

# **Culturalist and Materialist Explanations of Class and “Race”: Critical Race Theory, Equivalence/Parallelist Theory, and Marxist Theory**

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Dave Hill and Students

## **Abstract**

In this essay I examine the interconnections between “race”<sup>1</sup> and social class, with some reference to caste, in schooling and society.

I need to state that this is a panoptic paper that attempts to bring together, to link, empirical and theoretical data and conceptual analyses across a number of areas: These are: firstly, culturalist and materialist issues and analyses of “race,” caste, and class oppression, particularly in Britain, the USA and India; secondly, South Asian, other Black and Minority Ethnic groups (BME) and White working-class labour market and educational experience in Britain; thirdly, Marxist, revisionist socialist, and social democratic educational and political analysis; and, finally, neoliberal and neoconservative policy and its impacts. In particular, this chapter attempts to

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<sup>1</sup> I follow the convention of placing the word “race” in quotation marks to indicate that it is a social category, a social construct, rather than a biological category.

compare BME oppression and exploitation in the UK and, tangentially, in the USA, with caste oppression and exploitation in India and also as it manifests itself in Britain. Both are examined through a materialist, class perspective: a Marxist analysis. Panoptic approaches can have value: a bringing together, an interrelating, of different aspects and areas of analysis, enabling, potentially, wider social theorizing. They potentially enable a wider understanding, or facilitate a wider evaluation of an overarching theory, such as Marxism, as it analyzes a variety of linked issues. In this paper, the issues above are linked in terms of Marxist analysis of capitalism, class oppression, and the implications of such analysis for the politics of resistance. A hazard with panoptic papers is that they can be dense, heavily referenced and footnoted. But this is to enable pursuit of further study/reading across a number of fields. In addition, a key strength of the panoptic approach is that it is multidisciplinary, enabling analysis, synthesis and evaluation across a number of disciplines.

I critique three forms of analysis/theorizing of “race,” caste, and class oppression:

1. Critical Race Theory, a theory that sees “race” as the most significant form of oppression, rather than social class. This theory originated in the USA (where its main theorists include Bell, e.g., 1992, 2004; Mills, e.g., 1997, 2003; Delgado, 1995; and Delgado and Stefaniec, 2000, 2001). It has been recently (pretty much since Gillborn, 2005) imported into Britain by writers such as David Gillborn (2005, 2006a, b, 2008a, b, 2009a, b, c), John Preston (2007), and Namita Chakrabarty (e.g., Chakrabarty and Preston, 2008);

2. “Parallelism” or “Equivalence” theories, widespread in the USA, and, for example, espoused by Michael W. Apple (Apple and Weiss, 1983; Apple, 1988, 1993, 1996, 1999, 2001). These argue that there is an equivalence or parallelism, between “race,” class and gender as forms of structural oppression in society; and

3. Caste Analysis, theories salient in India (and other South Asian countries such as Pakistan, Nepal), but present in Indian (and some other south Asian) heritage/Diasporic communities, for example in Britain, that the dominant form of oppression is caste oppression, of Dalits (“Untouchables”) by (high-caste) Brahmins and other castes (for sustained critiques in India, see Quadri and Kumar, 2003; Iliyah, 2005;

Kumar and Kumar, 2005, Murali Krishna, 2007; Kumar, 2010, and, in the UK, Borbas et al., 2006).

I critique these from empirical and theoretical/analytical perspectives, concluding that the salient forms of discrimination, oppression and inequality in the classroom, as in the economy and society, whether in the UK, USA or India, or elsewhere, are those relating to (“raced” and gendered and caste-divided) social class.

While recognising the power of subjective identities and consciousness, and while not being dismissive of racism as intrinsic to global capital’s agenda, I suggest that these forms and processes of (“race,” gender, caste) marginalization and inequality are functional for the capitalist system of exploitation, which uses schooling and formal education and other agencies of the state to reproduce the existing patterns and forms of educational, social, and economic inequalities.

They are functional in a number of ways: they occlude class consciousness and impede the development of the working-class movement by dividing the working class; they lend themselves to the creation of bourgeois groups among immigrant-descended/black/caste groups which have a self interest in perpetuating the capitalist system of exploitation; and they facilitate the extraction of surplus value by sustaining pools of marginalised cheap labour.

## **PART 1: “RACE,” CLASS, AND CAPITAL**

In this section, I examine the interconnections between “race” and social class, with some reference to caste and gender, in schooling, society, and economy in the UK, in particular relating to the two million children and adults in Britain who are of South Asian heritage.

Education policy relating to ethnic diversity in Britain springs (though not unproblematically, or in an unmediated fashion) from capitalist ruling-class demands for capital accumulation and profit, as does wider policy (Hill, 2001, 2007a, b, c, d). This is classic Marxist analysis. Education policy is linked to wider “race” policy in society, for example labour/employment law, welfare rights law, settlement/immigration rights and laws, and economic and fiscal policy.

These “race policies” and education policies can be analysed, variously (and sometimes in combination), as (i) racist (or caste) supremacist or (ii) assimilationist/

monoculturalist, or (iii) multiculturalist/celebrating cultural diversity; (iv) integrationist, recognising (some of) the diversity of “race” and ethnic cultures, but within (in Britain) an affirmation of “Britishness”; or (iv) anti-racist/critical policy for equality. These types of “race” policy all have a class dimension.<sup>2</sup>

How is this so? It is because these policies have impacts on the extents to which policy serves to include and empower, or exclude and disempower, sections and strata of the (“raced” and gendered and caste divided) working class. Thus some education and other policies are clearly class hegemonic and class supremacist I’m happy with supremacist, but if you prefer, use hegemonic, why not use both? as well as “race” or caste supremacist, other education and cultural policies accept aspects of working-class cultures and/or ethnic minority cultures, and other policies – egalitarian policies – attempt either a reformist meritocratic or slightly redistributive set of policies (social democratic policies).

The classical Marxist analysis I am suggesting here is that social class is the primary explanation for economic, political, cultural and ideological change. Social class, though manifestly layered into strata, and manifestly structured along lines of “race”/ethnicity, gender, and caste, for example, is the essential form of capitalist exploitation and oppression, and it is the dominant form of capitalist exploitation and oppression.

Kelsh and Hill (2006) (see also Kelsh, 2001) argue that it is

necessary to bring the Marxist concept of class back into educational theory, research, and practice. It has the explanatory power to analyze the structure of ownership and power in capitalist social relations and thus to point to ways of restructuring society so that public needs take priority over private profit.

Such an analysis is developed powerfully in Kelsh’s most recent publication, Kelsh, Hill, and Macrine (2009).

As Banfield (2009a) notes,

When class is treated as an analytic category all signs of life are lost in the dizzy heights of abstraction. The gritty realities of class disappear

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<sup>2</sup> For an explanation of this classification, see Hessari and Hill, 1989. The relevant chapter, Chapter 2, “Multi-cultural education: why, what’s going on and theoretical perspectives,” is online at <<http://www.ieps.org.uk/papersdh.php>>.

when it is seen as an idea (theory, perspective, a social scientific category) and not, what it really is: a social relation. (See also Banfield, 2009b.)

Marxist analysis suggests that we live in a Capitalist society and economy in which the capitalists – those who own the banks, factories, media, corporations, businesses, that is, the means of production – profit from exploiting the workers. Capitalists exploit workers' labour power – the labour power of men and women workers, workers from different, ethnic groups and religions, and those from different castes. Capitalism appropriates surplus value from the labour of the (“raced” and gendered and caste-divided) working class (see, for example, Marx, 1867/1996, explained in the Appendix to chapter 8 of Cole 2009 for an explanation, and also the explanation in Faivre, 2009).

The capitalist system – with a tiny minority of people owning the means of production – oppresses and exploits the working class. This, indeed, constitutes the essence of capitalism: the extraction of surplus value – and profit – from workers by capitalist employers. These capitalists may be white, black, men, women, (high caste) Brahmin, or (“untouchable”) Dalit. In India as well as in Britain, there are millionaire men, women, Brahmin, and Dalit capitalists – and politicians.

Marxist analysis also suggests that *class conflict*, which is an essential feature of capitalist society, will result in an overthrow of capitalism given the right circumstances. There has been considerable debate, historically, in different countries over whether this can, or will, be achieved either by *revolutionary* force or by *evolutionary* measures and steps (for example through the evolutionary, reformist measures of social democracy). Important examples of such debate- between protagonists of revolutionary socialism and those of evolutionary socialism/ social democracy are the late nineteenth century debates in Germany over “Revisionism” associated with the revisionist Eduard Bernstein (e.g., in 1899, his *The Prerequisites for Socialism and the Tasks of Social Democracy* – see Tudor and Tudor, 1988) on the one hand, and on the other hand, , orthodox revolutionary Marxist critics of revisionism such as Rosa Luxemburg (for example, in *Reform and Revolution*, in 1899/1900. Today such debates are carried on between revolutionary socialists/ Marxists such as the various Trotskyite groups, parties and internationals on the one hand, and social democratic parties and internationals on the other. As for where the

former communist parties stood, a historical transition was made in the 1970s and 1980s by various communist parties and leaders when they foreswore revolution and adopted gradualist social democracy.<sup>3</sup> These arguments and conflicts take place within many leftist revolutions. Today, for example, in Venezuela, Trotskyites argue for a revolutionary rupture with capitalism, while others urge caution, an accommodation with capitalism and capitalists. (See Gonzalez, 2007; ISG, 2007; Esteban *et al*, 2008; Fuentes, 2009.) And Trotskyite, revolutionary, anti-capitalist groups and parties have persistent major problems working within larger left formations, united fronts and popular fronts. Thus PSOL at first joined the PT government in Brazil but left in 2004 in protest at (Brazilian President) Lula's neoliberal pro-capitalist policies, and in 2007 Sinistra Critica pulled out of the broader left Rifondazione Comunista. There is considerable current debate within the Trotskyite movement and internationals over the incompatibility of socialist revolution with social democratic broader parties. (See, for example, Bensaid, 2009.)<sup>4</sup>

Historically, and indeed in current times, it is, of course the armed/police forces of the capitalist state that shoot first – and where the local capitalist state is not powerful enough in the balance of class forces in any particular site, then in come the United States cavalry, acting on behalf of transnational capital and its national capital – on behalf of the international capitalist system itself. (See, for example, Brosio, 1994.)

And yet there are denials, by postmodernists and other theorists of complexity and hybridity and postmodernists and post-ists of various stripes, that we no longer live in a period of metanarratives, such as mass capitalism, social class, working class,

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<sup>3</sup> The parties and leaders leading this transition from revolutionary rhetoric to social democratic rhetoric were the Italian Communist Party, the *Partito Comunista Italiano* under the leadership of Enrico Berlinguer, and the Spanish Communist Party, the *Partido Comunista Español*, led by Santiago Carrillo, when they adopted a Eurocommunist analysis and programme. Possibly the most important Eurocommunist theoretical publication was Santiago Carrillo's, *Eurocommunism and the State*, 1977. Trotskyites such as Mandel (1978) claimed that communist parties had abandoned revolutionary politics and the concept of proletarian revolution since 1924, when the Soviet Union abandoned the concept of world revolution and internationalism, replacing it with the concept of "socialism in one country," i.e., paramount support by communist parties throughout the world for the Soviet Union.

<sup>4</sup> In the UK this debate is urgent with the likelihood of a Parliamentary (general) election in May or June 2010. Some socialists/Marxist support voting Green, which in the UK is broadly a social democratic party, others say vote Labour, while others are trying to set up an anti-capitalist socialist party, currently based around the Trade Unionist and Socialist Coalition (TUSC). I am, in fact, one of their Parliamentary candidates, in the Brighton Kemptown constituency.

or, indeed, “woman” or “black.”<sup>5</sup> For many theorists since the 1980s, history is at an end, the class war is over, and we all exalt in the infinite complexity and hybridity of subjective individualist consumerism. It is interesting, and rarely remarked upon, that arguments about “the death of class” are not advanced regarding the capitalist class. Despite their horizontal and vertical cleavages (Dumenil and Levy, 2004), they appear to know very well who they are. Nobody is denying capitalist class consciousness.

Opposition to the rule of capital and its policies (either its wider policies, or specific policy) is weakened when the working class is divided, by “race,” caste, religion, tribe, or by other factors.

When I say “divided,” I am using it here as an active verb, to mean that the capitalist class divides the working class, for example by its ideological state apparatuses- its media, its formally or informally segregated school systems. This is “divide and rule.” Examples of schooling systems perpetuating such divisions are in apartheid South Africa, Arab-Jew segregated schooling in Israel, Protestant-Catholic religiously segregated Northern Ireland, and parts of the USA – in particular its inner cities, and, indeed, parts of Britain, where, in some inner-city working-class schools, more than 90 percent of the pupils are from minority ethnic groups.<sup>6</sup> In many of the cities of the USA and Britain the ethnic division is localized. But such segregation and division is overwhelmingly a class stratification. It is rarely the millionaire and capitalist minorities who live in the ghetto, or poor minorities or whites who live in “millionaires row.”

## **PART 2: SOUTH ASIANS IN BRITAIN**

### ***“Race,” Class and the Labour Market in Britain***

It is obvious to note that some workers, such as legal and “illegal” immigrants, and ex-colonialised and ex-imperialised populations (as well as white, non-colonised East Europeans) are exploited far more than others. Various groups are “racialised,”<sup>7</sup>

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<sup>5</sup> For Marxist arguments against postmodernism, see Eagleton, 1996; Cole, Hill and Rikowski, 1997; Callinicos, 1989; Cole et al., 2001; Hill et al., 2002; and Cole, 2008a. Elsewhere in this paper I refer to Bourne, 2002.

<sup>6</sup> This is not an argument against separate ethnic or religious language/culture/religion schooling for indigenous, migrant groups in schooling/education that is supplementary to, or complementary to, a common (or comprehensive) publicly funded, secular state school system with a common core curriculum.

<sup>7</sup> See Miles, 1987, 1989, 1993; Abbass, 2007; and Cole, 2008. I am using the Marxist concept of racialisation here. There are others, such as in Murji and Solomos, 2005.

or xeno-racialised,<sup>8</sup> a process by which they are ascribed particular social and ability characteristics, sometimes demonized and vilified, into particular labour market, housing market and education market situations.

Abbas (2007) notes, in relation to South Asians,<sup>9</sup> that “ethnic minority immigrants were . . . placed at the bottom of the labour market, disdained by the host community, and systematically ethnicised and racialised in the sphere of capital accumulation” (p. 3), and that the “ethnic penalty” experienced by first generations has largely translated to second generations (p. 4).

There are different typical class locations and positions within the labour market (and education attainment tables) for the different ethnic groups. Pakistanis and Bangladeshis (i.e., British Pakistanis and British Bangladeshis and those who have immigrated from Pakistan and Bangladesh) have similar labour market circumstances and in general greater disadvantage than other ethnic groups. These Pakistani and Bangladeshi men have the lowest economic activity rates of all populations, and high unemployment rates. Forty-four percent of all Bangladeshi men and 18 percent of Pakistani men aged 25 and over were employed part time. This compared to 5 percent of White British (Abbas, 2007).

Of all ethnic minorities, Indian men (British Indian and those immigrated from India and other countries) have employment rates that are, on average, most similar to White Britons. As a population in Britain they are considerably more middle class than Bangladeshis and Pakistanis. The Indian population has relatively high levels of qualifications. Nonetheless, Indians have significantly worse outcomes in the labour market compared to White Britons with similar qualifications (Simpson et al., 2001; see also, Abbas, 2007).

### ***Educational Attainment: “Race,” Class, and Gender in England and Wales***

With respect to educational achievement in England and Wales, Gillborn and Mirza (2000) show very clearly that it is the difference between social classes in

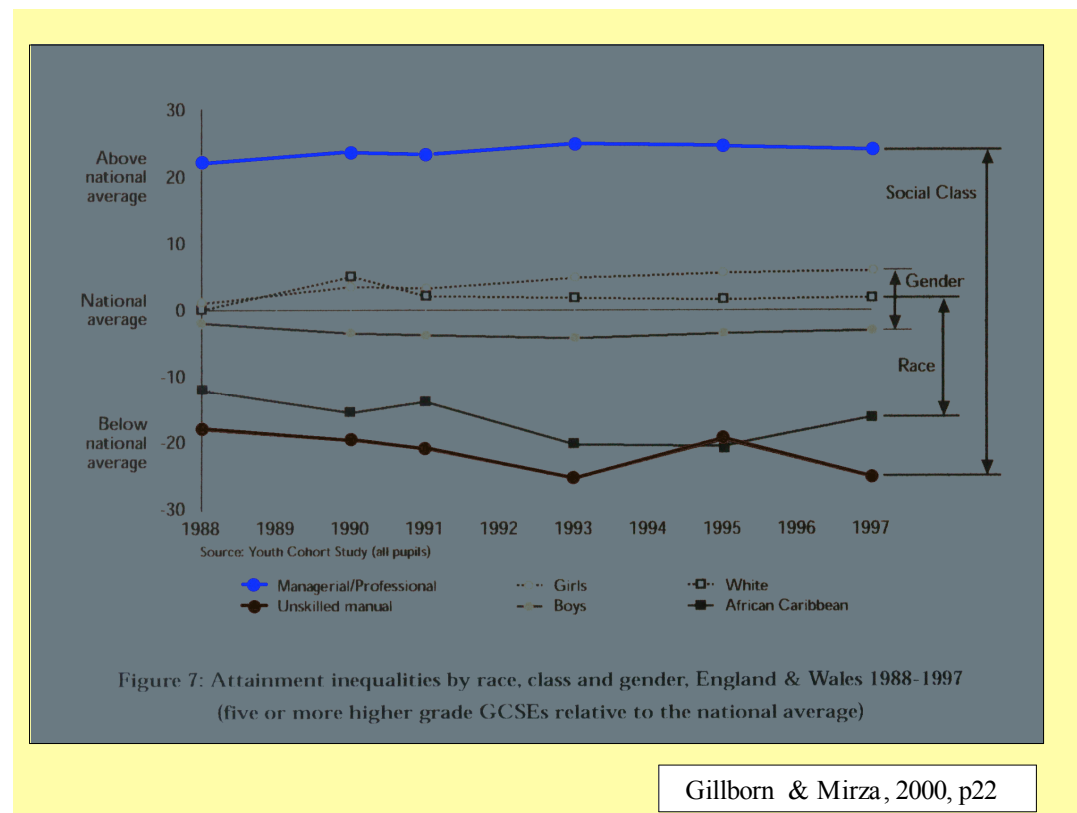
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<sup>8</sup> Cole, 2004b, 2008a, b, 2009.

<sup>9</sup> In Britain 1.8 percent of the population are Indian heritage (more than one million), 1.3% of Pakistani heritage (three quarters of a million, with over half of Pakistanis living in the West Midlands, Yorkshire and the North West), and 0.5 percent of Bangladeshi heritage (280,000). London has the highest proportion of minority ethnic communities. Almost 50% of Londoners describe themselves other than white British (National Statistics, 2001). (See also Commission for Racial Equality, 2007).



attainment that is the fundamental and stark feature of the education system in England and Wales, rather than “race” or gender.



In their analysis of attainment inequalities by class, “race,” and gender 1988-1997 (five or more higher grade GCSEs – General Certificates of Education – the exam taken by virtually all sixteen year olds in England and Wales – relative to the national average) the gender difference between girls and boys is half that relating to “race” (comparing white students with African Caribbean). This in turn is less than half of the social class difference – the difference between children of managerial professional parentage, on the one hand, and children from unskilled manual working-class homes (Gillborn and Mirza, 2000:22). Gillborn and Mirza’s study concerns a study of all social strata/social class groups.

Strand (2007, p. 13) points out that

In terms of national data, the Youth Cohort Study (YCS) has historically provided the best estimate of national figures for attainment at school leaving age by ethnicity. A representative sample of approximately 30,000 pupils is surveyed approximately every two years. Analysis of examination results at

age 16 for 1992, 1994, 1996, 1998, 2000 and 2002 shows a consistent picture of Indian pupils gaining higher examination scores than White British pupils, while Black, Bangladeshi and Pakistani pupils consistently achieve lower examination scores than White British. In the last published results for GCSE examinations for 2006 (DfES, 2007), 80% of Chinese pupils, 72% of Indian and 69% of Mixed White & Asian pupils achieved the benchmark of five or more GCSE A\*–C grades, compared to 58% of White British pupils. This level of success was achieved by 57% of Bangladeshi pupils, 51% of Black African and Pakistani pupils, 45% of Black Caribbean pupils and just 10% of Gypsy/Roma pupils.

*This data does not show an overall pattern of White supremacy. Indians do better as an ethnic group than Whites, so do Mixed White and Asian students.*<sup>10</sup> This (YCS) data cited by Strand (2007), like that of Gillborn and Mirza (2000) above, concerns a sample of all social strata/social class groups.

Dehal (2006) refers specifically to the educational attainments of “the poor” – the poorest strata of the working class, those who are entitled to and claim Free School meals (FSM). Dehal points out that the impact of economic disadvantage does differ significantly across “BME” (Black and Minority Ethnic) groups. He concludes that “economic disadvantage is the key driver of ethnic disparity.” In other words, economic poverty is the most important factor in low levels of academic/school attainment.

In the first figure/picture below (“Economic disadvantage is the key driver of ethnic disparity”), the left-hand chart shows this clearly (as does the Gillborn and Mirza chart above). The right-hand chart shows the proportions of school students in each of eight ethnic groups who do receive FSM, who are in the poorest 14% of the population in England and Wales.

The second figure below (“but its impact does differ substantially across BME groups”) shows that the different ethnic groups among these “poorest” 14% of children at state schools do perform differently to each other. Other than Gypsy/Roma, Whites do worst.

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<sup>10</sup> In the UK, in official data such as census data and school achievement data, “Asian” refers to South Asian. In the UK this is mainly Indian, Pakistani, and Bangladeshi. In the UK “Chinese” is a category distinct from “Asian.” This is in contrast to usage/categorization in the USA, where “Asian” refers to East Asian (primarily Chinese, Japanese, Vietnamese, Cambodian, Laotian, and Korean).

Figure 1

## Economic disadvantage is the key driver of ethnic disparity ...

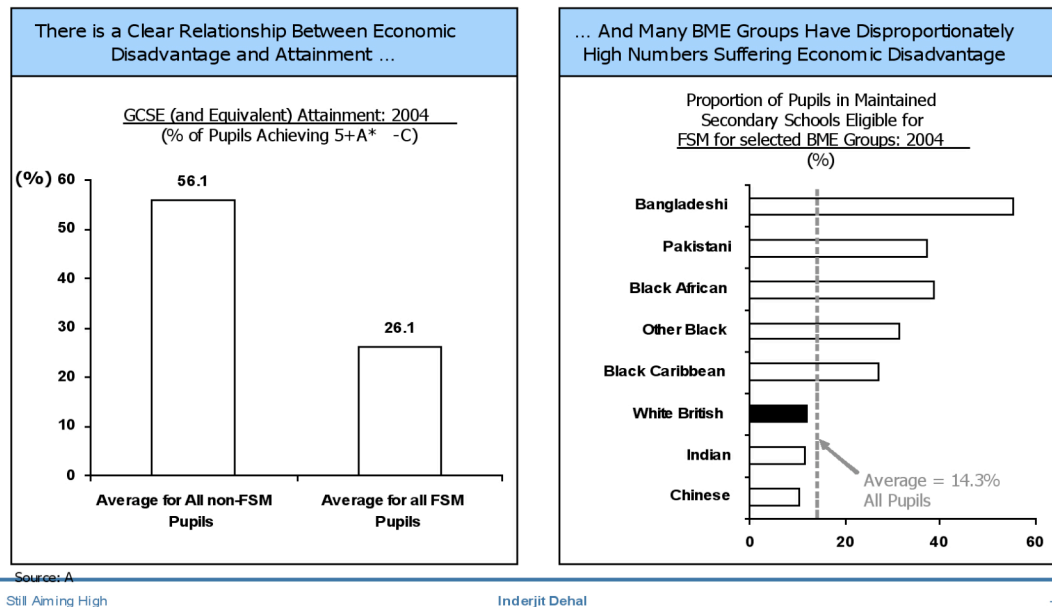
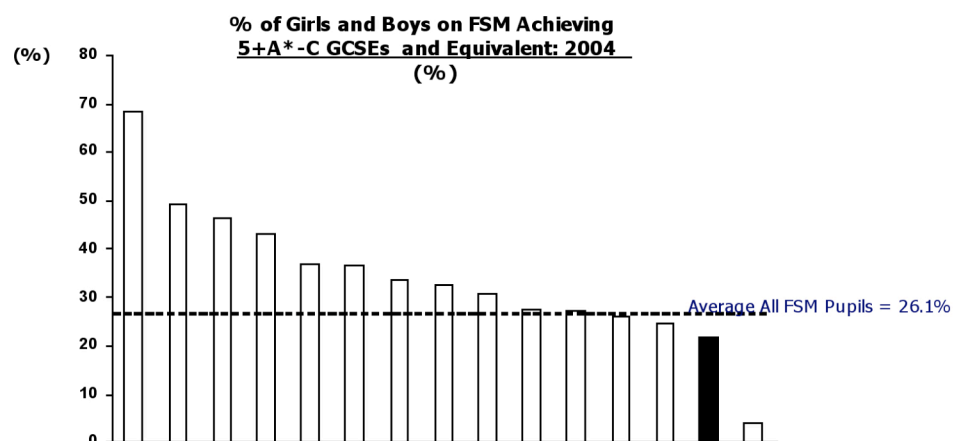


Figure 2

## ... but its impact does differ substantially across BME groups



Source: A

Still Aiming High

Inderjit Dehal

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Dehal's (2006) conclusion is that there is a specific "race" factor involved. Some ethnic groups of 15-16 year olds in receipt of free school meals – such as White and African-Caribbean and Roma children – do perform/attain more poorly than the average for all 15-16 year old children in receipt of free school meals, and considerably more poorly than Chinese and Indian group of such children. Strand (2007, p. 32) also shows figures for Free School meals – a crude marker of poverty – in relation to various ethnic groups in England and Wales. (On p. 29 of Strand's text there is data on the socio-economic class composition of each ethnic group, in Table 5 and Figure 3 on that page.)

Gillborn and Mirza's (2000) conclusion from their own data is that

social class and gender differences are . . . associated with differences in attainment but neither can account for persistent underlying ethnic inequalities: comparing like with like, African-Caribbean, Pakistani and Bangladeshi pupils do not enjoy equal opportunities. (p. 27).

However, the "race" effect, the effect of being part of a particular ethnic group, and thereby 'winning' or 'losing' from the "race" effect, has less impact on achievement and under-achievement than does social class. Class analysis is more reliable as a measure of achievement/underachievement, than "race" analysis. Demie and Tong (2007), and Demie et al. (2007) provide a detailed analysis at the level of one ethnically diverse London Borough, Lambeth. In Lambeth, one sizeable White group, the Portuguese, does significantly worse on standard scores of attainment at various age levels than do other groups, for example.

Strand's (2007) data and analysis suggest that in terms of "raw score" at Key Stage 3 (age 14) test results in England and Wales, the "gaps" for KS3 results are that

[t]he social class gap was largest with a 10 point gap between pupils from higher managerial and professional families and those where the main parent was long term unemployed. The maternal education gap was also large with a nine used above point gap between pupils with mothers qualified to degree level or higher and those with mothers with no educational qualifications. These compare to an ethnic gap of three points. The gender gap was just 0.8 points, with boys scoring lower than girls. (2007, p. 6)

A summary of Strand's work (Strand, 2008a) shows that

White British working class pupils (both boys and girls) and Black Caribbean boys were the lowest performing groups at age 16 and made the least progress during secondary school. In particular White British working class pupils show a marked decline in attainment in the last two years of secondary school. Pupils from most minority ethnic groups made good progress during secondary school and showed greater resilience to deprivation relative to their deprived White British peers.

With respect to non-working class school students, Strand (2008a) notes that "Black Caribbean and Black African pupils from more advantaged homes underachieved in relation to their White British peers."

To turn to BME groups who are *not* Black Caribbean or Black African, with specific respect to the education of South Asians in Birmingham, England, Abbas (2007) carried out a theoretical and empirical study of the ways in which different South Asian groups, Bangladeshi, Indian, and Pakistani, achieve entry into the selective education system – that is, entry to either the paid for/private purchased private school places, or entry to the (free) grammar schools.

His findings are that certain working-class South Asian parents possess strong middle-class attitudes towards selective education, irrespective of their ability to facilitate it as a function of their financial, cultural, or social capital. Middle-class South Asians were not only highly motivated but also possessed the economic, social, and cultural capital to ensure successful selective school entry.

To conclude this section, Abbas' conclusion, like those of the studies above, is that, "in general, social class status was the strongest factor in the likelihood of gaining entry into selective schools" (Abbas, 2007, p. 75).<sup>11</sup> Abbas, while asserting the salience of social class factors in educational attainment, also, like Dehal and like Gillborn and Mirza above, draws attention to what he sees as culturally specific attitudes to education.

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<sup>11</sup> For ethnographic and empirical and theoretical/analytical work on South Asian minority ethnic groups' identity and educational achievement, see, for example, Runnymede Trust, 2000; Sivanandan, 2001; and Abbas, 2004a, b.

### **PART 3: THREE CRITIQUES OF MARXIST ANALYSIS: (1) REVISIONIST SOCIALIST/; GENDER/“RACE”/CLASS PARALLELISM; (2) CRITICAL RACE THEORY; (3) CASTE ANALYSIS**

Marxist analysis, crucially concerning the objective salience of social class (objective as contrasted with subjective consciousness/awareness of social class), is of course, contested, particularly in the USA, not only on the right but also by radical (denoted as “left liberal” or “revisionist socialist” by Kelsh and Hill, 2006) scholars such as Michael W. Apple. It is also contested by Critical Race Theorists (and, indeed, by others/other theories) who see “race” oppression as the salient structural and policy form of oppression (such as Paul, 2001). It is also contested by those in India who prioritise caste analysis and caste suffering/oppression and caste politics as the fundamental form of oppression.

I now wish to address these three types of non-Marxist, indeed, in essence, anti-Marxist analyses and theories.

The first, Critical Race Theory, sees “race” as the fundamental form of social, economic, and political oppression.<sup>12</sup>

The second perspective asserts either a parallelist or tryptarchic analysis of “race,” social class, and gender oppression (Apple’s broad view, and that of many others in the USA, such as Lois Weiss).<sup>13</sup>

The third contestation of Marxist analysis is caste analysis, predominantly in India, but throughout the Indian, Pakistani, and Nepali diasporas.<sup>14</sup>

#### ***Critical Race Theory***

Critical Race Theory, imported from radical analysis in the USA, is propounded in the UK primarily by David Gillborn and by John Preston and Namita Chakrabarty. To repeat, there is full agreement with Gillborn (and great appreciation of his substantial corpus of work over a twenty-year period) on the ubiquity of racism,

<sup>12</sup> See Mills, 1987, 1989, 1993, 1997, 2003; Bell, 1992, 2004; Delgado, 1995; Delgado and Stefanic, 2000, 2001; Gillborn, 2005, 2006, b, 2008; Preston, 2007a, b; and Chakrabarty and Preston, 2007.

<sup>13</sup> See, for example, Apple, 2001, 2005, and 2006.

<sup>14</sup> For critiques of the effects of caste in India, see Iliyah, 2005; Kumar and Kumar, 2005; Murali Krishna, 2007 and Quadri and Kumar, 2003. For critiques of caste in Britain, see Borbas et al., 2006.

how it plays out within schools and the education system, its impacts, the salience of “race” as the ever-present, or most present, *subjective* feelings and consciousness among most in BME (Black and Minority Ethnic) groups in Britain (“people of color,” in the USA) concerning their daily awareness of personal and institutional discrimination and oppression. His latest book, *Racism and Education: Coincidence or Conspiracy?* (2008), extends this to education policy, showing the racist nature and effects of New Labour government education policy in England and Wales, in particular regarding assessment and exclusion from schools. But the pre-eminent focus of this book, and his recent articles setting out Critical Race Theory, is the pre-eminence of “race” rather than social class as a form of structural oppression. Accompanying it is an attack on class analysis.

Gillborn (2008) is right about underachievement by Blacks (Black Caribbean and Black African school students) in England and Wales. However, to repeat the points made above in relation to Dehal’s data and analysis, most of this underachievement is related to class location – Black Caribbeans are, with Bangladeshis, Pakistanis and Traveller/Roma, the most heavily working class of any ethnic group. When class location – as measured by those claiming and in receipt of Free School Meal (FSM) – is accounted, the all minority ethnic groups other than Gypsy Roma/travellers perform better than whites.

Regarding more privileged groups in society, Strand (2008b) points out that (at age 16) “White British pupils from high SEC” (Socio-Economic Class) “homes are one of the highest attaining ethnic groups, while White British pupils living in disadvantaged circumstances are the lowest attaining group” (p. 2). Gillborn (e.g., pp. 54-56), too, draws attention to this, showing that with regard to non-FSM students (for example at age 16 in their national GCSE assessments) that white students perform better than (most) other ethnic groups.

To repeat, and, as shown by the final Dehal table above, the poor white working class (as measured by FSM), being in receipt of free school meals, performs less well than the working class of nearly all other ethnic groups. Most BME groups do better than whites, once allowance has been made/controlled for class location as measured by FSM.

It seems that Gillborn’s own statistics (in Gillborn and Mirza, 2000) and other empirical data I present or refer to in this paper (see also Independent Working Class Association, 2005) lend compelling support to a Marxist critique of “race” salience

theories in general (such as, currently, Critical Race Theory) offered, for example, by Cole, Maisuria, Miles and Sivanandan, and the Institute of Race Relations that he founded, in Britain,<sup>15</sup> and in the USA by the *Red Critique* journal, for example, Young, 2006. In his work on Critical Race Theory, Gillborn in most cases ignores and in other cases belittles the class dimension, a class dimension that, ironically, his own statistics of 2000 (Gillborn and Mirza, 2000) draw attention to.

Gillborn (in his chapter 3, 2008, p. 45) does refer to the relative importance of and intersections between, inequalities based on “race,” class, and gender. He does, as have I, following Strand and Dehal (Dehal, 2006; Strand, 2007, 2008a, b) above, note that “economic background is not equally important for all students.” On p. 46 he criticises an “exclusive focus on class.” On p. 69 Gillborn notes that “the data certainly confirms that social class background is associated with gross inequalities of achievement at the extremes of the class spectrum.” He repeats: “However, class does not appear to be equally significant for all groups.” He then adds, importantly for his argument (i.e., an argument that seeks to avoid concentrating on data concerning the poorest strata in society), “the growing emphasis on FSM students projects a view of failing Whites that ignores 5 out of 6 students who do not receive FSM.”

But contemporary and recent Marxist work, including my own work, does not have an exclusive focus on class. As this article, and an accompanying article (Hill, 2009), I hope, makes clear, we adhere to a notion of “raced” and gendered class, in which some (but not all) minority ethnic groups are racialised or xeno-racialised (explained below) and suffer a “race penalty” in, for example, teacher labelling and expectation, treatment by agencies of the state, such as the police, housing, judiciary, health services and in employment. Gillborn gives specific recognition to the analysis that social class is “raced” and gendered (e.g., p. 46), but gives relatively little – in fact very substantially less – explicit (other than implicit) recognition that “race” is classed (and gendered). While his work is not silent on social class disadvantage and social class based oppression, his treatment of social class analysis is dismissive and his treatment of social class underachievement in education and society, extraordinarily subdued. In Hill (2009), *Race and Class in Britain: a Critique of the*

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<sup>15</sup> See Sivanandan, 2001; Cole, 2007a, 2007b, 2008a, b, 2009 forthcoming; Cole and Maisuria, 2007, 2009; and with respect to “race” salience theories – theories analyzing “race” as the primary form of structural oppression – see Miles 1987, 1989, 1993; and Young, 2001.



*statistical basis for Critical Race Theory in Britain: and some political implications*, I also critique what I regard and analyse as the misuse of statistics in arguments put forward by some Critical Race Theorists in Britain showing that “Race” “trumps” Class in terms of underachievement at 16+ exams in England and Wales.<sup>16</sup> Accepting the urgent need for anti-racist awareness, policy and activism – from the classroom to the street<sup>17</sup> – I welcome the anti-racism that CRT promulgates and analyses while criticising its over-emphasis on “white supremacy” and its statistical misrepresentations.

### ***The Marxist Concept of Racialisation***

A number of critiques of CRT appear very convincing. These critiques and their concepts draw attention to CRTS’s empirical, theoretical and political failings. These critiques (in Britain) include: Miles’ thesis of racialisation (Miles, 1987, 1989, 1993); Sivanandan’s theory of xeno-racism (2001, and, in Fekete, 2001); Cole’s thesis of xeno-racialisation (e.g., Cole 2008a, b, 2009); and Cole’s critique of dangers of aspects of Critical Whiteness Studies (Cole, 2008a, p. 124; Cole, 2008b, 2009).

Cole (2007, p. 124) continues his discussion of racialisation, referring to Miles (1987, p. 75). Cole makes it clear that, like racism, racialization is not limited to skin colour: “the characteristics signified vary historically and, although there have usually been visible somatic features, other non-visible (alleged and real) biological features

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<sup>16</sup> I ask two questions, and make these two associated criticisms, concerning the representation of these statistics: Firstly, with respect to “race” and educational attainment, I question the validity of ignoring the presence of the (high achieving) Indian/Indian heritage group of pupils – one of the two largest minority groups in England and Wales. I make the point that this group has been ignored, indeed, left completely out of statistical representations – charts – showing educational achievement levels of different ethnic groups. Secondly with respect to social class and educational attainment, I question the validity of Gillborn’s selection of two contiguous social class/strata in order to show social class differences in educational attainment. This is in sharp contrast to his earlier practice, for example in Gillborn and Mirza, 2000, of comparing social “classes” (strata) that are not contiguous. I have seen David Gillborn present his arguments at two separate conferences – the April 2009 AERA (American Educational Research Association Annual Conference in San Diego, California) (Gillborn, 2009c) and at the Race(ing) Forward: Transitions in Theorising “Race” in Education conference organised by The Higher Education Academy, in 2008, at the University of Northampton (Gillborn, 2008b).

<sup>17</sup> An anti-Muslim group calling itself the “English Defence League” has been demonstrating outside mosques in London and Birmingham, chanting “*Muslim bombers off our streets*” and rampaging through ethnically mixed areas such as Stoke. In January 2010 at Stoke, there were 1500 demonstrators, including known fascists and racists (BBC, 2010; Smith, 2010). Similar racist demonstrations have been held in Wales and in Scotland by the Welsh Defence League and the Scottish Defence League. This is serious; it is the first time since the defeat of the National Front in the late 1970s (by a combination of street-level anti-fascist mobilisations and Margaret Thatcher’s 1979 election appeal to nationalist and racist voters) that fascists and racists are attempting to control the streets in some areas and intimidate minorities.

have also been identified.” Cole (2007, p. 124) adds “cultural” to Miles “biological” (features) and includes culturally specific appurtenances, for example recognizing that “people are sometimes racialised on grounds of clothing (e.g., the hijab).”

Cole (2004a, b; also see Cole 2006, 2007a, b, 2008a, b, 2009) has introduced the concept of xenoracialization (developing Sivanandan’s discussion of xenoracism) to describe the process whereby refugees, economic migrants, and asylum-seekers (often white) become racialized. Sivanandan defines xenoracism as follows:

It is a racism that is not just directed at those with darker skins, from the former colonial territories, but at the newer categories of the displaced, the dispossessed and the uprooted. . . . It is a racism, that is, that cannot be colour-coded, directed as it is at poor whites as well, and is therefore passed off as xenophobia, a “natural” fear of strangers. But in the way it denigrates and reifies people before segregating and/or expelling them, it is a xenophobia that bears all the marks of the old racism. It is racism in substance, but “xeno” in form. It is a racism that is meted out to impoverished strangers even if they are white. It is xeno-racism. (Sivanandan, 2001; also cited in Fekete, 2001 p. 26)

### ***Critical Race Theory and White Supremacy***

One of two major tenets of CRT that Cole (2008a, b, 2009; see also Cole and Maisuria (2007, 2009)) critically examine is CRT’s “idea that the concept of *white supremacy* better expresses oppression in contemporary societies based on ‘race’ than does the concept of *racism*.” Cole and Maisuria (and Cole) argue that Critical Race Theory “homogenises all white people together in positions of class power and privilege, which, of course, is factually incorrect, both with respect to social class inequality in general, and, as will be shown in later in this paper, with reference to xenoracialization.” Cole and Maisuria (2007) continue, “it is certainly not white people as a whole who are in this hegemonic position, nor white people as a whole who benefit from current education policy, or any other legislation. Indeed the white working class, as part of the working class in general, consistently fares badly in the education system.”

Cole (2008a) notes that, in focusing on issues of color and being divorced from matters related to capitalist requirements with respect to the labour market, CRT is ill-equipped to analyse the discourse of xenoracism and processes of xenoracialization.

McGary (1999:91) points out that “Black people have been used in ways that white people have not.” Young’s (2001) comment (with which I and Cole and Maisuria would concur) is that McGary’s “observation may be true, but it does not mean that whites have not also been ‘used.’” Young continues, “yes, whites may be ‘used’ differently, but they are still ‘used’ because that is the logic of exploitative regimes – people are ‘used,’ that is to say, their labor is commodified and exchanged for profit.”

Young continues, in his critique of McGary, that such a view

disconnects black alienation from other social relations; hence, it ultimately reifies race, and, in doing so, suppresses materialist inquiries into the class logic of race. That is to say, the meaning of race is not to be found within its own internal dynamics but rather in dialectical relation to and as an ideological justification of the exploitative wage-labor economy.

Critical Race Theory, and other similar theories of “race” salience, such as (Molefi Kete Asante, and of Paul Gilroy (2001), critiqued in Young, 2006) are understandable, as Leonardo (2004) notes, in the USA, as a salient subjective lens and understanding/analysis of felt (and indeed, of course, actual and widespread) oppression. As Leonardo (2004), Young (2006), Cole and Maisuria (2007), and Cole (2008b) note, Critical Race Theory, just as earlier theories such as that of Fanon and Negritude, do draw into the limelight, do expose and represent black experience, humiliation, oppression, racism. But they collude, just as much as race equivalence theorists such as Michael W. Apple, in super-elevating subjective consciousness of one aspect of identity and thereby occluding the (“raced” and gendered) class-essential nature of capitalism and the labour-capital relation. As such it seeks social democratic reformism, the winning of equal rights and opportunities – within a capitalist (albeit reformed) economy and society. As Young (2006) puts it,

unlike many commentators who engage race matters, I do not isolate these social sites and view race as a local problem, which would lead to reformist measures along the lines of either legal reform or a cultural-ideological battle to win the hearts and minds of people and thus keep the existing socio-economic arrangements intact . . . the eradication of race oppression also requires a totalizing political project: the transformation of existing capitalism – a system which produces difference (the racial/gender division of labor) and accompanying ideological narratives that justify the resulting social inequality. Hence, my project articulates a transformative theory of race – a theory that reclaims revolutionary class politics in the interests of contributing toward a post-racist society.

Critical Race Theory seems analytically flawed, to be based on the category error of assigning “race” as the primary form of oppression in capitalist society, and to be substantially situationally specific to the USA, with its horrific experience and legacy of slavery. It also seems to me to be a form of left radical United States imperialist hegemonizing, that is, of USA-based academics projecting on to other countries those experiences and analyses and policy perspectives that derive most specifically from the USA experience of slavery and its contemporary effects. I am very much aware of the existence and horrors of racism in, for example, Britain and Europe in general.<sup>18</sup> Notwithstanding those horrors, the Critical Race Theory analysis would appear to have less significance and applicability in, for example, Western and Eastern Europe, or, for example, India, Pakistan, and Nepal, than in the USA.

### ***The Equivalence or Parallelist Theory of “Race” Class and Gender***

Many of the points I make above in Critical Race Theory seem to me to be of equal value in relation to “Equivalence” or “Parallelist” theory (e.g., of Michael W. Apple).

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<sup>18</sup> I have been actively involved in the anti-Fascist and anti-racist movement since the 1970s. From the Grunwicks mass picket in 1977, to being a local officer of the Anti-Nazi League in the 1970s, and being smoke bombed by NF supporters, to engaging in street confrontations against the fascist National Front, and twice being physically attacked by Fascists. I was also involved in ARTEN, the Anti-Racist Teacher Education network in Britain in the late 1980s, and joined the march to close down the NF headquarters in Welling in 1993. More recently I took part in and was a platform speaker at the 2009 anti-British National Party rally at the national conference of the Trades Union Congress Trades Councils.

Apple criticises class analysts for ignoring “race,” gender, and sexuality. He suggests that we need a much more nuanced and complex picture of class relations and class projects to understand what is happening in relation to “racial dynamics” as well as those involving gender.<sup>19</sup> Like Leonardo (2004) he sees shortcomings in classical Marxist analysis of class, “race,” gender. Leonardo sees strengths in both class analysis, with its emphasis on objective analysis, and CRT (and, presumably, other theories and analyses that prioritise “race” experience and awareness and oppression). Apple doesn’t.

Apple’s accusation is that classical Marxists “privilege” class and marginalise “race,” gender, and sexuality. *But the concept of class, the existence of class, the awareness of class, is itself sometimes buried beneath, hidden by, suffocated, displaced, in the recent (though not the early) work of Michael W. Apple.*

As Kelsh and Hill (2006) critique,

What is masked from workers, because the capitalist class and its agents work to augment ideology in place of knowledge, is that some workers are poor not because other workers are wealthy, but because the capitalist class exploits all workers, and then divides and hierarchizes them, according capitalist class needs for extracting ever more surplus value (profit).

Kelsh and Hill argue that “the Marxist concept of class, because it connects inequitable social relations and explains them as both connected and rooted in the social relations of production, enables class consciousness and the knowledges necessary to replace capitalism with socialism.” They continue, “the Marxist concept of class, however, has been emptied of its explanatory power by theorists in the field of education as elsewhere who have converted it into a term that simply describes, and cannot explain the root causes of, strata of the population and the inequities among them.”

The African-American scholar of the 1940s, Oliver Cromwell Cox argued that “making sense of the meaning of race and the character of race relations in American life requires an understanding of the dynamics of capitalism as a social system and its specific history in this country” (Reed, 2001). Cox’s main book, *Caste, Class, and Race* (1948, reprinted in 2001), argued against the “caste school of race relations.”

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<sup>19</sup> See, for example, Apple, 2005:392; 2006:116.

He did this on the grounds that “it abstracted racial stratification in the United States from its origins and foundation in the evolution of American capitalism.” He criticized those who compared racial stratification in the USA with the caste system in India for treating “racial hierarchy as if it were a timeless, natural form of social organization.” As Reed (2001) notes, “the caste approach to the study of American race relations has not been in vogue for several decades; other equally misleading metaphors have long since supplanted it.”

As Reed (2001) notes,

Cox’s critique of the caste school was linked to his broader view of the inadequacy and wrong-headedness of attitudinal or other idealist approaches to the discussion of racial inequality. He emphatically rejected primordialist notions of racial antipathy or ethnocentrism as explanations of racial stratification. He insisted that racism and race prejudice emerged from the class dynamics of capitalism and its colonial and imperial programs . . . , race was most fundamentally an artifact of capitalist labor dynamics, a relation that originated in slavery. “Sometimes, probably because of its very obviousness,” he observed, “it is not realized that the slave trade was simply a way of recruiting labor for the purpose of exploiting the great natural resources of America.” This perspective led to one of Cox’s most interesting and provocative insights, that “racial exploitation is merely one aspect of the problem of the proletarianization of labor, regardless of the color of the laborer. Hence racial antagonism is essentially political-class conflict.” We should not make too much of the adverbs “simply” and “merely.” Seeing race as a category that emerges from capitalist labor relations does not necessarily deny or minimize the importance of racial oppression and injustice or the need to fight against racism directly.

Cox did not dismiss racism among working-class whites. He argued that “the observed overt competitive antagonism is produced and carefully maintained by the exploiters of both the poor whites and the Negroes.” He recognized that elite whites defined the matrix within which non-elite whites crafted their political agency, and he emphasized the ruling-class foundations of racism as part of his critique of the liberal scholars of race relations who theorized race relations without regard to capitalist political economy and class dynamics. (Reed, 2001)

More recently Young (2006) has also criticised scholars who theorise race relations without regard to capitalist political economy and class dynamics, arguing “social alienation is an historical effect and its explanation does not reside in the experience itself; therefore, it needs explanation and such an explanation emerges from the transpersonal space of concepts.”

And, Young criticizes views such as that of McGary (1999) that “it is possible for African-Americans to combat or overcome . . . alienation . . . without overthrowing capitalism.” Young criticizes this as a “pro-capitalist” position: “Here, we see the ideological connection between the superstructure (philosophy) and the base (capitalism). Philosophy provides ideological support for capitalism, and, in this instance, we can also see how philosophy carries out class politics at the level of theory” (Althusser, 1971, p. 18).<sup>20</sup> Similar criticism, of pro-capitalism (albeit of a radical reformist, social democratic variety), of failing to locate racism within the labour-capital relation, within capitalist political economy and class dynamics, can be leveled at the work of Michael W. Apple.<sup>21</sup>

### ***Caste Analysis***

I would wish to advance a similar critique of the hegemony and the caste system in India, and among Indian-heritage people in Britain. There is no denying the material reality and form, the murderous and tragic consequences of the caste system currently and historically, primarily for Dalits, the Untouchables, who are regarded as impure by higher caste Brahmins and others. Whole libraries have been written on caste oppression, lakes of tears have been shed and blood flown.<sup>22</sup>

In the British context, particularly worth noting is, Borbas, Haslam, and Sampla’s 2006 report for the Dalit Solidarity Network, *No Escape: Caste Discrimination in the UK*. This draws similar attention to caste discrimination that exists in the Indian Diaspora, with over 300 million people worldwide suffering from

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<sup>20</sup> See the section below on Identity and Identitarian Politics.

<sup>21</sup> For critiques of Apple’s analysis see, in addition to Kelsh and Hill, 2006, Farahmandpur, 2004, Rikowski, 2006, and Hill 2007a. This, my, critique is not an *ad hominem* critique. Apple, in a whole series of books, articles, and doctoral supervisions over three decades, has been a powerful figure in critiquing and analyzing capitalist education from a left perspective – a reformist left perspective.

<sup>22</sup> The writings in India of, for example, Murali Krishnai (2007) and Kancha Ilaiah (2005) regarding Hindu Dalits and of Quadri and Kumar (2003) on oppression of Muslim Dalits are very powerful testimonies to the oppression of Dalits in India.

caste-based discrimination and caste-like practices linked to untouchability (p. 4). Their report on caste discrimination in England, with an estimated 50,000 Dalits, gives evidence of in job discrimination against Dalits and lower castes (for example, with higher castes rejecting or resenting taking orders from, being managed by, Dalits or lower caste Indians, and with the different castes and the Dalits all having different temples/gudwaras/places of worship. In addition, inter-caste marriages are unusual. The authors (p. 7) note that “the rules of endogamy (marrying within the caste group) are still strictly followed.”

When I raise the issue of caste discrimination in Britain or India, I often get the retort, “caste is a pre-capitalist social formation.” And so it is, but caste lives today, in capitalism, with the emergence of economic elites, a capitalist class and class stratification in the Scheduled Castes, The Backward Castes, the Backward Tribes, and the Dalits.<sup>23</sup>

Indeed, it is these elites who benefit disproportionately from caste-based access to education. This is played out with the quota system for entry to universities. A quota of places is reserved for various groups within higher education and also within state employment. This is termed “reservation” in India and is protected/enforced as part of the Indian constitution.

Capitalism has benefited from this caste politics/policy/legislation. Social class and the idea of class conflict has been put on backburner in India. Economic and social justice are no longer the justice achieved through class struggle but rather through the government reforms for certain castes. Kumar (2008a) notes that “such measures have been continuing for Scheduled Castes and Scheduled Tribes for decades and it came for the Backward Castes (BCs) in jobs with Mandal Commission (with the National Front Government during 1989) and in Higher education institutions with the government passing a law and Supreme Court upholding it.”

There is no denying that caste repression has been there in Indian society throughout (and, of course, before) capitalism in India. However its “social” content and “economic” content has often been seen in disjunction, which leads to flawed analysis. Rather than struggling specifically for “caste rights,” the rights of Dalits and of Scheduled Castes, a Marxist approach and analysis is that the political struggle

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<sup>23</sup> Dalits are not a separate caste, but it is considered a politically correct term to be used for the Scheduled Castes, as it literally means “repressed.” The Scheduled Castes comprise 16.2% of India’s total population, and the Scheduled Tribes comprise 8.2% of the population as per the 2001 census.



should be for Dalit rights or poor Backward Caste rights by virtue, not of their caste position, but by virtue of their social class position, as landless workers or as (part of a multi-caste) working class (Kumar, 2008a, d).

Emphasis on the “social,” the subjective identity of caste, just as, with the pre-eminence accorded by some writers to the subjective identity of “race” in the USA, for example, is perpetuated through the ideological apparatuses used by the dominant and entrenched hegemonic interests to perpetuate the economic (and resultant social) inequalities that exist.

A class divided by caste, or divided by “race” – whether such divisions are inflamed by “saffron fascists” in India or by racists in the USA (or Britain), or whether they are perpetuated by reformist “reservation”/huge scale quota systems (valuable though, in part they might be) – serve to divide and perpetuate capitalist class rule. “The workers united will never be defeated,” a phrase thundered out of a million voices on demonstrations and struggles in countries such as France, Portugal, Spain, and Britain at various times, is a phrase and concept and organizational aim understood well by those opposed to the development of working-class consciousness.

As Ravi Kumar (2008c) notes,

And now because of the host of measures/reforms an elite has emerged within the Dalits as well as the BCs (as indicated starkly in North India by political formations led by Mayawati in Uttar Pradesh, Mulayam Singh Yadav in Uttar Pradesh and Laloo Prasad Yadav in Bihar). They are now very much part of the plan of capitalist expansion. Nobody is talking about land reforms, minimum wages, gender equality (in fact the Women’s Reservation Bill has been stuck in Parliament for ages because of objections made by the Backward Caste lobby), unemployment and growing disparity. And their support as well as close relationship with big industrial houses shows how much they care for the uplifting of even their own caste-people, people from the same caste.

Ashwani Kumar (2008) gives the example from Rajasthan: “there are many lower caste people who have economically reached the upper class but do not want to give up the benefits associated with having a Scheduled Caste or Tribe certificate,” and he

gives the example of the Meena tribe, many of whose members are top government officials, but whose offspring continue to reap the benefits of “reservation.” Similarly, Ravi Kumar 2008c (chapter 9) analyses the enormous inequity within the *jatis* (*sub-castes*) with an elite emerging among them which manipulates the caste identity and consolidates it for its own gains, as part of the class stratification of castes.

Ravi Kumar (2008b) notes that in India “[T]he discourse on caste as located within the realm of capitalism is almost negligible” and that “[O]ne of the much frequently visited debates in Indian context has been that of non-significance of ‘class’ and significance of ‘caste’ as the most significant category of social division or form of social relation.” Kumar (2008b, developed in depth in Kumar 2008c) suggests that

The emergence of elite among all castes (which could very well be identified with parallel class positions), especially among the so-called Backward Castes and Dalits (literally meaning “oppressed”), has shown how capital uses the existing identities to sustain and expand itself. *The direction in which Dalit politics has moved recently has been that of co-optation into the larger system of capitalism. In terms of “inclusion” of hitherto unrepresented social categories into the dominant forms of capital accumulation it can be said that there has been a democratisation of opportunities to access the realm of competition* (italics in the original).

As Brosio (2008) notes, such co-option weakens the anti-capitalist struggle. To repeat, there is no denying the material reality, the daily living conditions, the deaths, arising from caste discrimination in India, or, indeed, from the 2008 ethnic strife/cleansing in Kenya, or the ethnocratic Zionist oppression and landgrabbing of Israeli Arab and Palestinian Arab land. Non-class ideologies can and do assume material reality, sometimes with lethal force. However, below, I advance a Marxist analysis of these ethnic, caste, and other forms of oppression.

#### **PART 4. MARXIST ANALYSIS OF CLASS, “RACE,” CASTE, AND GENDER**

##### ***Neoliberalism and Neoconservatism***

Neoliberal capitalist policies of marketisation, commodification, and privatisation of public services, together with fiscal and other policy changes, comprise an intensification of “class war from above” (Harvey, 2005) by the capitalist class against the working class. It is worth noting that “class war from above” is a permanent feature of the labour-capital relation, more observable during crises of capital accumulation/major threats to the rate of profit, less observable during periods of class compromise, of “truce,” but permanent, nevertheless.

These neo-liberal policy changes *in the education sector* result, *inter alia*, in (1) widening social class educational inequalities, for example in wealth, income and educational attainment; (2) attacks on the key working-class organisations, such as trade unions; and (3) worsening pay and conditions of education workers. These can be seen as three “fronts” in the current class war from above.<sup>24</sup>

The introduction and extension of neoliberal social policies in Britain, the USA after the New Right reactionary movements of the 1980s, and more globally (notably in Chile under Pinochet, elsewhere in Latin America under an assortment of generals and “big business” control) offer fertile ground for Marxist analysis since economic inequality and class division has sharpened markedly, within countries and internationally.<sup>25</sup>

### ***Social Class and Marxist Critique of Identitarian Politics***

Young (2006) notes that “in terms of race, an Althusserian account is presented in Stuart Hall’s, 1980 article, “Race, Articulation, and Societies Structured in Dominance”:

by the 1990s, Hall shifts to a semiotic notion of race, and sees race as a “floating signifier.” In many ways, Hall’s intellectual trajectory on race mirrors the larger shift from the “material” to the “semiotic” in social theory. (from Young, 2006)

In a similar critique of Hall’s “New Times” analysis, I also trace the Stuart Hall’s (and other post-Marxist and postmodernist) progression from materialist analyses to

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<sup>24</sup> Hill et al., 2005a, 2007a, c, d.

<sup>25</sup> See Dumenil and Levy, 2002; Harvey, 2005; Hill and Kumar, 2009.

semiotic/culturalist analyses) (Hill, 2001, 2005a). So does Jenny Bourne, in her discussion of the rise of cultural studies, the “Hokum of New Times,” and her critique of Hall over his post-Marxist position on “race,” “identity,” and difference. She writes,

The politics of identity and difference were now being clearly used to justify the break with class politics and, indeed, with the concept of Left politics altogether. (idem)

The “personal is the political” also helped to shift the center of gravity of struggle from the community and society to the individual. “What has to be done?” was replaced by “who am I?” as the blacks, feminists and gays, previously part of the pressure groups in Left parties or in social movements campaigning for rights, turned to Identity Politics. Articulating one’s identity changed from being a path to political action to being the political action itself. (2002:200)

Bourne, continues,

Sivanandan critiques postmodernism not so much in terms of the inward-looking self-referencing type of debate, beloved of academics, as in terms of the danger it spells to anti-racist practice. First, he takes issue with those intellectuals who, at a time when racism against the black working class is getting worse, “have retreated into culturalism and ethnicity or, worse, fled into discourse and deconstruction and representation – as though to interpret the world is more important than to change it, as though changing the interpretation is all we could do to change the world.”

And in an acerbic aside Sivanandan adds: “Marxists interpret the world in order to change it, postmodernists change the interpretation” (cited in Bourne, 2002, p. 203).

Class is absolutely central to Marxist ontology and epistemology. Ultimately, it is economically induced and it conditions and permeates all social reality in capitalist systems. Marxists therefore critique postmodern and post-structural arguments that class is, or ever can be, “constructed extra-economically,” or equally that it can be “deconstructed politically” – an epistemic position which has underwritten in the previous two decades numerous so-called “death of class”

theories, arguably the most significant of which are Laclau & Mouffe (1985) and Laclau (1996).

I am not arguing against the complexities of subjective identities. People have different subjectivities. Some individual coalminers in Britain were gay, black, Betty Page or Madonna fetishists, heavily influenced by Biggles or Punk, their male gym teacher or their female History teacher, by Robert Tressell or by Daily Porn masturbation, by Radical Socialists or by Fascist ideology. But the coal mining industry has virtually ceased to exist in Britain, and the police occupation of mining villages such as Orgreave during the Great Coalminers' Strike (in Britain) of 1984-85 and the privatisation of British Coal and virtual wiping out of the coal mining industry was motivated by class warfare of the ruling capitalist fraction. It was class warfare from above. Whatever individuals in mining families like to do in bed, their dreams, and in their transmutation of television images, they suffered because of their particular class fraction position – they were miners – and historically the political shock troops of the British manual working class.

Postmodernism's rejection of metanarratives can be seen as symptomatic of the theoretical inability to construct a mass solidaristic oppositional transformatory political project, and that it is based on the refusal to recognise the validity or existence of solidaristic social class. More importantly, this general theoretical shortcoming is politically disabling because the effect of eschewing mass solidaristic policy is, in effect, supporting a reactionary status quo. Both as an analysis and as a vision, post-modernism has its dangers – but more so as a vision. It fragments and denies economic, social, political, and cultural relations. In particular, it rejects the solidaristic metanarratives of neo-Marxism and socialism. It thereby serves to disempower the oppressed and to uphold the hegemonic Radical Right in their privileging of individualism and in their stress on patterns and relations of consumption as opposed to relations of production. Postmodernism analysis, in effect if not in intention, justifies ideologically the current Radical Right economic, political, and educational project.

### ***Marxism and Class***

At this point it might be useful to discuss, briefly, Marxist analysis of social class. There are significant issues concerning intra-class differentiation and about

class consciousness. It is important to recognize that class, for Marx, is neither simply monolithic nor static. Marx conceived of classes as internally differentiated entities. Under capitalist economic laws of motion, the working class in particular is constantly decomposed and reconstituted due to changes in the forces of production – forces of which members of the working class are themselves a part (6). Furthermore, Marx had taken great pains to stress that social class as distinct from economic class necessarily includes a political dimension, which is in the broadest sense of the term “culturally” rather than “economically” determined.

And, class consciousness does not follow automatically or inevitably from the fact of class position. *The Poverty of Philosophy* [1847] distinguishes between a “class-in-itself” (class position) and a “class-for-itself” (class consciousness); *The Communist Manifesto* [1848] explicitly identifies the “formation of the proletariat into a class” as the key political task facing the communists. In *The Eighteenth Brumaire of Louis Napoleon* [1852] Marx observes,

In so far as millions of families live under economic conditions of existence that divide their mode of life, their interests and their cultural formation from those of the other classes and bring them into conflict with those classes, they form a class. In so far as these small peasant proprietors are merely connected on a local basis, and the identity of their interests fails to produce a feeling of community, national links, or a political organisation, they do not form a class. (Marx, 1999 [1852])

Thus social class exists in a contingent rather than a necessary relation to economic class. The process (and conceptual category) that links economic and social class is that of “class consciousness.” This is arguably the most contentious and problematic term in the debate over class.

### ***Marxism, Class, and Capitalist Education and Economy***

Classical Marxian scholarship with respect to education theorises the relationship between education and the inequality in society as an inevitable feature of capitalist society/economy. Glenn Rikowski focuses on the relationship between social class and the process of capitalization of education (e.g., Rikowski, 2005) in the

USA and UK, where neo-liberal drivers are working to condition the education sector more tightly to the needs of capital. A global study I carried out in 2005 for the International Labour Organisation (Hill, 2005b; Hill et al., 2006) shows clearly the similarity of these drivers, the similarity of policy developments, and the similarity of impacts across many countries. Empirical evidence (e.g., Greaves, Hill, Maisuria, 2006; Hill, Greaves, and Maisuria, 2008) shows how capital accumulation is the principal objective of national and international government policy, and of global capitalist organizations, “capitalist clubs,” such as the World Trade Organization.

To repeat from above the key ontological claim of Marxist education theorists is that education serves to complement, regiment, and replicate the dominant-subordinate nature of class relations upon which capitalism depends, the labor-capital relation. Education services the capitalist economy, though this servicing is not unproblematic or uncontested. Education (schools, universities) helps reproduce the necessary social, political, ideological and economic conditions for capitalism, and therefore, helps reflect and reproduce the organic inequalities of capitalism originating in the relations of production.

But education is also a site of cultural contestation and resistance, a key site of “the culture wars” between neoconservative and neoliberal, liberal, social democratic, and socialist visions of and articulations of culture, correctness and common-sense. Education reflects and supports and reproduces the social inequalities of capitalist culture. The “education industry” is a significant state apparatus (Althusser, 1971) in the reproduction and replication of the capitalist social form necessary for the continuation of “surplus value” extraction and economic inequality. Hence, Marxists argue that there are material linkages between educational inequality, exploitation, and capitalist inequalities in general.

In contrast to both Critical Race Theorists and revisionist socialists/left liberals/equivalence theorists, and those who see caste as the primary form of oppression, Marxists would agree that objectively- whatever our “race” or gender or sexuality or current level of academic attainment or religious identity, whatever the individual and group history and fear of oppression and attack- the fundamental objective and material form of oppression in capitalism is class oppression.

Black and Women capitalists, or Jewish and Arab capitalists, or Dalit capitalists in India, exploit the labour power of their multi-ethnic men and women workers, essentially (in terms of the exploitation of labour power and the

appropriation of surplus value) in just the same way as do white male capitalists, or upper-caste capitalists. But the subjective consciousness of identity, this subjective affirmation of one particular identity, while seared into the souls of its victims, should not mask the objective nature of contemporary oppression under capitalism – class oppression that, of course, hits some “raced” and gendered and caste and occupational sections of the working class harder than others.

Martha Gimenez (2001:24) succinctly explains that “class is not simply another ideology legitimating oppression.” Rather, class denotes “exploitative relations between people mediated by their relations to the means of production.” Apple’s “parallelist,” or equivalence model of exploitation (equivalence of exploitation based on “race,” class and gender, his “tryptarchic” model of inequality) produces valuable data and insights into aspects of and the extent and manifestations of gender oppression and “race” oppression in capitalist USA. However, such analyses serve to occlude the class-capital relation, the class struggle, to obscure an essential and defining nature of capitalism, class conflict.

Objectively, whatever our “race” or gender or caste or sexual orientation or scholastic attainment, whatever the individual and group history and fear of oppression and attack, the fundamental form of oppression in capitalism is class oppression. While the capitalist class is predominantly white and male, capital in theory and in practice can be blind to colour and gender and caste – even if that does not happen very often. African Marxist-Leninists such as Ngugi wa Thiong’o (e.g., Ngugi wa Thiong’o and Ngugi wa Mirii, 1985) know very well that when the white colonialist oppressors were ejected from direct rule over African states in the 1950s and 60s, the white bourgeoisie in some African states such as Kenya was replaced by a black bourgeoisie, acting in concert with transnational capital and/or capital(ists) of the former colonial power. Similarly in India, capitalism is no longer exclusively white. It is Indian, not white British alone.

As Bellamy observes, the diminution of class analysis “denies immanent critique of any critical bite,” effectively disarming a meaningful opposition to the capitalist thesis (Bellamy, 1997:25). And as Harvey notes,

neoliberal rhetoric, with its foundational emphasis upon individual freedoms, has the power to split off libertarianism, identity politics, multiculturalism,



and eventually narcissistic consumerism from the social forces ranged in pursuit of justice through the conquest of state power. (Harvey, 2005:41)

To return to the broader relationship between “race,” gender, and social class, and to turn to the USA, are there many who would deny that Condoleeza Rice and Colin Powell have more in common with the Bushes and the rest of the United States capitalist class, be it white, black or Latina/o, than they do with the workers whose individual ownership of wealth and power is an infinitesimal fraction of those individual members of the ruling and capitalist class?

The various oppressions, of caste, gender, “race,” religion, for example, are functional in dividing the working class and securing the reproduction of capital; constructing social conflict between men and women, or black and white, or different castes, or tribes, or religious groups, or skilled and unskilled, thereby tending to dissolve the conflict between capital and labor, thus occluding the class-capital relation, the class struggle, and to obscure the essential and defining nature of capitalism, the labor-capital relation and its attendant class conflict.

Class is clearly not the only form of oppression in contemporary society. People get demeaned, discriminated against, labelled, attacked, raped, murdered and massacred because of a variety of presenting characteristics and identities, such as gender, “race,” caste, sexuality, religion. As Marx (1852/1969) notes,

Men [*sic*] make their own history, but they do not make it just as they please; they do not make it under circumstances chosen by themselves, but under circumstances directly encountered, given and transmitted from the past. The tradition of all dead generations weighs like a nightmare on the brains of the living.

### ***Non-reductionist class analysis***

I now refer to a non-reductionist analysis of the role of ideology, knowledge workers, and the material practices of racism and Dalit discrimination. As Motale and Vally (writing about South Africa, but with global analytical relevance) analyse,

Simply rejecting these deeply embedded social norms, practices and histories, often developed over many centuries preceding the advent of capitalist accumulation, as “hypocrisy” is disarming and does not provide a basis for understanding them. In other words, the idea that “race” (or other such conceptions and practices) is a social construct does not automatically imply that it has no explanatory value (especially about how power is constituted through racist categories and/or gender to reinforce the structural attributes and impediments of working class lives). The explanatory value of “race” and gender lies in the power to reveal the relationship between these social constructs and class without suggesting that they provide a better explanation of exploitation. (2009, n.p.; italics added)

They recognise that

[u]nderstanding the role of ideology fully and its construction of forms of subjectivity that reinforces class domination [is] essential. Ideology allows capitalist relations to be concealed, blocked from being grasped conceptually, by the empirico-experiential actuality of racist practices. (idem)

This comment, I might interject, is also relevant to the empirico-experientialist actuality of Caste oppression in India and the Indian diaspora.

Motala and Vally continue,

And because the empirio-experiential trumps the theoretical, the root cause of inequity is accepted as and ascribed to the empirical – to “race,” in this case – rather than to capitalist relations. Ideology is rooted in and impacts on the material and cannot be reduced to falsehood.

Thus this analysis in this paper does not ignore the material reality of “race” oppression, caste oppression, or gender oppression. The analysis I am putting forward is a Marxist argument located within Marxist reproduction theory, the theory that education systems, together with other ideological and repressive state apparatuses, work to reproduce existing patterns of economic, social and political life. While not subscribing to an Althusserian relative autonomy analysis (one developed, inter alia, by Michael W. Apple), this analysis is not an “iron chain of command” –

from capital to government to state apparatuses to effective impact. The analysis offered here, while it will no doubt be criticised as “vulgar Marxism” and as deterministic, reductionist, and essentialist (for such critiques, see Apple, 2005, 2006), does recognize developments within neo-Marxist theory, especially state theory, that this cultural, economic, and ideological reproduction is mediated and resisted. (See Hill, 2001, 2005a.) However, such an analysis is more deterministic, reductionist, and essentialist than those of relative autonomy “culturalist (neo-)Marxists” and, most certainly, postmodernists. But not in terms of the “vulgar Marxism” attributed by its critics.

Such an analysis sees class as central to the social relations of production and essential for producing and reproducing the cultural and economic activities of humans under a capitalist mode of production. Whereas the abolition of racism and sexism or caste does not guarantee the abolition of capitalist social relations of production, the abolition of class inequalities, or the abolition of class itself, by definition, denotes the abolition of capitalism.

As Motala and Vally (2009, n.p.) argue,

the absence of class analysis leads to a debilitating failure to appreciate the deeper characteristics of society; de-links poverty and inequality from the political, economic and social system – capitalism – which underpins them; obscures the class nature of the post-apartheid state; renders ineffective social and educational reforms and denies the importance of class struggle and the agency of working communities in the struggle for social transformation.

## **PART 5: SOCIAL DEMOCRACY, REFORMS, AND THE TRANSITION TO SOCIALISM**

Social democratic reforms, and social democratic or “revisionist left” analyses and theorists and the policies related to those theories and class/political mobilisations/struggle, are immensely valuable. Clean water, free schooling, social welfare benefits, the creating of Welfare States, are, of course, life enhancing/life changing/life lengthening for billions, in rich countries like Britain and the USA as well as in developing countries such as India, and are therefore intrinsically valuable. Thus, in India, for example, or in Britain or the USA, a common school system

(known in Britain as a comprehensive school system) – with no private purchase of educational privilege via the existence of private, or semi-private school systems – would, if properly funded, be an immensely valuable, “welfarist” social reform.<sup>26</sup>

And in India, the caste-based system of quotas for entry into universities and into government jobs (termed “reservation”) has indeed been invaluable in millions of individual cases of advancing repressed and poor sections of the people.

Ravi Kumar points out that,

There is a great deal of debate on the issue of reservation in India. The Left has been in forefront of supporting it. My argument regarding it is as following: If one looks at the reservation policy it has, on paper, democratized access of the lower class/caste population to education/jobs.

So that is the value of a social democratic reform. But Kumar goes on to look at the class impact of such a policy:

However, it has also, as an analysis of the past decades demonstrates led to the emergence of an elite. Reservation demand for the backward castes, for instance, since 1990 has clearly indicated this, as the majority of the BC population remains landless workers, or poor peasantry. The reservations democratize the access but only for those who have reached such a position to access it. For example, when the majority of children are not able to cross Class V in schools. Would reservation in Higher Education mean democracy in access for majority? Rather, it will only increase access for those who could afford to go beyond schools. In other words, those who can afford to purchase education.

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<sup>26</sup> For some suggestions concerning the development of an eco-socialist education policy, see Hill and Boxley, 2007. See Glenn Rikowski’s, “Marx and the Education of the Future,” 2004, where Rikowski, with close reference to Karl Marx’s writings on education, outlines the education of the future as anti-capitalist education. In starting out from a conception of communism as the “real movement which abolishes the present state of things” (Marx), Rikowski argues that the anti-capitalist education of the future consists of three moments: critique, addressing human needs, and realms of freedom. He also argues that that all three moments are essential for an anti-capitalist education of the future, but the emphasis on particular moments *changes* (a movement from moment one to three) as capitalist society and education are left behind through social transformation. In the light of this framework, Rikowski critically examines Marx’s views on the relation between labour and education, and his views on education run by the state. He concludes with a consideration of two trends that are gaining strength in contemporary education in England: the social production of labour-power and the business takeover of education. These trends, and this analysis, clearly have global resonance.

Thus, within a social democratic welfarist framework, involving, in various countries, quota/reservation systems, assistance for poor students, and other measures of positive discrimination, education continues to play a key role in the perpetuation of the labour-capital relation, of capitalism itself. Referring to social democratic, left-liberal and “revisionist left” theorists, Kelsh and Hill (2006) explain,

By “revisionist left,” we mean, following Rosa Luxemburg (1899/1970), those theorists who consider themselves to be “left” but who believe there is no alternative to capitalism, and thus do “not expect to see the contradictions of capitalism mature.” Their theories consequently aim “to lessen, to attenuate, the capitalist contradictions” – in short, to “adjust” “the antagonism between capital and labor.” As Luxemburg explained, the core aim of the revisionist left is the “bettering of the situation of the workers and . . . the conservation of the middle classes.”

In contrast, egalitarian, socialist, reforms, affecting the lives, life chances material conditions of, for example, South Asian and other school students and communities in Britain, as elsewhere, require an end not only to neoliberal/neoconservative globalising capitalism, but to capitalism itself, and through a localising and globalising of resistance, a transition to a socialist society, economy, and polity.

As Marx and Engels, 1977a [1847], p. 62) put it:

The Communists fight for the attainment of the immediate aims, for the enforcement of the momentary interests of the working class; but in the movement of the present, they also represent and take care of the future of the movement.

In this, socialist and Marxist teachers and other cultural workers, community and political activists have a dual role: to act as critical transformative socialist public intellectuals, and to act with others in wider arenas of anti-capitalist struggle.

### *Political Strategies*

The analyses and statistics used or misused by knowledge workers can impact on the foci of political action – street action, propaganda, and programmes of progressive and egalitarian political parties and groups. Theories of oppression and of exploitation, with their statistical underpinnings and justifications, also impact on progressive political action. This was exemplified in the 2009 European Parliament election campaign and current political action and developments in Britain, such as the Spring 2010 general election campaign.

The question for progressives, egalitarians, socialists, and Marxists is the balance between focusing on anti-racist campaigns and class-based campaigns. The necessity for and viability of such strategies does of course vary historically and geographically. In Britain, currently, the two major anti-racist organisations are “Hope not Hate” and Unite Against Fascism (UAF). During the June 2009 European election campaign, they both called on voters to “vote anyone but the BNP.” On the other hand, some socialist/Marxist/Communist campaigns such as the NO2EU-YestoDemocracy and the SLP campaigns prioritised class-based campaigns of anti-racism and anti-sexism, but also of working-class unity, as does the current (2010) TUSC (Trade Unionist and Socialist Coalition) and the programme/analysis of the Socialist Party. In strategic terms this is the difference between a Popular Front and a United Front.<sup>27</sup> Thus, two alternative political strategies were evident in the 2009 European election campaign in Britain, and will be again in the 2010 Parliamentary election campaign. The first strategy in 2009 (that of Unite Against Fascism – UAF – and the “Hope Not Hate” campaign, and the tactical voting urged by some sections of RESPECT, such as Salma Yaqub and the North-West region of RESPECT) was that the most important issue of all in the European election campaign was the anti-racist issue, to “Stop the BNP.” Hence the call by the abovementioned sections of RESPECT to “Vote Green’ to ‘stop the BNP.”

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<sup>27</sup> A Popular Front is a broad-based, multi-class alliance, involving for example liberals and even conservatives in an anti-war movement, or an anti-fascist or anti-racist movement. While valuable in mobilizing (sometimes very) large numbers and forces, its politics are usually the politics of the lowest common denominator. Extremely important though that might be, the Popular Front is different from a United Front in that a United Front is a coming together of socialist forces. It is class based, with a (working) class perspective. For a discussion of the differences between these two forms of organization/political tactics, see, for example, Goldfield, 1999; Bensaid, 2007; Choonara, 2007. Choonara also points out the difference between the United Front and the revolutionary, Marxist, party. The United Front ‘is not a substitute for a revolutionary party. The United Front tactic can never, under any circumstances, mean the subordination of revolutionary politics and organisation to reformist politics and organisation.

This particular view would seem to theoretically align with the view of Critical Race Theorists that “race” and racism are *the key* forms of structural discrimination and oppression in Britain and in the USA. David Gillborn’s insistence, like the Racism Awareness Training theorists of the 1970s, and like the various incarnations of black separatists and nationalists in various countries, seeks to blame all whites, and serves to divide the working class, black from white. At the political level this was paralleled by the various groups within the socialist and Marxist Left who sought to prioritise anti-racism and who were furious with NO2EU for “splitting the anti-racist vote” during the 2009 European election campaign.

A class-based Marxist analysis is that it was the collapse of New Labour’s vote – due to its abandonment of working-class interests in the interests of neoliberalism – that depressed the voting turnout, enabling the BNP to get elected. This was despite the BNP gaining fewer votes than in the previous European elections. But they got elected because of the collapse in the Labour vote. This is paralleled in various countries in Western Europe, where the decline of former social democratic parties (in Austria, France, and Italy, for example) has been stark, with fascist, racist, and anti-immigrant groups becoming beneficiaries of social democratic parties’ embrace of neoliberalism.

Critical Race Theorists’ prioritising of the “race” issue is in contrast to the view of Marxists who took a class perspective – who prioritised the class issue. Such a class perspective was advanced within, for example, the NO2EU-YestoDemocracy campaign (supported principally by the RMT trade union, the Socialist Party and the Communist Party of Britain with its *Morning Star* daily newspaper, and – ultimately– the view of Socialist Resistance, to which I belong).

During that campaign, as a lead regional candidate for NO2EU-YestoDemocracy<sup>28</sup> at various venues, from doorstep campaigning, to addressing the Trades Union Congress national conference of Trades Councils (local TUCs), to conversations with Greens at the Regional Election count, I was one of those who advanced the view that anti-racism was and is a key policy/focus, but that there are others, such as resisting/opposing/stopping privatisation of public services; opposing the

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<sup>28</sup> I was lead candidate for the NO2EU-YestoDemocracy campaign in the May-June 2009 European Parliament election campaign, for the SouthEast region of England. See <<http://www.no2eusoutheast.blogspot.com/>> for some aspects of the campaign. The election leaflets in the SouthEast region highlighted anti-racism as one of the four key points of the campaign. See also the interview I did (Hill, 2009b) with *Weekly Worker*, online at the Respect blogspot, *Interview with Dave Hill who tops the No2EU list in the South East* at <<http://respectuk.blogspot.com/2009/05/interview-with-dave-hill-tops-no2eu.html>>. The main organisations supporting NO2EU-YestoDemocracy were the RMT trade union, Socialist Party of England and Wales, the Communist Party of Britain, the Alliance for Green Socialism, and the Indian Workers Association. Groups such as Socialist Resistance also gave their general support.

European Union's privatising policies, such as the Health Services Directive and the Postal Services Directive (which demand of member states the marketisation of Health and Postal Services); renationalising formerly public services such as the Railways; and stopping/reversing the Posted Workers' Directive, which, along the principles of the Bolkestein Directive, allows groups of workers to be imported by employers into member states and paid at the wages of the originating member state, thereby undercutting trade union national agreements.

The final aim of much of the NO2EU campaign was to set up a new "Workers' Party," backed by trade unions, as a socialist party, defending working-class interests (of workers of all colours and creeds) occupying the space to the left of Labour. Indeed, the TUSC is a possible embryo for such a development, supported as it is not only by some trade union national leaders and by regional organisations of the RMT union, but also the major socialist and Marxist groups in Britain such as the Socialist Workers' Party, the Socialist Party, Socialist Resistance, the Indian Workers Association, Respect, and by various trade union national leaders, as well as local councils of trade unions ("Trade Councils") and union branches.<sup>29</sup>

The political focus made by socialists and Marxists in Britain during the period of the May-June 2009 European parliamentary election campaign and during the Spring 2010 general (parliamentary) election campaign was/is thus between two positions.

The first was prioritising the "Don't Vote BNP" campaigns. The Socialist Workers' Party, the largest of the Marxist parties in Britain, with around 5,000 members, took the perspective highlighting race.

The second position, held by other parties (such as NO2EU and its constituent/supporting organisations, and the Socialist Labour Party), and by TUSC in the 2010 general election campaign, took/takes the class perspective. This class perspective (at least that held by the Socialist Party constituent part of NO2EU) was about developing/setting up a new Workers Party, one that would unite various socialist political parties, groups, individuals, with trade unions. That is, to prioritise working-class issues on behalf of /with the "raced" and gendered working class. This view, which I am advancing here, is to fight the class struggle for all workers, black, white, brown, or, to echo the anti-fascist slogan of the 1970s, "black and white unite and fight, smash the National Front." To echo an international slogan of working-class revolutionaries and

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<sup>29</sup> I am standing as the trade Unionist and Socialist Coalition parliamentary candidate in the Brighton Kemptown constituency. The blogspot is at <<http://www.brightontusc.blogspot.com>>. There is also a national Trade Unionist and Socialist Coalition Facebook page, and a Brighton TUSC Facebook page.



Marxists across different countries, “*o povo unido jamais sera vencido*,” “the workers united will never be defeated”

This is not to deny the existence of “white privilege.” Yes, Whites do have white privilege because of the colour of their/our skins. But the poor white English, Portuguese, African Caribbean, Black African, Indian, Pakistani, Bangladeshi, or Chinese have more *in common* in terms of the material conditions of their daily existence than they do with sons and daughters of the white English, Indian, Pakistani, African Caribbean or Chinese millionaire. As Bob Crow, leader of NO2EU-yesToDemocracy, lead figure in the Trade Unionist and Socialist Coalition, and general secretary (leader) of the RMT (transport workers trade union), says, “I have got more in common with a Chinese labourer than I have with Sir Fred Goodwin” (the multimillionaire ex-“boss” of the Royal Bank of Scotland) (Hattenstone, 2008).

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