole (1996); Cole and Hill (1997), Hill and Cole, (1999a); Hatcher and Jones (1996), Hatcher, (1996a), together with the Marxist press such as *Socialist Worker*, *The Socialist* and *Socialist Organiser*.
6. See also Tooley (1997).
- 7 See Allen (1999) for a discussion.
8. Martell and Driver, 1998, and Giddens, 1998, engage in detailed comparisons between what they term 'Old Labour' and 'New Labour'. So does Hattersley, (1996, 1997) although, more briefly. In this paper I use the term Labour to signify traditional Labour Party, what some have termed 'real Labour'. I use the term 'Old Labour' only where Labour, in its longstanding traditional policy form, is thus described.
9. See Davies (1999a) Crisis, crisis, crisis: the state of our schools: the fatal flaw at the heart of our education system (*The Guardian*, 14<sup>th</sup> Sept.), (1999b) Bias that killed the dream of equality (*The Guardian* 15<sup>th</sup> Sept.) and (1999c) Political Coup bred educational disaster: Nick Davies talks to Lord Baker (*The Guardian* 16<sup>th</sup> Sept.).
10. This table and its explanatory endnotes is constructed from government legislation and Green (Consultation) Papers, DfEE press releases, Labour Party publications and press releases, and from Press sources.
11. Since the election, the hackles of teachers were raised by Blair's publication, days after his victory, of a 'hit-list' of 18 'Failing Schools' - all of them in areas of high social deprivation. The 'naming and shaming' policy was exacerbated by the new Government's decision to keep in office the widely excoriated Chief inspector of Schools, Chris Woodhead, regarded very widely as the chief 'teacher basher' of recent years, albeit in conjunction with the appointment of 'New Labour' educationalist Tim Brighouse as co-ordinator of a School Improvement task force. The NUT, among others, has criticised this approach For example, the Easter 1999 NUT Annual Conference 'voted unanimously to oppose the government's 'Fresh Start' initiative, under which failing schools are closed to be re-opened later with a different name and under new management. They accused the government of using classroom staff as scapegoats, making them responsible for underachievement that had many other causes....and....put the

blame on teachers rather than on the underfunding of schools' (BBC News Report 5<sup>th</sup> April 1999, pp.1-2).

**12.** Thus three of the government's four 'priorities for the year ahead' (i.e.1999-2000) relate to measurable standards. These are, 'to increase the proportion of those aged 11 meeting the standard of literacy for that age from 63% to 80% by 2002'; increase the proportion of those aged 16 who achieve five or more GCSEs at grade A-C, or equivalent, from 45% to 50% by 2002; increase the proportion of those who have achieved NVQ level 2 or equivalent from 72% to 85% by 2002' (The Government 1999: 11).

**13.** Inspection of FE colleges is being devolved to Ofsted.

**14.** The Government claims that 'the number of failing schools is starting to fall. For the first time in over five years there are more schools coming off special measures than are going on....The 37 schools which have now been failing for over two years will be closed or removed from special measures by the end of this summer term' (i.e. 1990) (The Government 1999: 9).

**15.** See DfEE Circular5/99, The Induction Period for Newly Qualified Teachers (DfEE 1999).

**16.** See Cole1999a; b for a discussion.

**17.** See Hill 1994a, 1997a for a delineation and discussion of different types of reflection in education.

**18.** The detail is spelt out in the Government's 'Green Paper of December 1998, *Teachers: Meeting the Challenge of Change*. The government proposes two pay scales for classroom teachers, separated by a performance threshold. 'There will be a tough new appraisal system. Up to the threshold, teachers would progress as now. To cross the threshold, teachers will need to demonstrate high and sustained levels of achievement and commitment. Heads will appraise and review their progress, underpinned by external assessment...Success in crossing the threshold would mean an initial salary increase of up to 10 percent- of the order of £2,000 per year- and access to further pay steps on this higher scale, based on appraisal of performance. Over time, we expect a majority of teachers to be of a standard to cross the threshold' (DfEE Press Release 566/98 3<sup>rd</sup> December 1998, p.1). The scheme is due to start in September 2000 and has a budget of £1 billion over the next two years (*The Guardian* 26<sup>th</sup> July 1999).

Proposals for 'superteachers', high quality classroom teachers to be highly paid, (the rest, not). In the government's words, 'the Government wants the best classroom teachers to earn up to £40,000 and the best heads up to £70,000' (The Government 1999: 10).

Martin Allen (1999) points out that New Labour's policies are aimed at creating a restructured, hierarchicalised and segmented teaching force via PRP (performance related pay) for schoolteachers, for a stratum of highly paid 'superteachers', for more classroom assistants, while at the top there is the fourth, managing, stratum of headteachers and other senior school management employees.

**19.** 'Over the next three years we will fund at least 20,000 more qualified teaching assistants' (DfEE Press Release 566/98 3<sup>rd</sup> December 1998: 2).

**20.** See Allen 1999 for a discussion of the restructuring of the teaching force.

**21.** The School Standards and Framework Act of 1998 (Chapter Two, 'Selection of Pupils') 'allows pre-existing selection by ability or aptitude to continue', but 'places a general restriction on selection by ability or aptitude in certain circumstances'. Section 102 allows schools with a specialism to select up to 10% of pupils in an age group for aptitude in one or more subjects' (DfEE Press Release 382/98 27<sup>th</sup> July 1998: 7).

**22.** See 'Education Opted-out schools face deficits', BBC News Report, April 20<sup>th</sup> 1999, pp.1-3), their ability to engage in some selection remains. As Baker noted, these two types of

selection outlined here retain 'the competitive market' in schooling. 'Schools can still select some of their pupils by aptitude. Grammar schools will continue unless local parents vote for change. Opted out schools will get a new name but will continue to be distinctive from other schools' (Baker 1998).

**23.** Ainley, among many others, points out that,

even if private provision initially improves standards of service, privatisation leads inevitably to two tiers- one for those who can pay, and one for those who can't. This is because it is necessarily more expensive than public provision, since it has to make a profit. The profit imperative also means that the private provision of public services is less directly accountable to society and that former public service values of service to citizens are replaced by those of responsiveness to consumers' (1999 in press).

**24.** The government describes EAZs as 'a revolutionary and innovative partnership between businesses, parents, schools and Local education authorities' (DfEE Press Release 382/98 27<sup>th</sup> July 1998, p.1). The government initially made it clear that it wanted at least one EAZ to have a private company as a lead partner, though subsequently David Blunkett appeared to rule out companies making a direct profit from the provision of schooling within the state system. However, companies involved in action zones will be able to charge a management fee' (BBC News Report May 19<sup>th</sup> 1998 : 1-2). According to Chitty (1998) 'Mr. Blunkett said companies backing the successful zones included Blackburn Rovers, Cadbury Schweppes, Nissan, Rolls Royce, Kellogg, British Aerospace, Tate and Lyle, American Express and Brittany Ferries. The zone in the London Borough of Lambeth would be led by Shell International and managed by private sector consultants (p. 80).

**25.** The first example is Kings Manor School in Guildford, Surrey. 'The City Technology College in Kingshurst, Solihull-through its commercial arm, 3E's Ltd.- beat off competition from better-known rivals (Wilson and Smithers 1999).

**26.** For example Hackney's £1.3million school improvement service was, by order of the government, contracted out to a private contractor in June 1999. Its ethnic minority achievement programme will be contracted out, against the wishes of the LEA, in April 2000 (Barnard 1999).

**27.** The quote continues, 'working through local partnerships of headteachers, college principals, business representatives, (LEA) officers and community leaders' ...businesses would lose their absolute control over workplace training. ....the aim is to stop cut-throat competition between schools, sixth-form colleges and further education establishments (Carvel and MacLeod 1999).

**28** These revisions are set out in *The Times Educational Supplement*, 10<sup>th</sup> Sept. They are also contained on the DfEE website [www.dfee.gov.uk/natcurr.htm](http://www.dfee.gov.uk/natcurr.htm). Among commentaries on the Eurocentric nature of the National Curriculum, see Hillcole Group 1991, 1997; Cole, Hill and Shan 1997; Hill and Cole 1999.

**29.** The School standards and Framework Act 'makes clear that pupils may undertake work experience throughout Key Stage 4' (DfEE Press Release 382/98 27<sup>th</sup> July 1998: 7).

**30.** 'For all schools, the importance of setting by subject ability is being emphasised' (The Government 1999: 10).

**31.** See Cole 1998, and McLaren and Farahmandpur 1999- in particular their discussion of 'technoideology' and its role in developing what they term 'fast capitalist' economies.

**32.** Examples are the March 1999 budget and funding for library books for each school; 'in 2002 we will be spending £11 billion more on education than the last administration planned to spend this year' (DfEE 1998 Press Release 360/98: 1), and, 'we are investing £5.4 billion in

school buildings over the next three years' (The Government 1999: 8), 'each school will get an average of £2,000 for books this year- an investment of £49 million (idem).

**33.** This is with 'an extra £725million' (The Government 1999: 8), 'to increase spending on further education to allow 700,000 more young people to go to college by 2001/02 as compared to 1997/98' (The Government 1999: 10).

**34.** 'the proportion of 3 year olds with a free early education place will almost double to 66% by the year 2002, backed by £390million more. All 4 year olds have been guaranteed a nursery education place since September 1998 (The Government 1999: 8). These are under section 18 of the School Standards and Framework Act of 1998.

**35.** This had 'creamed off' some bright state school children and subsidised their enrolment in private schools). One of the five overall pre- election 'pledges' made by Blair in was to abolish the (Conservative introduced) Assisted Places Scheme and to use the money saved to benefit far greater numbers of children by cutting class sizes to below 30 for five to seven year olds.

**36.** 'we are on course to meet our infant class size pledge by September 2001. The £620 million 'we are providing for extra teachers and classrooms will enable virtually all schools to meet the pledge that all children, aged 5, 6 and 7 are taught in infant classes of 30 or fewer a year early- by September 2000... Average primary class sizes are falling for the first time in ten years' (The Government 1999: 8). Furthermore one of the four education 'priorities for year ahead' is to 'cut the number of pupils aged 5, 6 and 7 in infant classes of over 30 from 477,000 to zero by September 2001 at the latest' (ibid. p.11). (This is Chapter 1 of the School Standards and Framework Act of 1998).

**37.** EAZs are part of the 1998 School Standards and Framework Act. 'EAZs will pump £75 million in three years into 25 areas facing real educational challenges' (DfEE Press Release 382/98 27<sup>th</sup> July: 1).

**38.** These, at a cost of £70 million, take place after school, at weekends, or in the holidays (BBC News Report July 12<sup>th</sup> 1999: 1). The £350 million 'Excellence in Cities' scheme was announced in May 1999. It is targeted at twenty-five LEAs in inner city areas (Dean 1999).

**39.** These are for 16-18 year olds from households with an income of less than £13,000 ((Labour Party Weekly Brief 13 May-1999: 6; Ward 1999).

**40.** As part of this, 'we have...begun to offer a million people £150 each to set up their own Individual Learning Accounts- so they can plan their training and careers themselves' (The Government 1999: 11). Ainley points out that 'Lifelong Learning' (is) for 'full employability' (not full employment)'. (Ainley 1999)

**41.** Most students are not liable for the complete fees, and students start paying back loans once they have graduated and their income is above a (low) threshold.

**42.** From *The Guardian* Editorial 25<sup>th</sup> August 1999. See the article on which the editoeial was based, Travis 1999.

**43.** See Hill, 1989, 1990, 1991, 1993.

**44.** In addition to these two routes for the over 24's, New Labour has introduced a new modular Post-Graduate Certificate in Education course (PGCE).

**45.** The 'New Labour' Government criteria and standards for ITE are contained in four documents. These are, *Training Curriculum and Standards for New Teachers: a Consultation Summary*, (TTA, 1997f), *Standards for the Award of Qualified Teacher Status* (TTA, 1997g) and its accompanying documents, *Initial Teacher Training National Curriculum for Primary English*, (TTA, 1997h) and *Initial Teacher Training National Curriculum for Primary Mathematics* (TTA, 1997i). They have subsequently been supplemented, though not, in essence, changed. The Labour government issued (DfEE) Circular 10/97- 'the first ever national

curriculum for initial teacher training' (DfEE 1998: 3), and Circular 4/98, *Teaching: High Status, High Standards: Requirements for Courses of Initial Teacher Training*, which superseded previous Conservative and New Labour requirements for 'teacher training'.

46. See Robertson (1999).

47. See Cole 1999a; b for a discussion.

48. See Cole (1999a, b).

49. With respect to the Radical Right and teacher education, I identified fifteen Radical Right policy principles on ITE carrying out a content analysis of twenty-eight salient Radical Right texts. These have been set out in Hill 1989, 1990, 1994a, 1997b.

The twenty-eight texts are: Boyson (1990); Daily Mail (1982); Daily Mail (1992); Daily Mail (Halpin) (1997); Hillgate Group (1986; 1987; 1989); Lawlor (1990a; b; 1992); Major (1993); O'Hear (1988; 1989; 1990; 1991a; b); O'Keeffe (1987; 1990a; b); Patten (1993); Sexton (1987); Shaw (1986); Shepherd (1997) (in Carvel 1997); Sunday Express (1991; 1992); Thatcher (1993); The Sun (1989); Trend (1988). The themes were given operational meaning as these policy principles via various CATE and TTA Circulars under the Conservative governments.

50. See Whitfield (1999) for a critique.

51. This is a view put forward, *inter alia*, by Cole 1998; Hatcher 1998; Whitty 1998; Hill 1999a; Hill and Cole (1999a: xiii).

52. For arguments concerning the salience of social class in capitalist society, see German, 1996; Hill 1999; Sanders, Hill and Hankin 1999; and McLaren and Farahmandpur, 1999.

53. See Chitty 1997; Fielding 1997; and Hatcher 1998, for a critique of the School Effectiveness and School Improvement movements.

54. As Pat Ainley puts it, 'Thatcherism with a smiley face, run efficiently (unlike under Major) (Personal communication).

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## CORRESPONDENCE

**Dave Hill**  
**Faculty of Arts and Social Sciences**  
**University College Northampton**  
**Park Campus**  
**Boughton Green Rd.**  
**Northampton**  
**NN2 7AL**  
**+44 (0)1604 735500**  
**e-mail:** [dave.hill@northampton.ac.uk](mailto:dave.hill@northampton.ac.uk)

or

**Dave Hill**  
**1 Cumberland Rd.**  
**Brighton**  
**BN1 6SL**  
**+44 (0)1273 270942**  
**e-mail:** [dave.hill35@cwcom.net](mailto:dave.hill35@cwcom.net)

**Dave Hill** teaches at University College Northampton. He was formerly a school teacher in Inner London, and taught Access course students at Tower Hamlets College. He taught at Chichester Institute of Higher Education from which he was made redundant. He worked as a painter and decorator prior to taking up his present post. He is a former Labour Parliamentary candidate (in 1979 and 1987), former Labour Group Leader on East Sussex County Council, Regional higher education Chair of NATFHE, the lecturers' Union, leader of various regional political campaigns and mobilisations and a local leader of the Anti-Nazi League. He has advised the Labour Party on teacher education from a radical Left perspective. With Mike Cole, in 1989, he co-founded the Hillcole Group of Radical Left Educators. He has written a number of Hillcole Group booklets on teacher education and on schooling, co-written the two Hillcole Group books *Changing the Future: Redprint for Education* (Tufnell Press 1991) and *Rethinking Education and Democracy* (Tufnell Press 1997), co-edited *Promoting Equality in Primary Schools* and *Promoting Equality in Secondary Schools* (Cassell 1997; 1999) and

*Postmodernism in Educational Theory: Towards a Politics of Human Resistance* (Tufnell Press 1999). He is editing *Education, Education Education: Capitalism, Socialism and 'the Third Way'* (Cassell, forthcoming), and co-editing *Schooling and Equality: Empirical, Conceptual and Policy Issues* (Tufnell Press and Institute for Education Policy Studies, forthcoming).