

From the desk of AMI/USA Executive Director Ayize Sabater, Ed.D.:

As I arose this morning I had deep thoughts about the American political upheaval which recently transpired on January 6, 2021 in Washington, D.C. My primary question and concern as a father, educator, and educational leader is, “How are we addressing the #AttemptedCoup on the #USCapitol” not only with our own children, but with those students and adults whom we face each day, both inside and outside of our classrooms, our schools, and/or our homes?

This experience has been traumatic for many. Children are living in the same world that adults occupy. They are astute and capable of great understanding. They experienced the event also, therefore, we would do well to not go on with teaching as usual. When children become conscious of societal events, especially those outside of the norm, they too want to examine them. So, in moments like this, my question is “what do we tell our children and adults?”

As Montessorians, we understand that our children are the hope for our peaceful future. We must remember during times like this that Maria Montessori advised that “[a]n education capable of saving humanity is no small undertaking; it involves the... preparation of young people to understand the times in which they live” (Education and Peace, chapter 3). So, my question is “are we going to play the #SilenceGame and hope that the chaos and its impact will likewise go silent and vanish?”

Dr. Montessori has said that “[i]f we really aspire to better things, at spreading the light...it is to the children we must turn to achieve these ends” (The Absorbent Mind (chapter 7). I believe that we would do well to give our children time and space to talk about and process this ordeal... and then, using age-appropriate language and content, tell the truth, to our students and adults. With primary children... ask what they heard and acknowledge what they understand, and ask them what they are concerned about. Then, help provide them with facts to address their questions (see tolerance.org).

With older children, we must acknowledge that mob violence, which is often seething with racial animus, has been a recurring theme in American history. We can consider comparing these recent events with other attempted domestic mob-coups throughout American history, such as the #WilmingtonCoup1898 or #NOLACoup1874 and we can share the great resources found at EJl.org (see “Our Work” > Racial Terror Lynching) or teachingforchange.org to further help with our own adult preparation and/or for our student’s self-construction.

Finally, as a Montessori educational leader I believe that we are called to give students and adults a hope for a better future, a sense of security, and empower them to believe that they can act to make significant changes in our society. Dr. Montessori provides us with some tremendous tools for peace education, moral development, and blueprints for self-construction. Still, a great American poet and educator said “teachers should push students to understand that the world was molded by people who came before, and that it can be remolded into something new” (James Baldwin, A Talk to Teachers). Here at AMI/USA we stand with each you during this chaotic moment, and if we can be a resource in any way, then please let us know.

Peace,



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AMI/USA Executive Director