Why Marxist economics should be taught but probably won't be!

Peter Clarke and Andrew Mearman

An argument will be made for the teaching of Marxist economics. This will draw upon the intrinsic and instrumental aims of education, as well as other literature in education. A case is made that Marxist economics should be taught. This is based on Marxist arguments against the orthodoxy, namely that it serves capitalist interests; and also educational arguments and the perceived ability of Marxist economics to meet educational aims. It then moves on to discuss why it is unlikely that Marxist economics will be taught in this way.

Introduction[1]

The crisis in recruitment to economics degrees (perhaps reflecting a wider trend in social sciences, suffering collectively, relative to vocational subjects) in the 1990s led to a raft of literature on how to reverse this trend (Fettig, 1999; Helburn, 1997; Salemi & Siegfried, 1999; Becker, 1997; Walstad & Rebeck, 1999; Walstad & Allgood, 1999; Wirtz, 1998; Hartman, 1999 and Eschenbach, 1999; Earl, 2000). This need to reproduce economics and thus its practitioners has inflated the 'education of economics' literature beyond issues of teaching technique, textbook evaluation and learning styles, etc. However, the new focus and energy drew heavily on the existing literature: a primary assumption of the new drive to save economics provision was that students found the subject unattractive because of flawed teaching methods;

or at least that any problem could be corrected by better teaching (Becker, 1997; Laney, 1999). More recently though there have been several new developments in the 'education of economics' literature. Heterodox economists have taken up similar causes to their orthodox opponents, though they have used different arguments (Cohn, 2001; Earl, 2000). They have argued that the problem with economics is its content and (although not against innovations in teaching) that the process of teaching is secondary (Rochon, 2001). Whereas orthodox economists focused on process, not (orthodox) content, heterodox economists focus on (orthodox) theoretical content that they oppose. They argue that economics can be more attractive if its subject matter improves. Some heterodox economists have also expressed concern that economics is being dominated by neo-classical economics. They are also concerned about their own prospects and the possibility for the future development of heterodox thought (Lee and Harley, 1999; Dow, 2000). Also, highly significantly, a movement has grown up (from student ranks) in France attacking the content of courses (see Galbraith, 2001).[2]

The current debate has, therefore, centred on either the content or process of education, but without considering the aims. Helburn (1997) has suggested that clearly both content and process are necessary and interconnected. Whilst this is undoubtedly true, it is argued here that any discussion of content or process should be preceded by a discussion of the aims of education. It is necessary to understand exactly what the educator is attempting to achieve before the means of achieving it can be discussed. It seems clear, therefore, that a discussion regarding the teaching—or not teaching—of orthodox economics must involve a discussion of the aims of education. However, a consideration of the aims of education is largely absent from the existing literature. This paper aims to address that absence.

As the authors are economists, the aims of education are placed within the context of the teaching of Economics. It does seem likely that heterodox economists will disagree more on the means than on the aims, but we do however need to be clear about these aims, for there will not be complete agreement. Common to those positions, though, any discussion of the aims of education would probably be either naïve or utopian without a consideration of the wider social context, as education has always had this wider social role. Those who wish to teach heterodox economics must be aware of this social context or they will inevitably fail.

Such discussions have a long history, and Castle points out that 'Plato would certainly remind us that it is impossible to devise the right means if we are not clear what our aim is to be' (1961: 203-4). Bertrand Russell (1992: 413) agrees: 'Before considering how to educate, it is well to be clear as to the sort of result which we wish to achieve.' Mager writes: 'Instructors simply function in a fog of their own making unless they know what they want their students to accomplish as a result of their instruction' (cited in Curzon, 1990: 131). This is to suggest that these considerations are a prerequisite of any discussion on process or content, for as Peter's comments, education itself '… picks out no particular activity or process. Rather it lays down criteria to which activities or processes must conform' (1970: 25).

Thus, the paper proceeds as follows. In the first section, the aims of education are considered. It is argued that the aims can be understood via a continuum, ranging from intrinsic to instrumental; and these terms are explained. The second section examines the educational aims of orthodox economics. The third section utilises the arguments of the first to make a case for the teaching (i.e., the introduction or extension) of Marxist economics in Economics programmes. It is argued that Marxist economics can achieve several educational aims as least as well as can the orthodoxy; in many cases, it might achieve more. The final section argues, however, that in spite of its educational benefits, Marxist economics is unlikely to be taught widely and/or in context because of several (mainly institutional) factors, including the way in which teaching in the UK is funded under the new Quality Assurance Audit.

Aims of education

To Left/radical/heterodox scholars, of course, education has always been of central concern. It has also always been a politically contested subject, and the introduction of a national curriculum by the last Tory Government can be seen as a clear attempt to control the content of education. The role and importance of this, however, is no longer a part of the mainstream political debate. It must be of great concern to those of the Left to see the Right, yet again, controlling the agenda. Surely for those who wish to achieve a fairer society, hope for the future must lie in education and the communication of ideas.

Yet history suggests that the Right has always succeeded in controlling the agenda of the education debate. Historians generally agree on the purpose of the introduction of universal primary education. For Hobsbawm, they:

> …are pretty well united in holding that, for most of nineteenth-century Europe, for the authorities and institutions fostering it, the actual purpose of universal primary education was not economic...It was, in the first place, ideological and political: to instil religion, morality and obedience among the poor, to teach them to accept the existing society contentedly and to bring their children up to do likewise, to turn Auvergnat peasants into good republican Frenchmen and Calabrian peasants into Italians (1997: 116).

Stone (1969: 91) makes the same point, with an explicit reference to England.[3] Gellner (1999) sees this homogenisation of society as the role of education. Bowles and Gintis' (1976) seminal work takes a more radical view. For them schooling is concerned with reproducing society as it is, complete with the existing inequalities: 'Education reproduces inequality by justifying privilege and attributing poverty to personal failure' (1976: 114). Zinn (1997: 193) argues that universities in the USA were designed to produce 'those who would be paid to keep the system going, to be loyal buffers against trouble' and therefore to control society and neutralise discontent.

The extent to which this is true today is likely to be more keenly debated, but there are many (not amongst the orthodox) who believe that very little has changed. Hobsbawm again:

> Why…do all regimes make their young study some history in school? Not to understand their society and how it changes, but to approve of it, to be proud of it, to be or become good citizens of the USA or Spain or Honduras or Iraq (1997: 35).

This attitude has now arguably further penetrated Higher Education (HE) with the introduction of 'benchmarking'. As discussed below, this may well marginalise further the teaching of heterodox economics. However it does raise questions as to the purpose of education. Is the purpose of education to communicate to today's young an established body of knowledge or is it to promote understanding, and to discover new knowledge to reconstruct the world? Yet the current debate does not centre on the purpose.

The aims of education, for the purposes of discussion, can be split into two broad categories, that is intrinsic and instrumental. These are examined next. Peters argues that the split is justified simply as the two concepts are in current use, but also that 'people are only too prone to view education in an instrumental way' (in Dearden, Hirst and Peters, 1972: 14). The split then, does take us 'straight into the heart of live ethical discussion, which is concerned with the *content* of what is valuable' (14, emphasis in original). It should be obvious from the definitions below that, under capitalism, education *does* tend to operate instrumentally, but the split pre-dates capitalism and is discussed by the Ancient Greek philosophers.[4] The two categories can then, be seen as philosophical polar extremes with a whole spectrum in between.

Intrinsic versus instrumental aims

a) Intrinsic education

This type of education is also referred to as liberal education in the literature, but for Bridges the central feature of it is 'to equip people to make their own free, autonomous choices about the life they will lead' (Bridges, 1992: 92). For Bridges this implies:

> · an ability to treat critically and of course also informedly ideas and beliefs put forward by other people, …
> · an awareness of the wider alternatives … available upon which one may exercise choice …
> · a level of personal independence or autonomy which gives one the will, courage of confidence to act on one's own beliefs. (Bridges, 1992: 92)

These three can be classified more succinctly as critical (evaluative) and analytical thinking; comparative thinking; and intellectual open-mindedness or emancipation. These are clearly intellectual categories; aimed at the achievement of intellectual capacities. They all generally aim at developing the process of thinking within the individual. In modern parlance, students are encouraged to 'learn how to learn'. This all has potentially radical effects, since the aim of openness and intellectual emancipation can lead to the development of critical world views, which in turn might lead to transformative action. However, there is no necessity for this. In terms of the influential work of Bloom, *et al* (1964: 10), intrinsic aims are relatively 'complex'.

This category of aims might be criticised for several reasons. For instance, the emphasis on intellectual and not practical capacities might be regarded as elitist. Also, the analysis might be considered too psychologistic, or alternatively, individualist. Nevertheless, abstracting from this, intrinsic aims have two important implications: first, that curricular content is only relevant in achieving outcomes that are (thought) processual—and content should be assessed according to its ability to achieve these outcomes; and second, 'facts' and 'knowledge' are similarly de-emphasised.

b) Instrumentalist education

By contrast, instrumental education has more concrete, less complex, specific aims. Instrumental education is inherently practical and pragmatic, aimed at usefulness and application. Whilst this set of aims is less complex it is more varied than the intrinsic aims. In the literature it is possible to identify several instrumental aims of economics education. Consistent with a radical worldview, instrumental education can be seen to aim at the inculcation of specific 'facts' in order to effect a specific worldview. This might be called socialisation or even indoctrination. This is usually associated with a form of conservatism (even though, as under Thatcherism, this might take on a liberal, or right-radical guise). Clearly the principal aim here is to reproduce the existing social system as it is. A major element of this is the aim of creating consumerist, socialised citizens susceptible to advertising and mainstream news management.

Combined with that is the creation of a useful and productive—but also compliant and pliable—workforce. This might be an interpretation of the goal of so many HE institutions, and successive governments, to increase 'employability'. For example, The Training Agency outlines objectives for such education, which include:

> · secure curriculum development and change so as to enhance personal effectiveness and achievement at work;
> · offer students the opportunity to develop and apply skills including those of communication, teamwork, leadership, decision-making, problem solving, task management and risk taking;
> · develop students' initiative.
> (Training Agency, 1989, cited by Bridges, 1992: 93)

Quite clear here is the instrumental aim of 'employability', or more particularly, of usefulness to employers and to production. Conversely, little attention is paid to the intrinsic aims of education discussed above. Of course, some economists who are critical of the existing order, but do not argue for its complete transformation (including many heterodox economists), also aim for 'employability', because their students need to be given a chance in an imperfect system. This partly reflects, perhaps, their concern over unemployment, poverty and inequality. However, in turn, the goal of 'employability'—and its acceptance by students and by wider society—leads students to seek and demand specific learning, skills and training. An importance is placed on the accrual of specific 'facts' and 'knowledge'. However, this can lead to the students knowing 'how to' or 'what' but not necessarily 'why?' or 'is it?' This impairs their ability to understand and to think independently and critically. Students become adept at solving problems but do not ask whether the problem is worth solving. The instrumental aims of education can obstruct the intrinsic aims.

A clear example of instrumental education is given by Norman Tebbit's argument that education should be geared to the market place (Bailey, 1992: 99). This has two principal contemporary manifestations: first, that education should be geared to the wider market place, i.e., the needs of (mainly) domestic employers; and second, that the education process itself should be marketised. On the second, Harvie (2000) offers powerful insights on the impact of such a movement on the organisation of production within academic departments. Furthermore, the increasing treatment of students as 'customers', and the notion that educational provision should be 'demand-led' are evidence of this marketisation. This in turn means two things: one, popular subjects receive more resources; and two, students' demands impact greatly on course curricula.[5] The first of these effects means that academics are forced to act like capital, i.e., to move into popular areas but out of their established areas of expertise. This clearly has educational ramifications, most of which one would expect to be negative.

Instrumental aims centred on employment and marketisation can be identified here easily; but for Bailey, instrumentalist education goes further:

> The lines of pressure have been varied, but the general direction has been towards casting education, or at least schooling, in an instrumental mould which will produce citizens not only capable of filling the roles of producers and consumers in a free-market society, but happily disposed to approve of such a society and their roles within it. (Bailey, 1992: 99)

The recent announcement of the benchmarks for the teaching of economics in HE may lead one to conclude that this has now spread beyond 'schooling'. This clearly reflects the instrumental aim of socialisation.

Some issues should be cleared up regarding these classifications. So far the intrinsic and educational aims of education have been presented as a dual, but the relationship may in fact be more intricate than that (Clarke & Mearman, 2000; Bailey, 1992; Bridges, 1992). Perhaps a distinction can be drawn between aims and outcomes. Clearly, if criticism is the key to intrinsic education, a level of knowledge is first required before that knowledge can be effectively criticised. Therefore it is not possible to educate intrinsically without the student gaining instrumental knowledge. If this knowledge was seen as an outcome of the educational process rather than an end in itself, the dual is maintained. However, it is possible to argue that intrinsic and instrumental aims can be achieved simultaneously. For example, a plumbing student can learn to think critically about the laws of physics, learn the laws themselves and then apply them to the problem of unblocking any drain of any type. Thus aims can embrace both categories. It is important to note though, that whilst intrinsic aims cannot be achieved without instrumental outcomes, this does not operate in reverse. It is possible to achieve instrumental aims without any intrinsic outcomes.

This affects the notion of 'training' as contrasted to 'education'. To some who hold an intrinsic view of education, instrumental education is nothing more than training. For some, moreover, economics is nothing more than training and is not concerned with education. For example, Peters suggests that 'we do not naturally talk of educating men as rulers, soldiers, *or economists*; we talk of training them' (1970: 29, emphasis added). His distinction between the two is:

> A man with a 'trained mind' is one who can tackle particular problems that are put to him in a rigorous and competent manner. An 'educated mind' suggests much more awareness of the different facets and dimensions of such problems. (Peters, 1970: 32)

However, the nature of the distinction between intrinsic and instrumental becomes crucial here. There is no suggestion that there is no educational value in an instrumental approach: training might 'also have educational value' (Peters, 1970: 30). In this case, though, if the goal of economics education is mainly instrumental, the choice may well become to train in orthodox or non-orthodox methods. If this is currently the case in economics education, it is not explicitly acknowledged. Perhaps if it were, the argument could be moved forward. If, however, the aim of economics education is intellectual development, then a critical approach is necessary.

Even if the categories are not mutually exclusive, however, it is clear that, in educational and curricular terms, instrumental education manifests somewhat differently to intrinsic education. For, with instrumental aims, the focus is on the content that is to be taught, not on the process of thought that occurs within the student. 'Process' is important, but only in terms of the process of teaching. As noted above, this has been the traditional response of orthodox economists to the crisis in the learning of economics: it is paramount that content is absorbed; the 'crisis' is that it is not. Thus, a literature has mushroomed on the retention rates of students: the retention of student numbers and the students' retention of orthodox material. A considerable literature has followed on how deficiencies in both areas are to be corrected. It concludes that teaching process must be at fault and needs to be changed, so as to achieve content more clearly. Additionally, leading commentators argue that, in order to attract more students, economics curricula should be simplified; for instance, graphical methods should be removed (Siegfried, *et al*, 2001). Clearly this has very little to do with intrinsic education.

Before it is assumed, however, that all orthodox economists are instrumentalists and that all heterodox economists are not, it should be said that in fact many heterodox economists share many of the orthodox aims. Their concern is also chiefly content, although their argument is that the 'wrong' content is being absorbed and that heterodox content is more appropriate. This is so, they argue, because heterodox economics is more capable than orthodox economics of providing useful, realistic explanations and 'true' knowledge. However, such arguments do not address the intrinsic education of students. Both sides of the debate also share the goal of reproducing economics. Both sides are concerned that economics is not popular and is viewed as increasingly irrelevant.

The other major issue arising from the distinction of the categories is the location of the apparent dividing line between the two. For instance, socialisation thus far has been assumed to be negative. However, it might be argued that socialisation is a necessary and desirable consequence of education and that an educated person should be socialised (Piaget, 1955). It might also be argued that an educated person necessarily possesses certain practical knowledge that enables their fuller participation in life. It is clearly necessary that students possess facts if they are to think critically, for it is necessary that they have knowledge in order to criticise untruths masquerading as facts. Knowledge of facts, events, or opinions is a necessary component of being critical. An obvious example of how that is so is that for students to be critical of a theory or event, they have to know the theory or event. Therefore, specific knowledge increases prior to the development of critical thinking capacity. Therefore, to place 'knowledge of facts' on one side of a fault line and 'critical thinking' on the other is misleading: intrinsic and instrumental aims can be achieved simultaneously. Moreover, critical thinking is not demonstrated by the mere knowledge of a criticism—although this will play a part—but is a cognitive process.

Clearly, therefore, there is indeed no strict fault line between the two categories. Moreover, any nominal division is mutable. Specifically, the division is contestable and subject to power relations: for instance, at which point does socialisation become indoctrination, and how is the socialisation conducted; what are the criteria for socialisation? Also, it is contentious, whether or not intrinsic and instrumental aims are afforded equal status. This paper argues that in fact, Economics education prioritises instrumental aims, of various types, at the expense of intrinsic aims; and that the current literature ignores intrinsic aims almost completely. This certainly represents a shift in educational policy/emphasis (see Maurice[6], 1855 [1968]; Peters, 1970).

Orthodox economics and the aims of education

Some of the material above suggests that orthodox economics has instrumental aspects. In fact, it can be argued that orthodox economics is, indeed, *inherently indoctrinary*. Thus, its teaching cannot achieve intrinsic educational aims. For example, Galbraith is of no doubt of the purpose of the orthodoxy:

> It is the nature of privileged position that it develops its own political justification and often the economic and social doctrine that serves it best. No one likes to believe that his or her personal well-being is in conflict with the greater public need. To invent a plausible or, if necessary, a moderately implausible ideology in defence of self-interest is thus a natural course (Galbraith, 1996: 5).

Bailey (1992: 102) argues that instrumental educational aims, or what he refers to as *enterprise education*, are a part of this justification:

> A modern liberal education would certainly, therefore, include some study of a free-market economy. However, alternative systems and alternative motivations to those of profit and selling would need to be understood as well. Also to be understood, as apparently inescapable aspects of a free-market economy, would be those frictional elements like unemployment, recessions, failure and bankruptcies of enterprises, the consequences of encouragement to borrow, gross inequalities of wealth and power—and so on. These are all undeniable parts of the free-market picture; to ignore them is grossly indoctrinatory. I remain to be convinced that enterprise education gives any attention to this negative side of free enterprise society... Enterprise education does not seem unbiased in what it tries to get pupils to understand (Bailey, 1992: 102).

For Bailey, then, orthodox economics education is about indoctrination. Indeed, this is implicit in the (possibly subconscious) practice of many orthodox economists, who test students' 'understanding' by their ability to produce orthodox answers to open economic questions (see Walstad & Rebeck, 1999). This also applies to those who attempt to achieve attitude adjustment by teaching 'facts' or 'truth' about contemporary issues such as free trade and the WTO (see van Scyoc and Robson, 2001). If this is the instrumental aim, then it may have some success in achieving that aim. However, this is not explicitly recognised. Instead it is presented as a 'truth' that is unquestionable. This is clearly contrary to the achievement of intrinsic educational aims.

It seems then, that orthodox economics, as it is currently taught in many of our educational establishments, is dominated by instrumental educational aims. The only way in which it could achieve intrinsic aims is if it were taught critically.

Marxist economics and the aims of education

a) Why Marxist economics should be taught

First, it should be acknowledged that Marxist economics *is* widely taught in UK (and elsewhere) universities at some point in the Economics programme. This might be a dedicated unit on Marxist economics (more common in, say, US universities) or more likely, as part of a course on the History of Economic Thought. Experience suggests that it is unusual to find Marxist units or even Marxist content in core Economics units. Moreover, where Marxist economics is taught, it tends to be treated unfavourably, with disproportionate attention given to its alleged crux, the Transformation Problem.[7] However, either too much attention is paid to this issue (cf. Schumpeter, 1942: 23; 1954: 650-1; Robinson, 1964: 50) or relevant recent work is ignored which either claims to solve or reformulate that 'problem' (see Kliman, 2001). Or, as in many orthodox treatments of the History of Thought (see Emmett, 1998; Knight, 1956), Marx's work is regarded as an error that has been corrected by subsequent theory (e.g. Marx's value theory). So, having Marxist economics 'taught' under our definition means specifically that it is treated (critically, fallibilistically) in detail with no *presumption* of incorrectness. This assumes, of course, that there are sound educational reasons for the teaching of Marxist economics.

Clarke and Mearman (2000) argue that in order to make a case for teaching heterodoxy, heterodox economists need to make several types of argument. Essentially, heterodox economists need to show that heterodoxy can achieve educational aims, either intrinsic and/or instrumental, and that it can achieve them better than orthodoxy. This implies showing that orthodoxy somehow fails to achieve educational aims. The previous section makes this type of argument. Specifically, heterodoxy must show that it can achieve the intrinsic aims of generating intellectual capacities (or an intellectual transformation) in students. Second, it might show that its instrumental aims are superior according to some criteria. Indeed, the assumption from which this paper proceeds is that at present there is a strong imbalance in favour of instrumental aims.

Can Marxism achieve intrinsic educational aims? In terms of critical thinking, undoubtedly it can. Marxism is perhaps unique in available economic paradigms in having an inherent criticality. Marx's work is often portrayed wrongly as merely a critique of prevailing economics. Of course, *Capital* in particular is a triple critique: of contemporary economics (a sympathetic critique of classical political economy being the main element), of capitalism itself, and of the connection between the two. The latter is exemplified in Marx's attacks on vulgar economy (1967; see particularly, 817-18). Several authors, principally Bhaskar (1979, 1986) and Edgley (1976), have systematised this type of work as explanatory critique, which has potentially emancipatory effects. Significantly, such explanatory critique can be applied to orthodoxy itself, in an argument that it tends to stifle criticism and alternative views, thereby limiting intellectual emancipation and therefore the achievement of intrinsic educational aims. Also, Marxism has shown a capacity for self-criticism, which although not always constructive (and often, for Left activists, leading to dismay)[8], is essential in terms of achieving intrinsic aims. Of course, if there is a temptation to teach orthodoxy critically and Marxism much less critically, this should be avoided. This is despite Marxism's inherent criticality. This would merely replace neo-classical economics with Marxism as the insurmountable dominant paradigm. This conflicts explicitly with the aim of intellectual emancipation. This argument is supported by the example of Stalinism, which proves that not all that passes for Marxism is self-critical, and that indeed some versions of it are absurdly doctrinaire and closed. Under Stalinism, Marxism was used explicitly for ideological, instrumental purposes.

In terms of analytical thinking, again this can be achieved by teaching Marxist Economics. Marxism uses theories and models to varying degrees. In many of its variants it uses mathematical modelling, graphical analysis, etc. (for a range of examples, see Roemer, 1981; Okishio, 1990; Shaikh, 1990). It utilises various types of logic (although cf. e.g. Moseley, 1993) rather than merely deduction in the orthodox economic case. Principally, of course, it uses dialectical logic. Relatedly, Marx developed a materialism (of some variant), which might also be considered a realism (Bhaskar, 1991). Thus, in fact, Marxism offers a (set of) philosophical alternative(s) to the orthodoxy. Most significantly, perhaps, Marxism is an integrated approach, i.e., it incorporates history, social studies, spatial analysis, etc. into a philosophical framework. And it is a comprehensive programme, with implications for philosophy but also methodology, theory, policy and practice. Thus the student learns to think at different levels of abstraction and in different ways.

Also, drawing on Bloom, *et al* (1964: 57) we can see that if, relative to orthodoxy, Marxism is deemed more relevant and realistic, it might be more engaging and thus more able to affect the cognitive domain (thought and knowledge), which in turn can lead to developments in the affective domain (attitudes and values). The diversity within Marxism and the possible consequent confusion in students' minds, however, could potentially be a disengaging feature. However, this is an issue with any so-called 'parallel perspectives' (Clarke & Mearman, 2000) approach and is not unique to Marxism. Also, inevitably tutors must overcome the negative prejudice generated by students' own received experience of so-called Marxist regimes. However, by rejecting the false fact/value distinction and hence the positive/normative distinction, Marxist economics can deal directly and openly with political aspects. This might allow critical thinking and also engagement, as perceived relevance would most likely increase.

In terms of instrumental aims, if Marxism can create engagement, provide policy proposals, seem highly relevant, inspire debate and argument, and link to other disciplines, whilst not using methods that seem to exist for their own sakes, or assumptions that are deemed irrelevant (such as in the approach of fictionalising instrumentalism, Friedman, 1953) then it could well be extremely attractive to students, thereby achieving the goal of reproducing economics. The statements of the Post-Autistic Economics movement suggest this (more generally) to be the case. As noted above, this goal of preserving economics appears to be one shared by all economists, although clearly there are divergent visions of the form of economics to be preserved. Although it is not an aim of Marxist economists, it might be the case that teaching Marxist economics can even lead to the aims of producing a work force, albeit possibly a more critical, less pliable one. An unintended consequence of teaching Marxist economics might be that students become more creative, better problem-solvers, which can raise their productivity. These two effects might have the unexpected consequence that capitalism is aided in its own reproduction.

To recap, Clarke & Mearman (2000) required that any argument for the inclusion of heterodox material must show that it achieves educational aims better than orthodoxy. It follows from the above arguments that this might be the case with Marxism.

It can be seen then, that there are no fundamental educational grounds for the marginalisation of Marxist Economics in the curriculum. It can achieve educational aims, and may even do so better than the orthodoxy. It is inherently critical: its triple critique automatically forces students to think critically, either to attack *with* it, or to *attack it* in order to defend the *status quo*. Orthodox theory has elements of this, but is very selective, in attacking Unions, certain market failures, government policies, etc. It *requires* more of a critical approach in its *delivery*, by teachers, than Marxist economics requires. Thus it is argued that Marxist economics should be taught, either as the main paradigm in an Economics programme, or as part of a 'parallel perspectives' approach.[9]

b) Why it probably won't be taught

The analysis above argues that Marxist economics can achieve educational aims, probably better than can orthodox economics. This section discusses a number of reasons why, despite this, Marxist economics probably will not be taught openly and in context. First, the current nature of education is problematic. For, if the purpose of education is indoctrination, and if neo-classical economics is the organ of that indoctrination—as Marx claimed with respect to vulgar economy—then the current orthodoxy will resist the use of Marxist economics for the purpose of achieving educational aims. After all, the aims of neo-classical economics can be seen as instrumental anyway. Because orthodox economists believe their theories to be true, or at worst, least wrong, it is unlikely that they would sacrifice their beliefs for educational aims, or for the sake of the reproduction of Economics. There are other sociological and institutional considerations, like internal labour market factors, that would mitigate any possible movement. For example, a socio-psychological observation is that economics teachers tend to perceive themselves as economists first and teachers second. Perhaps economics teachers need to try to separate the teacher function within them from the economist-politician function. As economists they can be expected to favour one school of thought over another, but the danger is that this overly influences their educational aims. Or, at least, if they recognise that they are unable to make this separation automatically, they should seek to achieve the separation via deliberate teaching strategies.

Perhaps the most serious barriers to the teaching of Marxist economics however, are governmental structures; in particular, funding criteria. Lee & Harley (1999) argue, for instance, that the design and criteria of the UK Research Assessment Exercise (RAE) are likely to lead to a further marginalisation of heterodox views. The mechanism is simple: fund universities according to research quality, rate that quality by publications, and rate publications by journal. Given that the profession determines the choice of 'quality' journals, the composition of the profession is crucial. Lee & Harley argue that this will most likely lead to a retrenchment of orthodoxy. Clearly, the possibility arises that the UK is headed further towards the US situation of publication being dominated by certain economics departments (see Heilbroner & Milberg, 1995: 100) that are inevitably orthodox. There is probably insufficient empirical evidence to assess this claim at present (although the changing composition of Economics teaching at Cambridge University is one confirming indicator), but if the projection is realised, it is unlikely that government research funding will flow to departments with significant heterodox presence. The upshot therefore will tend to be a reduced recruitment of heterodox economists.

The Benchmarking Statement on Economics (hereafter BSE) issued recently (QAAHE, 2000) establishes guidelines for QAA assessments of economics programmes in UK universities. Space prevents a warranted, detailed treatment of this important document, but some salient points can be noted. Clearly, obvious orthodox agenda are presented, for instance a commitment to scarcity (section 1.1), opportunity cost (section 4.4), equilibrium (4.4), and marginalism (4.4). Also sought is the economic imperialist application of economics to other disciplines; and also the instrumental aim of the provision of policy recommendations (section 1.3) and increasing employability (section 1.2). However, the relative pluralism of the BSE panel is reflected in the guideline that students should be able to use 'quantitative and qualitative data', to reason 'both deductively and inductively' (section 1.3), to 'appreciate the existence of different [not model-based] methodological approaches' (section 3.1) and to recognise 'the differing methods of analysis that have been and are used by economists' (section 3.3). In terms of the aims of education discussed above, the aims of Economics as outlined in section 2.1 of the BSE, are a combination of intrinsic and instrumental aims.[10] Respectively, section 2.1 aims to 'stimulate students intellectually', and to 'provide students with analytical skills';[11] and on the other hand, to provide 'training in the principles of economics', 'a range of transferable skills', a 'knowledge and skill base', 'a firm foundation of knowledge about the workings of the workings of the economy' and the 'constructive use of that knowledge in a range of settings.' However, the aims as formulated lack any systematic framework and would benefit from analysis according to the aims outlined above.

It is clearly difficult to predict what are the likely implications of the BSE for economics. One might read the BSE as either an orthodox charter, supporting as it does basic orthodox concepts, or as calling for a radical change in the official methodology of orthodox economics, such are the foreign (to orthodoxy) nature of some of the basic principles of the document, such as plurality. However, even if we applaud the BSE for its attempt to reflect the range of economic perspectives, it does not, it is argued, hold out hope for the teaching of heterodox economics, especially Marxism. For, even if the document is viewed optimistically, as it might be, as promoting tolerance of various perspectives, the document's status in affecting economic departments is arguably weak. For example, if the BSE were the sole document establishing criteria for the QAA assessments, and/or if certain clauses, such as the need to recognise plurality, were written somewhat in stone, it might have power and create institutional incentives to teach heterodoxy. However, the BSE is merely 'an important external source of reference' (preamble); it provides 'general guidance for articulating the learning outcomes associated with the programme but [is] not a specification of a detailed curriculum in the subject.' This can be interpreted as promoting tolerance, but in fact, it is argued, it will most likely have the opposite effect. As there is no requirement for tolerance or pluralism, there is no mechanism by which to encourage departments to be more heterodox. Moreover, a department, for example, that eschews (as far as is possible) mathematical modelling and promotes pluralism can be attacked not for what it does, but rather for what it *does not* do. This is particularly likely if the assessors are promoters of mathematical modelling, which, given the current composition of UK economists and the dominance of the neo-classical paradigm, is probable. Indeed, this is the crucial point: the BSE is to be used 'in conjunction with…the institution's own internal evaluation documentation.' This of course, will be affected by the composition of the department.

Moreover, section 3.2 states crucially that, 'It is neither the function nor the objective of this [BSE] to prescribe what these forms of analysis might be; this is a matter for institutional choice and decision.' The first clause leaves matters completely open; the second clause is the killer, as it is where the impact of the RAE will be felt. The combination of the BSE, which is potentially benign, and the RAE, which is unavoidably polarising (and ghettoising) is likely to mean that the openness of the BSE is exploited by (increasingly) orthodox departments who can then use this document to justify their exclusionary policies. Indeed, wherever the BSE refers to specific institutional arrangements and effectively defers to them in curriculum design, the RAE becomes relevant. Hence heterodoxy can suffer greatly, not directly at the hands of this document, but because of who will likely have it in their hands. In effect, a policy of positive discrimination needs to be built into the BSE.

However, Harvie (2000: 121) argues that a 'research-bourgeois revolution' is occurring in the HE sector. He notes certain trends in that sector that evidence this. For instance, he focuses on an increasing division of educational labour, and on the emergence of research capitalists. Both are linked to the invasion of Higher Education by neo-liberalism. Clearly this tendency towards the capitalisation of the sector reflects wider changes in the socio-economy, such as moves, in the name of efficiency, towards the privatisation of essential public services. It is clear that the imposition of market forces on education might be connected causally to these changes in the organisation of its production. It should perhaps be noted that orthodox economics is being hoisted by its own petard: the free market ideals it pedals are making the subject of economics endangered. This is supremely ironic. The result is that orthodox economists are arguing over how to 'repackage' their 'product', so that is can 'compete' for more 'customers' in the educational 'market'. Proposals now abound for refinements—mainly cuts—in the content of Economics syllabuses (Siegfried, et al, 2001; Buckles, 2001). These changes clearly have very little to do with educational considerations and everything to do with the reproduction of (orthodox) economics.

Several factors inherent to contemporary economics also impact adversely on the prospects for teaching Marxism. The effects of trends identified by Harvie (2000) and of less formal predecessors to the RAE can be argued to be present already in the composition of economics departments. Arguably there already is a shortage of economists trained adequately to teach Marxist economics in the way proposed here. The likely consequence of this is that the current situation—that either Marxism is not taught or is taught, but along orthodox lines—will be exacerbated. As already noted, the approach of current orthodoxy to the history of economic thought is such that it discourages pluralism and tends to bring rival theories into disrepute. Instead, a rationalisation of current orthodoxy is presented. A shortage of constructive scholars of Marxism would also render unmanageable proposals for Marxism to be taught as one of several 'parallel perspectives'. Such an approach is adopted in other subjects, such as International Relations and Sociology. But to provide an integrated approach, the requisite balance and sufficient comparative analysis, requires coordination at the level of the degree programme.

However, several factors suggest that such a 'parallel perspectives' approach would be unlikely. The current institutional structures of economics education and the shortage of competent scholars are principal. Additionally, the orthodoxy holds a belief in a monolithic 'science' of economics, which is taken to disallow plurality. Moreover, for isolated scholars wishing to teach individual units of Marxism (as is common in US universities) there is the problem that their students generally have been schooled in orthodoxy. This creates a problem of path dependence: students have struggled to 'think' in orthodox ways and are then asked to forget this for one course. Inevitably the richness of the Marxist analysis is lost. Yet heterodox authors tend to focus their attention on teaching higher-level undergraduate (or higher) courses, teaching heterodoxy as merely critique of the orthodoxy.

More serious than the path dependence problem is that it merely compounds the problems of the socialisation process. Generally, economics is not taught at primary school, yet anybody teaching economics is not presented with the proverbial 'blank page'. Students will invariably have a whole host of preconditioned ideas, including perceptions of 'communist' or 'socialist' regimes, or of 'inefficient' public sector provision. These images of course arrive via the news media. All of this makes the job of the constructive teacher of Marxism harder, although not impossible. However, Hoyt (2001) proposes that indeed, economics should be taught at US primary schools, via 'Junior Achievement' schemes, whereby university students go into the school system. Hoyt proposes that students in fact go into kindergarten classes and teach opportunity cost. This is deemed beneficial to the students; but more so for the children, who can understand economic concepts better. The rationale for this is to increase the economic understanding of both parties, the ultimate goal being the long-term reproduction of economics as a subject. Clearly there is an ideological aspect to this, intended or not. This reflects, we would suggest, the wider political and educational context, which militates against the constructive and balanced teaching of Marxism, in spite of its obvious educational potential.

It seems that educational policy (and in our view, the problem of educational policy) today is driven by the idea that the value of education lies in its instrumental benefits. So, a well-educated workforce will, it is supposed, increase productivity in the work place, and so benefit all. As argued at the beginning of the paper however, this should not be surprising. Traditionally, the Right has set the educational agenda. As noted above, the introduction of education at various levels is thought by historians to serve the purpose of ruling groups. More widely, and reflecting the discussion above, education and educational policy have historically reflected a narrow set of instrumental aims. It has been argued that this situation persists and that economists, largely but not exclusively orthodox, are complicit in this, through the central concerns a) that students retain specific pieces of knowledge and b) that economics as a subject is reproduced, requiring its more effective 'marketing'.

The alternative is that education be directed towards a non-instrumental aims, or at least, that there is a better balance between the two. Clearly, heterodox ideas have a major role to play in a non-instrumental economics education. However, there is also a role for the orthodox, as it can be used to achieve specific intrinsic aims. The question then becomes one of balance, for, as Bailey again comments:

> Liberal education is a combination of a certain kind of curriculum, certain methods and attitudes of teaching, and certain kinds of intentions on the part of the providers and teachers. (Bailey, 1992: 103)

Conclusions

There are strong reasons for teaching Marxism as it can clearly achieve intrinsic educational aims. In fact, it has been argued that it can do this more readily than the orthodoxy. For Peters (1970: 27), for example, this is the point of education. Marxism, then, should be taught. However, it has also been argued that the aims of the contemporary education system are not about this 'true' education, but more concerned with the narrowly instrumental aim of socialisation or indoctrination and the justification of the existing economic system. Thus, even though Marxism can also achieve specific instrumental aims, such as explanatory power, or creativity in the workplace, the dominance of other instrumental aims will most likely preclude its effective, constructive teaching. There is a need to refocus the education debate. Currently it is about content—hence the introduction of the national curriculum in UK schools and the benchmarking in UK HE establishments. The focus needs to be aims. However, as has been historically the case, the political Right currently control the agenda.

Notes

1. The arguments made in this paper are applied specifically to Marxist economics. However, similar arguments can be applied to heterodox perspectives generally or specifically. Additionally, as Clarke and Mearman (2000) argue, the arguments can be applied, broadly, to any subject where there is an orthodoxy; at least where there is a dominant philosophical approach underlying the subject. Specifically, *if* it is argued that all subjects are dominated by an orthodoxy linked to capitalism, the arguments can be applied to *all* subjects.
2. This Post Autistic Economics movement has been bolstered somewhat by statements by Economics students at Cambridge University and by students at an Association for Evolutionary Economics summer school at Kansas City.
3. See also Stone's (1969: 85) discussion of Tom Paine's *The Rights of Man*, a book that became widely read despite a lack of educational provision. Strategy towards the poor shifted from the denying them an education, to controlling the nature of that education, in order to counter the effects of Paine's book.
4. Thus, even though capitalism arguably has tended to transform ostensibly intrinsic aims, such as 'open-mindedness', into instrumental aims and notions such as 'objectivity', the distinction is still valid.
5. It might be argued that this refutes the view of education as socialisation. However, the 'choices' of students reflect past socialisation, which in turn reflect 'employability', etc. This socialisation has arguably been more effective, recently. This might partly explain both the low demand for intrinsically educative courses, but also the much higher demand for courses on Marxism in the 1960s and 1970s.
6. Maurice in 1855 suggested that the view of the universities should '...correct and expand the public mind, not stoop to it' (1855 [1968]: 41)
7. This problem is also faced by other heterodox schools, most obviously Keynesian economics, the neutered and synthesised version of which tends to be taught (Arestis, 1992).
8. Anderson (1979) illustrates both points well. First, the burgeoning literature based on, say, the Frankfurt School, can be seen as a

critique of pre-existing Marxism, yet remains, albeit controversially, Marxist. Second, Anderson argues, the renewed focus on philosophy represented a retreat and a defeat, in that it generated very few contributions to praxis.

9. See Clarke & Mearman (2000). The latter has certain advantages, in that it builds in a comparative element to the curriculum and prevents one paradigm from effectively dominating. However, it also can cause confusion and/or leave the students with a set of competing views but without the ability to evaluate any of them.
10. It is also possible to argue that some of the aims, as formulated, are essentially a hybrid, but for the purpose of simplification, we ignore that at this point.
11. QAAHE (2000), Section 1.3 also aims that students should gain the 'ability to think critically about the limits of one's analysis in a broader socio-economic context.' This clearly has an intrinsic tone to it.

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