

Education: The Fight for our Future

The Crisis in Education

The problems in education can't be solved within a single classroom or school. Education in every society serves to maintain the existing order and to socialize young people to function within it. That means educating children to function in the capitalist system, a system based on the exploitation of the overwhelming majority of people on the planet. It's a system rooted in genocide, racism, endless war and climate catastrophe.

Conditions in our Schools

Before the pandemic even began, teachers and students faced large class sizes, broken-down buildings, outdated textbooks, and a severe shortage of counselors, social workers, and nurses. In cities from Detroit and Newark to Baltimore and Washington D.C., students' water was poisoned by lead. In West Virginia, it was undrinkable, contaminated by more than a hundred years of toxic waste from mining. In Los Angeles, there were up to 39 students crammed into a classroom. In Texas, the hallways were patrolled by armed police officers, who charged children for so-called crimes ranging from swearing to wearing inappropriate clothing. And more than 12 million students were "food insecure" — a fancy way of saying they arrived at school with empty stomachs.

These Conditions Aren't the Exception

They are the rule in poor and working-class neighborhoods. And the pandemic of systemic racism means that the burden of a broken education system has fallen disproportionately on poor and working-class students of color. Studies show that across all school districts in the U.S., \$2,200 less is spent per year on a student of color compared to a white student. In cities across the country, Black and Brown students attend segregated, underfunded schools that have been starved of resources for decades. They are disproportionately punished, expelled and criminalized, as they are funneled into what has rightly been termed "the school to prison pipeline."

What does it even mean to offer a "good education" to a student under these circumstances? Arithmetic and writing are useful skills. But does learning fractions help you to understand the robbery and violence being committed against you? Does writing a five-paragraph essay help you to find food and shelter? Do multiple choice tests stop police brutality?

What Do the Billionaires Propose?

The billionaires and their politicians propose privatization, school closures, standardized testing, and focus on controlling and punishing students. That is their idea of education for the majority. That's because schools in this society were never meant to offer a real education to most of us. Their goal is to train the children of the middle and upper classes to administer the system, and to train the rest of us to be obedient workers who know how to shut up and follow orders.

A Broader Social Struggle

Education connects everyone in the community. Schools bring together parents, grandparents, students, bus drivers, food service workers, social workers, nurses, counselors, clerks, delivery drivers, teachers.

Education is an intersection of the problems we face in this society: systemic racism, poverty, unemployment, privatization, houselessness, and hunger. The fight for better education can be a broad, inclusive struggle. Public education could be the hub of the wheel in a fightback against all these conditions.

Instead of fighting for slightly smaller class sizes, a few more counselors, and a small pay increase, we could fight together to transform education as part of the struggle to transform our entire society. A socialist society would mean education for life. It would be like attending a giant university that recognizes all that we learn in daily life. Imagine a world in which anyone could be a philosopher, a scientist, an artist, and an athlete, and we could unleash the potential of billions of human beings to build a better world.



***We Shouldn't Pay for Their Crisis!
The Future is in Our Hands!***

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