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21 years  
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I have mixed feelings about the subject of education. On one hand I feel education is important, but on the other hand, going on my own experience of a modern comprehensive, I feel that the educational system as it stands is a total farce; for instance, I spent five years of my life being subjected to abuse dished out by stupid incompetent figures of authority who seemed to spend their time in the classroom boosting their own egos by intimidating the pupils.

If a pupil got the slightest thing wrong they were a 'cretin' or a 'moron' and I remember one teacher who used to do things like make you stand at an angle with your nose up against the blackboard and every so often hit the back of your head.

Surely the educational system is designed to teach those that need to learn, not some sort of institution hell-bent on breaking the will of the pupils, or to provide an outlet for the teacher's own frustrations. I must admit not ALL the teachers were egomaniacal nazis - the ones that weren't were the ones with a TOTAL lack of the ability to cope with a class, as a result the pupils would take advantage of it and we'd have an hour long lesson in chaos. Towards the end of years there it turned into fighting, with chairs thrown about and one teacher was threatened with a knife, being told that if he turned up the next day he would have an extra hole somewhere. Incidentally, he didn't come back.

Skin heads used to sniff glue in the class, and do things like walking around with a stanley knife in their hand, or something. Another time a skin head walked up to someone who was just minding his own business, and just started smashing his head against a brick wall, the boy had to be taken to hospital with concussion - thing is though, there was four teachers there but they didn't do a thing.

All these were daily occurrences, and it led to the school employing security guards, but that just made things worse because it increased tension. Also it was the system that made things worse, because the teachers who liked to intimidate the pupils provided the initial resentment and the teachers who couldn't control a wet bag provided the outlet by providing the opportunity to fight back and this increased and spread like cancer. Slowly the system broke and there was hardly any teaching going on towards the end, just teachers trying to control the class. It was a farce which they only had themselves to blame for, for trying to cope with a situation in the wrong way.

But having said all that I do feel education is important. It wasn't education itself that was wrong in that school, it was the system. It's true that the majority of schools do not have the funds to provide better conditions and facilities, but the end result of it all is more often than not what you have just read. Instead of cutting money spent on education the government (seeing as we are stuck with a governmental system) should increase expenditure on making the facilities available to schools greater and making the working environment better for both teachers and pupils. But also there should be tighter rules on what the teachers can or cannot do as regards the pupil, as it stands the ONLY reason a teacher can be reprimanded in any way, is on questionable moral grounds. That leaves him free to publicly intimidate (and that's what it is if someone is dragged up in front of 30 or so other pupils and made to do things designed to embarrass you) the pupils or to take out any inner frustrations on the pupils. This is wrong and it has to change.

You might be stupid enough to say well how do you control a class without that, but what the teachers do is one the key factors in the system breaking down. On the risk of running into another moral issue on education, we are at the moment slipping slowly back into another Victorian age of the haves and the have nots, the majority of the populace being the 'have nots'. It is already happening and one of the major factors of this is the extremely serious problem we have with the educational system as it stands. Education is the most important factor in the living standards of the working class no matter how the economical situation of the country is. The average working class person cannot rely on daddy's company to provide a good position and a good wage to live on, or they can't simply rely on daddy's large bank account to help them when they need it, they have to go on what qualifications they managed to attain under terrible learning conditions to get them money, so education is the backbone of the working class and something has to be done to improve it because the working class person's future is at stake. And if there is any of you ignorant enough not to see this, then just go to the east end of London or Manchester or Birmingham, and just look around, it's happening now.