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# EDUCATION & LIBERATION

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HOW SCHOOLING FUNCTIONS UNDER CAPITALISM



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# EDUCATION MATTERS!

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A good education is a necessity for everyone. Education forms the foundations of our lives, from childhood to our later years. It gives us tools to interpret and navigate the world around us. No society can thrive without an educated population.



Today, we are facing environmental collapse brought on by centuries of colonialism and capitalist extraction. Now more than ever before, **we need education that enables us to understand what is happening and take action to reclaim our future.**

British education is often considered "good," especially compared to standards of education in other countries around the world. However, education systems in many countries have been **forced into conditions of underdevelopment** by British and European colonialism and its modern-day economic and political legacies.

British education scores highly in rankings devised by the British capitalist ruling class, who control and structure our education systems entirely for their own benefit — **to preserve their own class and to reproduce the class of workers whose labour they rely on.**

**In the classroom, students are indoctrinated with capitalist and imperialist ideology.** We are taught to equate economic productivity with moral worth, to glorify war and colonisation, and to obey orders. Questioning or deviating from norms is discouraged or even punished. Eventually, students internalise these ideas and perpetuate them for another generation.

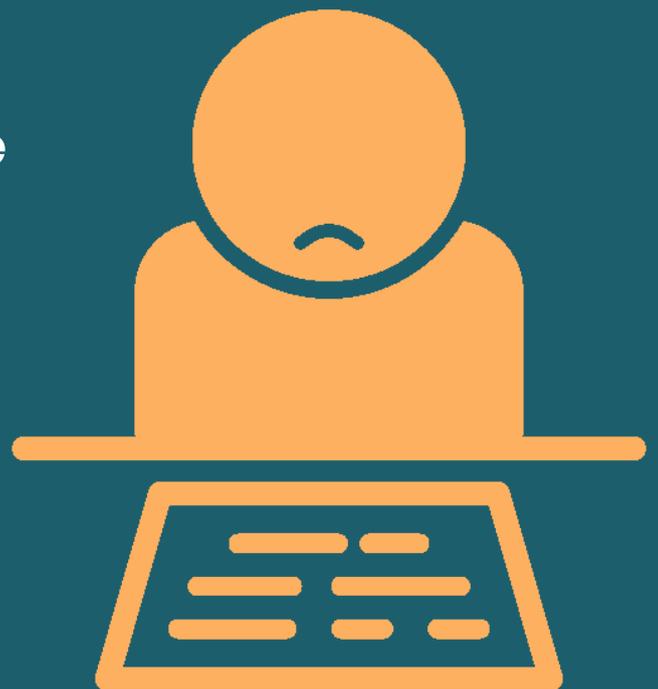
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# THE CAPITALIST CLASSROOM

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Most working class people have not had a positive experience of school. Feeling disengaged or bored, being treated poorly by teachers and other students, and struggling to function within the classroom environment are all common problems, which lead to low attendance and bad GCSE results.

**These outcomes do not indicate an inherent failing of the students – rather, they reflect the fundamental inhumanity of bourgeois education under capitalism.**



**The capitalist school mimics the capitalist workplace.** Pupils have no say in what they learn or how they learn it, and are never viewed as having knowledge of their own to contribute. If they are punished, they have no recourse. They are only allowed to express themselves during strictly limited periods of time, at lunch or recess.

**This restrictive environment prepares young people for the misery and alienation that they are expected to experience as working adults.**



Children are brimming with interest, talent, and a natural ability to learn and grow.

**Capitalist education is designed to suppress and eliminate these qualities rather than nurture them.**

Few adults know the true joys of learning; they associate the concept of education with the traumas of schooling, where they were punished for challenging authority or expressing themselves.

In other words, **capitalist 'education' alienates people from the very idea of learning.** Politically, this result benefits the ruling class by robbing the working class of potential leaders and forcing us to choose sides from a selection of bourgeois political parties, none of whom have working people's interests in mind.

**Capitalist education also upholds racist and imperialist narratives** about Britain's role in world history, teaching children to regurgitate chauvinistic propaganda and preventing them from recognising their position as the proletariat of an imperialist nation.

**Schools are not primarily concerned with developing well-rounded, responsible, intellectually curious human beings.** Their priority is achieving the highest possible scores on the standardised tests issued by the capitalist state.

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# THE SCHOOL-TO-PRISON PIPELINE

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**In the capitalist education system, performance is measured without consideration of circumstances.** Factors that provably affect a student's performance at school (such as race, gender, disability, and class) are ignored completely.

By alienating students, particularly Black students and other students of colour, from formal education, academic achievement can be regulated. This gives a systemic advantage to white children and those from bourgeois backgrounds. In this way, marks are outright rigged, as the 2020 exam results scandal definitively showed.

**On the flip side of systemic privilege, there is oppression and super-exploitation.**

The majority of "young offenders" (child prisoners) have a similar story: their path to incarceration or institutionalisation began through class exclusion, in-school exclusion, expulsion, and finally arrest and imprisonment.

**Each step leads to the next – and it all starts in school.**



**Excluded pupils are 7 times more likely to have special educational needs.**

**Every day, 35 students are permanently excluded from school.**

**Only 1% of them will get 5+ GCSEs.**

**The school and the prison go hand in hand under capitalism, sharing the same carceral logic.**

"Carceral logic" refers to how prisons, and other approaches that involve the violence of incarceration, are built into our culture and everyday lives. Just as prisons claim to solve crime by removing people from society, exclusions purport to solve undesirable behaviour by removing students from their schools and communities.

But are these children truly beyond hope? Do they really "deserve" this kind of punishment and its long-term ramifications? **Exclusions don't do any good for students or society; they just perpetuate the systemic inequalities that exist in education.**

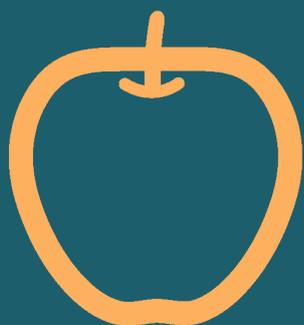
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# TEACHERS IN TURMOIL

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**Austerity has reduced teachers' wages and stretched classroom resources to their limit.**

Teachers' jobs depend on standardised test scores, and so students are reduced to numbers, measured by their ability to conform to an expectation rather than by their personal intellectual development.



The unsurprising result is that fewer people are going into teaching, which has only worsened the already unmanageable workloads of school staff. **Disillusionment and exhaustion** are common among seasoned teachers, yet they are compelled to stay in their jobs due to rising retirement ages and the threat of financial insecurity that comes with old age.

The reason behind these problems is that **in capitalist terms, teaching is an "unproductive" industry** — meaning that it provides little immediate profit for capitalists.

The long, bitter struggle of workers to force the bourgeois state to outlaw child labour and introduce mandatory state education shows plainly that a well-rounded education of the working class is the last of the capitalists' priorities. **Education is only useful to capitalists insofar as it is necessary to produce the next generation of productive workers.**

Class struggle has brought about some reforms, but because these were never consolidated through socialist revolution, they have always been manipulated by the bourgeois state, as evidenced by the common practice of laying off teachers during recessions.

**The result of this arrangement is that everyone suffers.** Pitted against each other, students and teachers alike are denied the rightful joys of giving, receiving, and developing knowledge.



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# BOURGEOIS IDEOLOGY

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The content of school curricula is equally harmful. From the outset, schools teach the ideology of capitalist-imperialism, attempting to instill children with a deeply rooted belief in a system that enriches a small class of land- and property-owners and exploits and oppresses working people.

"fascism is a thing of the past"

*"history is like a novel where the main characters are monarchs and their children"*

"Britain is a democracy and respects the democracy of other nations"

"our system rewards hard work and creativity"

Statements like these are false, but they are taught to the working classes so that we identify with our oppressors and sympathise with bourgeois perspectives on political, historical, and social issues. Capitalist education is meant to prevent us from recognising the oppression that is wrought by capitalism globally: we can't challenge what we don't realise exists.

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# EDUCATION AS LIBERATION

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**We need a new, liberatory approach to education,** because the capitalist education system was not designed for the benefit of working class and oppressed people: it was designed to suppress us.

A liberatory education should teach **real history**, recognising that the modern world is built on a system of injustice and exploitation — but also that there are many legacies of fierce resistance to be studied and learned from.

It should approach topics **in an interconnected way** — for example, considering how Newton's first law of motion, that "bodies in motion remain in motion unless an equally opposing force acts upon it," applies equally to political struggle.

It should accommodate the unique interests and learning styles of individuals. **It should be about fulfilling the needs of all people, rather than training to support the rich.**

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# ABOUT RED FIGHTBACK

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Red Fightback advocates for universal, comprehensive education for the benefit of the international working classes. We study and teach proletarian history, philosophy, economics, and politics in order to equip working class people with the tools for their liberation from capitalism and the construction of a future based on hope, justice, sustainability, and prosperity.

## To learn more or get involved:



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