

TEACHING MARXISM IN A NEOLIBERAL ERA

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Abstract. During the last two years, senior high school teachers struggled with course contents in a neoliberal education. While the Mass Training of Teachers (MTOT) focuses on pedagogical knowledge, their concern is to deepen their content knowledge. As a result, they face difficulty in teaching the subjects, one of which is Marxism under Disciplines and Ideas in the Social Sciences (DISS). Enriching this paper, the query turns to the key participants of the sector and seek their insights. Then, critical analysis applies what the literature says about the way Marxism is taught.

Keywords. Marxism, neoliberalism, course content, pedagogical knowledge, content knowledge

Introduction

A country's goals can be achieved through education since it is a socio-politico economic tool, and educational systems are designed to produce graduates who uphold the status quo under neoliberalism, as pushed by neoliberals from the time of Ronald Reagan and Margaret Thatcher since the 1980s.¹ Henceforth, neoliberalism has become the driving ideology of globalization. As accounted by history, Philippine education is a legacy founded and influenced until the present by the United States imperial agenda, and is degenerating since it started more than a century ago.² With the aforementioned ideas, this paper claims that today's Philippine educational systems run under neoliberal

scheme, and asks how it looks like to teach Marxism in a neoliberal-inflicted education.

It has been recognized that educational institutions are streamlining their programs with neoliberal policies backed up by World Bank education policy.³ Across the world, neoliberalism has been influencing reforms in public services especially in education. In the United States, neoliberal offense hits not only the marginalized but also the higher education institutions.⁴ In Canada, the neoliberals collaborate with higher education institutions and the private sector in delivering public service to the settlement of immigrants.⁵ In Irish higher education sector, neoliberalism does the following 'adjustments': "effects budget cuts; transfer of research funding to external agencies; reduction in permanent contracts; and increased reliance on part-time, temporary staff for teaching and research roles."⁶ The attack of neoliberalism against the English public education is recognized as a maneuver of capitalists but confronted with a call to switch to democratic Marxism.⁷ German and most Western European public higher education institutions are also under the neoliberal scheme compelling privatization but in Central and Eastern Europe, there is a rediscovery of post-socialism.⁸ Recently in Aeon, it is said that "Even though the Cold War ended almost 30 years ago, a struggle to define the truth about the communist past has continued to rage across the United States and Europe."⁹ In Saudi Arabian higher education, neoliberalism is buzzing as socialist policy refuses to die.¹⁰ In Latin America, teachers of public higher education institutions face challenges from neoliberal policies of globalisation as dictated by World Bank people¹¹ but "Since 2000, candidates representing leftist parties and coalitions have won an unprecedented seven presidential elections. Leftist presidents now govern most of Latin America: most of its people, most of its land area, and most of its wealthier nations."¹² Opening up the educational systems to globalization, Asia-Pacific countries experience a "damaged-

culture.” It is already posited that “traditional cultures and values of collectivism, humanism, self-cultivation, trust, compassion, grace, and honesty in educational governance, administration, management and leadership have changed into those neo-liberal values of contract, market, choice, competition, efficiency, flexibility, managerialism, and accountability.”¹³

The neoliberal impact on education, which had been studied widely in many countries, shows that the geopolitical West directs the worldwide educational reforms of the higher education systems.¹⁴ However, despite numerous studies about neoliberal effects on education, they are rarely tackled in the Philippines as Left-leaning school of thought is considered a taboo in many schools. Amid efforts, Philippine-based studies fail to put the quality of Philippine education into high gear.¹⁵ Moreover, many of these endeavours fail to consider the neoliberal policy of globalizing world. Studies on Philippine education must see the bigger picture of problems from the shadow of neoliberal scheme of globalization.¹⁶ The neoliberal agenda in education is the interest of the global community, and it is the aim of this paper to take into account Marxism vis-à-vis neoliberalism in Philippine educational studies.¹⁷ In so doing, a broad approach is employed.

Brief History of Neoliberalism

In 1938, Alexander Rustow, a German intellectual, coined the term "neoliberalism," which was popularized in the writings of Ludwig von Mises. The term is drawn from Adam Smith's idea that the common good is attained through a free market maintained by the invisible hand of self-interest. It equates the entrepreneur's economic freedom with the society's political freedom. The proponents, mainly from the Freiburg School, the Austrian School, and the Chicago School of Economics, put emphasis on the system of competition by upholding the right to

private property in the means of production. In upholding free competition capitalism, neoliberalism poses against state ownership of any means of production. Unlike Keynesianism, neoliberalism opposes state intervention in the economy. Beginning from the 1980s, Ronald Reagan and Margaret Thatcher led the move for neoliberalization of the world. Hence, there's an elimination of state subsidy for public social services so that the capitalists can come in and that the relationship between the business sector and the government's social service provider is strengthened.¹⁸

Neoliberalism in Education

Neoliberalism, the driving ideology of today's global capitalism, influences the social mind. Eventually, it changes the mode of governance resulting to policies strengthening trade and industry liberalization, deregulation, privatization, and denationalization. But without the social mind accepting and maintaining these concepts and policies, the neoliberals won't succeed. But through education, neoliberal policies can be accepted by the public. Consequently, there is now an educational system catering to the needs of the global market with firming ties between the business sector and the learning institutions. International Financing Institutions (IFI) are funding education in developing countries. In so doing, the neoliberal concepts are sown in learning institutions which eventually produce citizens abiding by the driving ideology of globalization with unbridled capitalism blaming wage increase and big government social spending as causes of stagflation. Neoliberal policy is also known as the Washington Consensus after its enforcers, namely, World Bank (WB), International Monetary Fund (IMF), and the US Treasury Department. In the 1990s, the World Trade Organization (WTO) enforces neoliberal policies for the "development" of developing countries. In recent years, Asia Pacific Economic Cooperation (APEC) and Association of South

East Asian Nation (ASEAN) serve as lobbies for neoliberals moving the invisible hand of self-interest affecting educational systems.¹⁹ Today, Philippine K12 education is funded by Asian Development Bank (ADB) despite the claim that “Foreign aid ... is inherently political—an outside country’s efforts to enact change within another country through the introduction of external resources, removing a degree of national sovereignty from the recipient.”²⁰

From Pedagogy to Historicizing Teacher’s Knowledge

Plato

In *Cebu Daily News* dated 16 July 2014, Raymund Fernandez’s “The Teaching Profession” raised doubts, “How, after all, do we make certain we are taught by people who know what they are talking about and how do we make sure teachers ground their teaching on real-life?” Fernandez’s query had been faced by Greek philosophers. In the *Apology*, where Socrates defended himself against the accusation of teaching something untrue, Plato accounts for how the human mind can be taught with falsehood. This happens because in Socrates’ time there were teachers who taught what they did not know most about, if not what they didn’t know, and even Socrates himself was not able to escape this charge. He was accused by the Sophists whose knowledge and teaching he questioned. He started his counter-argument with a dialogue between himself and Callias, the son of Hipponicus who paid the Sophists for instruction. In this dialogue, Socrates scrutinized the Sophists’ credibility to teach as their knowledge seems vague.

If your two sons were foals or calves, there would be no difficulty in finding someone to put over them; we should hire a trainer of horses, or a farmer probably, who would improve or perfect them in their own proper virtue or excellence; but as they are humans,

whom are you thinking of placing over them? Is there anyone who understands human or political virtue? ... 'Evenus the Parian,' he replied; 'he is the man and his charge is five minae.' Happy is Evenus, if he really has this wisdom and teaches at such a moderate charge. Had I the same, I should have been very proud and conceited but the truth is I have no knowledge of the kind.²¹

Towards the end, Socrates ended up the dialogue with a twofold conclusion: that he neither knows nor thinks that he knows, and that a person may know nothing but s/he thinks that s/he knows. Another section from Plato's work which has bearing with this probe is the dialogue between Socrates and Glaucon on "shadows and realities in education" from Book VII of the *Republic*. On this work, Plato asserts that it is possible that what we believe as true is false and to know falsely is equivalent to not knowing, thereby leading to error. In the *Allegory of the Cave*, people are seeing not the truer picture of reality but only the passing shadows of it. Socrates suggests that this error can only be corrected by leading them out of the cave, "He will have to see the sun and not mere reflections of him in the water but he will see him in his own proper place, and not in another, and he will contemplate him as he is."²²

Like those in the *Allegory*, teachers' direction is twofold: out of the light, i.e., staying inside the cave, or into the light, i.e., moving out of the cave. As practiced, workbooks alone won't lead teachers into seeing course contents like Marxism in the academe and scholarly works. Most teachers view Marxism from the reactionaries' counter-revolutionary propaganda. Thus, there has to be an ascent of knowledge, and it means not to settle down with workbooks students are using. Teachers Guide (TG) and Curriculum Guide (CG) are only helpful when it comes to pedagogical knowledge. What about the content knowledge? Overloaded with clerical works, teachers of the newly

implemented Senior High School (SHS) clamour over the burden of teaching without preparing for their lesson; they may have lesson plans but don't bother to read about the lesson outside the books provided by the government. By being pages or chapters ahead, teachers are guilty of being unfair to their students, to the course content, to the theorists like Marx, and to the profession itself.

Aristotle Onward

Another Greek wrote about teaching and the teacher's knowledge. In *Metaphysics*, Aristotle showed his outlook on the relationship between knowing and teaching.

We regard master-craftsmen as superior not merely because they have a grasp of theory and know the reasons for acting as they do. Broadly speaking, what distinguishes the man who knows from the ignorant man is an ability to teach, and this is why we hold that art and not experience has the character of genuine knowledge (episteme) – namely, that artists can teach and others, i.e., those who have not acquired an art by study but have merely picked up some skills empirically, cannot.²³

Aristotle's observation on teacher's quality as an intellectual being is not far from the supposed teacher who knows what s/he teaches about. George Bernard Shaw puts teachers' content knowledge under scrutiny. In his *Maxims for Revolutionists*, Shaw cautions that a person may teach something s/he does not know about.

When a man teaches something he does not know to somebody else who has no aptitude for it, and gives him a certificate of proficiency, the latter has completed the education of a gentleman...He who can, does. He, who cannot, teaches...A learned man is an

idler who kills time with study. Beware of his false knowledge: it is more dangerous than ignorance.²⁴

Millennia spanned since the time of Socrates, yet teachers' content knowledge has been the subject of scrutiny. Nevertheless, the value of the teaching profession cannot be downgraded. During the first half of the twentieth century, Alfred North Whitehead continued the query between content and pedagogical knowledge. In his *Aims of Education and Other Essays* he claims, "Some of the major disasters of mankind have been produced by the narrowness of men with a good methodology." Whitehead must have referred to the emphasis of pedagogical knowledge on the content. This problem traces the course of our knowledge-getting process. In contrast to so many disputes that regard the formation of knowledge as problematic, we must examine knowledge in the environment where it is formulated since it is infrequently formed independent of time and place. To some degree, the way teachers teach Marxism speaks of their perception of communism through Western hegemony in relation to how neoliberalism dilutes Marx's philosophy. Such is the origin of teachers' knowledge. Teaching Marxism, furthermore, is not only an understanding of the philosophy-in-itself but also a consciousness of relations: objective and subjective relations of the teacher and the object of knowledge. As shown by Plato, Glaucon and Socrates converse: "And may we not say that the mind of the one who knows has knowledge, and the mind of the other, who opines only, has opinion?"²⁵ With the aforementioned contention, this probe turns to Marx and Engels.

Marx and Engels on Education

Karl Marx and Friedrich Engels sustain the Greek-conceived emancipatory characteristic of education. Through their lenses, education is seen as an instrument so that the proletarians can

gain back their dignity from the exploitation by the bourgeoisie. But the bourgeoisie, according to Marx and Engels,

... finds itself involved in a constant battle. At first with the aristocracy, later on, with those portions of the bourgeoisie itself, whose interests have become antagonistic to the progress of industry; at all times, with the bourgeoisie of foreign countries. In all these battles it sees itself compelled to appeal to the proletariat, to ask for its help, and thus, to drag it into the political arena. The bourgeoisie itself, therefore, supplies the proletariat with its own elements of political and general education, in other words it furnishes the proletariat with weapons for fighting the bourgeoisie.²⁶

The bourgeoisie, in its effort to suppress the proletariat, sows the proletarians on a soil fertilized with conditions *conscienticizing* their thoughts.²⁷ In as much as the bourgeoisie maximizes its machinery suppressing antagonisms against each other, it is through this antagonism that Marx and Engels see the inevitable awakening of the proletarians. And this awakening is mechanized for the proletariat to fight against the bourgeoisie: “But, you will say, we destroy the most hallowed of relations when we replace home education by social.”²⁸

Since the social mind is the most powerful tool to institutionalize ideas, it is maximized by the struggling masses in confronting the ruling class. Education, then, can never be separated from the society's socio-politico economic goal. And whose education is uprooted from the ills of its own society? And your education! Is not that also social and determined by the social conditions under which you educate, by the intervention, direct or indirect, of society, by means of schools etc.? The Communists have not invented the intervention of society in education; they do but seek

to alter the character of that intervention, and to rescue education from the influence of the ruling class.²⁹

If the bourgeoisie uproots education from the society's ills, the task of the communists, then, is to root education back into the society's problems in line with the struggling masses.

The bourgeois clap-trap about the family and education, about the hallowed co-relation of parent and child, becomes all the more disgusting, the more, by the action of Modern Industry, all family ties among the proletarians are torn asunder, and their children transformed into simple articles of commerce and instruments of labour.³⁰

This alienation by education brought by bourgeoisification is addressed by the *Manifesto* in its ten-point measures. The tenth point clarifies the close relationship of education with the promotion of basic social services vis-à-vis national industrialization: “Free education for all children in public schools. Abolition of children’s factory labour in its present form. Combination of education with industrial production, etc., etc.”³¹

Marxism-Leninism-Maoism Character of Education

Pushing for mass-oriented education, the Maoist Communist Party of Nepal (CPN) offers alternative to the elitist mainstream education.³² In this way, a foreign-influenced nation can combat against domination by other country. Transforming society, therefore, requires revolutionary struggle that is corresponded with revolutionary pedagogy.

The guiding principles of the CPN (Maoist) i.e. Marxism-Leninism-Maoism and Prachanda Path had been reflected in the process of curriculum formation. The philosophical base of National Democratic Education included the principle of dialectical

materialism by replacing the idealistic foundation of state driven education. The primary focus of the new curriculum was on the development of the students' materialist understanding of nature, human society and culture, and history. Within the materialist conception it further emphasised the principle of superiority of matter over consciousness.³³

Marxism-Leninism-Maoism (MLM) is posing itself as a remedy to the bourgeoisified education and hegemonized learning isolated from the country's socio-politico economic matters. With such philosophy embodied in an organization performing educational role,³⁴ socialism is viable with the working class struggling to attain its freedom and education free from bourgeois claws³⁵ pursuing people's political education.³⁶ Education is an arena between the bourgeois liberals and the working class.³⁷ Since the bourgeois liberals have the propaganda machinery like the press, the political education of the proletariat is at stake and has to be shielded from the marauder of labour.³⁸

This is the meaning of all philosophy: all that contributes to the political education of the people is good; all that hinders it is bad.³⁹ ... The political education of the people—that is our banner, that is the meaning of all philosophy!⁴⁰ ... Unless the masses are politically conscious, wide-awake and full of determination, no changes for the better can be brought about.⁴¹

Education is not limited to formal schooling⁴² especially in a society where the relationship between the masses' class education and alienated politics is inversely proportional⁴³ but political dynasty is doomed to end if the masses are educated on class struggle⁴⁴ as the Party is concerned about the working class' political education.⁴⁵ Mao added that “educational policy must enable everyone who receives an education to develop

morally, intellectually and physically and become a worker with both socialist consciousness and culture.”⁴⁶ He encourages latitudinarian approach towards Marxism-Leninism, and exhorts to study it in connection with the masses.⁴⁷ Education, then, is not for the educated to exploit people but to serve them. But who’s going to oversee and lead? “Group of several people,” says Mao.⁴⁸ This concept of leadership is not isolated from Lenin’s idea of a vanguard party as manifested by the Communist Party of the Philippines (CPP). The Party suits to lead only if it integrates the people’s problem as their own. Even in training troops, Mao emphasizes the student-teacher complementary relationship: “Officers teach soldiers, soldiers teach officers and soldiers teach each other.”⁴⁹ Education, in this way, is scientific and mass-oriented for it problematizes the people’s problems, and it can find solution only if the intellectuals learn from the masses and then teach them.

CPP’s Marxism-Leninism-Maoism’s character of education

As to how and why the Communist Party of the Philippines applied Marxism-Leninism-Maoism, Jose Maria Sison, the founding chair of the Communist Party of the Philippines, reiterates:

The CPP has applied Marxism-Leninism to define the new democratic and socialist stages of the Philippine revolution. It has also applied Maoism to combat modern revisionism and guarantee a future of consolidating socialism and preventing the restoration of capitalism. For some years, from 1963 onwards, the founders of the CPP were enlightened by the Marxist-Leninist line against modern revisionism centred in the Communist Party of the Soviet Union and the revisionist character of the Merger Party of the Communist and Socialist Parties (MPCSP).⁵⁰

The Party echoes the need for Philippine education to advance the country's democracy and the nation's liberation from US imperialism and any foreign influence.⁵¹ In so doing, the local reactionary class of landlords, big *compradors* and bureaucrat capitalists must be differentiated from the marginalized class of the exploited and the oppressed. But without solid philosophy, educating the masses is unscientific. Sison maintains: "By adopting this (Marxism-Leninism-Maoism) revolutionary theory of the proletariat as theoretical guide, the CPP has integrated it with the history and concrete circumstances of the Filipino people and proletariat."⁵² Praxis, then, is the basis of education. And this can be done only if history is to be understood by a progressive school safeguarded from the cyclical, providential, and postmodernist schools of thought. With such framework, the Party made an analysis:

The CPP has traced the major strands of Philippine history: communalism and patriarchal slavery in the pre-colonial period, feudalism under Spanish colonialism, semifeudalism under US colonialism and the semicolonial and semifeudal society since after the 1946 US grant of nominal independence to the Philippines. Based on the analysis of Philippine history and concrete circumstances, the CPP has defined the character of Philippine society, general political line of struggle, motive forces, adversaries, stages and future of the Philippine revolution.⁵³

Philippine education is seen through the aforementioned scrutiny as hostage to foreign influence. Sison retorted to the Philippine's hosting of Asia-Pacific Economic Conference (APEC):

K-12 and other neoliberal school reforms deemphasize patriotic education, consciousness and culture. In universities, courses or subjects on Philippine history, Filipino language and literature and on Philippine government and constitution have been trimmed

down. In high school, class hours devoted to Philippine social studies (Araling Panlipunan) will also be reduced, and its curriculum restructured based on themes derived from the US National Council for Social Studies.⁵⁴

Sison's retort has been Constantino's three-point agenda in his *Miseducation*: political independence, economic emancipation, and cultural renaissance.⁵⁵ Over half a century since Constantino identified the ways Philippine education should take, the three agenda have evaded the nation unresolved of its educational system. Moreover, campus repression produces docile faculty and students. Education, then, must be progressive and militant against foreign domination. Otherwise, Filipino hopes and aspirations will be hijacked incessantly.

Every exploitative ruling class in modern society, be it the monopoly bourgeoisie in imperialist countries or the bourgeoisie in combination with the landlord class in the underdeveloped countries, always puts its class imprint on the character and content of education and lays stress on the preservation of the ruling system and continuing exploitation of the working people.⁵⁶

As the ruling class mechanizes education to pursue its interests, the masses can utilize education on behalf of the exploited class. Sison exhorts, "In opposition, the revolutionary forces of the people lay stress on the transformative character and content of education for the purpose of national and social liberation, all-round development and the attainment of socialism."⁵⁷ Confronting the ruling class through education has not been easy for the masses. It is and will never be easy.

Since then (the push for free market or neoliberal globalization), the imperialist countries headed by the US have gone on a rampage of pressing down the real wage level, cutting back on social spending for

education, health and other social services and curtailing the rights and hard-earned social benefits of the working people.⁵⁸

Even until the presidency of Rodrigo Duterte, a self-confessed socialist, neoliberals continuously reform education. According to Sison, “such monstrous policy has degraded and devastated education.”⁵⁹ Today’s massive budget cut to social services in education and health is a manifestation to Sison’s retort. Such retort should have been heeded if the Filipinos want to maximize education as the avenue towards progress since the exploitative class is mechanizing its interest through education.

The imperialist powers keep on tightening their grip on education on a global scale. They use the WTO General Agreement on Trade in Services (GATS) to treat education as a commodity for profit-making in the so-called free market and to push the privatization of public schools at all levels. The purpose, content and conduct of teaching and research are made to serve the interests of the imperialist powers and local reactionaries. These factors of mis-education design and produce the curricula, study materials, education and research programs and institutional structures. They use the combination of schools, mass media and other means of information and education as tools of imperialist domination in the cultural field as well as in the socio-economic and political fields.⁶⁰

Given the mechanization of education by the ruling class, the aim of transforming society has to be pursued also through education that is in touch with the socio-politico economic situation of the country. Otherwise, education’s noble goal is defeated. Conscienticize and immerse with the masses!

To be able to fight for a new and better world, the people need to be aroused, organized and mobilized by the revolutionary party and progressive alliances in

every country. In this regard, the revolutionary party analyses the global and domestic situation and sets forth the general program of action and the strategy and tactics. The people must be aroused through information and education work. They must be organized on the basis of class or sectoral affinity as well as on the basis of major social issues. They must be mobilized through mass campaigns and through sectoral and multisectoral alliances.⁶¹

Though petty-bourgeois as categorized, educators are urged to side with the masses and teach for their sake.

The teachers and researchers play a crucial role in the struggle of the people for a new and better world. They must develop and utilize knowledge and research against the imperialist domination of these and for the liberation of the people from national and class oppression, for the realization of democracy, for all-rounded development in the service of the people, for world peace and the protection of the environment. They must promote and realize a new type of education and culture that is anti-imperialist, scientific and pro-people.⁶²

Since it has been recognized that the Philippines suffers foreign influence, land monopoly and elite politics, Sison presses:

It is of urgent necessity that the teachers and researchers put forward a critique of imperialist ideology. Such a critique is an important instrument for defining the targets and tasks in the struggle for a radical transformation of society. We must be able to confront imperialist globalization and its terrorist complement of state repression and wars of aggression. In this regard, we must be able to build ever stronger the solidarity of the people of the world and advance their struggle to defend their rights and

welfare, including the people's right to education, and advance in stages the struggle for a new and better world of greater freedom, justice, development and peace.⁶³

In addition, educators are highly encouraged to advance the people's interest and spoil the neoliberals' agenda. In his keynote speech delivered in Shih Hsin University, Sison expresses enthusiasm to the conference's goal.

I am pleased to know that participants in this conference are urged to contribute to the critique of any aspect of imperialism and education and are encouraged to make interdisciplinary approaches to such concerns as access to education, the so-called neoliberal reforms in the education sector, the right to education and livelihood, the political economy of education, the politics and theories of knowledge, production and research, the impact of privatization and liberalization on educators and students and adverse effects of neoliberal reforms in education on societies.⁶⁴

As to the kind of papers for publication Sison anticipates:

I look forward to the publication of the papers on education and imperialism, dealing with historical perspectives, the relation of imperialist globalization to the basic and higher levels of education and the relation of debt and so-called aid to education; to the papers on education and markets, dealing with the relations of education with industry and imperialist globalization, free trade agreements and transnational education; and to the papers on education, oppression and resistance, dealing with the relations of education to social movements, the cause of national liberation, the issues of race, ethnicity and gender and the rights and welfare of educators and related personnel.⁶⁵

With the aforementioned account of Prof. Sison, it is hoped that the CPP's Marxism-Leninism-Maoism's character of education clarifies the reactionary's demonization of the Party's educational program.

Analysis: Neoliberalism and the Need for a Marxist-Oriented Education

Missing the Paradigm

Most of the teachers teaching Marxism in SHS of the Department of Education (DepEd) are graduates of Bachelor of Secondary Education major in Social Studies. Their struggle with the course content is due to the stress on pedagogical over the content knowledge. This emphasis can be traced back to their baccalaureate degree program. Even if they would try discussing the course content, they are restricted within their capacity since the training they had focused on pedagogical knowledge. Moreover, two years after the implementation of K12, regional MTOT still focuses on pedagogical instead on content knowledge.

During trainings, teachers clamour for trainers who are experts on the discipline that they facilitate. Common concern among the trained teachers to teach in the Humanities and the Social Sciences (HUMSS) is the deepening of content knowledge. In a group trained to teach DISS, nobody among the facilitators teaches any of the course contents included in the curriculum guide of DISS. As a result, a teacher-demonstrator during MTOT mentions "alienation" without even knowing what Marx meant with the term. Worse, teachers teaching DISS are not acquainted with the difference among basic terms and concepts, e.g. proletarian, proletariat, bourgeois, and bourgeoisie. As they grapple with the course content, a fellow asks, "Why can't they (DepEd officials) outsource from universities who have experts on these disciplines?" While others

say it is about budget-concern, some say it is the stress on pedagogical over content knowledge. On the other hand, a regional memorandum asks SHS teachers to promote college-type of learning. Whatever that means, the paradigm is missing.

Professional Regulation Commission's Code of Ethics for Professional Teachers indicates that the teaching profession is vital in maintaining "the highest possible standards of quality education."⁶⁶ Bestowed upon the duty of being an "intellectual leader"⁶⁷ and a trustee of educational heritage,"⁶⁸ teachers should strive to maintain their professional competence in order to be nationally and internationally competitive.

So, where did we go wrong? Here is an explanation in relation to the 2015 Program for International Students Assessment (PISA):

The top-ranking countries do not spend the most for education, but they spend a good portion on recruiting and sustaining the best teachers. The top-ranking school systems are also serious about teacher development. In Singapore, only the top one-third of the graduating class in college can consider taking up an education degree and only one of eight candidates is accepted in the teaching profession. In China, teachers have to participate in 360 hours of professional development each year. After recruiting smart people into the teaching profession, the top countries exert great incentives to keep them in schools by making the job not only financially attractive, but also intellectually attractive.⁶⁹

The elucidation boils down to the budget concern of the Philippine government. Jose Enrique "Sonny" A. Africa, Executive Director of IBON Foundation, provides data showing that the current administration treats the budget for infrastructure more important than providing quality education and other social services: 27.5% more for infrastructure (Php861

billion for 2017 and Php1.1 trillion for 2018), 5.4% more for social services, 68.9% less for housing, 5.2% more for social welfare, 5.8% more for education, and 9.2% more for health.⁷⁰ A good reason how and why the best of Philippine graduates are not attracted to the profession of teaching is the government's treatment of education department, e.g. rate of the teachers' salary. Though teachers are unanimous in advocating for their pay hike, many are cautious to deal with the country's macro-economic policy as the root cause of insufficient budget. Otherwise, one runs the risk of being red-tagged, i.e., activist, Leftist, Communist, NPA, or terrorist, etc. How much more if one teaches Marxism well? As explained in *Aeon*, Marxism is confronted by the prejudice caused by the West-led demonization of communism.⁷¹ Western demonization of communism leads to the murder of Marxism⁷² but it refuses to die since Marxist organizations are alive worldwide.⁷³

But it is not only the demonizing scheme of the West that poses trouble. There is also an ongoing local-based demonization of Marxism not just from the reactionary government but also from its ardent supporters and the traditional political parties. With such intolerance and ignorance to Marxism, it is tough to teach the philosophy itself.

Business of the State

From the Ancient to Postmodern period, there is a never-ending discussion on the relevance of education to the public sphere such as politics, economy, and culture. Plato in his *Republic* founded the pivotal role of education in the development of societies. Up to this day, national development is linked to the success of education.⁷⁴ As a consequence, it makes sense that the neoliberals are utilizing it. As observed in many societies, education is increasingly privatized despite the argument that it is an affair of the State.⁷⁵ This privatization of education causes alarm from the advocates of socialism in the

twenty-first century. From the Marxist lens, neoliberalism sees schooling as an avenue for ideology and politics favoured by the ruling class.⁷⁶ In Nigeria, the role of education in national reconstruction is hijacked by the imperialists' agenda.⁷⁷ The neoliberals' method is so subtle that it needs epistemic investigation to realize as to how graduates of developing countries tend to support and legitimize the status quo. This discussion reiterates what the political theorist Louis Althusser did posit that education is one of the *Ideological State Apparatuses*.⁷⁸ With the capitalist crisis, the West maximizes its platform in the international stage.

In today's globalized era, one must consider the machineries and mechanisms of neoliberals. Consequently, the country's philosophy of education can be seen as problematic. The era when it was formulated must be examined for the reason that knowledge is historically situated and politicized. One approach, therefore, to an examination of the formation of educational philosophy is to place it in its historical setting treated with philosophy and other disciplines. As noted, imperial countries utilize education to perpetuate their interests. IFIs lend educational funds to developing countries like the Philippines whose educational system is constantly held by Western influence making it thought-provoking to teach Marxism for it will go against the grain of neoliberalism.

Today's education in the Philippines shifts from essential to dispensable value, i.e., from human to capitalist values. Highlight is on technological-vocational over liberal arts courses, a way of sustaining the multinationals' need for cheaper human resource. Teaching Marxism is challenging with educational institutions catering to the demands of transnational companies and multinational corporations over the society's need for sustenance of its own people thirsting for quality social services which the government fails to provide. In the same manner, how to promote socialist ideals if liberal arts courses suffer cost-

cutting and defunding as public education institutions run as quasi-private? Reliance on the business sector continues despite the passing of Republic Act 10931 or the Universal Access to Quality Tertiary Education Act, and the State's insufficient budget for education tolerates neoliberal incursion. With K12 implemented, Philippine education is geared to develop productive workers as guarantees for multinationals since the Philippine government borrows from IFIs whose interests may head-butt against socialist goals as discussed by the Comprehensive Agreement on Socio-Economic Reforms (CASER) between the Government of the Republic of the Philippines-National Democratic Front of the Philippines (GRP-NDFP) Peace Talks. And such talks can't be promoted since many teachers do not know such happening. If they do, they would rather not talk about it even in their respective classes for they fear of being red-tagged. Thus, Philippine education seems irrelevant since teachers are unacquainted with the socio-politico economic dynamics in their own country.

Teaching has to be connected with the social dynamics. In this way, education can be led towards being scientific, nationalistic, and mass-oriented. Friedrich Engels, in *Ludwig Feuerbach*, asks: "In what relation do our thoughts about the world surrounding us stand to the world itself? Are we able in our ideas and notions of the real world to produce a correct reflection of reality?"⁷⁹

Keeping teachers unfamiliar of their course contents like Marxism in DISS, they are asked to do observational performance, i.e., things that are counted but do not really matter. Compelling them to provide observational performance reports leads to white-washing the realities of educational system, things that matter but not counted.

Nonetheless, the key participants of this query come up with the following premises: (1) The more reliance on IFIs; the stronger is the neoliberal influence on education; (2) Stronger

neoliberal influence on education makes teaching Marxism more challenging; (3) Teaching Marxism, without the prejudice to demonize Marx, takes courage; and (4) Without the courage to fight against neoliberalism, schools lead towards strong relationship with the business sector, corporatisation.

Conclusion

Since students are educated in a way that they'll be docile and submissive to the status quo, it is timely that after ten school years of basic education they, as wage-earners-to-be (though not all), are introduced to the critique against neoliberal capitalism brought by West-led globalization. Students, then, should be educated not only to become efficient employees or entrepreneurs but also to know the anti-thesis to the status quo so they may clearly and critically understand the complete picture of reality that they may seek alternative to the crisis brought by unbridled capitalism. In the Philippines, there's no other organization, institution, or political party that provides an anti-thesis to the status quo than the Communist Party of the Philippines-New People's Army-National Democratic Front of the Philippines (CPP-NPA-NDFP). Without Left-wing schools of thought from basic to higher education institutions, education is nothing than seeing mystified reality through the lens of neoliberals. MLM has been part of Philippine mass movement for more than half a century above and under the ground of Philippine socio-politico economic dynamics among the seventy-one to seventy-three of the eighty-one provinces with one hundred twenty plus guerrilla zones across the country. Despite the extent of MLM, there is no in-depth understanding of the said philosophy as the reactionaries demonize it, compelling teachers to dismiss it without due study. Philippine educators have to deal with MLM as there is live discussion on this from scholars of North America, Europe, and in other parts of the

globe. It cannot be dismissed by demonization but by academic discussion.

Philippine education is an avenue for the neoliberals to enforce the fourfold path of neoliberalism's package-policy: trade and industry liberalization, deregulation, privatization, and denationalization. Out of this four neoliberal public economic policies, four ignoble truths are known from neoliberal education in the Philippines: emphasis on technological-vocational over liberal arts courses, quasi-private public education, banking-method pedagogy, and white-washed reports on the status of education.

With the seemingly indomitable force of globalization, Philippine education undergoes systemic change. While some are cordial to this reform, others are critical about it, accusing that it is a neoliberal scheme. The impulse of this reform is externally induced making Philippine educational institutions run under neoliberal scheme and leading the country astray from national industrialization and genuine agrarian reform.

So what would happen to scientific, nationalistic, and mass-oriented education? The teaching profession dovetails with accountability to know what one knows. This is so essential that the nature and origin of knowledge must be scrutinized. In this manner, certainty can be founded that s/he who teaches knows what s/he teaches, making pedagogical knowledge goes hand in hand with content and curricular knowledge vis-à-vis the country's socio-politico economic dynamics. These are like relative ideas—the one cannot stand without the other as revolutionary struggles have to be paired with revolutionary pedagogy.⁸⁰ Classrooms, then, should serve as a public democratic sphere where students can critically reflect the signs of times with teachers acting as public intellectual leaders and cultural workers or, as defined by Antonio Gramsci, the articulators of collective consciousness.⁸¹

In any case, Marx should have been treated fairly.

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