The Destructive Path of Neoliberalism
An International Examination of Urban Education
Bradley Porfilio and Curry Malott (Eds.)

The Destructive Path of Neoliberalism. An International Examination of Urban Education, a compilation of twelve essays by leading scholars and educators, sheds light on the social, political, economic, and historical forces behind the rise of neoliberalism, the dominant ideological doctrine impacting developments in schools and other social contexts across the globe for over thirty years. Several authors provide rich empirical data from schools across the globe to capture how neoliberal imperatives, discourses, and practices are impacting teachers, students, and communities at today’s historical juncture. Finally, several contributors have developed pedagogical initiatives, suggest policy considerations, and convey theoretical insights designed to assist us in the struggle against the corporatization of schooling and social life.

An International Examination of Urban Education: The Destructive Path of Neoliberalism. by Bradley Porfilio and Curry Malott, is an important and provocative text, indeed, not only for its careful and eloquent theoretical and analytical examination of neoliberalism and “globalization” in urban educational contexts — and the dystopian and globally catastrophic consequences of these instantiations of late-capitalism — but also because it is what its name implies: an international study of these phenomena (a study and critique by those most immediately and directly affected by the “manifest destiny” of capitalism/imperialism). As neoliberalism appears to be both in continued ascendance and imminent collapse, Porfilio and Malott’s text is a must-read for every serious student of education, political science and sociology.

Marc Pruty, New Mexico State University (co-editor, most recently, with Luis Huerta-Charles of De la Pedagogía Crítica a la Pedagogía Revolucionaria: Ensayos para Comprender a Peter McLaren from Siglo XXI Press in Mexico).

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THE DESTRUCTIVE PATH OF NEOLIBERALISM:
AN INTERNATIONAL EXAMINATION OF EDUCATION

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heart of private property is evident in the plain fact that the working class is working harder, longer, and for less money. To add insult to injury, as the champagne corks pop and the crustless cucumber sandwiches are passed around at Liberal Party fund raising functions that serve as the boardroom of the ruling class, you will not hear about any bold new policy proposals to reduce the suffering caused by neo-liberalism, e.g., to combat poverty; to protect workers' rights; to promote gender equality or for that matter to reduce gaps in Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander health and education.

As the economy starts to sputter and falter and the working poor is forced to rely on handouts from St Vincent de Paul, Mission Australia and the Salvation Army, unionised and working-class Australians will begin to bear the brunt of an intensified “class war from above” in everyday life, e.g., continued attacks on organised labour and the annual downsizing of the state sector through cuts in expenditure as a proportion of gross domestic product (GDP) (Holl, 2006). During this current period of dislocation and transition, the ruling class is confronted with the structural violence associated with the full-fledged expansion of exchange relations into every sphere of social life. Drawing upon Lenin's (1965a) theory of imperialism, this is the case as decaying capitalism seeks to “...dispense with massive forms of social up-value expenditure” (e.g., public housing, health and education) and to convert the use-value of untapped resources and labor into surplus value and eventually exchange value (Frankel, 1978, p. 48). Despite the propaganda of the ideologues and propagandists of the imperialist bourgeoisie, it is absolutely obvious that the augmentation of value is only possible through the increased discipline of labor time and the corresponding exploitation of labor power under capitalism. Within the social universe of capital, it is labor that gives value to what is produced and it is for this reason that capital is less an object than a social relation (McLaren, 2005; McLaren & Farahmandpour, 2005; Rikowski, 2001, 2000).

Making a mockery of direct democracy, the ruling class is attempting to “prevent the state sector from operating the production process” in order to improve conditions for the appropriation and accumulation of surplus value (Frankel, 1978, p. 38). Its highly aggressive and tendonous toward the “cradle to grave” welfare state is premised upon a neo-liberal belief that “...state policies or socialization processes negate discipline, the work ethic, internalization of conventional perceptions of authority, laws, consumption” (p. 54). Scarcely clad in the rhetoric of “choice” and “freedom” to sell its package of neo-liberal reforms to the public, this paper argues that the ruling class has engaged in a defensive strategy of re-politicizing the administrativideological state apparatus through such “boundary blurring” strategies as privatization, deregulation and decentralization (Frankel, 1978, p. 40; Starr, 1990). Starr (1990) defines “boundary blurring” policies and proposals such as providing parents with “choice” through the provision of school vouchers “...as a second-best alternative to eliminating public spending for many services altogether.” In Australia, the six states and two territories are constitutionally required to provide free public education and inviting greater private sector involvement “...in the performance of functions that government cannot surrenders to subject state enterprises such as the schools to the discipline of market forces (Starr, 1990). As the plug is pulled on state-funded education, the toll is mounting, particularly for the most vulnerable students who are victims of geography, class and policy.

In this paper, I start by providing a very short introduction to globalization. I then argue for a broader theory of the state within the shifting contours of imperialism. Locating my narrative “at home” in the Australian context, I then discuss the ill effects of globalization on labour before providing a case study of “life in schools” (McLaren, 2007). Finally, after establishing that the Australian education researchers have focused on urban education for about two decades, I argue that the struggle for free and universal education is tied up intimately with the class struggle for a society based on the meeting of collective rather than private profit needs.

GLOBALIZATION: A VERY SHORT INTRODUCTION

Looked into the “war on terror” and confronted with the competitive pressures of “globalization” or classical imperialism, the prevailing wisdom is that nation states such as Australia must accept capitalist institutions, methods and practices or face the inevitability of economic decline (Gamble, 1999, p. 5). Working hand-in-glove with imperialism, neo-liberalism enabled capitalism to overcome the economic stagnation and crisis of the 1970s and 1980s. Creating the ideological and material conditions for a new cyclical upswing in economic development, neo-liberalism has enabled the capitalist state to impose discipline over labor-time and to attract financial investment as the ruling class ambitiously strives to resolve the inherent contradictions and spatial limits of capital accumulation. Unlike classical liberalism, which held a wholly gloomy and negative view of the state for interfering with the economic freedom of the capitalist class, neo-liberalism has a “positive conception” of the regulatory state via privatization, deregulation, and decentralization (Hartman, 2006).

During the late 1980s and early 1990s, the ideological tide was running in the favor of market forces and it was clear to the ruling class that the size of the highly unionized and labor intensive state sector had grown disproportionately in relation to the monopoly and competitive sectors. The shift from Whitlam to the Hawke/Keating government in Australia to the Hawke/Keating government in Britain (from Heath to Thatcher), the United States (from Nixon to Reagan) and Europe (from de Gaulle to Chirac) with the entrenchment of far reaching “new market-minded policies” hostile to the evils of the welfare state (Stall, 1984). Having borne witness to the collapse of the Soviet Union and degenerated workers' states in Eastern Europe, the ruling class was determined to re-establish the conditions of profitability progressively eroded during the post-war upswing (1950-73) through full employment, relatively high wage levels, and welfare programs. Keep in mind that many jobs in the non-competitive sector were “...created in response to anti-"exchange relation" struggles” (Frankel, 1978, p. 35). These concessions were part of a new class compromise that was negotiated during the...
dramatic Civil Rights and social movement era of the 1960s and 1970s amongst the different groups and strata... excluded from, or marginally related to commodity production” (Frankel, 1978, p. 35). Far from forgetting the class struggle, this "social revolution in the form of worldwide radicalization ‘marked a general questioning of public sector and values’ and these reforms in the form of expansion of the public sector of services secured for the ruling class the necessary conditions for super-profits through the weakening of organised labour, reduced taxation and the opening of new markets to financial capital through the liberalisation measures”. In what was to become known as the “second wave of globalisation”, the process of liberalisation created the necessary economic conditions for super-profits through the weakening of organised labour, reduced taxation and the opening of new markets to financial capital through the liberalisation measures proposed at the end of the Cold War (1989–1994). The liberalisation of the financial system, the “toile love” austerity/debt policies and the rise of IMF, Hoe, has been economic gurus’ version of the idea that “globalisation” under the influence of the “ballyhooed” “information revolution” spreads capitalist development, boosts the prosperity of the working class and blots out features of underdeveloped development between and within different national economies (Foster, 2001, p. 3). It is impossible to deny that over the past one hundred and fifty years, capitalist accumulation has led to the fastest growth of labour productivity in human history with its huge advances in productive technology (Milanovic, 1998, p. 9). At the same time, as capitalist logic spreads its seeds through the internationalized division of labour, it is also equally impossible to refute the fact that its growth is rooted in the unparalleled exploitation of the world’s humanity and the savage plunder of the planet (Lotta, 1998, p. 9).

THE SHIFTING CONCERNS OF IMPERIALISM

What all this chaos underlines is the need for a more adequate Marxist theory of the state from the standpoint of Lenin’s (1975a) theory of imperialism. In State and Revolution, Lenin (1965b) argued that “...the state is a special organ of force: it is an organization of violence for some particular purpose.” Under this concept, the definitive social and political meaning that capitalism divides that between the exploiting (the ruling class) and the exploited (the working class), the apparatus of the state act advantageously in the interests of the bourgeoisie. Establishing the necessary pre-requisites of the first stage of capitalist development, Lenin argued that the state is the political/legal entity the state is not neutral but rather exists to hold social antagonisms in check in the favor of the ruling class. A good instance of what Lenin states (1965b) is taking place is completed. As for the example, it is not a single state, however, democratic in which there are no loopholes, or reservations in its constitution guaranteeing the bourgeoisie the possibility of dispatching troops against the workers, of proof of the non-compliance of the law, and so forth, in the case of a violation of public order, and actually in case the exploited class “violates” its position of slavery and tries to behave in a non-slavish manner” (p. 22).

Given the monstrous and intractable role of the modern security state, we must ask what type of democracy can exist in the general context of the struggle for workers’ rights. In the form of a direct reply, Lenin (1975b) pointed out that liberal democracy is a convenient illusion because it works to ensure democracy for a tiny minority, a stratum of society whose real aims go no deeper than a Nation subsection. Lenin (1975b) stated: “It is natural for a liberal to speak of ‘democracy’ in general; but a Marxist will never forget to ask: ‘for what classes?’” (p. 9). Thus, “We cannot speak of ‘popular’ or ‘bourgeois’ democracy” (1975b, p. 19).

“Hemmed in by the narrow limits set by capitalist exploitation,” bourgeois democracy is in effect a dictatorship, “Democracy for an insignificant minority, democracy for the rich — that is the democracy of capitalist society” (Lenin, 1975a, p. 102).

In 1916, amidst the horrors of the First World War, Lenin (1975b) defined imperialism as historically a specific stage in the development of capitalism. In short, the theory of imperialism argued that imperialism was the assertion of the authoritative state and uneven development behind the crumbling façade of “globalization.” Largely before the Make Poverty History campaign, Lenin (1975a) wrote, “The world has become divided into a handful of inerter states and a vast majority of debtor states” (p. 121). Contrary to the prevailing narrative that economic and technological changes have created a “global village,” the world economy is not substantially more homogenous, far from it. As Lenin (1975a) defined imperialism as “the highest stage of capitalism” and in a well known and oft quoted line, he wrote, “…capitalism’s transition to the stage of monopoly capitalism, to finance capital, is connected with the intensification of the struggle for markets and the intensification of the struggle for raw materials and the intensification of the struggle for the division of labour among the biggest capitalist powers. (p. 106)

The shift from Keynesian economics to neo-liberalism in the 1980s and 1990s expanded the franchise of imperialism. As a page in the history of classical “bourgeois” economics, Keynesianism in challenged the anxiety or “laissez faire” model of economics. Based on the ideas of a centrally planned or mixed economy developed by the British economist John Maynard Keynes, it evolved out of the horrors of the Great Depression. In light of all that economic "turbulence," Keynesian economics influenced President Roosevelt’s New Deal administration in the United States and Britain’s post-war Labour government. It was also institutionalized in the Bretton Woods system (1944–1973) of international monetary management, which gave birth to the IMF and World Bank (Brenner, 1999). However, the premise that speculation, in the form of the speculative finance (Bretton Woods) is a functional "organizing" element of capitalism, inaugurated a transition to the current era of liberalized forms of capital movements. Although much maimed, Lenin noted that one of the key features of imperialism was the emerging era of financial capital. Due to the, the present of the self-serving fallacies of neo-liberalism is that export led production creates trickled-down prosperity (Bond, 2006). In reality, "Liquefication" is a process "...in which stronger capitalist countries appropriate surplus value from weaker capitalist countries" (Debelle, 2001, p. 8). For example, as Millennials (2002) points out, much of what the US exports in the form of arms, movies and legal services are "sold above their value" while much of what the US imports, from food to clothing. For instance, TVS and computers are purchased below value. With regards to Lenin’s theory of combined and unequal development, the relative privilege enjoyed by the working class in the home capitals of imperialism such as America, Britain and the United States is predicated upon the "...extraction of surplus value from the poorly developed and unequal exchange as well as through direct colonial exploitation in "Free Trade Zones"" (San Juan, 2003). What matters here is that "...the superexploitation of colonial and "weak" nations has allowed the imperialists to preserve a relative class alliance with their workers, and that the cultural and political foundations of this class peace remain generally unchanged in our time, notwithstanding the fact that the neo-liberal turn has taken some away of those privileges, which workers in the West received for being "loyal" to their "imperial" masters.

In Australia, this class of peace is associated with the rise of the ”aspirational” working class. Noting that even Labor politicians are reluctant to use expressions that reflect any of the talk about social collective and social economic identities. Terms such as "battler" and "aspirational", for example, are increasingly used in place of class to describe collective identities. Such terms cut across class lines. They express the kind of consumption that led the students to convince themselves that there is such a thing as class and the cleaner in Nickel and Dime to believe that a luxurious mansion was in her reach if she won the 2021.)

On this point, Marxist argue that capitalism is an "ideological illusion" that we are all workers and that the world is divided into those who work and those who do not. For Marx and Zavarzadeh, 2002), at a time when most people affirm their middle class identities through consumer "choice" in the sphere of culture and consumption, the various ranks of the middle class operate "...to give ideological stability to the economically insecure and unstable life under capitalists” (Ebert &
but also threaten to condemn human and non-human nature to oblivion as the planet is "poisoned and plundered" of its resources (Townsend & Burke, 2002). Yet, remarkably, the idealists of imperialist globalization tell us that "...to oppose globalization is to oppose the future" and that the only option is to jump on the bandwagon "...or to be left behind" (Lotta, 1997, p. 4).

In sum, the globalization thesis is not simply "descriptive" of objective conditions but rather constitutes a new and hegemonic form of bourgeois ideology (Hannan, 2000). It is an ideological cover for good old-fashioned imperialism, that is, a New Imperialism as a strategic rather than a chronological capital (Trotzky, 1939). What it announces is a world in which old and new forms of bourgeois property rights of exploitation and appropriation that "globalization" is supposed to threaten both exploitation or other basic types of struggles. As an ideology, therefore, globalization is a form of market triumphalism used to paper over the material reality of distinct national markets in which exploitation manifests itself. As a phenomenon, it is also clearly linked to neoliberalism, essentially a new type of capitalism which is systematically geared toward dismantling barriers to accumulation (Hill, 2001). More than anything else the objective is to produce conditions favorable to capital, which includes minimizing the "twin rights" that protect the right to the economy where labor is cheap and flexible and ensuring the unretarded circulation of goods and services is guaranteed through "free trade" treaties, agreements and politics. Here, globalization is thin soup indeed.

THERE GOES THE NEIGHBOURHOOD

Like observing snow flakes melt as they fall from the sky and touch the ground, the effects of "globalization" on labor are clearly visible in Australia. Over the past two decades, the political representatives of the imperialist bourgeoisie including the "lesser evil" Australian Labor Party (ALP) actively fostered a vision that eroded the collective identity of "egalitarian" Australia. Capitalists have used ideologies of mercertocracy and egalitarianism to hide the grim realities of class and exploitation. Even if this egalitarian identity and the principle of a "fair go" constitutes a poisonous and destructive capitalist myth, neoliberalism is an essential part of capital's way of thinking. The Accord, a central wage setting mechanism that took into account economic policies and the Consumer Price Index (CPI), implied the ruling class during a period of severe economic crisis and political transition (Kahn, 1986). As Australia slid deeply into recession and unemployment in the early 1980s and again in the early 1990s, the Accord protected the real purchasing power of workers' wages and also ensured that organized labor did not "rock the boat" once it was won. Bob Hawke, Prime Minister office for 5 Malcolm Wilson (1990). However, as Hawke surveyed his empire from the Lodge (the official residence of the Prime Minister of Australia is in the national capital of Canberra), he also worried the imminent as well as the fighting strength and capacity of organized labor.

The Workplace Relations Act passed in October 1996 by the newly elected Howard conservative government did not pull punches with the trade union movement. This piece of anti-union legislation had a dual purpose: to undermine the rights of unionized workers and the capacity of workers to move with renewed confidence and led to a stripping down of wages and conditions, particularly with the introduction of Australian Workplace Agreements (AWAs). AWAs introduced an explicit New Imperialism agreement to negotiate directly with an employer over wages and conditions rather than to have a union negotiated agreement. With attention to detail, AWAs prohibit industrial action for the life of the agreement.

As Australia's trading partners fell into recession during the Asian Economic Crisis of 1997 and the U.S. experienced an economic slowdown after the 11 September terrorist attacks, Howard shrewdly used the rhetoric of choice and freedom embodied in new AWA as a way of getting a new deal from workers. In a string of deals with workers in a growing number of workplaces, Howard is making a mockery of the workplace in the world of work. This is true of workers in every industry and around the country. Howard's move to turn the workplace from a site of struggle to a site for ideological selling off their own private economic interests ahead of collective rights, needs and obligations, e.g., Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander land rights, the environment, public education and health care. In this atmosphere, the diffusion of neo-liberal policies combined with direct attacks on union power led to a decline in union membership. Despite pockets of resistance from the most militant trade unions such as the Maritime Union of Australia (MUA) during the Patrick Stevedoring waterfront dispute and the 400 striking members of Mining and Energy Division of the Construction, Forestry, Mining and Energy Union (CFMEU) in the Hunter Valley No. 1 mine, it is clear that the class compromise negotiated under the Accord actually hid the very open for policy changes that eroded the overall strength of organized labor (Haggett, 1993).

A key weapon in the arsenal of the ruling class in its far-reaching assualt on workers' conditions and rights, the union movement and the left is the Howard government's use of Australian Workplace Agreements (AWAs) and the distribution of WorkChoices to bring about a "new industrial relations system" in which employees are "in control of their own employment contracts" (Howard, 2006). The Howard government's "new industrial relations system" is in contradiction with the right to organize, freedom of association and collective bargaining. The Howard government, through the WorkChoices legislation, is hijacking and dumb-down to accommodate the chomander drinking ideologies of the multicultural Left. Warning that "the flags of the left" are "visibly on display," Howard (2006) put the boot into public education at a speech to celebrate the 50th anniversary of the right-wing magazine Quadrant. With a sense that melodrama should have a higher priority than the public, he argued: "A few debates are as vital as those over education, whether it be in upholding basic standards on literacy and numeracy, promoting diversity and choice or challenging the incomprehensible sludge that can find its way into state-mandated books" (Howard, 2001). The Howard government had, in the 70s and 80s, had the unique experience of seeing the migrant labor force. In the 80s and 90s, the Howard government had under AWAs, which provide flexibility for performance-based incentives (Topfield, 2006). Looking to undercut the membership density and influence of the Australian Labor Union (ALU). AWAs will have the Federal government to have a major role in removing the last vestiges of collective bargaining and to strike (Isaac, 2006). It is little wonder that teachers joined thousands of other workers to attend union-organized rallies that protested the Howard government's WorkChoices legislation, which has been the key to success of the Prime Minister single out teachers who participated in rallies in support of the Year Rights at Work campaign. "Let me say that it is more than a glib joke about working under precarious conditions, a way of life for both unionists and non-unionists, has faced the realisation that the Australian Education Union's (EPU) has been unable to achieve agreement with the national employers and unions for the purpose of extending the "break" of the new AWA. The EPU has not been able to negotiate a new AWA that has a role in preserving the"years of good work at work, but rather a way for the "expansion of the "national co-workers who have been fighting for public funding to private schools to fight for the "independence of education" that is the "independence of education have to be saved, chipped, cutared, circumscribed." With a view to reasserting "traditional" Australian values and "social discipline" amongst the next generation of workers, the Howard government has now directed the Howard government to fund the appointment of religious counselors or chaplains to provide "spiritual and pastoral" guidance to primary and secondary school students in both the secular public and private school systems (Zimmer, 2007; God in the Machine, 2006). The objective, of course, is to socialize social norms and ethical frameworks in order to fashion a new vision of the ideal citizen. By all indications, the federal government is using the discourse of standards, performance and accountability to further its ideological project of "national co-workers and political alignment of the neoliberal vision to a national takeover of the public school system. In Australia, constitutional responsibility for the establishment and oversight of K-12 education resides with the six states and two territories, including the formation of policy, statutory requirements and standards and financial management with the federal government the main provider of funding (Miner, 2006). For this reason, the Australian government has a tremendous amount of influence over education as it controls the purse strings and allocates funds on the state and the Commonwealth levels through the Commonwealth and State Education. Hence, the attempt of the Howard government to sneak in through the backdoor in order to influence behaviour and content through its emphasis on standards, choice and efficiency, which is all tied to funding arrangements designed to ensure "accountability."
The annual downsizing of spending in the public sector by the Howard government has fuelled middle-class welfare and tax cuts has produced dire effects at all levels of government. The Australian Government is the third, highest spender on public education." In a recent interview with Researching Schools titled Australia Battles Privatisation, Angelo Cavallaro, Deputy President of the AEU, stated: "Between 2003 and 2006, the federal government has given 71 per cent of recurrent grants to private schools... Thirty years ago, only 15 percent of students were in private schools. That figure has more than doubled, and nationwide approximately 32 percent of students are now in non-government schools. There is a need to compare this with the institutionalized patterns of funding, disinvestment, and social polarization that characterize the struggling urban core of cities in some countries such as the United States. First and foremost, Australia has always been a relatively highly urbanized country, although popular perception movement from the rural to the urban has increased. Many of its subregions has increased partly because of planning policies (Australia State of the Environment, 2006). Providing a fascinating portrait of urban/suburban space, Brendan Gleeson (2006) has mapped and analyzed the geographies of development in the towns and cities of the state and its non-local policies of "sustainable development." In uncompromising honesty, he paints a pretty bleak and disconcerting picture. Since the mid-1990s, uneven development in the working class areas and ethnic enclaves is also a result of the effects of urban renewal policies in the form of gentrification spurred on by skyrocketing property prices. Intended or not, planning policies that encourage higher density housing in urban areas, it is also a pretty safe bet that they will not rush to operate in rural and remote regions where operational costs are significantly higher (Miner, 2006).

SCHOOLING AND UNEVEN URBAN DEVELOPMENT

Fieries (2006) states that urban education has not been a targeted area of focus for Australian education researchers, particularly following the closure of the Centre for the Study of Urban Education at La Trobe University in Melbourne in the late 1980s (p. 3). Certainly, the changing topography of urban and suburban development and the Australian education system compared to the institutionalized patterns of abandonment, disinvestment and social polarization that characterize the struggling urban core of cities in some countries such as the United States. First and foremost, Australia has always been a relatively highly urbanized country, although popular perception movement from the rural to the urban has increased. Many of its subregions has increased partly because of planning policies (Australia State of the Environment, 2006). Providing a fascinating portrait of urban/suburban space, Brendan Gleeson (2006) has mapped and analyzed the geographies of development in the towns and cities of the state and its non-local policies of "sustainable development." In uncompromising honesty, he paints a pretty bleak and disconcerting picture. Since the mid-1990s, uneven development in the working class areas and ethnic enclaves is also a result of the effects of urban renewal policies in the form of gentrification spurred on by skyrocketing property prices. Intended or not, planning policies that encourage higher density housing in urban areas, it is also a pretty safe bet that they will not rush to operate in rural and remote regions where operational costs are significantly higher (Miner, 2006).

I SUPPOSE THAT'S JUST THE WAY THE COOKIE CRUMBLES?
A LEFT RESPONSE

After the collapse of the former Soviet Union, Lenin's theory of capitalist decay was reduced by academics in the home colds of imperialism to nothing more than an artefact in the "curiosity cabinet," relegated to history books, footnotes and bibliographies. It was symptomatic of the period that total militarization and decay theory was the peak of social science, characteristic of the effects of imperialism. With regards to the current mood of the Australian electorate, household debt has risen substantially relative to income and the possibility of rising interest rates or unemployment has created fear, uncertainty and a loss of living standards. The working class begins to rally against the neo-liberal policies of the Howard government. Over the past two turbulent decades, decadent,parasitic and decaying imperialism has created an increased in jobs and competition amongst the unemployed. But it also means that the effects of neo-liberalism are not evenly distributed and that the repeated attacks on living standards particularly the anti-union WorkChoices legislation has sparked widespread anger and militancy. Indeed, the results of the Australia National University’s Australian Survey of Social Attitudes revealed a progressive shift in attitudes in 2003, as compared to 1987, on a range of issues including Aboriginals, unions, and the funding of social services (Macaulay, 2005). Using data from the national student surveys, it can be seen that governments are best suited to delivering child, aged, and health care than any other form of organisation, including families and relatives. And despite the popular myth that neo-liberalism has brought good things, Australian governments expressed a high commitment to the provision of state-run education, with "over two-thirds" prepared to pay more tax to improve it (Wilson & Meager, 2004).

In Australia, the current neo-liberal offensive is not simply the product of imperialism’s relentless drive towards expansion. Having repeatedly terrorised the labor power sector through blatant attacks on the Keynesian welfare state, the class antagonisms that this policy has produced at a national level have fuelled the development of capitalist accumulation. The focus on class antagonism between wage-labor and capital stemming from this distinctive phase of imperialism deserves attention, particularly as it relates to the development of proletarian class-consciousness and political consciousness (e.g. as论证). This process (e.g. as论证) made abundantly clear, socialists are completely opposed to all forms of terrorism. By the same token, this does not mean that workers should not criticize and resist the horrors of imperialism. The defense of social rights is not the destruction of a socially and ecologically humane society orientated towards socialist ideals. Along with an independence of spirit and determination, socialism is about creating a society free of violence through "...the establishment of caring and loving [intergenerational] communities, which build bridges to connect different social sectors, people and organizations" (Martin, 2005). Given the importance of building democratic organization forms that can rise to the challenge, there are no shortcuts to building a progressive movement based on the material interests and needs of Australian cities led to problems of housing affordability and social exclusion as capital creates new sites of unequal development concentrated in the "poverty thickets" of the suburban heartland (Gleeson, 2006; Nixon, 2006). With regards to the unique geography and spatial ordering of "globalizing" cities in Australia, this points to the need for more empirical research into the dialectical relationship between the various neo-liberal policies that are working hand-in-hand to intensify the isolating and polarizing effects of uneven spatial development. Highlighting the importance of place in education disparities, Pierides (2006) claims that the "episcopal positioning" of schools in the gentrified urban centres underscores the experimental and testing environment for students in "neoliberal settings" (Pierides, 2006, p. 1). In the battle towns streets of inner-city neighbourhoods and outer suburbs that remain stubbornly impoverished to capitalist development, Pierides (2006) argues that this governance model is most closely associated with socioeconomic status and gender (see for example, Tceco, 2000; Tceoe & Polsele, 2003) as well as rural youth and rural education" (see for example Wyn & Stakes, 2000; Wyn, Stakes, & Stafford, 1998). Despite a plethora of studies in disciplines such as geography and planning that have investigated the spatial and economic effects of urban restructuring in Australia, this topic does not seem to have plied the interest of education researchers where studies in urban education have been few in number, and usually single-site case studies (Singh, 2005).

Since the golden age of the 1970s and 1980s, when the study of education and sociology was heavily influenced by Marxism and theories of class a handful of detailed case studies have looked at the complex dynamics of neo-liberal state restructuring in relation to schools and rural/working class communities. With the strong emphasis on consumer "choice" and the introduction of a user-pays policy, Connell (2003) argues that schools is left with no choice but to become "entrepreneurial units" competing for potential customers (p. 237). Predictably, the education market is a battlefield and as it continues to mature schools are increasingly ranked through (unreliable) indicators of performance such as university shortlist rates and the percentage of students from high socio-economic classes has increased partly because of planning policies (Australia State of the Environment, 2006). Providing a fascinating portrait of urban/suburban space, Brendan Gleeson (2006) has mapped and analyzed the geographies of development in the towns and cities of the state and its non-local policies of "sustainable development." In uncompromising honesty, he paints a pretty bleak and disconcerting picture. Since the mid-1990s, uneven development in the working class areas and ethnic enclaves is also a result of the effects of urban renewal policies in the form of gentrification spurred on by skyrocketing property prices. Intended or not, planning policies that encourage higher density housing in urban areas, it is also a pretty safe bet that they will not rush to operate in rural and remote regions where operational costs are significantly higher (Miner, 2006).

NOTES

1. Although inspired by the lyrics from Lily Allen’s song Everything’s Just Wonderful.

REFERENCES


COST-EFFECTIVE STATE TERROR IN AUSTRALIA

of the working class. More specifically, as workers resist the commodification and exploitation of all spheres of life, it is in the sphere of education that the struggle is intensifying" (Fieries, 2006). In this context, it is not surprising that various societies have found ways to deliver a reasonable education for their children" (p. 249). On the ground, he notes, that "There is still a great deal of good will and respect for schooling, and some schools make very good use of it" (p. 249).


TOUROUZOIZU SOME AND BURRELL GUEYE

The SILENCING OF THE AFRICAN MIND

Neoliberalism and Education in Senegal and Burkina Faso

The francophone countries in West Africa share nearly the same educational system left by France after the "colonial" independence of the 1960s. It is controlled by the ministry of education, which alone determines the reforms, the curricula, teachers' appointments, and salaries. Typically, formal education was modeled on the metropolitan system with its needs and interests of the colonial administration rather than that of the people of the region (Ki-Zerbo, 1990; Chaker, 1994; Bassey, 1999). According to Fafawa (1974), the establishment of schools was usually motivated by utilitarian considerations, not by humanitarian motives. They had two primary purposes: the provision of middle and lower-level human power for the colonial bureaucracy and the private European companies and the conversion of the indigenous population to Christianity. In British and Belgian colonies, especially, churches played a key role in this process of colonization.

Today, if all the African countries are nominally independent—so they have no government, a territory, and are not recognized by other nations and do they not enjoy the outward signs of sovereignty?—they do not yet control their destiny, and therefore this is more true than in education. Has this led Wu Thiong's (1966) to argue that:

Economic and political control can never be complete or effective without mental control. To control a people's culture is to control their tools of self-definition in relationship to others. For colonialism, this involved two aspects of the same process; the distortion or the deliberate underdeveloping of a people's culture, its art, dance, religions, history, geography, education, culture and literature, and the conscious elevation of the language of the colonizer. (p. 16)

In this paper about education in Senegal and Burkina Faso, the authors, nationals of the two countries, look at some structural changes that take place in the postcolonial era. In effect, the neoliberal project in education is compounding an already heavy colonial legacy. The education reforms initiated by international institutions with structural adjustment programs and globally mandated national education development plans are impinging on the education systems. These developments have had tremendous effects on the sovereignty of the two societies.