



Critical Education Against Global Capitalism: Karl Marx and Revolutionary Critical Education

Paula Allman

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In today's vernacular, Marx 'outed' capitalism well over a century ago; however, his explanation has been both ignored and misinterpreted by not only his detractors but also by many socialists and even a considerable number of Marxists as well. Today we are experiencing the full impact and suffering the repercussions of capitalism's inherent need to grow and become, more than ever before, a fully internationalized and integrated system of socioeconomic control and domination?the global system that many commentators have suddenly remembered Marx and Engels (1848) presciently forecasted in the Communist Manifesto. When the Berlin Wall fell in 1989, the victory of capitalism and liberal democracy was triumphantly proclaimed. The Cold War was over, and we were promised a lasting peace. As we entered the third millennium, the promise of peace was brutally dashed, and humanity now appears to have entered a state of permanent war. We have just witnessed the near total collapse of the global financial system and are continuing to experience, as we will for years to come, the collateral damage this crisis has caused. Problems we were facing before the current crisis will be exacerbated?escalating social and economic divisions, jobless growth, injustice, and oppression together with an environment in varying stages of degradation. Daily, on television news, we are bombarded by the schizoid media images of capitalism's extremes: the ravaged faces and wasted bodies of some of the thousands suffering famine, or the millions living in the world's slums, followed within a blink of the eye by the gleaming, yet vacuous, smile and sumptuously adorned figure of some extravagant, wealthy individual who is one of the select members of the global upper class. Are we becoming conditioned to accept such contrasts and regard them as normal and inevitable at a time when we have the potential to eliminate scarcity and eradicate human deprivation? The author argues that revolutionary critical education is needed to inform and form a social movement capable of challenging and then transforming capitalism. She also offers an accessible account of Marx's dialectical critique and exposé of capitalism, clearly demonstrating the real enemy that should be the focus of anti-capitalist and anti-globalization struggles. This is an account that explains why our focus should not be on greedy, individual capitalists, Wall Street financial institutions, particular multinational corporations, national governments, or even their handmaiden institutions, such as, the World Bank, IMF, WTO, etc. but instead the global network of capitalist socioeconomic relations and consequent habituated human practices in which we are all involved. These together with the historically specific form of capitalist wealth are the real enemy?the essence of capitalism?that must be abolished in order for humanity to have any hope of social and economic justice in the future. Testimonial Paula Allman's book is beyond doubt one of the most important and possibly THE most important of all contemporary texts in education. It will be a classic. I can't think of an educational text that can match it in importance. Amazing! Peter McLaren, Professor, Graduate School of Education and Information Studies, UCLA, author of Che Guevara, Paulo Freire, and The Pedagogy of Revolution

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