

changing the future
changing the future
changing the future
changing the future
changing the future
changing the future
changing the future
changing the future
changing the future

**REDPRINT
FOR
EDUCATION**

changing the future

THE HILLCOLE GROUP

Contents

Foreword	<i>vii</i>
1 General Principles for a Socialist Agenda in Education for the 1990s and into the 21st Century <i>John Clay and Mike Cole</i>	1
2 Critique of Alternative Policies <i>The Hillcole Group</i>	15
3 The Structure of the System: Proposals for Change <i>Andy Green</i>	59
4 The National Curriculum and Assessment: Changing Course <i>Clyde Chitty, Tamara Jakubowska and Ken Jones</i>	83
5 Education for Work <i>Pat Ainley</i>	101
6 What's Left in Teacher Education: Teacher Education the Radical Left and Policy Proposals for the 1990s <i>Dave Hill</i>	115
7 Resources and Funding for State Education <i>Rehana Minhas and Gaby Weiner</i>	145
8 A New Education Act <i>The Hillcole Group</i>	165
Bibliography	186
Glossary of Acronyms	189
Index	191

Foreword

This book has been written by the Hillcole Group. While most of the chapters have been written by individual members, or by small sub-groups, of the Hillcole Group, the book nevertheless represents a collaborative perspective. Each chapter has been discussed fully at one or other of ten Hillcole Group meetings held over the past year; and the writers of each chapter have developed and amended their analysis as a result of this systematic group discussion. The collection has been edited by Clyde Chitty to whom particular thanks are due for the final form in which the book now appears.

This book is Redprint One. It will be followed by others in an attempt to develop a coherent democratic socialist alternative to the current Radical Right and Centrist perspectives on education.

The Hillcole Group at the time of writing Redprint One are:

Pat Ainley
Stephen Ball
Caroline Benn
Clyde Chitty
Mike Cole
John Clay
Andy Green
Dave Hill
Janet Holland
Tamara Jakubowska
Ken Jones
Rehana Minhas
Gaby Weiner

Chapter One

General Principles for a Socialist Agenda in Education for the 1990s and into the 21st Century

John Clay and Mike Cole

Before attempting to map out the agenda for a socialist education policy for the 1990s and beyond, we have to take stock of the system as it exists at present. This does mean that we have to acknowledge the influence that Thatcherism as an ideology has had and the way in which this ideology has been put into practice by a succession of Conservative governments since 1979. The Thatcherite legacy that we have been left with has been that of unashamedly introducing a hierarchy of systems within education; whereby privileges in terms of money and status have been poured in and conferred on the few whilst denying the majority an equitable share of the resources. This has meant funding selective initiatives such as the Technical and Vocational Education Initiative (TVEI) generously, to re-orientate education for the world of work. The Tories argued that schools were producing pupils who were anti-entrepreneurial and anti-industry. To make this point even more forcibly, the introduction of the TVEI programme into schools was placed under the aegis of the Manpower Services Commission, an offshoot of the Department of Employment. The clear intention at the onset of the Programme was to target a selected number of schools in LEAs across England and Wales.

The earliest attempt to break up the fragile consensus of the post-war years was to halt the programme of comprehensivization of schools. The 1980 Education Act provided the 'Assisted Places Scheme' for pupils to transfer from state schools to the private sector on a subsidized basis, under the banner of 'parental choice'. The fact that this notional choice was available only to the few and mainly

benefited the already privileged middle classes largely went unchallenged. The requirement for all schools to publish their examination results and the right of parents to appeal against the LEAs' school allocation for their children, along with the right to send them across LEA boundaries, undermined the principle of community provision and absolved parents as ratepayers from taking an interest in their own local educational provision. These rights were enacted for the sake of the few but their rhetorical impact was considerable. To argue that these new freedoms for the few were at the expense of enhanced quality provision for all by the consequent diminishing of centralized provision and planning, was seen as arguing against the right of parents to choose. In addition, the effect of the 1980 Act was for the system for the first time to be opened up to the idea of parents as *consumers* rather than as providers in a partnership with the community as a whole.

It could be argued that although Thatcher herself did not personally play a central role in radicalizing education, Thatcherism provided the economic and political context for the New Right to operate in and gave the ideological support which assured its ascendancy in education policy making. The authors of the series of Black Papers on education in the late 1960s and 1970s who criticized the abolition of the grammar schools and of the selection process at the age of 11 were finding themselves in a position to influence government policy directly. The Centre for Policy Studies, the Adam Smith Institute and the Hillgate Group are the natural heirs to that tradition, although it is important to emphasize that they have abandoned the defensive position of the early Black Papers in favour of policies designed to reconstruct the whole education system. The New Right are not a homogeneous bunch; and two distinct strands within this broad alignment are discernible. The ones who influenced the drafting of the 1980 Education Act and, more importantly, the 1988 Education Act are those who can be loosely defined as the free-marketeters. They see the main purpose of the education system as that of producing labour hierarchies for driving the capitalist economy. The 1986 Education Act was brought on to the statute book for a different purpose. This was influenced by the tendency within the New Right that Ken Jones labels the 'cultural restorationists' and Clyde Chitty calls the 'neo-

conservatives.¹ This group of academics and intellectuals expound a philosophy that is culturally supremacist and anti-egalitarian. They see their role as rescuing 'British Culture' from its diminution by 'alien cultures'. The adoption of equal opportunities policies, the promotion of multi-culturalism and anti-racism, and the attempts to make schooling more relevant to working class pupils are seen as undermining the traditional values and hierarchical structures that have kept the Right in power.

In this context we can see that the 1986 Education Act did not directly further the cause of bringing market forces to bear on the public sector of education but did nevertheless bring to the statute book several pet concerns of the New Right. These included the proscription of partisan teaching about political matters, school governors' control over sex education and the codification of police influence on schools - headteachers had to have regard to police representation about curriculum matters. Its aim was to restrain at local level the work of 'progressive' schools. These were schools that were seen as teaching all those concerns that were anathema to the 'cultural restorationists'.

The most far-reaching and controversial changes have been brought about with the passing of the 1988 Education 'Reform' Act. The National Curriculum can be seen as the brainchild of the 'neo-conservative' element within the New Right but the other major provisions are instrumental in moving us towards a fully market orientated system of public sector education. Its introduction by Kenneth Baker was preceded by his now famous announcement to the 1987 Tory Party Conference that 'the pursuit of egalitarianism [in education] is over'.² The provisions within the Act allow secondary schools and, more recently, primary schools of all sizes to 'opt out' of LEA control. This will have the effect of initially undermining and finally destroying educational provision that is collectively provided to meet local needs within a community through national and local taxation. Moreover, schools that 'opt out' are directly funded from central government and have no obligation to use the community-based LEA provision and services such as advisory staff and EWOs.³ Thus the provision of pooled services for the remaining schools will inevitably deteriorate since poll tax capping prevents the community

from increasing its resources to make up for the deficit through higher taxation. So far schools that have gained grant-maintained status have been those faced with closure through falling rolls or others that have sought to maintain selective intakes or that have held on to their cherished sixth form provision in the light of the threats of LEA post-16 reorganization.⁴

The 1988 Act includes proposals for open enrolment whereby secondary schools that are popular are obliged to increase their numbers up to at least the school's 'standard number', defined by 1979 'peak of the bulge' admissions. This was intended to introduce the notion of competition between schools in vying for pupils and thus force less popular schools to sharpen up their marketing skills or else 'wither on the vine.' However, the 'opt out' clause allows these vulnerable schools to seek Grant Maintained Status. The net effect is that LEAs are prevented from rationalizing school provision and planning strategically for the medium and long terms. The clear intention of this Government is to destroy LEAs. A right wing junior Minister for Education was quoted as saying to a conference organized by a pressure group that promotes the contracting out of public services to private firms, that local authorities were already becoming a mere postbox between central government and schools. He told the conference that the Government's reform had been planned to break up the monopoly of council schooling.⁵

The 'opt out' and open enrolment clauses in the 1988 Act are not designed to produce an effective and efficient system of education but are ideologically motivated and destructive in their effects on collective provision. The schools that have 'opted out' and sought grant-maintained status have been given up to £190,000 more for the year 1991/92. According to a report in *The Times Education Supplement* in March 1991, 41 of the original 49 Grant Maintained Schools were to benefit from this targeted largesse. All the schools involved get a basic budget equal to other LEA run schools but in addition get an extra 16 per cent to compensate for advisory and other central services provided by the LEA.⁶ What makes these arrangements totally inequitable is that government guidelines to LEAs for the coming year ensure that LEAs retain no more than 7¹/₂ per cent in their central budgets for the provision of central services. This way the majority of

LEA schools will not only receive a less well-funded central LEA service but will in effect be subsidizing these 'opted out' schools; another case of robbing the poor to pay the rich. In terms of capital expenditure for repairs and new buildings, the story seems to be the same. Grant Maintained Schools have benefited to the tune of £326 per pupil compared to £83 per pupil spent in LEA maintained schools.⁷ This highlights the need for us as Socialists to use the legislation in a way that promotes the social purposes of education as we see it.

The creation of CTCs has to be seen, within this context, as a crude attempt to bring market forces to bear and, as such, epitomises the neo-liberal attempt to shift from collective provision and collectivism to individualism and personal greed. CTCs tie the very small number of pupils who attend them directly to the market. CTCs, like private schools, are exempted from implementing the National Curriculum.

There are many clauses within the 1988 Education Act that will need to be repealed if we are to be able to pursue the kind of policies outlined later in this chapter. The fact that this Act locates so much direct power in the hands of the Secretary of State can be a two-edged sword. It does provide an incoming Socialist minister with the structures to effect change since the Act itself is remarkably unrestrictive.

A Socialist Agenda

The myth of 'parental choice' has to be exposed since this notion applies to only a minority of (middle and upper class) parents who can pay for such choice. A future Labour Government should provide meaningful choice through a truly comprehensive system, not only within the compulsory age range of 5 to 16, but for pre-school and post-16 education too. Education for life should be the immediate aim and on-going objective.

The social purposes of education need to regain primacy. The dichotomous divide between education and training should not be maintained and we must reject the premise that education is about producing labour hierarchies for the unfettered market economy.

In arguing for a repeal of the 1988 Act, we include in that an explicit rejection of the National Curriculum and seek to replace it with a

curriculum that is underpinned by principles of equality *for all* and social justice. The curriculum has to be both enabling *and* empowering. We should therefore aim to redefine the curriculum content, away from its present form as a hierarchy of knowledge that assumes that learning occurs in a linear fashion. Its express purpose seems at present to be a mechanism for weeding out the vast majority and selecting the few who are chosen to proceed to the supposed cutting edge of new knowledge. We need to acknowledge that there is a difference between knowledge and skills required by all of us as 'literate citizens' and the different order of skills and in-depth knowledge required to pursue the study of a discipline to the frontiers. By this we mean that the knowledge and skills required for all citizens has to be of a much higher order and radically different in kind from the present; relevant to the needs of our global society in the next century. The development of 'collective intelligence' (Brundtland, 1987) that no longer relies on selecting the 'talented few' and labelling the rest as failures will enable pupils to flourish and avoid the present system of establishing a vast pool of 'trained incapacity'.⁸

We must argue for a change in thinking to take us beyond the 'welfare paternalism' and labourism of the post-war years and rather than merely advocating 'user involvement', we should propose a model of enabling 'self-advocacy.' In other words we must move away from thinking of the Welfare State as an inefficient centralized bureaucracy and move towards a model which not only *involves* the user but gives rights to and *empowers* that user. We should be concerned with more than merely having a voice in the provision of services which is then filtered, redefined and the final form determined by 'the professionals'. Self-advocacy is about our development as citizens, our understanding of civil rights and responsibilities and, more importantly, our ability to become active and articulate in the furtherance of these rights and responsibilities. It is about people making their own decisions about their own lives. To repossess the old socialist slogan hijacked but not implemented by the New Right - it is about power to the people.

One way of pursuing 'self-advocacy' is to extend the concept of the rights-based approach from benefit rights to welfare rights and social

service provision. This 'bottom-up' democratic participation can be combined with 'top-down' guarantees of basic rights. Central services in education should be enshrined in law but delivered locally at community, neighbourhood, group and individual levels. This must be subject to continuous review and accountability. The process would ensure the development of an education service that is genuinely democratic at the local level. There is a need to move away from a system of citizenship based merely on duties to one based on rights and concomitant duties.⁹

A system of education that aims to fulfil the social, political and economic objectives we wish to see cannot be provided on the cheap. However, we must avoid using the jargon of the market such as 'value for money' since our values cannot be conveniently price tagged like a can of beans. We need to think of a new method and language that forms part of a larger social audit. We must argue that money being targeted to the already privileged and transferring resources inequitably to benefit the few at the expense of the rest may on paper appear to drive unit costs down but is fundamentally unjust.

Many educationalists on the Left have argued that 'new technologies' in a 'Post-Fordist' economy can be used to benefit the 'collective intelligence' and be truly empowering. Though this argument can possibly be sustained when considering the developed economies of the West, they take no account of the way in which denying access to technology has been a potent weapon in the maintenance of capitalist hegemony. Technology has also been used as the determinant of locating people into the hierarchy of any particular society.

What is Equality?

We currently try to define equality principally by highlighting existing inequalities arising out of differences in class, 'race', gender, sexual orientation, disability and age. As Radical Left Educators we need also to state the political, economic and social equality we seek in terms of outcomes and access.

Bryan S. Turner has distinguished three forms of equality, corresponding to different forms of citizenship existing at different levels and informed by a different politics. (See figure 1.)

Figure 1

Equality	Citizenship	Level	Politics
opportunity	legal	person	liberalism
condition	social	society	reformism
outcome	economic	production	socialism

In this diagrammatic representation, liberalism is a revolutionary movement to liberate what Turner describes as ‘the person’ from the fetters of legal restraint under feudalism. It gave rise, he suggests, to the notion of careers open to talent.¹¹ What liberalism really represents, we should argue, is the legal and deliberate liberation of white, able-bodied, heterosexual males and an accompanying *limited* social mobility for them. Reformism, in its turn, attempted to change the conditions of competition in capitalism by the legislative management of social conditions. Turner gives the example of free school meals as an illustration of reformism. Finally socialism attempts to bring about equality of outcome by changing what Socialists see as the real basis of inequality, namely the ownership and control of the productive basis of society.¹² Modern-day Socialists stress that equality of outcome should be a reality for all citizens and not just white, able-bodied, heterosexual men. Socialism does not, of course, abandon the principles of legal and social citizenship, but these will need to be amended often drastically to enhance the position of citizens currently excluded and/or discriminated against. There is an urgent need to extend access to those citizens currently experiencing denial or restrictions.

While believing that equality of outcome can be achieved only by changing the mode of production, as Socialists we also work towards more equality within the context of capitalist society. This has the dual benefit of alleviating hardship here and now and increasing the consciousness necessary for achieving more fundamental change. Such consciousness entails a vision of a society where competitive values are replaced by co-operative ones, where drudgery is either eliminated or shared, where the control of society is genuinely rather than formally democratic and where the organising principle is from each according to her/his ability to each according to her/his needs. As Democratic Socialists we would totally distance ourselves from

Stalinist bureaucracy and lack of freedom and would embrace the concept of self-advocacy as outlined above. Self-advocacy is a powerful antidote to dictatorship and a vehicle for *advancing* freedom.¹³ To reiterate, as Radical Left Educators, we take the need for long-term fundamental change as given but we are also concerned with short-term reform. In reforming the system in favour of those it exploits and oppresses (a worthwhile aim in itself) we aim also to open up the system so that it becomes a dynamic forum for a cooperative and democratic learning experience for all. In such a forum where *all* ideas and concepts are subject to critical scrutiny, we believe that socialist values will win the day. We aim not at propaganda or indoctrination (in fact we believe that the present system amounts to that) but at the creation of critically reflexive pupils/students.¹⁴ In our last section, we list some of the aims which we believe Socialists should continue to struggle for at all levels, which should become part of educational discourse and development and which we would encourage a future government to adopt.¹⁵

A Socialist Education Policy

The Aims of Education

We believe that the existing political, economic and ideological arrangements of society are such as to reinforce inequalities, to stifle creative potential, and to develop the personality in competitive ways. We believe that educational institutions increasingly reflect this wider system. Access to advanced education is still disproportionately denied to young women, and to black and working-class students. The content and the hidden curriculum of education leaves the majority of students with a deep sense of the unimportance of their own lives and with no conviction that knowledge can, in any broad sense, be really useful.

We believe that education, in and out of educational institutions, should concern:

The development of people's creative potential.

The development of students' understanding of the natural world, of the society in which they live, and of the work processes of that society.

The development of the capacity to work with others in controlling society's collective life.

Organization

We should introduce a new Pre-School System for young children that combines the learning function of nursery classes (DES based and disproportionately used by the middle class) with the caring function of day centres (DHSS funded, heavily used by working class parents). Integrating care and education throughout, the service should be available from the early months of life - for parents who want or need it, with flexible hours and varied venues, including care centres, schools, playgroups, and child minders. Local authorities should be empowered to organize, set standards, help fund, equip and train for the service - using skills of local parents wherever possible.

The education system should be resourced so as to increase the educational opportunities for students who are disadvantaged, oppressed and under-represented in positions of power. Class size should be greatly reduced and staffing levels adequate to provide a wide range of teaching strategies, with support for special needs, ESL, curriculum development and implementation.

The present system of assessment introduced by the 1988 Education Reform Act should be abolished and exams should no longer serve as 'cut-off' points which restrict access to employment and further and higher education. At any time in their post-14 educational career, students should be able to accumulate credits for particular courses, which would build up to certificated qualification.

A unified system of fully comprehensive education should be created under local democratic control. The education of adults and school students should be integrated. All workers should have the right to educational sabbaticals and educational institutions should have the resources to provide for them.

The Curriculum

The curriculum should be made relevant to the majority of school students, should give an accurate picture of social reality and should be capable of engaging their interests.

Wherever appropriate, learning should be activity based and organized around student enquiry. The community should be used as an educational resource, and as material for critical investigation. The curriculum should encompass areas of knowledge such as philosophy, psychology, economics and sociology which are essential to understanding contemporary society.

The curriculum should be attentive to the real cultures of the people who live in Britain. It should not transmit the versions of the national culture promoted by the dominant class in society but should attempt to liberate students from oppressions. The culture which students bring to the school - including community languages - should be neither disregarded nor patronized and, *provided there are the resources* (not last of which must be substantial numbers of staff from black and other ethnic minority communities), culture should be at the centre of many aspects of the curriculum. At the same time, schools should aim to develop in all students the conceptual and linguistic advantages that the dominant group has long enjoyed.

Educational institutions should consciously organize to develop an internationalist, not an anglo-centric curriculum, and to challenge the racism, sexism, heterosexism and disablism which affect many students.

These measures would raise the levels of achievement of the majority of the school population and create the basis for a different attitude to learning. Whereas its basic outline would be the outcome of a national process of decision-making, every encouragement would be given to local initiatives to devise curricula and teaching methods that take up the general themes.

Democracy

Educational institutions should be centres of initiative, responsive to the communities in which they are placed. Democracy should be fundamental to their ethos and their functioning. We need measures to increase democracy and collective participation in the work of the

institutions and in the planning of education policy. These would include:

Democracy among teaching staff with curriculum and associated decisions made through collective discussion and not management dictation.

Meetings of all who work in educational institutions to discuss matters of common interest and to break down professional barriers.

The promotion of trade unionism, through opposition to privatization, the restoration of school teachers' negotiating rights and the establishment of agreements that safeguard conditions of service.

Secondary, FE and HE students would have the right to organize and be consulted, and would be represented on an institution's governing body.

Local democratic control of educational institutions. Decisions about educational planning, resources and the broad framework of curriculum policy would be taken by education authorities which had been broadened to include representatives of community groups, parents and trade unions. Governing bodies, which should comprise LEA, parent, teacher and student representatives, should oversee the implementation of this policy at local level.

Education after sixteen

Our aim should be progressively to extend the comprehensive principle upwards. To this end, local or regional authorities should be empowered to create learning networks in existing schools, further and higher education colleges, adult centres and workplaces, integrating them into a universal and unified tertiary provision (ending the split between FE and HE and the division between education and training). Each area should have its own network with all adults given rights to use it. There must be education and training allowances for 16 and 17 year olds, grants for unemployed and retired adults, and paid educational leave (PEL) for those at work - giving priority to those whom the education system has failed to serve in the past.

This requires a great expansion of the system and the range of venues where learning will take place, plus a dramatic increase in numbers and types of access courses - so that no one is denied the

first step on any academic or vocational route. It means ending most of the YTS and JTS and integrating only high-quality training with academic and vocational education - with a nationally reorganized 'building block' system of courses and credits (on the lines pioneered by the Open University). This will vastly increase the choice and flexibility of learning programmes available to adults - and reform the current 'jungle' of post-16 qualifications. In time it will end the hierarchy of learning which segregates post-16 provision into three tiers: the academic (highly restricted and over selective), the vocational (narrow courses starved of general educational content), and the low-quality mass schemes providing few recognized qualifications and little real skills training.

Increased funding would be reoriented to support courses, units, programmes and research projects - rather than institutions, while institutions themselves would diversify - to serve a larger range of students. All centres of learning would relate more closely to their own communities, including those with national and international intakes and reputations.

There should be reforms of course content, extending the concept of a broad and balanced education upwards from 16 to the adult years. The commercialization of learning - with its narrowing courses 'bent' to serve short-term business interests at the expense of many other fields of learning - should be restricted, while other types of learning, including the humanities and general education, should be encouraged to expand.

Throughout, the equality of the educational and training experience should be monitored - to eliminate discrimination on the grounds of wealth, class, age, ethnicity, religion, sexual orientation, gender, disability, and level of previous attainment - and programmes of positive support encouraged.

Popular appeal

A socialist policy has great appeal: not just because it will devote more resources to education but because it will also ensure their fairer distribution. It will remove the selective barriers that restrict real choice, giving everyone meaningful rights - and community support - to advance themselves personally through education and training.

Lastly, it will see that education develops away from a service giving priority to elites, small privileged groups, and short-term commercial interests - and renews itself as a community force designed to advance both individuals and society as a whole.

Notes

1. See Ken Jones, *Right Turn: The Conservative Revolution in Education*, London: Hutchinson Radius, 1989; and Clyde Chitty, *Towards a New Education System: the Victory of the New Right?* Lewes: Falmer Press, 1989.
2. Kenneth Baker, Speech to the Conservative Party Conference, 7 October 1987, London: Conservative Central Office.
3. In addition to 'opted out' schools and CTCs, there has been a rise in the private school population from 5.9 per cent of the total in 1980 to 7.3 per cent in 1989 and 7.4 per cent in 1990/91. However, as Hutton points out, that disguises the substantial growth in the privatized sixth-form population, estimated at nearly half in the South-west of England and at 39 per cent in London and the South-east. Although these figures are inflated by the exclusion of Further Education colleges, for which a regional breakdown is not readily available, as Hutton stresses, 'the message...remains stark'. Social apartheid is likely to intensify, he goes on, as the social composition of the university intake reflects the growing preponderance of qualified applicants from independent schools. Moreover, new capital investment per head in private schools is five times higher than in state schools. 'Not that anybody in the cabinet would give as much priority to this [inequity] as, say, fighting for a new world order in Kuwait,' he concludes, [since] they've chosen the inside track for them and theirs - and it's that right to choose that comes first'. (W. Hutton, 'Why our choice-based education system is developing into one of the world's most sophisticated forms of social apartheid', *The Guardian*, 14 January 1991).
4. *The Times Education Supplement* 15 March 1991.
5. Ibid.
6. Ibid.
7. Ibid.
8. Brundtland Report, *Our Common Future, World Commission on Environment and Development*, Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1987.
9. S. Croft, and P. Beresford, 'User-Involvement, Citizenship and Social Policy', and P. Alcock, 'Why Citizenship and Welfare Rights Offer New Hope for New Welfare in Britain' in *Critical Social Policy*, Issue 26, Autumn, 1989.
10. Turner, B.S. *Equality*, Chichester and London: Horwood Ellis Ltd and Tavistock, 1986, p.120.
11. Ibid.

12. Ibid.
13. Here is not the place to counter the arguments which are levelled against socialism both from positions of privilege or principle and in terms of feasibility. For such a discussion see J. Baker, *Arguing for Equality*, London: Verso, 1987.
14. Dave Hill, *What's Left in Teacher Education: Teacher Education, the Radical Left and Policy Proposals*, Hillcole Group Paper 6, London: the Tufnell Press, 1991; and Hill's chapter in this volume.
15. The following is based on a list which was drawn up by the Socialist Teachers Alliance and Caroline Benn. It formed part of an article which appeared in *Interlink*, No. 8, June 1988.