Teaching Politically: Policy, Pedagogy and the New European University

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Abstract

> *This article reports on a movement to create a radical new model of higher education in Europe and beyond based on the practices of self-education and militant/co-research during 2011. The article provides an account of a group that lies at the heart of this movement, the Edu-Factory Collective. The approach advocated by the Edu-Factory Collective is illustrated by two radical pedagogical projects – Student as Producer, based in the UK, and Universidad Nomada in Spain.*

Key words: radical pedagogy, students, self-education, militant/co-research, knowledge

> In this revolution knowledge has become a battlefield. In this revolution knowledge can become a weapon. We want to arm ourselves (Editorial, KAFCA, [Knowledge Against Financial Capitalism] A Journal of Common University Struggles: March 2011 2)

In February 2011 more than four hundred students and academics from around the world came together at the University of Paris 8, located in St Denis on the outskirts of France's capital city. The purpose of the event was to create a transnational network of struggle by redrawing the map of Europe around a new cartography grounded in a resistance to the neoliberal economic and social policies of the European Union and its member states. Foremost among these policies are the implementation of the politics of austerity and the imposition of precarious work. At the centre of the meeting in Paris lay the desire for a new European university, as a radical political project, that would emerge not from an already existing blueprint, or ideology, but as pedagogical event based on the practices of self-education and militant/co-research.

This article follows the development of this new cartography, as it moved in a 'revolutionary caravan' across Europe and North Africa in 2011. The article provides

an account of a group that lies at the heart of this movement, the Edu-Factory Collective, based on an understanding gained from face-to-face discussions with key participants, attendance at events organised by the Collective and associated groups, and through a review of the Edu-Factory's various publications: books, journals and zines. The approach advocated by the Edu-Factory Collective will be illustrated with a report on two radical pedagogical projects – *Student as Producer*, based in Lincoln, in the UK, and *Universidad Nomada* in Madrid, Spain, each operating inside and outside the HE system, providing examples of what is referred to in this paper as 'teaching politically', i.e., the ambition to create a radical new model of higher education in Europe.

This article is itself a form of self-education and militant/co-research, within which the production of knowledge is regarded as a form of political action. From the position of militant/co-research and self-education the political subjectivity of the author is not regarded as detrimental to the research process, but is the essential objective reality out of which the research is derived. In more traditional terms the positionality of the author is triangulated within the multiple formal identities of the author as researcher, as part of the Edu-Factory network and member of Student as Producer, one of the projects reviewed in this paper.

A key aspect of the article is to discuss the idea of teaching politically in the context of the current state of teaching and learning in universities in the UK. The paper will argue that, at the very least, approaches based on the principles of teaching politically can be used to refresh and revitalise the undergraduate curriculum; while, at the very most, teaching politically can be used to reinvent higher education as a revolutionary political project.

FOR A NEW EUROPE: UNIVERSITY STRUGGLES AGAINST AUSTERITY

The University of Paris 8, now situated in St Denis, has a special place in the history of the development of progressive higher education in Europe. The University was established at Vincennes in the centre of Paris as a direct outcome of the events in May 1968. Depending on one's point of view, this new university was the revolutionary form of higher education demanded by the student protestors, or an

attempt to contain the revolutionary movement (Ranciere, 2011). Nevertheless, it employed the most radical teachers, recruited students from non-traditional and cosmopolitan backgrounds, taught the most progressive curriculum, engaged in campaigns for social justice outside of the university and was institutionalised as a model of democratic governance. It was eventually overwhelmed by its popularity, attracting more students than it was able to hold and, with its radical pedagogies now recuperated by the mainstream institutions of higher education, its progressive methods of teaching and learning lost their distinctive appeal. The result of overcrowding and the undermining of its radical status gave strength to its political enemies in the Ministry of Education. It was bulldozed in 1980 and moved out to St Denis, a suburb (*banlieue*), in the north east of Paris. Nevertheless it retained its leftist orientation, attracting radical intellectuals, maintaining its reputation for innovative pedagogy, and student protest. However, in recent years the students appear to be have become more instrumental and pragmatic in their approach to higher education (Cohen 2010).

But things are changing fast.

No one can agree precisely when this new movement of resistance started, or if it had ever really stopped. Some say it began with the 'Battle of Seattle' (Thompson 2010) while others argue it can be traced back to a series of counter-summit mobilisations beginning in Birmingham, England against the G8 in 1998 (The Free Association 2011), or maybe the spark came from the Zapatistas in Mexico, or revolts in Argentina (1999) and Bolivia (2000) or in Africa, against the IMF sanctions in the 1980s (The Free Association, 2011). Whatever its starting point these protests have converged into a constellation of struggles, by academics, students, activists and those who would never regard themselves as activists, against the police and the state, reacting against the impossibility of life in capitalism. One of the most notable of these uprisings was in France 2006, beginning in the very *banlieue* where Paris 8 is situated (Budgen, 2011). At the heart of this 'movement of movements' were students. In UCL, at Berkeley and Santa Cruz. In Athens. In Rome. In Zagreb. In Vienna. In Santiago. In the midst of these rebellions the students invented new forms of protest, e.g., the Vortex, Book Blocks and the Black Block. Where these actions have been theorised they are ripped from the pages of the most subversive writings of

the 20th century, e.g., Lefebvre, Debord, Cixous, Vanneigem, and written up to coincide with the contemporary events as the Invisible Committee's *The Coming Insurrection*, Tiqqun's *The Civil War* and *Communique from Occupied California*.

At the same time the Arab Spring, or Arab Revolutions, was bursting into life around North Africa and the Persian Gulf. In Tunisia, Egypt, Bahrain, Yemen, Syria, Algeria, Saudi Arabia, Iraq, Oman, Morocco, as a Civil War in Libya, and struggles within and at the borders of Israel. The protests had common motivations, struggling for freedom and human rights against political repression, high unemployment and corruption. At the centre of the struggle were students: young men and women, for whom the revolutions were a revolt against a 'dead future'.

Paris 8 in St Denis was a venue for a coming together of this diverse 'movements of movements'. The meeting at Paris 8 at the beginning of 2011 was an expression of the change in radical and political activities and attitudes among students and academics not only in France but across Europe and the world. This meeting was organised by the Edu-Factory Collective and the Autonomous Education Network, as well as other activists living in Paris. The meeting was the latest in a series of events that had began with 'Bologna Burns' in Bologna the previous year, as well the Commoniversty meeting in Barcelona in 2010. The title for this event in Paris was 'For a New Europe: University Struggles Against Austerity'. The overall aim of the Paris event was to develop a collective political capacity for a new university, a new Europe and a new future for everyone. Flyers for the event stated its objectives: *'The time is now upon us to rise up, together, collectively and singularly, to reclaim our lives and build a New Europe based on rights and access. The time has come for us to reclaim what is ours: the common'*. The organisers were overwhelmed by the number of people who came to the event:

> The response to this attempt to make struggles around Europe was amazing for us. In Paris there was more people than we expected. This was a lucky moment because my feeling is that following the protests at the end of 2010 and the uprisings in the Arab world people were looking for a major point of connection, and in a really strong way the Paris meeting was able to break the idea of formal borders. There were people there from North Africa which meant that our Europe was now more than Europe, with new borders drawn by struggle rather than by politicians' (Anna Curceio, member of Edu-Factory collective, interview, September 2011).

The groups included the University of Utopia, the All Nepal National Free Student Union, the Carrott Workers Collective, Critical Legal Thinking, Direct Action from Ukraine, the Slow University of Warsaw, Fakultat Null from Berlin, the Pan Africa Student Council from the Gambia, the Street University of Russia, Öğrenci Kolektifleri from Turkey, The Association of the Blacklisted Students of Tokyo and Upping-the Anti from Canada. Some groups had tried to attend the event from North Africa but had not been granted visas and so were unable to take part.

The lecture theatre for the opening plenary was packed with people sitting on the floor and in the aisles, mostly students and young activists and some academics. The overwhelming numbers of participants was reflected in the chaotic workings of the timetable. Nothing started on time, but no one minded. Groups who had only read about each other were now meeting face to face, reveling in the situation and the impact they were having. Even the British students, not known for their radicality, had taken on the status of vanguard activists, with all interested to know about what had been going on in London and elsewhere in the UK around the marches and occupations.

The event was organised like a formal academic conference with a series of presentations, workshops and panels in which key issues were discussed in the traditional setting of class rooms and lecture halls. The issues under discussion included autonomous knowledge production, self-education, networking struggle, transnational organisations and the concept of the common. Indeed the common, as is increasing prevalent in academic circles, was the defining principle of the event. The outcome of the meeting was a joint declaration and a decision to form a new group to take the movement forward. The Joint Declaration included the statements:

> Since the state and private interests collaborate in the corporatisation process of the university, our struggles don't have the aim of defending the status quo. Governments bail out banks and cut education. We want to make our own university. A university that lives in our experiences of autonomous education, alternative research and free schools. It is a free university, run by students, precarious workers and migrants, a university without borders.

> This weekend we have shared and discussed our different languages and common practices of conflict: demonstrations, occupations and metropolitan

> strikes. We have created and improved our common claims: free access to the university against increasing fees and costs of education, new welfare and common rights against debt and the financialisation of our lives, and for an education based on co-operation against competition and hierarchies.

The participants agreed a new name for taking this 'revolutionary caravan' forward; it was to be known as the Knowledge Liberation Front (KLF). To support the work of the Front the delegates in Paris agreed to create a common journal of struggles, KAFCA, an acronym for Knowledge Against Financial of Capital; and that the 'revolutionary caravan', would hold its next general meeting in Tunisia towards the end of the year.

EUROPE AND THE UNIVERSITY

Universities have played a central role in the creation of the 'idea of Europe', as the institutional home of modernity and science (Van Vught 2006). In the European Union Higher Education was now seen as a key institution platform for the development of a new Europe. The idea of a European university was a recurrent idea from the very beginning of the formation of the EEC, and enshrined in the Treaty of Rome 1957, as part of 'a common market of the intelligence' (Corbett 2005 12). As one of the chief architects of the EEC put it:

> Would not such a market – more than anything else – accord with the concept and the tradition of a university, the most magnificent form of cultural institution created by the European mind (Hallstein in Corbett 2005 158).

In terms of Higher Education the ambition has been to create a 'Europe of Knowledge', so that by 2010 the EU should be ' the most competitive and dynamic knowledge-based economy in the world, capable of sustaining economic growth, with more and better jobs, and greater social cohesion' (European Council 2000, in Van Vught 2006 8). The function of universities will be 'to promote the development of the highest possible level of knowledge for their people through a wide access to education and its continuous updating' (Treaty of Amsterdam 1997, in van Vught 2006 10).

This ambition is clear from one of the chief strategy documents:

> Europe is not only that of the Euro, of the banks of the economy. It must be a Europe of knowledge as well (Sorbonne Declaration 1998, in Corbett 2005 195).

These policies for the new European University together with other EU ambitions have had to recast themselves following the Global Slump of 2008 and the onset of the Great Recession (McNally 2011). EU economic and social policy has now become the major player in the politics of austerity and precarity. What was billed as 'a decade of austerity' (McNally 2011) has become 'austerity for ever' (Corporate European Observatory 2011).

This programme of 'austerity for ever' is the latest example of the 'shock doctrine' principle (Klein 2007) designed to overwhelm opposition against austerity throughout the EU and beyond. However, the speed at which the austerity programme has been put together, as well as its lack of democratic accountability means it is built on weak political foundations (Corporate Europe Observatory 2011). The signs are that protests are already being mobilised, bringing together groups from across the social spectrum to fight against austerity, precarity, and the unaccountable global and European institutions through which these programmes are being enforced. At the centre of this movement are students, academic workers, and the Edu-Factory Collective.

THE UNIVERSITY IS PRECARIOUS – EDU-FACTORY

In 2006, starting in Rome, Italy, and spreading out all across Europe and beyond, a form of academic activism emerged to confront the future of the university in the context of the global crisis of capitalism. It began as a trans-national mailing list for militant academics and students who were engaged in the radical reinvention of higher education, and has grown to be 'a complex political machine'[1] assuming a life beyond the listserv of more than five hundred subscribers.

From the beginning the Edu-Factory programme has been how to restore the university as a revolutionary political project. The Collective is inspired by Autonomist Marxism, and other European social theorists, including the French philosopher, Michel Foucault. Debates within the collective focus around ideas that

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[1] http://www.edu-factory.org/edu15/

had become prominent within that milieux, e.g., social factory, cognitive capitalism and the commons. These new revolutionary concepts were designed to reignite the socialist vernacular in a way that corresponds to the contemporary revolutionary context, including 'new forms of co-operative and reticular communication' (Negri 2008 15).

At first Edu-Factory was internet based:

> We made some innovation in debates on the internet, without it the network was impossible. The internet provides the site for interesting discussions but they tend to sprawl and lack continuity. So we organised online discussions on specific topics and for set periods of time. The first discussions were on the university and knowledge production, followed by a discussion on hierachisation of the university on a global level. (Roggero, member Edu-Factory collective, interview September 2011)

The movement expanded from a web based group with a global membership of five hundred subscribers to become a genuinely transnational project. The purpose of this expansion was to realise the political potentiality that was evident from the web based network and to extend the borders beyond Italian and European activists and intellectuals. There were some problems around this expansion among the local Italian groups. The Rome based activists wanted to make a division between theory and practice, and to create a dichotomy between local based priorities and a more global strategy. Gigi Roggero, a founding member of the Collective, disagreed:

> We say for us transnational politics is a political gamble and not just a Fascinating idea. How to build up a transnational politics is a real everyday practice, for us the theoretical practice is immediately political practice: there is no distinction, this does not mean there is no difference but theoretical practice is a specific practice within political activity. Edu-Factory is a project that shows precisely this connection (Roggero, interview, September 2011).

While it sought to extend it geographical frontiers, Edu-Factory was based on a well defined analysis of the global crisis of capitalism. For this group of students and academics it had now become impossible to understand and respond to the changes in higher education without placing those changes in the context of labour and production (Edu-Factory Collective 2010b). The social relations of capitalist work had extended to the whole of society so that ' the whole of society becomes an articulation of society' (Tronti 1971 quoted in Wright 2002 38): ' the social factory',

within which the university had become a key institution. To fit with its identification of labour and production as key issues, the group quickly took on the descriptor of the 'Edu-Factory Collective':

> As was the factory, so now is the university. Where once the factory was a paradigmatic site of struggle between workers and capitalists, so now the university is a key space of conflict, where the ownership of knowledge, the reproduction of the labour force, and the creation of social and cultural stratifications are all at stake. This is to say the university is not just another institution subject to sovereign and governmental controls, but a crucial site in which wider social struggles are won and lost (Federici and Caffentzis, 2007).

Knowledge had now become a key commodity in the processes of valorisation, and the university the key site of production of commodified knowledge. Any sense of knowledge being produced for a common good, or that academic work requires open networks of collaboration was now being enclosed behind intellectual property laws, student debt, budget cuts, knowledge transfers, marketisation and privatization. The valorization of knowledge had produced a new regime of accumulation: cognitive capitalism, with Universities the new training ground for a new form of cognitive labour (Vercellone 2007, Paulo Do 2008). As the primary source of cognitive labour, students came to see themselves as the most precarious form of capitalist work.

Faced with this condition of precarity, an alternative form of knowledge production becomes a weapon to use against the current conditions of austerity, and, through that alternative process of knowledge production, the creation of new concepts by which this knowledge can be articulated and disseminated. For Edu-factory and its networks the weapons through which this alternative knowledge was to be produced became militant/co- Research and self- Education.

MILITANT/CO-RESEARCH

The purpose of this radical network was to create a transnational organisation of struggles informed and built on forms of research, referred to as militant or co-research. The defining characteristic of militant/co-research is that research is not simply the production of knowledge for the market, but a form of radical political action (Roggero 2012, Thorburn 2011).

Co-research (Conricerca) was developed in Italy in the 1960s by a group of young militants gathered around two groups: the *Red Note Books* (Quaderni Rossi) and *Working Class* (Classe Operaia) (Roggero 2012):

> Conricerca is itself a practice of intellectual production that does not accept a distinction between active researcher and passive research subject. The "con" or "co" is meant to question the borders between the production of knowledge and political subjectivity or, simply, to create a productive cooperation that transforms both parties into active participants in producing knowledge and in transforming themselves. More than anything, conricerca is a political methodology; it is the methodology of a constitutive breach (Thorburn, 2011).

Militant Research is based on similar methods and defines itself as a radical leftist political programme:

> We have to re-open and re-invent social inquiry: militant research can define the political method of critical analysis, invention and social insubordination in the political phase. To restart militant research means, first of all, that the learning phase is part of the political one, that we must crossbreed knowledge with practice, reflection and experience. Doing social inquiry means setting up tools of action, intervention and organization' (Edu-Factory Collective 2010b).

Roggero has conceptualised the process of co-research as the production of 'living knowledge' (Roggero 2011): "Co-research questions the borders between research and politics, knowledge and conflicts, university and social context, work and militancy" (Roggero 2011: 5). He argues that co-research is not to be confused with the sociology of work: knowledge gathered by sociologists to be revealed to workers so they can overcome false consciousness and advance their struggle (Wright 2002); rather, *conricercia* is fundamentally constitutive, where 'the production of knowledge is immediately the production of subjectivity and the construction of organisation' (Roggero 2011: 138), bringing together intellectual and political action from the perspective of living knowledge and living labour as a form of revolutionary practice. For Roggero, living knowledge is something that is constituted through class struggle, co-operation and radical practice. The purpose then is to turn the crisis of the university into a field of radical research in order to investigate and produce living knowledge (Roggero 2011: 29).

To support this work the collective set up a website, an online journal and in 2008

published an edited book collection, later translated into many different languages, while, at the same time, extending the network of meetings and events in Europe and elsewhere.

Edu-Factory Journal

The journal published in January 2010 reflects the Edu-Factory Collectives' preoccupation with the crisis of the university as part of the global crisis of capitalism: what they refer to as a double crisis; and, consequently, the struggle to create an 'autonomous institution' through the invention of the 'university of the common'. This first edition had articles, written by students, activists and academics on the predicament of knowledge workers: 'the 'cognitariat', in the US (Newfield 20010) and around the world, specifically Africa (Caffentzis 2010) and South America, (Carmona and Slachevsky 2010); as well as writings which showed how students and academics are struggling to articulate a language of resistance against the racist and colonial discourse of the World Bank and the Chicago School with its Anglophone logics, exemplified by the concept of excellence and entrepreneurship. These articles show the ways in which these discourses are linked to the quality protocols which express the 'thuggery of management theory', infecting the university with a culture of 'more with less', and a love of wage slavery (Bousquet 2010). Exemplars of resistance are elaborated through the attempts by the Lulu government in Brazil to create a more democratic and accessible university education for the 'multitude' (Mendes 2010); and an account of forms of protest that broke out in Italy in 2008 as an 'Anomalous Wave' or 'Onda Anomala' against the marketisation of higher education across Europe, through new forms of reclaiming academic space inside and outside of the university. Key demands made by 'Onda Anomala' include generalised welfare benefits: basic income (Bernardi and Ghelfi 2010), and to support the decentralised and democratic European movement of squatters and occupations. Through these occupations universities can become occupied by living labour rather than capital (Dokuzovic and Freudmann 2010).

Knowledge against the Financialisation of Capital (KAFCA)

The KLF, established at the Paris meeting, has already began to produce a zine, with

the title 'Knowledge against Financial Capital' (KAFCA). This zine is another example of militant research, translated and written in an accessible form, as a samizdat publication. This publication is a combination of photographs of struggles, accounts of privatisation of HE in Japan, and of struggles for Higher Education and against cuts in UK. The zine also includes writings on the politics of student debt and the poverty of student life; as well as accounts of new emerging protests by students and academics in Eastern Europe.

One ambition of the KLF is to appropriate new sites for the production of knowledge:

> 'We the cognitive workers of Europe, knowing that the future of the world is in
> our brains and in our hands, lamenting the lack of spaces for lecturing, reading
> and living, DETERMINE, that banks shall become places for lecturing and
> studying and reading and sleeping and having fun and making love '(KAFCA
> 2011 4).

Another ambition is to produce a new form of institution, what they call 'monster institutions':

> To create new monster institutions based on networks of struggle defined as a
> form of organization that works from point to point, or as a total mesh where
> knots and swarms assemble in tactical forms and where topology is configured
> as an arrangement of composite rhythms and geometries of hostility and
> antagonism against the collective capitalist. Networks as intense and vivid spaces
> where the rhythms and the paces of different struggles converge in the bet (
> gamble: alt trans) for an original composition, for the production of common
> notions and common actions (KAFCA 2011 4 – 5).

SELF – EDUCATION

The edited book produced by Edu-Factory Collective in 2008, *Towards a Global Autonomous University: Cognitive Labour, the production of knowledge and Exodus from the Education Factory*, picks up on and develops these themes. It sets out very clearly the meaning and significance of the Edu-Factory project in a world that is about to be overwhelmed by a new global form of university derived from the non-regulations of the WTO and GATS. In this new financialised world foreign providers can intervene in domestic markets undermining regulatory national frameworks, with devastating consequences for academic labour in terms of insecure employment, increasing precariousness, as well a contravening academic, ethical and value

aspirations. The outcome is that academic culture is replaced by an enterprise business culture so that universities come more and more to resemble multinational corporations (Ross 2009), with student compliance enforced by a pedagogy of debt (Williams 2009).

In contradistinction to the pedagogy of debt, self-education requires an allegiance between full time faculty and students, a 'labour theory of agency in higher education' (Schell 2009 118). These alliances include making contact with the subversive academics who exist invisibly in the shadows of higher education, operating in the underground, referred to by Harney and Moten (2009) as 'the undercommons', i.e., those who have not yet abandoned the notion of revolution. These 'undercommons' are made up of:

> 'Maroon communities of composition teachers, mentorless graduate students, adjunct Marxist historians, or queer management professors, state college ethnic studies departments, closed down film programmes, visa-expired Yemeni student newspaper editors, historically black college sociologists and feminist engineers. And what will the university say of them? It will say they are unprofessional. How do those who exceed the profession, who exceed and by exceeding escape, how do those maroons, problematise themselves, problematise the university, force the university to consider them a problem, a danger? The Undercommons are always at war, always in hiding' (Harney and Moten 2009 149).

Paradoxically, this substratum of criticality is an essential aspect of higher education, enabling universities to maintain their critical distance from dominant orthodoxies. Yet the university administration are hostile to this group, who they regard as 'uncollegial, impractical, naïve, unprofessional' (Harney and Moten 2009 147).

From out of this work new concepts emerge, including undercommons, monster institutions, cognitariat, thuggery of management theory, pedagogy of debt and occupation. The sustainability of these concepts is the extent to which they further intensify the process of militant/co-research and self-education in praxis.

MILITANT/CO-RESEARCH AND SELF-EDUCATION IN PRAXIS

The strength of this movement is the way in which it seeks to ground its theoretical

concepts with real practical action. This can be illustrated by reference to programmes already taking place inside universities. These programmes often have no formal connection to each other, but each demonstrates aspects of militant/co-research and self-education as a form of praxis. Two such projects are *Student as Producer* at the University of Lincoln, England, and *Universidad Nomada* at the University of Madrid, Spain.

Student as Producer

Student as Producer did not emerge from within the Edu-Factory Collective, nor does it have any formal connection, but its activities are derived from a very similar theoretical Marxist framework. Student as Producer works at different levels: at one level it is a curriculum development model across all subjects areas at the University of Lincoln; at another more foundational level it has the ambition of reinventing the European University as a radical political project.

Student as Producer emerged in 2008 a model of curriculum development in HE, working across one institution, the University of Lincoln, in collaboration with other university in UK and internationally. Student as Producer is based on a negative critique of the current university structure. The modern university is fundamentally dysfunctional, with its two core activities - research and teaching - working against each other (Boyer 1998). To promote the re-engineering of the relationship between teaching and research Student as Producer returns to the radical history of the modern university, with reference to Willhelm von Humboldt's University of Berlin in 1810 and the student protests of 1968. Humboldt's plan was to establish 'the ideal of the university' as a progressive political, liberal humanist project, and the basis of modern nation-building. This would be done by connecting teaching and research in a programme to promote the expansive creation of new knowledge, so that the university becomes the highest level of consciousness of liberal society (Lyotard 1979). The student protests of 1968 is a defining moment in the eventual failure of the liberal humanist project, when students and workers became 'the revealers of a general crisis' of capitalist society (Ross 2002). This failure of liberal humanism is evidenced by ongoing imperialist global wars, continued repression of radical leftist political projects and the alienation and anomie at the centre of everyday life. An

important aspect of this revelation by students was the dymystification of the elite practice of the production of knowledge with 'research becoming something that anyone can do' (Ross 2002).

The radicality of Student as Producer is further underlined by its affinity with the writings of Walter Benjamin's, especially the paper 'Author as Producer' (1933), in which Benjamin addressed the question 'how do radical intellectuals act in a moment of crisis?' Following Brecht and the Russian Constructivists, Benjamin's response was to enable students to see themselves as subjects rather than objects of history, as teachers, writers and performers, rather than recipients of knowledge, and be able to recognise themselves in a social world of their own design.

The basic framework for Student as Producer at Lincoln is to involve undergraduate students as part of the academic project of the university by encouraging more research and research-like activities into the curriculum, and by involving students in the design and delivery of their course. These types of activities are well established at Lincoln and other HEIs, but are often found on the margins of mainstream practice. Student as Producer takes these most progressive practices and makes them the organising principle for the whole university. The programme has been developed with full consultation between academics and student groups. This programme is being embedded within the university's infrastructure, including bureaucratic processes and procedures, strategies for educational technologies, the design of teaching and learning spaces as well as by intensifying levels of student engagement (http://studentasprodcer.lincoln.ac.uk). The programme is under a constant critical review to prevent it becoming another managerialist imperative and to avoid recuperation (Neary and Hagyard 2010).

The significance of Student as Producer is not simply that students are working alongside academics on projects to create real knowledge – these progressive relationships can be found in most universities; but, rather, that the institutional form of the University of Lincoln is being transformed by re-engineering the relationship between teaching and research. The success of Student as Producer will be the extent to which it manages to transform the concept and practice of higher education (Neary 2012).

Universidad Nomada

Universidad Nomada is a group of academics, students and activists, which emerged in 2001 in Spain as a 'force-field' for the radicalisation of global society.[2] The concept of 'nomada' (Deleuze and Guattari 1988) points to the transnational, transversal and transformatory nature of the project, which aims to produce a society of knowledge against the neo-liberal hegemonic structures and institutions of cognitive capitalism. The purpose is to create counter-knowledge and counter-power as a resource for the society at the general social level.

Universidad Nomada's tasks are the production and dissemination of intellectual tools and cultural theory to understand domination and promote resistance. One of the main ways this is done is through a programme of courses and seminars on a range of related subjects operating inside the *Universidad Complutense de Madrid,* one of Spain's leading Universities http://www.ucm.es/centros/webs/en/. These courses provide credits for the university's enrolled students, while being fully open to any interested person and especially those active in social movements and alternative networks in the city of Madrid. The courses are self-organised, democratic and non-hierachical.

These courses include, Reimagining the Israel-Palestine conflict, studies on the Bolivian Revolution, Writing a Manifesto for Revolution 2.0 and Intellectual Property and Copyleft. Universidad Nomada is intimately concerned with the development of new political concepts such as the commons, commonfare and commoniveristy and establishing their connection with already existing political concepts, e.g., feminism and colonialism. As well as teaching programmes, the Universidad Nomada is involved with research through Globalization and Social Movements (GSM). The main object of enquiry for GSM is the European Higher Education Area, with the aim of working with social movements to research at the local, national and international levels.

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[2] http://www.universidadnomada.net/

One of the most solid organising principles of Universidad Nomada is the way in which it seeks to connect the university with Social Centres. Social Centres first emerged in Italy in the 1970s as sites for the development of autonomous politics and resistance to the growing corporate take-over, enclosure and alienation of everyday life. Social Centres convert local unused buildings into self organised sites for the provision of radical community use: social services, music, art, publishing and education (Hodkinson and Chatterton 2006):

> There is a close link between social centres and self-education. The purpose of Universidad Nomada is to make a link between the University and the Social Centre, as a self organised site linked to autonomous education. This is the border we want to problematise, between Social Centres and the University as a knowledge space and as a site of resistance. It's not a matter of learning a lesson and repeating it to the professor. No, it's about articulating and problematising radical theories in relation to the present situation collectively, to get ideas from the grassroots. The point is to put in crisis the relation between the student and the professor and to problematise that relationship. The aim for me is to be able to distribute our knowledge, to take it back to the society out of which it has been produced, as a model for how society should work in a sustainable way, struggling against exploitation. It's a simple point (Dario Lovaglio, member of Universidad Nomada, interview 2011).

TEACHING POLITICALLY – A NEW POLITICAL SCIENCE, A NEW UNIVERSITY

The struggles to create a new radical form of European University have much to teach the current designers of curriculum in higher education. The revolutionary pedagogies which emerged in 1968, forming the basis for the most radical leftist institutions, like Paris 8, have been recuperated by many European universities. So much so that the idea of independent study is now a common feature of the university curriculum, supported by problem-based learning, research-based teaching as well as student-centred and student-led teaching and learning, wrapped up in the concept of enhancing student engagement (Ramsden, 2003).

These recuperated radical pedagogies have done much to revitalise the undergraduate curriculum, but at the same time, the 'idea of the university' on which they are based has been undermined (Pratt 1997). The contemporary European University is being reduced to an increasingly functional and instrumental, practical and vocational

institution based on enterprise and links to business based on a marketised system of social development (Collini, 2010). The attempt to promote a marketised system of higher education is being done at a time when the market model for social development is on the point of collapse (McNally, 2009). It is becoming increasingly clear that the market based model for social development is not sustainable, and attempts to prolong it have devastating consequences not only for Universities but for the population of Europe and the world (Holloway, 2002).

The response to the collapse of neoliberal finance by conservative and reactionary forces has been a project of 'demodernisation' (Graham, 2010 xxiv): leading to increasingly militarised forms of political and economic violence against civilian populations, and an attack on the concept of critical knowledge (Graham, 2010 43), exemplified by killing universities (Evans, 2004). In such a context the triumph of radical pedagogy cannot be assumed.

Nevertheless, the struggles against these reactionary forces are, as this paper has shown, reigniting and reinventing new forms of teaching and learning. In this pedagogical environment teaching becomes not simply transmitting subject- based knowledge, but a way of problematising the relationship between teacher and student so as to provide some critical context for the institutions within which students and academics are working and a basis for their relationships with the social world. In an environment where the teaching in higher education is politicised in this way, the production of knowledge becomes a new form of political science derived from the struggles to build new forms of social institutions and a new political future.

POST SCRIPT - NOT SCIENCE FICTION: THE NETWORK OF STRUGGLES: TUNIS, TUNISIA

The students of the Maghreb had been unable to come to Paris, so the 'revolutionary caravan', the newly formed KLF, went to Tunis to meet with students and activists from the region. The title for this event was 'Network of Struggles'. Since its formation in Paris, the KLF, now had a clear sense of its purpose:

> 'KLF is a space of intensity for the autonomous production of knowledge that emerges from struggles of last winter. It is not a national frame to understand the struggle. It is a space for collaboration and dialogue, a process of connection....a machine that produces knowledge, a translating machine that recognises differences, but articulates them in a way that enables people to work collectively as the only way to break the exploitation of capital. The meeting in Tunis will be the first step' (Pantxo Rama, KLF member, interview, September 2011).

A caravan of more than three hundred people assembled in the Ibn Rachik Cultural Centre in downtown Tunis from 30th September to the 2nd of October, 2011. This included such global organisations as Afrique-Europe-Interact, as well as Ahl Al Kahf from Tunisia, the Social Science Centre from Lincoln, Border Monitoring from Germany, The Tunisian Free Youth Movement, the Centre Social Rog Ljob Ljubljana from Slovenia, Co-ordination Nationale Autonome de Etudiants from Algeria, as well as Take the Square from Spain and Arti from Tunisia.

These people had come from all over Europe and the Maghreb to discuss the Tunisian Revolution, the Arab Spring and the growing worldwide revolution against capitalism. Before the first workshop started I discussed the revolution with participants in a courtyard outside the School of Humanities in Tunis. One of the students said to me: 'Sitting like this and talking in groups outside and in public would not have been possible before the revolution. Any groups talking was seen as opposition.' He continued: 'Before the revolution it was dangerous to talk politics. Now everyone is a politician'. But there were less optimistic opinions. A female student said: 'It's not a revolution. It's a rebellion, Nothing has really changed. Repression has increased'. There are due to be democratic parliamentary style elections in Tunisia in a few weeks time, but there did not seem much hope that these elections would change anything fundamentally. The female student continued: 'Everyone is afraid the Revolution will be stolen or institutionalised'. But, at the same time, there was a clear sense of what must be done. One group of students demanded: 'We need to make autonomous zones, as a shield, to defend the revolution'. A key point that emerged from the discussion was the importance of making a connection between revolutionary theory and revolutionary practice. As one student put it: 'One thing we have learned from the Tunisian revolution is that to have revolution you need a revolutionary theory.'

Following the welcome in the Ibn Rachik Centre, the conference dispersed to sites around the city and across Tunisia to discuss specific themes. The sites outside of the city included Hamman Life, the coastal town where Tunisians attempt the voyage to Europe, and Sidi Bouzid 'the mother city' of the Revolution. The themes for discussion included: insurrectional urbanism, knowledge and culture, social medicine, migration, freedom and circulation, alternative media, state and repression and precarity and debt.

I went to the workshop on knowledge and culture, in the Faculte of Science Humaines and the Ecole National Superieure. The workshop was made up of different political groups and individuals, including Marxists, Nasser Nationalists, student groups, including General United Students and some attenders without any political affiliation. We spoke about the concrete work we were doing in our own universities. I told them about work I was doing in England and about Student as Producer. Our discussion was organised around three themes: transnational space against global financialisation, the connections between school, university and the labour market, and a radical critique of the concept of knowledge. We worked in Arabic, English, French, Italian, with members of the group providing simultaneous translation. By the end of our workshop we had written a statement to report back to the plenary in Ibn Rachik Centre. Looking back at our report now it was very like the agreed general statement of the first meeting in Paris.

Back in the plenary at the end of the event we made plans for the caravan of resistance to move on, in virtual spaces on the web, as well as in the material world, with a series of thematic meetings in Europe and the Maghreb. The purpose of this work was to continue to make common concepts of struggle and a new political language.

While we were in Tunis an article appeared in 'La Presse' (01.10.11) a major national newspaper, about the *Network of Struggles* event. Such a report in such a newspaper would have been unthinkable in the days of the dictatorship. As one of the participants at the conference said: 'This is not science fiction…this is making history'.

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