

Aksoy, H. H. (2024). From the Editor: To be “the heart of a heartless world” as scholars and educators. *International Journal of Educational Policies*, Vol.18 (1), pp. 1-5.

ISSN: 1307-3842

## **From the Editor: To Be the Heart of a Heartless World as Scholars and Educators**

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*Editor*

Dear Readers,

We are pleased to present the first issue of Volume 18 of IJEP to our readers.

This issue includes articles that support the journal's international character and its role as a platform for critical education and struggle. I would like to thank all our friends, colleagues, and comrades who have contributed to IJEP's journey to this issue and to the planning of future issues since its inception. The support and solidarity we receive from colleagues and educators from different countries, who believe that scientific activities and all forms of education should be carried out to contribute to an equal, just, and prosperous world and global peace, are immensely valuable. I extend my heartfelt thanks to each of my colleagues for their contributions. I would also like to extend my special thanks to the authors who shared their work for this issue and to the reviewers and editorial board members who provided constructive feedback through their insightful readings. In some issues, we have colleagues who make exceptional contributions. I would also like to extend my special thanks to my student and colleague, Muharrem Demirdiř, for his significant contributions to this issue, both as an author and in the technical editing of the journal.

The first article in this issue comes from an educator colleague in Greece, a country that has been particularly affected by neoliberal pressures in the field of education,

especially higher education, in recent years. Dr. Marina Sounoglou's article, titled "Curricula, Public Education, and Neoliberal Politics in Greece" traces the impact of neoliberal changes implemented through legislation in the Greek education system. According to Sounoglou "The state of public education in Greece can be seen through the legislation implemented by the neoliberal government which continues unabated the policy opposed to public education." The study "contains the enumeration the main points of the Laws and aims to reveal their meaning in the field of public education". That analysis of Sounoglou will not be strange, but familiar to academics from very different countries: "The strategic choice to align with the choices of the European Union and the OECD for education is clear, the 'commercialization' of education and the preparation for the whole sale privatization of schools, vocational training and universities. As a consequence, this affects the school, the curriculum and the lives of teachers and students. The economy of education in recent decades has seen citizen formation subordinated to a new economic mission." The study includes some suggestions and alternatives for goals of "another education".

The second article, titled "Religious Education in Schools" comes from a journalist, writer as well as a retired teacher Ünal Özmen from Turkiye. According to him, "The responses of natural (physics, chemistry, biology, etc.) and human sciences (philosophy, sociology, psychology, neurology, etc.) to metaphysical questions have limited the sphere of influence of religions. Therefore, religions are no longer concerned with explaining the world or seeking answers to metaphysical questions. Despite losing the capacity to be a source of questions related to their domain and failing to generate values that can be used in human relationships, religions still manage to keep their positions in defining individual and societal identities. Moreover, they can still function as equivalent to the state authority in Muslim countries." Özmen brings a fact to the front that "[i]n the modern state, while religion is counted among the fundamental social institutions such as law, family, education, culture, and economy, in Muslim countries, religion holds a superior position above all other institutions except the economy. In Muslim states, non-religious rules operate in the economy." At this point actually we can see that the main discussion point is not religions but rather about capitalism and its relations with other social institutions.

In the issue, a distinguished academic in education and politician Dave Hill from the United Kingdom has shared a description and his views about the parliamentary

elections in UK and the struggle and solidarity of left wing groups in this election. In a critical period of rising neoliberal policies around the world, Hill's writing titled "Elections, Campaigns and the United Front" outlines a path for solidarity among different communities and political groups in resistance to violent neo-Nazi movements and their allied capitalist class. Along with his solidarity-based approach to all of kinds oppressed groups, he insists on stressing consciousness.

Dear readers, the scope of IJEP is very well connected with the critical education issues. We can see the IJEP as a venue for the studies of critical education field but not limited to that. In the last study I and Muharrem Demirdiř provide a detailed description of the 12<sup>th</sup> International Conference on Critical Education, which was held on 3-6 July, 2024, in Ankara. The 12<sup>th</sup> International Conference on Critical Education (XII ICCE), hosted by Ankara University's Institute of Educational Sciences, was held bilingually in Turkish and English. The Conference brought together academics, teachers, students, and activists from different countries together. As participants and members of organizing committee I and Demirdiř "describe the meeting in broad scope, its history to some selected presentations" in the piece titled "Notes and Impressions on the 12<sup>th</sup> International Conference on Critical Education".

Dear readers, colleagues and friends,

We are observing and experiencing changes in every field, including scientific studies, as well as in all social areas such as education, health, security, social work. Almost all of these changes favour the economic system and its powerful actors or wealthy groups worldwide. This may be seen that the poor, disadvantaged, and all kinds of oppressed in the world will face more difficulties in their lives. Education, health services and, all other public services will become more commercialised and more expensive for the working class, the unemployed, and all other lower groups of the socio-economic. In these conditions, what can the educators and their works in education process along with the scholars and their scientific/academic studies do? Should educators, scientists, or all kinds of public service workers only follow the path of the economic order, or should they play a role in the political arena of the daily and real-world politics? In the field of education, public budget allocated to education are gradually and sometimes drastically decreasing. The employment of teachers in public schools are continuously decreasing in almost every country where neoliberal policies are in power. Higher education, as well as other levels of education, is becoming

privatized. Schools are mostly being divided into for the children from poor families and from affluent families. Religious, vocational, open/informal and apprenticeship schools are for the poor while the selected high quality academic public schools and other science schools support for higher education, and expensive private academic schools which provide a high-level support for higher education, are for the affluent. If legislation was to be enacted to make this kind distinction and division, no political, religious and pedagogical views could support it. However, these realities are, in fact, being accepted by the majority of the voters in many parts of the world. It can be said that this is the success of the neoliberal politics and its alliances. The world again shows its “heartless and” “soulless” face worldwide through the economic policies continuously changing under the same way of the capitalist mode of production relations. In this context, “the wretched of the world” are looking for a sanctuary without a real hope. One harbor of the people who have lost all their secured zone against the policy weapons of liberalism such as commercialization, commodification, privatization, de-regulation, de-unionisation, and contestation would be religion related beliefs and practices. Unfortunately, today the world has changed and even the sanctuaries and the religious belief and practises have also been occupied with the economical concepts and requisites. There is no strong call on the horizon for the abolition of the suffering of “the wretched of the world.”<sup>1</sup> In this context, educators, scientists, and all kinds of intellectuals may need to revise their roles in addressing this suffering. Some people who have faith as a human may think to be a part of the struggle to be “the heart of a heartless world, and the soul of soulless conditions”<sup>2</sup> instead of the sanctuaries occupied by the market-driven capitalist rules.

Here I would like to remark on the features of the job that scientists are doing, which, unfortunately, are also under threats. Scientists’ intellectual labor and its products, which should be for everyone, are becoming for only benefit of companies. Teaching, research and publishing venues – such as research institutions, higher education

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<sup>1</sup> Fanon, F. (1961/2018) *Yeryüzünün Lanetlileri* (The Wretched of the Earth) (Les Damnés de la Terre, originally published in French, 1961), Trs. Ş. Süer. Istanbul:Versus.

<sup>2</sup> Marx, K. (1844/2009). *A Contribution to the Critique of Hegel’s Philosophy of Right*. First published: in *Deutsch-Französische Jahrbücher*, 7 & 10 February 1844 in Paris; the source and date of transcription is unknown. It was proofed and corrected by Andy Blunden, February 2005, and corrected by Matthew Carmody in 2009. URL: <https://www.marxists.org/archive/marx/works/1843/critique-hpr/intro.htm>

institutions, universities- are being occupied by global corporations and their collobarators through commodification, commercialization and privatization. All scientific activities and their products are becoming connected with the economic activities, the market, and are directed towards the needs of corporations. An equal, just distribution of the resources, compensate the main human needs, neither reach to a virtuous life, which has been a central concept in the historical inquiries of human being. The academic and scientific journals are also taking their portion from these changes. The credits and rewards obtained from publishing in indexed, credited journals are a motivation resource for scholars. The most of indexing institutions were owned by or indirectly part of big companies that sell and own the academic products produced through intellectual and academic labor. Even scholars cannot distribute their published studies with the public for free. This reflects a system dominated by market forces. In this “contesting market”, individual efforts or non-governmental and non-market collectives can be seen as only a naïve strenuousness. Those people will continue to exist and work, coming together to be “the heart of a heartless world, and the soul of soulless conditions” in a world occupied by the neoliberal phase of capitalism. I am glad that we are a part of those struggle with this issue of IJEP.

Enjoy your reading.

***International Journal of Educational Policies***

**ISSN: 1307-3842**

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