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Program Planning Principles, Goals, and Evaluation Criteria in the Radical Adult Education Tradition

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Abstract: The purpose of this paper is to present what we consider to be essential principles, goals, and evaluation criteria, for program planning in the radical adult education tradition. The paper is based on historical and philosophical inquiry into the pedagogical practices of numerous social movements and social movement organizations.

When asked what makes for a radical education, co-founder of the Highlander Folk School Myles Horton (as cited in Horton & Freire, 1990) responded with the following:

If I had to put a finger on what I consider...a good *radical* education, it wouldn't be anything about methods or techniques. It would be loving people first. If you don't do that, Che Guevara says, there's no point in being a revolutionary....And then next is respect for people's abilities to learn and to act and to shape their own lives....The third thing grows out of caring for people and having respect for people's ability to do things, and that is that you value their experiences" (p. 177)

These ideas by Horton are important to us for two reasons. First, it is noteworthy that Horton puts the principle of love before methods or techniques. We agree with this idea and believe that principles such as love not only come before technique, but, as is implied in Horton's response, lead to certain methods and techniques over others.

The second reason we find Horton's ideas important is that he invokes the Argentine-born Cuban revolutionary Che Guevara when discussing program planning. When one analyzes the work of Che Guevara from a pedagogical perspective, one finds a comprehensive set of principles he developed for his own program planning and development. Moreover, he was very conscious of the fact that much of his planning work involved informal, nonformal, and formal education. Recognizing that most of us do not live in revolutionary societies, we will ground the program planning principles we derive from Guevara in contemporary and historical social justice-oriented education and activism in the United States. The principles we identify in Che Guevara's work, are present, for example, in the history of the African American freedom struggle and contemporary popular education programs in the US. What Che Guevara provides us with is a comprehensive set of principles for program planning for democratic socialism, which we believe are applicable to many different contexts and settings.

After outlining the principles we find essential for guiding program planning, we will turn to a discussion of the goals of program planning. By goals we refer to the idea of what we believe should be the outcomes of educational program planning for a democratic socialism. For this section, we will draw upon the work of Antonio Gramsci. Gramsci's work is prevalent in adult education. Here, however, we want to use Gramsci's work to help us formulate goals of program planning appropriate for democratic socialism. In the last section, we will present a list of criteria for evaluating programs aligned with the principles and goals we outline.

Principles of Program Planning

The idea of principles for program planning is not alien to the field of adult education. It could be argued that principles derived from the praxis of Ernesto Che Guevara and social justice movements in the US limits the relevancy of these principles. Nevertheless, with careful consideration of the different historical and social contexts of our own and that of the movement leaders and activists we drawn upon, these principles can be seen as a framework to guide any adult education planning interested in maintaining the historic affinity between our field and the goal of social justice.

By way of summary, we find the following principles as essential for democratic socialist program planning: internationalism, anti-imperialism, intrinsic motivation of love and empathy, discipline, honesty, self-criticality, flexibility in thinking, audacity, a willingness to sacrifice, a rejection of privilege, and an orientation toward service. In what follows, we will detail the presence of these principles in social justice-oriented education and activism in the US, and relate them to program planning.

Internationalism and Anti-Imperialism

Despite the United States' historical emergence as an imperialist power, there is a long standing anti-imperialist and internationalist tradition within the US. Nineteenth-century literary figures Henry David Thoreau and Mark Twain, for example, opposed imperialist wars against México and the Philippines respectively. From an organizational perspective, the Women's International League for Peace and Freedom (WILPF) founded in 1915 in opposition to World War I with Jane Adams as its first president is an example of an organization whose US branches have educated and organized in opposition to US imperialism and in favor of internationalist principles of social justice and peace for nearly a century. In the history of the African American freedom movement prominent leaders such as W. E. B. DuBois, Paul Robeson, and Malcolm X, often to their own personal detriment, have linked the struggle of African Americans to the international struggle against colonial and imperial subjugation.

Intrinsic Motivation of Love and Empathy

Motivation is a topic of great interest to educators. It is at the heart of many educators' laments of student disinterest and the agenda for education theory and research. For Ernesto Che Guevara, motivation for social justice must come from within. This is not, however, for Guevara an innate characteristic. Programs must be organized in such a way that they instill people with a disposition for social justice that intrinsically motivates them to act.

The principles of love and empathy as motivating factors can be found in the best of social justice movements in the US. Involvement in such movements, itself, often sparks a humanistic, intrinsic motivation. In adult education we often refer to these experiences as examples of transformative learning. When people organize, there is a dialectical relationship that emerges between personal and collective power that motivates individuals and collectives to push forward on demands as victories build upon one another or as people see others making gains in similar contexts. Intrinsic motivation for social justice takes root when people no longer see engagement in movement activity as a choice; it becomes something they have to do.

Discipline

Along with internal motivation stemming from ideals, Guevara (1985) also believed that an internal discipline "spring[ing] from a carefully reasoned internal conviction" (p. 153) was essential. More generally, we can say that when one learns to be internally driven by humanistic love and empathy, one also gains an orienting framework to guide and propel one's action. External motivators and orienting mechanisms are decreasingly necessary if program planning

gives people the personal and social space and institutional support in order to pursue actions and further learning guided by deeply held ideals.

Strict discipline of a military nature found in the guerrilla units led by Che Guevara can be found in the history of armed struggle-oriented US social movements. Beyond examples of a more military nature, training in social movements instills people with a discipline, confidence, and conviction that only through their own efforts things can change.

Honesty, Truth, and Self-Criticism

Self-criticism is a pedagogical tool for learning and teaching that should be a principle of program planning. In order to be effective, however, it requires honesty and an environment in which people can express their assessments of their strengths and weaknesses in a collective spirit of improvement. To engage in honest and open self-criticism is to teach others through example the ability for self-assessment, self-awareness and the desire for self-improvement. While self-criticism is essential for the individual, this is also essential at the level of groups, communities, and institutions to avoid bureaucratic stagnation.

Creative, Flexible, Non-Dogmatic Thinking and Audacity

Given the growing national and global economic inequalities, our programs should develop students disposed to a critical, non-dogmatic understanding of the political economy of exploitation with the analytical flexibility to understand how this plays out in different ways and in different areas in today's globalized society. We can see this being done in contemporary popular education-oriented organizations such as Project South based in Atlanta, Georgia and the School of Unity and Liberation (SOUL) based in Oakland, California.

The historical levels of migration and immigration today are part and parcel of neoliberal globalization. The recent waves of immigration to the US, have been accompanied by innovative social movement activism among immigrant workers. These workers are some of the most vulnerable and oppressed sectors of US society, and yet they have exhibited an audacity that has put them at the forefront of community, citizen rights, and labor activism. The principle of audacity is embodied in the popular slogan "Sí, se puede [Yes, we can]" of the immigrant rights movement in the US. Fundamentally this is a pedagogical stance—to show through your own audacious example that people are capable of things well beyond their oftentimes limited self image—and should be a part of program planning for a democratic socialism.

Service, Sacrifice, and Opposing Privileges

Sacrifice imbued with love and empathy transformed into service was a central part of the hegemony that Guevara believed ought to permeate the new Cuban society. The permeation of a society with hegemony is an educational process. Guevara understood this very well and argued forcefully for the power of what he called direct and indirect education in the formation of the new man and woman guided by the principles we are outlining. In the new society, sacrifices would not seem as such, but would be the 'natural' way of being and acting in a society oriented toward social justice. The principle of service was of particular import for professionals with whom Guevara frequently spoke during his time in Cuba. Professionals were products of the hard work and advances of the society to which they should be committed. Echoing the ideas of Freire that the educational professional cannot be neutral, Guevara extended this argument to all professionals.

Program planning should develop service-oriented people willing to make sacrifices for others. Aptheker (in Du Bois, 2001) comments that central to Du Bois' educational philosophy was "the demand for sacrifice, for a life of service, and an insistence that while such a life will bring hardships and temptations it also will bring fulfillment" (p. xiii). The best of social activists have always embodied this principle. Activists rarely attain personal benefit from the risk taking

involved in organizing and educating for change, which, more often than not, results in personal sacrifice.

Goals of Program Planning

In this section we will present what we consider to be the most important goals of program planning for a democratic socialism.

Political Independence of Working Class People

To begin, we should clarify that by working class, we are not referring to an early 20th Century, industrial-based definition of the working class. In defining the working class, we draw on the work of Zweig (2000) in considering the contemporary make up of the working class in the United States. Following Zweig, working-class people are those who, when they are employed, work for someone else and have a minimum amount of control over the conditions of their work, regardless of the color of the collar they wear on the job. By this definition, the working class constitutes about 63% of the US population. For a democratic socialism to be successful, program planning should work to achieve political independence for the working class. In the U.S., this will need to be manifested in the formation of a multiracial, multiregional working-class political organization. This organization will need to clearly identify a working class in the U.S. as the majority class with distinct interests from the class in power. In addition, an organization of this nature will need to articulate the demands of the so-called new social movements (issues of race, gender, sexuality, identity, and the environment) from a working-class perspective. In other words, it will need to reflect the interests and demands of the working class as it actually is: majority female, disproportionately formed by people of color, and disproportionately affected by environmental disasters and degradation.

Understanding the Line of March

It is essential that program planning help working class people understand and anticipate the trajectory of socio-political economic change; Marx and Engels call the line of march. This is a fundamental aspect of leadership at the individual and organizational level, without which a person or organization must merely tag along with rather than guide political action. People must be able to understand the complexities of their socio-political economic context in order to consciously work to change it in the direction of a democratic socialism.

Understanding Social Change as an Historical Process

Gramsci (1994) understood that social change emerges as an interrelated process of economic, social, and political transformations. We tend to only consider political upheavals as indicators of social change, and in this way, we fail to understand the interconnectedness of economic, social, and political transformations.

To see social change as an interrelated process involving economic, social, and political transformation, allows people to understand how there are transformations of an objective nature like the mechanization of agriculture over which working class people have little say, that transform the playing field upon which people fight for their demands. These objective changes can make social and political change more or less likely. If one is to be successful, educational planning for a democratic socialism should have as a goal, helping people understand social change as a process involving enabling or disabling objective changes in relation to their demands for a more socially just society.

Understanding One's Place in History

Today we are witnessing national and global economic polarization of rich and poor which is transforming the nature of social classes. Any program planning endeavor for

democratic socialism should have as a goal an understanding of the nature of the particular epoch one is working in, the prospects for change, the nature of that change and the likely agents of that change.

Working with and from the Movements of Working-class People

We need theory to understand the socio-political economic epoch through which we are moving and the prospects for change in this period. As much as we need theory, however, education must also be based in the spontaneous struggles of working-class people around their real needs and interests. For Gramsci, radical praxis of an authentically educational nature does not consist of preaching a dogma, but rather, working in a dialogical, pedagogical, and directive way with the real needs of those most negatively impacted by unfolding socio-political economic changes; those for whom a new social order is a vital necessity. Therefore, education planning should have as a goal to work with and from those most severally impacted by socio-political economic transformations.

Criteria for Evaluating Programs

Given the principles and goals that we have outlined thus far, how do we know if programs are helping build a movement for democratic socialism? In order to address this point, we will present eight criteria with which we can assess our program planning. While these criteria are framed in terms of yes/no questions, the answers to these questions will be on a continuum. Individual planners and planning collectives or groups, given their specific contexts, need to consider if they can move their work further in an affirmative direction on the continuum for each criterion. Moreover, program evaluation should be the responsibility of all those involved in the educational process; a process through which everyone takes responsibility for their own role in achieving the aims of the educational program.

Does our work begin with the pressing demands of the marginalized?

This is important for two main reasons. First, in any given situation, the most marginalized have the least at stake in the prevailing relations of power that maintain a given society. Moreover, the marginalized can often represent the future for sectors of the society not yet on the losing end of prevailing relations.

Does our work help the marginalized understand the historic nature of their existence, and does it expose the growing contradictions (polarization) and the inability to resolve these contradictions within existing socio-political economic relations?

These interrelated criteria are particularly important today, given our assumption that we are in a period of fundamental transformation characterized by a growing polarization of wealth and poverty on a global scale. In other words, today's poverty is unique since it is an expression of the growing inability of prevailing relations to satisfy the needs of the poor in the midst of surpluses of the basics of life (food, clothing, housing, etc.).

Does our work allow people to understand the interconnectedness of their own local situation and the broader context?

Isolated, people rarely see their problems as social problems. When people come together, however, they are much more likely to see how their own problems are not individual problems, but social problems rooted in prevailing asymmetrical power relations. Program planning should insure that people can come to an understanding of the interconnectedness of themselves, their social reality, and the wider society.

Does our work build an active and engaged political independence of the growing marginalized sectors of society? Does our work build unity among the marginalized?

Program planning for a democratic socialism must be based on the centuries old adage that the working class (as broadly defined above) must be in charge of and responsible for its own emancipation and education. While this is a tenet of socialist movements, it also resonates in many other social movements.

Does our work build organization through which the marginalized can exercise power?

Program planning for power is a long-term project, yet short and medium range planning should also keep this criterion front and center. All social change runs along the lines of reform. In other words, movements for fundamental social transformation must work for demands raised by people that call for reforms. Reform-oriented work, however, is also of a more fundamental or revolutionary nature when it helps expose the contradictions of society we discussed above and when it helps people exercise power in extracting victories (reforms) from the existing power structure.

Does our work develop the skills and knowledge which allow people to lead?

Serious program planning for democratic socialism must be more than political education aimed at raising people's understanding of the interconnectedness of social reality. If we are serious about people exercising power and decision making capability over the social, political, and economic forces impacting their lives, then people need knowledge and skills in order to make informed decisions and to be able to lead. Youngman (1986), in his book on socialist pedagogy, is one of the few within radical adult education to emphasize this point. Beyond political education, Youngman, identifies general education and technical education as key dimensions for democratic socialist program planning.

Conclusion

As we look out on a world where about half of the world's population lives on less than two dollars per day, the program planning principles we have outlined with the goals of educating people in order to create and take advantage of a democratic, participatory, and cooperative society seem less and less like politically charged phrases and more like planning that meets the needs of a growing majority of the world's population. Planning guided by the principles and goals outlined in this paper should not be seen as putting programs on the margins of the field, but rather as anchoring them within the best of our own traditions.

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