

Teaching is ill: We must stop therapeutic obstinacy

Without being able to make a "general" assessment of the effects of the COVID-19 pandemic at this time, it is nevertheless already evident that in some industries this will enable a clear acceleration in the process of mechanization and digitalization leading to a devaluation of the workforce. This is unquestionably the case in education, where the fixed costs saved and the economies of scale attained by the health measures will largely continue after this crisis.

In order to analyze this process, we must first reexamine the core disagreements between Marx and Engels regarding teaching, culture, and education. The current state of education in advanced capitalism will then be addressed, as well as the sector's increasingly rapid decline during its restructuring and adaptation to new industrial models of work organization. This accelerated trend signals the planned demise of education as we may have known it in the previous century, as well as the generalization of a "disqualification" by boredom and the brutalization of ignorance for the vast majority of workers.

"In bourgeois society, the school pursues three main objectives: it educates the young generation of workers in a spirit of dedication and respect for the capitalist regime; it prepares among the youth of the ruling classes "educated" trainers for the laboring people; and it serves capitalist production through the use of science for the improvement of technology and the increase of capitalist incomes."¹

Critics of education and teaching in Marx-Engels

Marx and Engels have always viewed education and teaching with a great deal of skepticism, just as they did with the other distinct fields of knowledge. They approached these problems from the standpoint of the critique of the capitalist system as a whole. Because of this, none of their works specifically address these problems. But rather than in a book that is specifically about the topic, it is through the statements that are scattered throughout their work that we discover their ongoing interest in the criticism of pedagogical and educational issues.²

His many observations can be condensed into a few main ideas. The primary purpose of teaching and education in the MPC (but also in all class societies) is to **reproduce** a class-based society and to represent its hierarchical structure. The duplication of opposing classes, including the two most fundamental of society - the bourgeoisie and the proletariat - implies this reproduction. This reproductive function is closely related to the state apparatus, which acts as tools of class dominance with a monopoly of violence that is both "kinetic" and more ideological, or what is known as "potential" violence. One of the requirements for this copying to work is reflected, at the level of the individual, in their aspiration to a potential social ascent due to merit. This reproduction acts globally for a duplication of classes as such. Therefore, it is advantageous for the system that some members of the lower classes show through their

¹N. Boukharine, E. Préobrajenski, ABC du communisme, T.II, P.62, Maspero.

²We will therefore use the collection of Marx-Engels texts produced and presented by Roger Dangeville.: « Critique de l'éducation et de l'enseignement » Maspero, Paris, 1976.

education that they are capable of rising to the elite classes if they have the motivation and drive to do so. This is a practical illustration of the social elevator, which explains why the vast majority of people stay in their original class—or occasionally even fall—as an elevator goes up and down! In this elevator, we are witnessing an increasing number of breakdowns, and elite procreation is largely reverting to the nepotism of the past. The fact that there can only be one education, equal for all, "democratic", but always with a variety of teachings (different types of schools and pedagogies), depending on the composition of the class in formation and its suitability for the productive tasks that will be assigned to the apprentices in their future working lives, implies that the reproduction by teaching and education of the different classes is a necessary presumption. *"Unequal access to knowledge and a mechanism for maintaining all the social injustices that general education only perpetuates from one generation to the next."*³

It's also interesting to note that, as one moves down the social hierarchy toward the lower classes, one becomes **less aware** of the mechanisms of indoctrination and the inequality in educational attainment (Bourdieu, Passeron)⁴. For the lower classes, who must be kept in this state of ignorance and delusion regarding a potential for personal redemption through meritocracy, the democratic myth of equal education for everyone therefore bears far greater significance. On the other hand, as one moves closer to the elites and the top of the cultural pyramid, the more knowledge of the reality of social and cultural disparity is required in order to use it as a tool for the upkeep of social dominance. As a result, it is highly uncommon to encounter people of the lower classes who are interested in pedagogical or educational disparities, as in their minds, only the ease of immediate survival matters. This is also the reason why, rather than simply being a matter of cost, the more we engage with alternative and libertarian education, the more we notice that the very top of society has a greater inclination to reproduce itself there. The "free children of Summerhill" were known for their anti-authoritarian (and for-profit) teaching, which has always had a high coefficient of elite reproduction⁵.

On the other hand, we must never forget that teaching and education are fundamentally ideological activities. These essentially work *"in alliance with the Church for the **dumbing down** of the citizens"* through the school (and the family)⁶. School is a setting that largely prepares students for working in factories or offices; it is a state institution for **training and domesticating** future wage laborers. This significant ideological element is also reflected in the teacher, who is frequently infused with the significance of his role as "teacher-castrator" and servant of the prevailing bourgeois values despite being an unproductive employee most of the time. He tends to forget that *"the educator himself must be educated"* far too often. (K. Marx, "The Theses on Feuerbach," p.20; G. Labica). The lay teacher's status as the parish priest's equal in the distribution of ideological repression was not given without cause. Therefore, the significance of its "mission" is directly related to its desire to socialize and inculcate both lower-class youth, despite their passivity and lack of interest in any critical knowledge. As Marx-Engels stated in the Manifesto of the Communist Party: *"Culture is for the great majority*

³ Marx et F. Engels : Critique de l'éducation et de l'enseignement, déjà cité Maspero. p.35.

⁴ Estas son las tesis desarrolladas por P. Bourdieu et J-C. Passeron dans : La reproduction éditions de Minuit.

⁵ C.F : A.S. Neill : Libres enfants de Summerhill, Maspero.

⁶ Lé. Thanh Khôi : Marx-Engels et l'éducation Puf. p.35.

only a training that turns them into machines." (Marxist Science Editions, p. 51). The long process of inculcating the dominant social values and real submission to them is necessary to produce the future labor force. This socialization must be primarily accomplished through required education.

"As a result, those who possess the means of material production also possess those of intellectual production. The dominant thoughts are nothing more than the ideal representation of the dominant material relations, which have been translated into ideas. In other words, they are an expression of the relationships or ideas that support a class's dominance. The members of the ruling class are conscious, among other things, which allows them to think. Insofar as they dominate as a class and define a historical era in its entirety, it is obvious that they dominate in all spheres; specifically, they rule as thinking beings who produce ideas and control how those ideas are produced and disseminated during their time. Therefore, their ideas were the ones that dominated their time." (K. Marx: The civil war in France, Social editions, p. 261)

The working class' education during the early years of capitalism was characterized above all by a complete lack of training and education. Ignorance was supposed to ensure the proletariat's passivity. Therefore, proletarian passivity would be ensured by ignorance. Marx had previously responded, *"...Ignorance has never served anyone"*⁷, in opposition to this. The "dangerous class", which the bourgeoisie feared, was seen as more dangerous because it could learn more about its own situation and the realities of society as a whole. For this reason, some socialist currents also placed a high value on teaching and education as a means of achieving liberation. For them, the promise of liberation for the exploited and oppressed classes was made possible by mandatory education, just like with the right to vote. This wasn't the case, though, as education has never truly been freed *"from the bonds of governmental control and class prejudice"*.⁸ In developed capitalism, the role of domesticating the future labor force and inculcating the dominant ideology through direct state education (also known as "public" education) or indirect, "private" (so-called "free education"), predominates and goes far beyond the idea that "knowledge, free and objective" will free the proletariat from its exploitation.

The affirmation of opposing ideas or a different point of view, even one historically grounded in the interests of the working class, cannot defeat ideology⁹ as a material force. The only way to truly reveal the world as it is and to make man aware of his complete social, free, and total being is through the top-down destruction of the material basis and of capitalist social relations. Because of this, there is not a "proletarian" (or worse, "Marxist") ideology, or if there were, it would be a counterrevolutionary affirmation of the proletariat, specifically class for capital, like in Stalinism. Ideology is an upside-down version of actual social relationships; it is a mirror image of them.

"Men's being is their actual life process, and consciousness can never be anything other than conscious being. In addition, if any ideology causes men and relationships to appear to us upside down, as in a camera obscura, this phenomenon comes from their historical life

⁷K. Marx : Lettre, Bruxelles, 31/03/1846.

⁸K. Marx : The Civil War in France ; Social Editions, p. 261.

⁹On these questions we refer the reader to our text: "The critique of alienation key to Marx's humanism": Matériaux Critiques N° 1, p.65, as well as to the website: <https://materiauxcritiques.wixsite.com/monsie>

process, just as the overturning of objects on the retina is the direct physical result of their life process."¹⁰

The primary purpose of this inversion, of this reversal of reality, is the need to conceal, to veil, to mystify the reality of its foundation. *"However, the worldly foundation's ability to detach from itself and anchor itself in a separate realm in the clouds can only be explained by how contradictory and self-destructive it is. Therefore, the latter must be understood in both its contradiction and practical revolution."*¹¹

This is the revolutionary critique in the absence of the weapon critique, as we like to point out, and the work of critical unveiling! The worker is asked to accept his exploitation as normal and fair as part of this mystification process and for the MPC to operate as intended. In contrast to what we know because of Marxist critique, he must imagine that his wage is paid at its value. By paying less than the value, it is possible to release an unpaid portion, the surplus labor, and ultimately, the surplus value after financial realization. This mystification must be put into practice, in part because of the political economy ideology, the same ideology that has taught us for centuries and in a variety of ways that all factors of production are paid according to the wealth they produce, allowing us to scotomize the exploitation process. With the growth of the actual subsumption of labor under capital, the process of inculcating the dominant ideology (in all of its manifestations) has advanced and become highly sophisticated, even in relation to the growth of mechanization in the production process, which has deepened the alienation of the worker in the mechanized and now digital factory.

*"From there, we can determine the connections between the various moments of alienation, which frequently manifest independently. The movement toward separation and splitting that has already been mentioned is linked to the movement toward the autonomy (Verselbständigung) of the things produced by human activity and the relationships it has fostered. It also involves an expropriation-dispossession (Enteignung), as the externalization (Veräußerung) of the capacities during the manifestation (Ausserung) of the human being is in fact an expropriation. Due to the products' alienation from both the producers and their community, extraneization (Entfremdung) occurs concurrently. The movement that results is an inversion-reversion (Verkehrung), which transforms objects into subjects (Versubjektivierung), and subjects into objects (Versachlichung), creating mystification. This mystification gives rise to a fetishism for the commodity or for capital, which gives objects human-like characteristics. As a result, at the start, there are beings that rule over things, and at the end, there are things that have evolved into beings."*¹²

*"Only the conventions of our everyday life make it appear commonplace and ordinary that social relations of production should assume the shape of things, so that the relations into which people enter in the course of their work appear as the relation of things to one another and of things to people. This mystification is still a very simple one in the case of a commodity. Everybody understands more or less clearly that the relations of commodities as exchange-values are really the relations of people to the productive activities of one another."*¹³

Education and teaching have the dual goals of exposing the next generation of workers to a world where reality is upside down and teaching them how to survive in it. They also aim to

¹⁰Marx-Engels, L'Idéologie Allemande, Social Editions, p.50-51.

¹¹Marx, Les Thèses sur Feuerbach présentée par G. Labica, E. puf, p.21.

¹²Camatte: Capital et Gemeinwesen: le 6° unpublished chapter of Capital and Marx's economic works, E. Spartacus, p.177-178.

¹³Marx, A Contribution to the Critique of Political Economy, Social Editions, p.27.

instill in them the notion that walking around with their heads down is normal and that earning a salary is both their only goal and means of emancipation and fulfillment. This work of mystification must be **ingrained** in the future worker over time and broken down according to the position that he or she will be required to hold, even if that means that there will be reminders in the form of unemployment, retraining, and continuing education in the course of the worker's future professional career.

Currently

The real subsumption of labor into capital is characterized by the increase of relative surplus value. The latter was made possible by the development of mechanization, which decreases the value of labor power by cutting down on the amount of time required for each task or operation produced. Each significant technological advancement causes the workers' "specialization" to advance one step. Don't let anyone fool you; this "specialization" simply refers to the "disqualification" of labor. It's critical to keep in mind how the level of qualification for a job is established in the sociology of work before defining this process.

"The level and frequency of the intellectual activity required to perform a job are indicators of its suitability. (...) The amount of time that must be spent learning and receiving instruction in order to perform a task is used to determine the level of intellectual activity required.

(M. Freyssenet: *La division capitaliste du travail*. Savelli, Paris. 1977, p.114).

Here, we can see the fundamental capitalist division between manual and intellectual labor, the break in continuous growth caused by the mechanization process, and the consequent disqualification of the majority of labor. Mr. Freyssenet explains this disqualification and others in his book, *The Process of Disqualification-Overqualification of the Labor Force*:

*"The main thesis of the work is that since the end of the eighteenth century, there has not been a generalized movement of disqualification or an increase in the real qualifications required to perform a given job, but rather a contradictory movement of disqualification of the work of some by "overqualification" of the work of others, i.e., a polarization of the real qualifications required, the result of a specific type of division of labor that consists of modifying the social distribution of the "intelligence" of production. Due to the efforts of a small group of people tasked with the seemingly impossible task of thinking through the entire work process on the machine and mastering all of its parameters, a portion of this "intelligence" is "incorporated" into the machines and a portion is distributed among many workers."*¹⁴

Marx actually equates the growth of mechanization with an increase in the technical and value compositions of capital (composition-value of capital because it depends on its technical composition). This procedure reflects the incorporation of science and technology into the machinery as well as the need to produce an ever-increasing amount of labor that is simpler, less skilled, formed more quickly, interchangeable, and... consequently, less expensive.

*"Science, generally speaking, costs the capitalist nothing, a fact that by no means hinders him from exploiting it. The science of others is as much annexed by capital as the labour of others."*¹⁵

¹⁴Website: <http://freyssenet.com/?q=node/518>

¹⁵Marx, *Le Capital*, Livre 1 cité par Dangeville, p.15.

The production of less complex, and therefore less expensive labor is at risk here. *"In order to modify the human organism, so that it may acquire skill and handiness in a given branch of industry, and become labour-power of a special kind, a special education or training is requisite, and this, on its part, costs an equivalent in commodities of a greater or less amount. This amount varies according to the more or less complicated character of the labour-power. The expenses of this education (excessively small in the case of ordinary labour-power), enter pro tanto into the total value spent in its production."* (K. Marx).¹⁶

The production of a cheaper labor force entails, and this is not a contradiction, a generalized lengthening of studies and excessive specialization in certain subjects. Indeed, in a context of latent and stagnant relative overpopulation, the extension of studies corresponds to a new function of education and teaching that of acting as a **reservoir of industrial reserve army labor force**. Furthermore, in a context of generalized fiscal crisis, this function of "parking for employment" is largely supported economically by families and students themselves (and even on credit!), making it possible to reduce the State's unproductive costs relatively.

This new role, "anteroom to employment", is completed by the aforementioned process of excessive specialization, which is itself a vehicle of "disqualification"; the labor force's programmed obsolescence. The constant upheaval in production techniques drives the use of new labor, recently graduated and thus less expensive, rather than investing in the reconversion of older workers, who are less flexible and, above all, more expensive. This distinct specialization is fleeting and revolves around the process of "over-qualification"¹⁷ / "disqualification" for a small number of essentially productive workers, such as production engineers, whereas for the vast majority of the rest of the workforce, this specialization rhymes above all with **cretinization**.

*"In some developed nations, capital during its mechanized and automated phase requires an expansion of the national educational system, which may go hand in hand with the importation of unskilled foreign labor, essential to the national industry. The absurdity of the profession is multiplied endlessly by this extension of schooling coupled with an increasingly specialized education because it renders each "expert" in a tiny department, a fool, ignorant in all other departments, but pretentious everywhere else".*¹⁸

Up until a few years ago, any supporter of the liberation of secular and mandatory schools would have cried out in outrage at this description of education as "cretinization." Today, it is clear that the school is turning into a "cretin factory" due to the proliferation of pseudo-pedagogical "reforms".

"Words must be interpreted in the opposite way in the Big Brother world as they are in our age of soft totalitarianism. The Ministry of Peace is about war, and power comes from ignorance. The "success" of the "new pedagogy" is the programmed death of knowledge; the Crétin factory is its endpoint." (Jean-Paul Brighelli: *La fabrique du crétin, The programmed death of the school*, p.18, Jean-Claude Gawsewitch, Editor, Paris, 2005).

¹⁶Marx, Capital, Social Editions, p.174-175.

¹⁷"Over-qualification" is no longer, in itself, a problem, except insofar as the extension of schooling increases the cost of public service and deprives the economy of a young, flexible and undemanding workforce". https://www.cairn.info/revue-education-et-societes-2003-2-page-91.htm?try_download=1

¹⁸ R. Dangeville in Marx-Engels, Critique de l'éducation et de l'enseignement, already mentioned, p.71.

Therefore, an increase in study time may also be associated with a decrease in knowledge and a change in the primary factors influencing school choice. One of these remarkable cursors' experience, which included the first three years of college, serves as an example of this situation. The baccalaureate has lost value in proportion to the rise in its success rate, whereas in the nineteenth and twentieth centuries, the emblematic moment of its realization represented the almost absolute realization of a frontier between the lower classes and the ruling class. We will highlight as the primary courses in the academic career the orientation towards professional sectors in the situation that the scholarship holder finds it more difficult to learn "General Education" and, particularly, the selection in the first years of university faculties and other "Grandes Ecoles" after the degree.

*"The economy cannot absorb the number of graduates being produced, which leads to categorical unemployment. This type of unemployment has negative effects beyond just being unprofitable; it also causes psychological and social harm, the extent of which is now endangering the stability of society."*¹⁹

"Unlike in the past, the great mass of chess now spreads after graduation rather than before. We moved the issue; we didn't resolve it. Mutatis mutandis, 65% of individuals who dropped out of college were also 65% of young people who were previously placed in the labor force between the end of the fifth and second grade. The difference? Those who were hired at the bachelor's level fifteen years ago are now being hired at that level." (Jean-Paul Brighelli: *La fabrique du crétin*, The programmed death of school, p.62, Jean-Claude Gawsewitch, Editor, Paris, 2005).

The "modern family" can no longer fully assume its role as the initial unit of socialization and inculcation of dominant values due to the new teaching function of "parking" and the multiple unpaid waiting periods (sometimes even paid by the apprentices). These factors correspond to the evolution-dissolution of family ties. We will observe how these declined from 2007 to 2009 following the subprime crisis. The comparison between the 2020 projection and the actual numbers after the ongoing global health crisis will be interesting to observe. Understanding that the US is one of the most impacted states globally. We will once more draw attention to the State's insolvency in its capacity as the primary agent of capitalist social relations, which accounts for, among other things, the growing size of education budgets. It also explains the expanding emergence of private educational channels as a supplement to the traditional state-subsidized ones. One of the main effects of this process of devaluing the labor force is the growing loss of language proficiency.

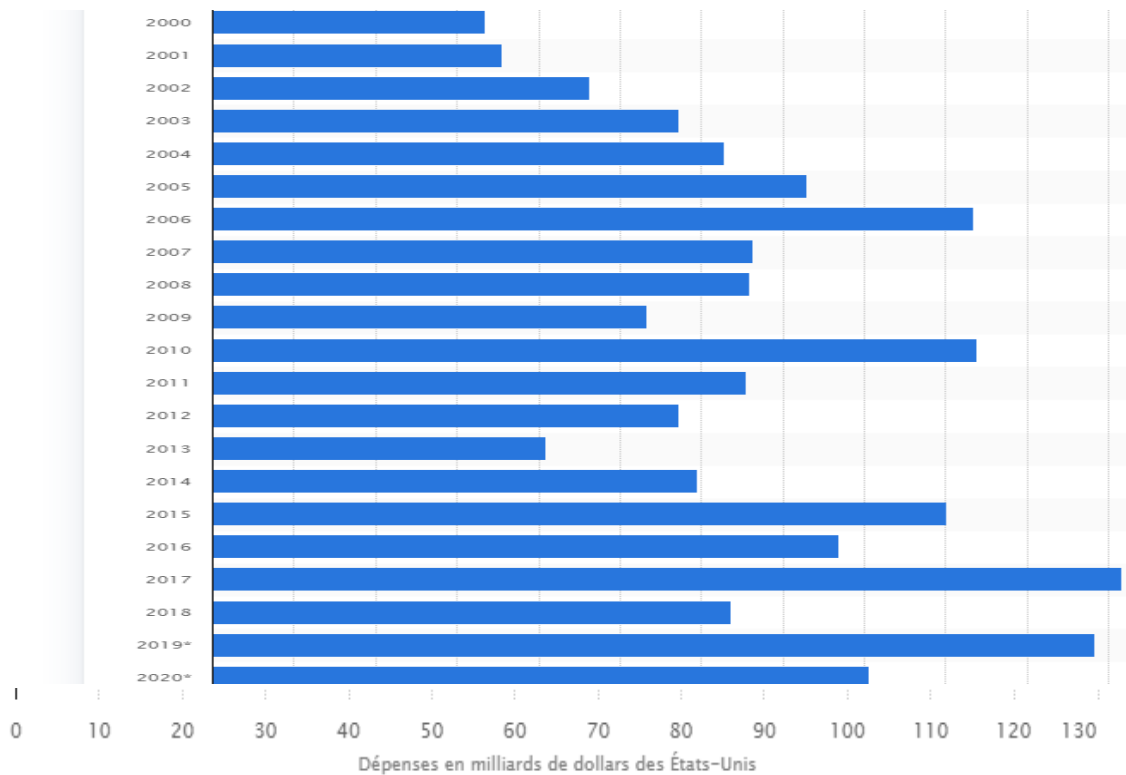
It is well known that Marx believed language to be a necessary instrument of production, without which humankind could not communicate and hence not produce. *"Ideas do not exist separately from language."*²⁰. The metalanguages that these machine systems use are always changing and becoming more complex, just as the complexity of the machine systems themselves does. As a result, learning and mastering them thoroughly is getting harder and harder. The fact that this mastery itself becomes the exclusive domain of experts highlights the theft of knowledge and the worker's reliance on the machine. The progressive obstruction of the proletariat's ability to articulate the facts of life through language plays a leading role in this

¹⁹Website: www.unesco.org/education/pdf/15_60_f.pdf

²⁰K. Marx : *Grundrisse in Œuvres, Économie II*, P. 215, Pléiade.

expropriation of know-how. According to Marx's Marxism, language is the ability of the species to represent the concrete social reality to itself through specific and intricate sound sequences. It is among the primary sources of human productivity.

For instance, the following graph displays the evolution of the U.S. Department of Education's total spending in billions of dollars:



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*"Language is the immediate reality of thought. Ideas and language do not constitute an independent universe; rather, they are merely expressions of real life. As soon as language becomes a thing in and of itself, it naturally transforms into phraseology."*²²

The proletariat is deprived of all mastery and comprehension of language as a means of production by the development of technicality. As a result, using configuration and digital specialists to "translate" the requirements of their new machines applications is becoming more and more necessary. So they become the new leaders of the cybernetic religion, of which Steve Jobs was the founder and those who follow him the "enlightened" consumers on a mission. The automated factory pushes the boundaries of Taylorist separation between the "designers", sequestered in their labs, and the "performers", Pavlovian followers willing for the next big thing. One of its most exclusive laboratories is the School of Capital, where tests and trials are conducted for the programming of these new languages and the selection of their bearers. Since it gets rid of all traces of classical, humanist, and universalist training, this process intensifies cretinization or "games". The terms have undergone changes due to the shift in technological

²¹Website: <https://fr.statista.com/statistiques/558804/gouvernement-americain-depenses-du-departement-de-l-education/>

²²K. Marx : L'idéologie allemande in Œuvres, Philosophie, P. 1324, Pléiade.

rhythm...Today, we "implement" projects rather than just "carry out" them! To extend the machines, all of man's senses are altered and disrupted. The classic science fiction author Isaac Asimov has already passed away, and his robot cycle was completed with capitalist ends. By establishing "Priority Educational Zones" where people are taught what decaying cities are like for them, the process known as "positive discrimination" that causes community drifts is another way to ensure the stupefying reproduction of the lower classes. Actually, what we are discussing is the creation of new ghettos; ZEPs serve as the prison system's equivalent to schools in terms of criminogenic formation.

"We must reverse the words in the new discourse of the neo-pedagogues. Priority Education Zones aren't really educational or priority. A ZEP is a planned community, typically found outside of major cities, where the best students can study in peace at the "good" inner-city high schools without being bothered by "scum" from some dirty suburb. Additionally, to gradually subdue the students who meant to "naturally" supply the vast armies of illiterates." (Jean-Paul Brighelli: La fabrique du crétin, The programmed death of school, p. 96, Jean-Claude Gawsewitch, Editor, Paris, 2005).

The fact that all of man's communications are mediated by screens, his emotions are reduced to stereotyped icons (emoticons), and his (in)human relationships are determined by algorithms worsens his alienation. The degradation of language has spread, ignoring phonetic spelling, grammar, and syntax. *"The imbecile formatted by spelling scoffers will no longer even have the means to write to the labor court to protest against his dismissal."* (Jean-Paul Brighelli: previously cited, p. 75).

A priori, no dialectical logic is conceivable; only binary logic is dominant. The modern worker is confronted with machines that appear to be smarter than him; they speak to him and give him orders; the worker is completely objectified, while the machine is "humanized." Man has been reduced to the role of supervisor and regulator, and the inversion is complete. He is, at best, an adjuvant to the machine. These technologies also provide benefits related to the **acceleration** process, which contribute to higher labor productivity. When compared to the means Marx had at his disposal, the Internet saves years of study. In the "British Museum" reading room, he often waited weeks for his correspondence. Without refusing the undeniable contribution of new technologies to human knowledge, it must be acknowledged that this is due to the profit they generate, inducing a greater selection in the actual possibility of their use.

This is yet another discriminatory reality that has emerged as a result of the covid-19 pandemic and the general shift toward distance and online education for those with the financial and cultural capital to do so in the first place. Indeed, it is "online" education that will allow enormous economies of scale and fixed costs to be borne in the future by workers rather than the state. We are thus witnessing a "uberization" of the teacher's work, as he must bear the costs of using his computer equipment, electricity, heating, and accommodation due to teleworking, dramatically increasing his productivity by increasing the teacher-to-student ratio. The profound significance of relative surplus value extortion is thus found in the permanent devaluation of the labor force, of the wage earner, but also of his family. The wage, which was initially contributed by the man, is well-known and is used to support the entire family. However, the other members of the family, the wife and children, are quickly sucked into the

cauldron of capitalist production, resulting in an accelerated decline in the value of labor power. Furthermore, the proletarian woman is frequently forced to do free domestic work.

*"The value of labour-power was determined, not only by the labour-time necessary to maintain the individual adult labourer, but also by that necessary to maintain his family. Machinery, by throwing every member of that family on to the labour-market, spreads the value of the man's labour-power over his whole family. It thus depreciates his labour-power."*²³. This capitalist process is the driving force behind the family's destruction, rupture, and the end of the ancestral social bonds of solidarity that it generated.

*"The bourgeois clap-trap about the family and education, about the hallowed co-relation of parents and child, becomes all the more disgusting, the more, by the action of Modern Industry, all the family ties among the proletarians are torn asunder, and their children transformed into simple articles of commerce and instruments of labour."*²⁴

The decline of the family corresponds to the rise of the power of the individual -a-social-, isolated and atomized. To survive, all members of a family, **including school students**, are expected to contribute through paid work, maintenance, and reconstitution. The rise in the number of single-parent families is a telling sign of this trend toward family disintegration. In France *"The number of couples with children has decreased slightly since 1990, while the number of single-parent families has increased. Single-parent families account for 23% of the 8.0 million families with minor children. Since 1990, when it was 12%, that number has more than doubled. In 84% of cases, the children live (or primarily live) with their mother."*²⁵

This situation highlights the growing need for many students to find work that will supplement or completely support their situation. We provide some figures here, keeping in mind that real situations for many student-workers are not included in statistics because their activities are performed "in the dark" or are not fully recognized as salaried work. In France, *"46% of students work while studying; according to a study conducted by the Observatory of Student Life, an increasing number of young people work odd jobs in addition to their studies. More than 17% believe this has a 'negative impact' on their performance."*²⁶

On the outskirts of this phenomenon, although it is difficult to quantify, "student prostitution" ("sugar daddies") is growing, i.e. the need for more and more young students to sell their bodies in order to cover their needs in a situation of rising tuition and rent costs. Faced with these increasing difficulties, students must find increasingly precarious "solutions," such as debt, to finance their studies, as seen in the Anglo-American example. At various levels, education is deteriorating irreversibly. Not only is learning deteriorating due to its lengthening, loss of effective content, and devaluation, but it is also deteriorating due to the increasing disqualification, demotivation, and depreciation of teachers, as what awaits their students. *"The properly formatted cretin will soon assume the position of master; the circle will be closed, and the mass is said."* (Jean-Paul Brighelli: already cited, p. 144).

²³ Marx; Capital Vol I, social editions p.282.

²⁴ Marx-Engels; Manifesto of the Communist Party, editions mille et une nuits, p.38.

²⁵ Website: <https://www.insee.fr/fr/statistiques/4277630?sommaire=4318291>

²⁶ Website : <https://www.lemonde.fr/campus/article/2017/05/22/46-des-etudiants-travaillent-pendant-leurs-etudes51315514401467.html>

Furthermore, students are neither a homogeneous category nor a class, but rather a collection of elements from all classes and class formations, as well as their hierarchy according to the "choice" of the various currents. It has also been amply demonstrated (Bourdieu, Passeron) that social reproduction was globally well operated in each generation and that teaching, in fact, only carried out and **concretized** a choice made beforehand in the family and socio-cultural environment before school. These are referred to as "heirs" by some.

Tomorrow

Since the outbreak of the covid-19 pandemic, this situation has accelerated and deteriorated to the point of no return. Consecutive periods of lockdown and curfew prevent a large number of student-workers from earning vital extra income, particularly in the hospitality sector (bars, restaurants, and stores are closed), and the demands of non-presential education and from a distance make their economic, social, and psychological situation increasingly precarious. Obviously, this situation is not limited to students; other groups, such as the "undocumented" and the entire "underground" economy, have been severely impacted by the various closures and disappearances of informal jobs. Dropout rates are also on the rise, and basic education delays are becoming increasingly unrecoverable. Thus, the more "basic" the education (as the name implies), the more crippling this lack of foundation; with education acting as an inverted funnel, reversing the slope of declining educational attainment is nearly impossible. According to UNESCO, *"Children's non-education is a scourge that affected an estimated 258 million students aged 6-17 worldwide in 2018." And, as of the start of the 2020 school year, one billion students had not arrived at school. A potentially long-lasting situation*".²⁷ Human Rights Watch goes even further in an April 2020 report, noting:

*"More than 1.5 billion students are no longer enrolled in school. Widespread job and income loss, as well as family economic insecurity, are likely to increase the prevalence of child labor, sexual exploitation, teen pregnancy, and child marriage. Pressure on families, particularly those in quarantine or confinement, boosts the risk of domestic violence. As the number of COVID-19 deaths grows, a large number of children will become orphaned, leaving them vulnerable to exploitation and abuse."*²⁸

Teachers' observations of the deterioration of working conditions, health, and survival are also dramatic. The school must bear the exacerbation of all societal contradictions; as a result, it is less and less the sanctuary and haven of peace praised by school ideology. Thus, the so-called health "measures" have allowed the state to significantly reduce the unproductive costs of education. The resulting economy will be useful in times of fiscal crisis and state indebtedness, but it will also complicate the logistics chain and disrupt work organization. The "Landscape" decree reorganizing French-speaking education in Belgium, for instance, is an excellent example of this. *"In 2014, the Landscape Decree profoundly changed the functioning of higher education. Completed the course after years of study! If this system allows students more autonomy in designing their own courses, it has had many unintended consequences, including increased study time, overwork, logistical headaches, and sometimes pedagogical inconsistency."*²⁹

²⁷ Website: <https://www.franceculture.fr/societe/la-crise-du-covid-19-accentue-la-descolarisation-dans-le-monde>

²⁸ Website: <https://www.hrw.org/fr/news/2020/04/09/limpact-devastateur-du-covid-19-sur-les-enfants>

²⁹ Website: <https://www.canalc.be/le-decret-paysage/>

"The art of teaching," and the transmission of critical tools, has been replaced by screens, "Powerpoints," and "video clips." "A computer is an incomparable tool in the hands of those who know how to use it. Under the fingers of the cretin, it is a weapon wielded by a blind man in the middle of the crowd, as Chester Himes said." (Jean-Paul Brighelli: already cited, p. 138).

The growing mechanization of the teaching profession may lead to its demise. The student, who was originally the one who took the action of studying, becomes or re-becomes the passive spectator, separated from his own life by the society of the spectacle: "*The spectator's consciousness, a prisoner of a flattened universe, limited by the spectacle's screen, behind which his own life has been deported, knows only fictitious interlocutors who unilaterally discuss its merchandise and the politics of its merchandise. The spectacle is its "mirror sign" in its entirety. This is the deceptive path out of generalized autism.*" (G. Debord, *La Société du spectacle*, Gallimard / Pocket, thesis 218, p.207.)

So it is with education, which is becoming more and more dissatisfied with the society that produces it. There is no possible reform other than a succession of education alibi plans and decrees that, in reality, only aim to save money at the expense of all education workers while making students and/or their families pay the rest.

Long before May 1968, some revolutionaries had observed about students that "*the mechanical and specialized education they receives is as deeply degraded (in comparison to the old level of general bourgeois culture) as their own intellectual level. They enter because the reality that dominates all of this, the economic system, requires a mass production of uneducated students incapable of thinking.*" (On Misery in the Student Environment: Economic, Political, Psychological, Sexual, and Particularly Intellectual Aspects, and Some Remedies - 1966 - Supplement to the International Situationist Review).

April 2021: Fj et Marcm.



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³⁰Google images.

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