

The local and global in capitalism's project: A snapshot today

March 26, 2014



One can't know from old modes of media, now state or corporate-controlled in every country I know of, how extensive resistance is to the destruction of systems of public education created in the past century, through struggles of working people to improve their children's lives. (The best chronicle of these struggles is www.teachersolidarity.com.) The struggles are local because that's where education occurs, in one's neighborhood and nation state. Often the battles are initiated by young people, who are fighting for their future. With increasing frequency teachers are spearheading campaigns, defying governments that do the bidding of wealthy, powerful elites. But when we put these local struggles together, we see that the resistance is global, as is this project of capitalism to alter who teaches, what is taught, and who dictates these matters.

Today, March 26, 2014, teachers in Paraguay, Buenos Aires Argentina, and the UK (do watch the video explaining the NUT's demands) are striking to defend the conditions that allow teaching to be a profession requiring rigorous preparation and conditions that allow exercise of professional judgment and the contour of a career - pensions and decent salaries. (The Real News will carry a story by Jaisal Noor on today's NUT strike, including a brief interview with me.)

It's happening - a new generation is rebuilding teacher unions, with a commitment that unions need to be social movements. Several readers have asked me whether I'll be participating in the Labor Notes conference in Chicago, April 4-6. I think the work of birthing this new movement has to be done by union members still working in schools. I'm with you in spirit and will follow closely what occurs. I hope you'll keep in mind the centrality of creating a democratic culture, norms and protocols in our unions. Mobilization on a social justice program is necessary but inadequate without our putting in place and defending democracy.

I'll be in Denver, March 28, at United Opt Out, explaining how I see the present moment, our challenges and the dangers. As always, you can contact me at drweinerlo@gmail.com and follow me on twitter and Facebook, as well as this blog every Wednesday here at New Politics.

"Class Action," a project of CORE, reformers in the Chicago Teachers Union, and The Jacobin is out now. It's a collection worth reading.