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LATIN AMERICAN TRADITIONS AND PERSPECTIVES

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Abstract – Educational and related non-pedagogical issues are generally described and discussed. Implicitly or explicitly, the theology of liberation, *educación popular* and traditional education tend to perpetuate male/female roles and very often incite violence. Peace education in Latin America should concentrate more on the pathology of the violent man. The so-called 'weaknesses' associated with women and their 'powerlessness' in Western civilization are precisely those which are absolutely essential to our survival. It is important for women to reject Western patterns of violence and participate actively in finding a viable alternative.

Zusammenfassung – Erziehungsfragen und darauf sich beziehende nichtpädagogische Probleme werden allgemein beschrieben und erörtert. Die Theologie der Befreiung, die *educación popular* und traditionelle Erziehung neigen verdeckt oder offen dazu, männlich/weibliche Rollen zu verfestigen und lösen sehr oft Gewalt aus. Friedenserziehung in Lateinamerika sollte sich mehr auf die Pathologie des gewalttätigen Mannes konzentrieren. Die sogenannten 'Schwachen', die mit Frauen und ihrer 'Machtlosigkeit' in der westlichen Zivilisation assoziiert werden, sind genau die Eigenschaften, die für unser Überleben absolut notwendig sind. Für Frauen ist es wichtig, westliche Muster der Gewalt abzulehnen, und aktiv daran teilzunehmen, eine lebensfähige Alternative herauszufinden.

Résumé – Les questions d'éducation et celles, non-pédagogiques, qui s'y rattachent sont décrites et discutées de façon générale dans cet article. Implicitement ou explicitement, la théologie de libération, l'*educación popular* et l'éducation traditionnelle tendent à perpétuer les rôles homme/femme et très souvent suscite la violence. L'éducation pour la paix en Amérique Latine doit se concentrer davantage sur la pathologie de l'homme violent. Les prétendues 'faiblesses' associées à la condition féminine et l' 'impuissance' de la femme dans la civilisation occidentale sont précisément des qualités indispensables à notre survivance. Il importe que les femmes rejettent les formes occidentales de violence et qu'elles participent activement à la recherche d'une solution viable.

In Search of Manhood

It has often been argued that Latin American education lacks a philosophical foundation (so Puiggrós (1980) and many other Latin American educators) and that this vacuum necessarily produces contradictions and antago-



nisms within the educational system which ultimately defeat its purposes. This lack of philosophy, however, could either be construed as a matter of not having the 'right' philosophy or be seen as the struggle to develop an unquestionable right to be and to exist. Part of this 'struggle to be' may be understood by interpreting the ultimate meaning of the relationships between the Western nations and Latin America, and within Latin America itself.

Somewhat freely following Galtung (1980b), distinctions can be made – with (A) and (a) standing for the political and economic power of the Western nations and Latin America, respectively, and with (B) and (b) representing the rest of the populations, more socially, politically and economically heterogeneous.

(a) understands and imitates the Western Verb. On the other hand, the West has not granted it the category of 'Manhood', assuming that it is composed of 'less-Men', bastard children of Europe – at best still developing – not entitled to claim the name of their own land (since 'American' only refers to an inhabitant of the North, who deserves His title because of His technological and economic advancement) and having no right to use their own language among experts (because Spanish and Portuguese are not acceptable technical/scientific languages in academic circles or journals).

This is the tragedy of identity of the 'poor' rich class of Latin America and its intelligentsia: no matter how wealthy, sophisticated or educated it becomes, no matter how hard it tries, it can never fit within the Philosophy of Progress. Its own existence is living proof of retrogression: how can it ever be forgiven for blending with 'peoples diminished in their humanity . . . (for having become) degenerated by the mixing of its blood with beings that could not justify their humanity . . . For mestizos and Iberians, the men of America, form a sub-humanity, and the expression of this sub-humanity is the underdevelopment in which they live, that reveals their incapacity for progress – because progress lies among Men men, that is, within the nations that conduct the destinies of the world' (Zea, 1980)?

However, the theme of the relationship between the powerful and the powerless is reproduced in the most intricate ways. In Latin America, for example, although (a), having the Western Logos, can understand the meaning of being considered 'sub-Men', it acts as 'Men' within the social structures. This means that the relationship of oppression between (a) and (b) is very similar to that between (A) and (a). Thus, to go 'Indian hunting' cannot be taken as a mere expression of greed (what more can be stolen from American aborigines?) but as a serious sport that may eventually erase proof of the source of the blood that runs in (a)'s veins; it reflects a need to eliminate that physical proximity with the 'real' sub-men which causes (a) to be reckoned 'sub-Men' by the 'Men' and 'Supermen'.

For (A), (a) is the only American (Latin American) that exists; after all, (a) can, with its own shortcomings and limitations, communicate (through the Western Verb, Western Logos and Western System of Communications) an insistent and persistent nagging signal that reads: 'I do exist, look at me, here I am. What more can I do to be considered "Man"?'

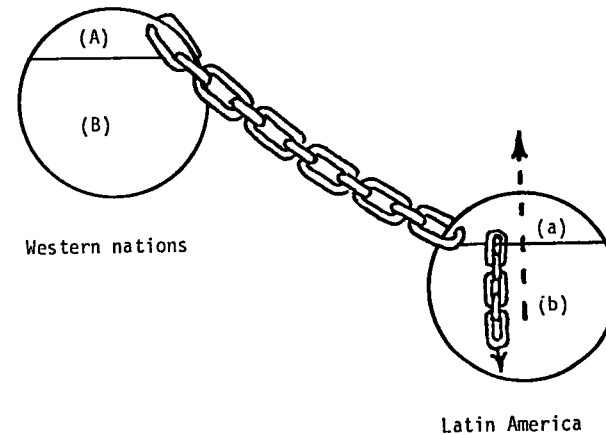


Figure 1. *The Economic, Political, Military and Cultural Relationship between the Western Nations and Latin America – a relationship 'for mutual benefit' of possession and control. (a) aspires to being considered 'Men', Western style, by simultaneously oppressing (b) and negating its right to be.*

Hardly anything is known about the true Americans, aborigines of this continent, because they lack the Verb; and until they possess it, they cannot exist in their own right. Their existence is only recognized as anonymous data in international statistics under the heading 'illiterate'; as tourist attractions (they produce good handiwork for low prices); and objects of research (their 'strange' ways and manners provide interesting topics for academics); or as objects of compassion (missionaries can never baptize enough of them).

Somewhere between (A) and (B), and (a) and (b), lie the middle classes, who (as has often been suggested) have very much in common. Many of these classes are the true Little Men that support (A) and (a) respectively, and dictate the rules of 'true knowledge' and 'true methodologies' – the Little Professors, the Little Social Scientists and the Little Scientists, who have dreams of being Big Men.¹ By common consent, they have already established that in order to be considered human one day, American aborigines

should be Baptized, Vaccinated and Literate – plus a recent innovation, Planned, which means using or being the product of Planned Parenthood.

The Wonders of the West

At this point in history it is relevant to ask why Western Philosophy has been so utterly successful: what made first the Peripatetic School, and then its combination with Christianity, appear so irresistible, so readily spread, so self-righteous? One answer could be that when the right to consider oneself a Human Being is denied by self-proclaimed Men or Little Men (to non-Greeks, non-Romans, non-Citizens, slaves, women, the non-baptized, heretics), people tend to consider this not as an act of arrogance that should be counter-balanced as a threat to selfhood, but as the Ideal of Being. Whether or not direct violence has been used, the process of domination is quick and effective; that is, within a generation or two, subjugation has taken place.

In the early Middle Ages, for example, European Men, carriers of the Western Logos, began to emerge, not as victims voicing a protest against Roman and Christian violence, but as victors, defining their manhood (already assimilated) with the same philosophical tools as their previous oppressors. The Others were now those who resisted assimilation, heretics and women accused of witchcraft. Gradually, it became more and more meaningless to speak of the Iberians', Celts' and Franks' right to exist. In the end, all they left was the inspiration to represent anti-civilization ('barbarism', 'vandalism', 'gothicism') and to be romanticized in Wagnerian pomp. With all discrimination and persecution forgotten, European Men proclaimed themselves as such, possessors of the Western Logos (the one and only indisputable logos), with a clearly established oppressed class (B). This refuse of Europe, the European sub-Men (many of them slaves and delinquents) were suddenly faced with the double task not only of pillaging America and other territories, but of civilizing them as well – and in so doing, they in turn proclaimed themselves Men. Putting aside any link with the past (neither Incas, Aztecs nor Europeans) these men asserted their humanity by using the same tools that had made them the refuse of Europe: the pattern had repeated itself to perfection.

These processes have been described from many angles and many perspectives. Here, we would like to point out that even the 'rebels' must use the logos of the oppressor, that is, His language and His technology (press, radio, TV), simply to aspire to be heard. For example, it wasn't until US blacks were allowed to enter some colleges, using Western language and techniques, that they could reveal their condition of oppression to the

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world. But the acquisition of this language (Western Logos) in itself very often represents a trap to the rebel too seductive to resist. 'Stay within our system,' it seems to say, 'and you will enjoy all the benefits, comfort and happiness that come with it. Look at your Sisters and Brothers: they are poor because they are lazy.'

The Vicissitudes of Education for the Privileged

In order to understand Latin American educational processes we should like to maintain our original division between (a) and (b), the first group holding the Western Logos and the second representing the masses stripped of their own logos and religion, the totally dispossessed.

It is necessary to explain that the expression 'Latin American Traditions', used in the title of this article and referred to education, sounds 'folksy'. *Traditions*, according to the dictionary, means 'the statements, beliefs, legends and customs handed down from generation to generation, especially by word of mouth.' It certainly does not refer to a serious intellectual attempt to construct a pedagogy that may meet Western standards; on the other hand, the title allows for the inclusion of the many non-pedagogical forces that have a most decisive influence in the education of the Latin American.

Politically, Latin America had followed Rousseau and the ideals of the French Revolution and Saint-Simon (during the Wars of Independence), succeeded by the supremacy of positivism, which in turn provoked a reaction to French idealism. The teachers of Latin America were Comte, Renan and Taine.

But positivism was certainly not the same throughout Latin America. In Mexico it was interpreted as an instrument of unity that would bring certain order after Independence. Gabino Barreda thought that education should be equal for all, regardless of their professions, because the ultimate end was social welfare. The Escuela Normal de Paraná was founded on the ideas of Sarmiento, who had worked very hard toward 'civilizing' people. Using Anglo-Saxon models, he encouraged individual responsibility. In general, Comte was not interpreted literally, but his ideas were adapted and freely changed according to local 'needs'.

After the second half of the last century, Latin American pedagogy centered around the argument between conservatives and liberals; that is, either education should reproduce the structures of the colonial society or it should prepare the road toward a utopian capitalist development. Both positions, naturally, remained beyond the needs and culture of the masses.

At the beginning of this century, the argument was between positivists

(modernists) and anti-positivists (spiritualists): either society should be organized according to the interests of the dependent oligarchies (pedagogy equalled 'order and progress') or pedagogy should claim the reunification of its object (by now fragmented in categories unable to embrace the educational problems of the continent); but spiritualists also remained trapped within an idealism that ultimately served the dominant classes.

One day, reform had to take place. It started in Córdoba, Argentina, in 1918. The Principles of the Reform, as expressed in the Córdoba Manifesto, showed the intellectual elites beginning to become aware of the self-perpetuating aspects of their underdevelopment in relation to other countries; universities should assume the responsibility of taking upon themselves the preparation of people with more concern for democracy and society. In general, the most important characteristics of Latin American universities were inherited from the Córdoba Program.

This reform, nevertheless, produced the so-called 'educationism', a belief that education possesses quasi-magical properties. A by-product of idealism and individualism, it is based upon the concept that all human problems originate from lack of education (that is, Western education) and that this condition makes people inefficient, indolent and incapable of responsible action; accordingly, all human problems would be solved if everyone were educated.²

Ultimately, Latin American reformed universities were reduced to the role of factories that produced leaders for a dependent capitalism; however, they managed to retain a touch of liberalism and an intense nationalism. The Latin American intellectuals of this time lacked the theoretical instruments or the interest necessary to understand their own nations and to produce a pedagogy committed to social change because they themselves were the privileged minority needing to maintain the *status quo* in order to enjoy the benefits of their position.

Functionalism invaded Latin America between 1955 and 1965. As a direct import, it was totally removed from positivist Latin American pedagogy and significantly adapted to fit dependent countries. The pedagogy of underdevelopment was clearly outlined in theories such as cultural deprivation which, translated into education, had the following characteristics:

1. Quantification of elements – functionalism places Latin American education on a scale that allows its elements to be measured. Students, institutions, programs and teachers occupy the lowest level on this scale.
2. Although modified, it is based upon the old idea of the eternal progress of societies as well as Dewey's idea of progress, that is, the association of educational progress with the social unit.

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3. The whole is fragmented and then reconstructed by the summation of its fragments.
4. Education as a need to form human resources for development is presented as an irrefutable reality.
5. Education is a pre-requisite for economic development. The person is reduced to his/her economic role.
6. The only valid forms of education are those of the dominant class, and those processes that escape its control are automatically disqualified.
7. The scientific appearance of this didactic gives legality to the penetration of the transnationals into the educational systems of Latin America.

The Beginning of Change

Criticism of the dominant form of education made possible the introduction of ideas from different ideological origins and with other theoretical values than those of the prevailing ideology; the works of Ivan Illich were a case in point.

Illich argued that since universal schooling is beyond the means of developing countries, and since education is recognized as the only legitimate avenue for participation in society, schools are destined to provide privileges for the minority at the cost of the majority. Schools also tend to produce a caste system by dividing society into two distinct classes: one composed of people with credentials/qualifications, and the other made up of those without them. These credentials do not, according to Illich, reflect an individual's ability to function in a particular capacity as much as they denote his membership of society's elite group. Illich envisioned non-bureaucratic, non-institutionalized systems, dependent upon a person's desire to pursue educational experiences, being made available; libraries, museums, etc., being opened. He also encouraged individuals with particular interests to form groups for verbal exchange and study (Illich, 1972).

Reimer¹ thinks in a similar way: schools have become depositaries of technological societies, incorporating and transmitting particular ideologies and reinforcing the concept of a closely-knit technological society functioning in interrelated ways. To many, the positions of Illich, Reimer and others were viewed as major threats to the educational establishment and formal schooling was strongly defended; furthermore, it was felt that these critics offered little as social scientists, and that schools should not be eliminated for a vague and unknown alternative which might prove negative in terms of development. Others, however, saw these radical approaches to education as a basis for self-criticism and change.

Among the several Marxist theories of education that have had a decisive influence among Latin American educators, Althusserian pedagogy has played the most important role. On the other hand, Puiggrós (1980) pointed out that Althusser creates categories that are useless in relation to understanding Latin American education. Furthermore, if used literally, they become a theoretical model that can only be supported if the data about Latin American reality is adapted to suit it.

Starting from the simplest point, the Latin American school system is a state machine which tends to dominate in reproducing the social relationships of production. The high rates of illiteracy and of school drop-out by no means support the argument that school is an institution that 'receives the children of all social classes starting from kindergarten, . . . and imparts to them practical knowledge over many years'. Furthermore, some authors maintain that the repressive machinery in Latin America has a more important role than the ideological, thus inverting the Althusserian outline. Repression should not be confused with reproduction. Repression is emphasized when the reproduction processes manifest antagonistic contradictions. But in Central America and the Caribbean, for example, where the school system is hardly developed, reproduction proceeds apart from the repressive machinery; repression only contributes indirectly to the process of reproduction. But within the family and at work there is a multitude of problems that must be solved daily. When a worker understands the nature of his/her oppression, the seeds of revolutionary consciousness germinate; and the most important educational processes take place in the context of this struggle (Puiggrós, 1980).

By the end of the 50's, students and teachers had become interested in formulating a critique of the dominant traditional pedagogy. The increasing poverty of the middle sectors was a further incentive for the organization of teachers, professionals and others in unions and political groups; these groups were much stronger than the old professional associations and brought a fundamental qualitative change in society. The teachers' revolutionary process and their organization in unions strengthened the popular political forces at the core of society. It is not surprising, therefore, that Latin American education, encouraged by transnationals, tends to replace the teacher with a TV or radio connected to programmed and highly centralized systems of instruction.

The Theology of Liberation

The impetus for consciousness-raising arose in Brazil, especially in the north-east, prior to the overthrow of the government in 1964. The *Movimento de Cultura Popular* was promoted by radical Catholics, most of whom were university students. Films, plays, leaflets and other devices were used to direct attention to the peoples' own problems while raising other political issues. Content was directed toward liberation and against imperialism. It aimed at consciousness-raising and included a 'praxis' or 'action' dimension.

The *Movimiento de Educación Básica* (MEB), originated by a 1958 Catholic-sponsored radio school program, was based upon a similar model. The Brazilian government together with the Brazilian Bishops' Conference combined to initiate a nation-wide school system with 7,000 radio schools. The program used volunteer monitors to co-ordinate listening groups. By 1962 the radio broadcasts had begun to radicalize into the consciousness-raising movement and by 1963 into the popular culture movement. Also, in this period MEB began to use popular animation as a technique in the programs.

By the end of their short existence, the programs were concerning themselves less with education *per se* and more with the economic structures which perpetuated the plight of peasants barely able to survive. This resulted in confrontations with landowners and challenged the wider political and economic system which held peasants in bondage to the local *patrón*. The potential dangers of the programs were quickly perceived. After the coup of 1964 the radical orientation of all radio broadcasts was eliminated and they were reduced in number by more than a half. However, they continue to function under the Catholic Bishops' Conference.

In general, the role of the clergy was of great importance. Specifically, in Central America, activist priests helped significantly in legitimizing armed struggle. Throughout Latin America there were very few organizations of peasants, workers and slum-dwellers. However, in Central America, guerrilla groups made up of peasants and factory workers emerged in the 1970's. Although the scale of the repression exceeded even the horrors of Argentina, guerrilla movements survived: in Nicaragua they took power in July, 1979; in El Salvador, Guatemala and Honduras they are still at war against military regimes.

Some authors (e.g., Lernoux, 1980) argue that the increasing militancy of some of the clergy is the most significant political development in Latin America since the Cuban revolution, since so little else has changed. The economic, political and educational structures of the continent are still designed to produce wealth for the few rather than development for the many.

Even the educational movement brought about by Freire in Brazil and Chile foundered with the downfall of the governments in these countries, respectively. Furthermore, the idea that the complexity of all the unrest in Latin America is 'communist agitation created and sustained in Cuba' remains intact.

Lernoux asserts that the centuries-old alliance of the Sword and the Cross in Latin America is suddenly disintegrating. Although Las Casas and other Jesuits and missionaries spoke openly against this alliance, the reality is that the Church – as an extremely wealthy landowner – stood close to political and economic power. (It is important to remember that the Inquisition also played a role in repression throughout the Continent.) In spite of anti-clericalism in most Latin American countries, the Catholic Church is still a powerful conservative force connected with the ruling elites. Nevertheless, it contributed towards the foundation of Christian Democratic parties formally committed to social reform, if only as an alternative to losing the faithful and their clergy and in reaction to the growing movement of priests and nuns who were renouncing their vows. Revolutionary encyclicals emphasizing the right to education, a decent standard of living, and political participation, have been emanating from Rome since 1961. 'Medellín produced the Magna Carta of today's persecuted, socially committed Church, and as such rates as one of the major political events of the century . . . It shattered the centuries-old alliance of Church, military and the rich elites,' writes Lernoux. Pope Paul, who travelled to Colombia, told a crowd in Bogotá, 'We wish to personify the Christ of a poor and hungry people.' In their final document, the bishops of the continent developed this theme, denouncing 'institutionalized violence' and the international imperialism of money, and committing themselves to the option of the poor. Thus the Theology of Liberation was born, and thus began also an inner battle within the Church between the conservative clergy and those progressive priests who today frequently incite strikes from the pulpit and openly defy military regimes.

The Church in Central America, however, instead of defending the victims of military governments, as happened in South America, took upon itself the awakening of poor peasants and workers from the resignation, apathy and fatalism of centuries. As this brought more repression, so the priests in turn became more radical. When non-violent tactics failed and became virtually suicidal, they took up arms. Suddenly, the people were told that the armed struggle was also a Christian cause. The activities of the Church in El Salvador are well known, not only because of the murder of Archbishop Romero in 1980, but also because of ordinary priests whose work has had great political significance.

Educación Popular

People in Latin America no longer think that learning to read and write is merely the acquisition of a technical skill. It is understood as a process that implies values, forms attitudes, and leads to social and political positions. In fact, many suggest that literacy training has been openly revolutionary. The chief intellectual architect of this change is Paulo Freire who developed the theory of *conscientization*, also known as the psycho-social method. In Chile the method was adopted in 1965 for all government programs in literacy training. Fundamentally, Freire was concerned with the relative status of teacher and learner, and with the psychological effect of traditional methods on the latter. Culture was seen to be intimately linked with literacy: as the teacher bestows his culture on the 'ignorant' pupil, he intensifies the sense of subordination and worthlessness that the student, as a member of the lower classes, already suffers. The old learning process was, by its nature, paternalistic; consequently, education became one more manifestation of the social class system of Latin America. Furthermore, Freire puzzled over the reason he was teaching these people to read and write: was it to appropriate the values and assume the roles of a society that was stratified and dehumanizing? He recognized that education was attempting to make pupils adapt to a society that he and other critical Brazilians thought should change. Turning his back on the standard textbooks, Freire began to develop his own approach. His method emerged from combining the resources of the language, culture and problems of the illiterate themselves with a profound theoretical basis (deriving categories and concepts from the phenomenology of Husserl, the psychoanalytical theory of Fromm, existentialism, Marxist humanism and a whole range of scientific and linguistic philosophies).

The analysis of underdevelopment began to have an impact on Latin Americans after World War II. Like many other of his fellow countrymen, Freire concluded that an older epoch of backwardness, dependency and immobility was being replaced by one of new economic orientation, industrialization, greater national autonomy and class mobility. Politically and culturally, closed societies were becoming more open. Traditional interpretations of such themes as democracy, popular participation, authority and liberty, were seeking new content. In Freire's words, education should assume a highly important role in this transition.

But the trauma of change began to divide Latin American society into two groups – those who did not understand the necessity for modernization and used paternalism to inhibit it, and those who were eager to participate in the changes. As an educator and interpreter of these processes, Freire felt that his mission was to create a people capable of participating rationally, criti-



cally and democratically in both the present and future development of the continent. He distinguished between the 'magical' way in which man may confront the world around him and the critical vision of that world. He wanted to reform the perspectives and reality of illiterates (which had usually been characterized by a profound pessimism and fatalism) by helping them to become aware of their capacity to shape the environment and enabling them to acquire the means to do so.

All pedagogical methods imply a concept of man in society; therefore there is no neutral education. Traditional theories of literacy training have attempted to adapt man to his society by methods which stripped him of his individuality and made him an object into which superior beings poured knowledge. For Freire, however, man's psychological vocation is to be a subject who works upon and changes his environment. If man as subject is transforming his world, the process of education should be different. If we look at him as a person, our educational task will be more and more liberating. Yet the Latin American masses cannot express their destiny. To speak of humanization as the basic object of man's existence points to the dehumanization of centuries of exploitation, of which the prevalent illiteracy is only one manifestation. The educator facing a class of illiterates finds himself with an option: to maintain their dehumanization by the methods he uses with them, or to work toward the fulfillment of their human potential. This was precisely the problem that struck Freire – for he found that the available methods offered no alternative but to perpetuate attitudes of passivity and ingenuousness. The method Freire developed makes literacy training a critical and active process in which habits of resignation have to be overcome. Both teacher and pupil co-operate in a common purpose, seeking truth about relevant problems while respecting each other's opinions. The teacher serves as the co-ordinator of the discussion while the pupil becomes a participant in a group trying to understand existence in a changing society. As a basis for this teaching process, Freire believed that he could isolate a minimal core of vocabulary which touched real situations and would lead to issues that stimulated discussion and awakened critical consciousness. Freire's method is usually linked with popular cultural movements which emphasize the creativity of the people and seek new forms of culture among them.

Cuba and Nicaragua

Cuba

The revolution that came to Cuba brought about many changes and a style of life quite in contrast to the one that had existed for centuries. Superficially, the revolution has imposed a conceptual and institutional structure similar to that found in the socialist countries of Eastern Europe and China; but in operation, the Cuban revolution is unique and radically different. The ultimate goal of the educational establishment is to remold and transform every individual under its control according to the image of an ideal 'socialist' humanism and a political system labelled 'communist'. The design of Cuban revolutionary education can best be described in the following terms:

1. Making education universal from nursery school to university, so that knowledge, science and technology is available to all;
2. Developing a Marxist orientation in education;
3. Combining education with technological principles, productive work and research; and
4. Involving the working masses in education.

The most significant achievement of the Castro regime has been the establishment of genuinely free co-education in all types of schools and at all levels by eliminating registration and tuition fees and by providing textbooks (some of them without charge) and school supplies. Scholarships and economic aid have also contributed to making education available to thousands of young people, peasants and workers who would otherwise never have had the opportunity to secure it. The principle of universal education through state control and management has been implemented for the first time in the history of Cuba in order to meet the social, economic and cultural needs of children and adults as well as the needs of a technologically developing nation. This is a huge undertaking for a newly established revolutionary government in an industrially underdeveloped country; great investments of human resources and money are necessary, but the leadership considers this work as an indispensable task for a socialist Latin American nation.

The fact that Cuban educational policies require a high level of control of daily life and activities and (as many educators argue) has been reduced mostly to political and economic strategies, should also be taken into account. However, to reverse this process is to deny the revolution itself. Martí was opposed to placing personal rights above the national welfare, for he who loves his country, cannot think of himself first.

Nicaragua

The methodology of *educación popular* as we understand it is the concrete connection between the educational theory and pedagogical practice of the masses – the dialectic and dynamic relation between the political objectives and the reality from which a start is made – the logics of the pedagogical process that is to be implemented.

Thus, the first experiences of *conscientization* begin to be reformulated, departing from the questions generated by the 'combative actions of the popular masses'. (Jara, 1981)

In Nicaragua, this reformulation was based upon the theories and experiences that generated the *educación popular* initiated by Freire; but in Nicaragua, *pedagogía popular* is being developed as a structural part of the political action of the masses, as a new dimension of the organization of political action. This implies a complete reversal of the earlier strategy which says, 'Let's do *educación popular* and *conscientization* first, in order that the masses may organize and act consciously later,' as if these were two phases of a gradual process. It also implies going a step further from the argument that the work of *educación popular* must be linked to political action, as if they were two separate fields that should be united.

The logics of the educational process should be action/reflection/action/practice/theory/practice . . . To pose the problem of the methodology of *educación popular* means facing the issue with a global perspective and not simply asking which research techniques or what type of communication should be used in our work. (Jara, 1981)

Interpretation and Analysis for the Peace Educator

1. There is no doubt that Latin America leads the world in the development of a pedagogy for man's liberation. The objectives and methods of *educación popular* by far surpass those of countries with a long history of socialism: in fact, none of these countries has brought about any dramatic innovations in the field of education, and many actually argue that the most traditional education is found precisely in European socialist countries. Teacher authority and pedagogical dogma are reflected in the structure of the school systems. This rigidity is supposed to contrast radically with the pedagogical experiences in China during the Cultural Revolution when many pedagogical taboos were demythicized.

2. Many myths have been created from the concept of *conscientization*, and most of its original meaning has been lost. It is used to describe many differ-

ent experiences, and if ambiguity is to be avoided in its usage as a theoretical category, the term needs concrete definition. A brief summary of the changing usage of the concept, *conscientization*, may be of interest. At root, the method is based upon the premise that the masses have an 'ingenuous' or 'magical' consciousness of their situation, and that through an adequate educational process, this awareness may be transformed into a critical consciousness. Therefore, the oppressed masses should be made critically conscious of their situation in order that they may be motivated to change it. In short, first comes the critical consciousness and then the implementation of conscious action.

This conception led many popular educators

- either to divorce education from political and organizational action or to see them as antagonistic to it;
- to maintain the expectation that collective dialogue would bring some effective actions in the future;
- to refuse to take part in revolutionary movements arising within and outside the popular education groups; and
- to leave popular political action solely in the hands of revolutionaries.

As mentioned before, the basis of this confusion was the assumption that *conscientization* was a previous stage to action and that education could not form part of the class struggle.

3. Nevertheless, the most advanced experiences in *educación popular* show that practice itself led to this initial conception of *conscientization* being rejected because it was found to be much too limited to respond to the demands of the popular movements. Freire himself retracted his earlier conceptions and definitions where the problem of class struggle and the political nature of education were not present.⁴

4. The observation of the revolutionary processes in relation to education is of transcendental importance for Latin America. To compare objectives with what in reality has been carried through under similar revolutionary circumstances may show up our own limitations.

5. Implicit or explicit in all Latin American pedagogy is violence. In traditional education, class and sex divisions, neatly defined by Western culture, are clearly justified. But the theology of liberation and *educación popular* are essentially constituted as pedagogies of violence, either to defend already acquired rights (as in the cases of Cuba and Nicaragua) or to acquire them (as in most Latin American countries).

On the other hand, the perils and difficulties for a small nation that decides to become socialist are very great and can never be over-emphasized.

The fall of Allende in Chile, for example, was interpreted as a need to arm the entire population: Castro had done it, and it had proved effective in eliminating counter-revolutionary efforts. But the peace educator should always insist, Have all the possibilities for a peaceful solution been explored? Has every effort been made to avoid torture and killings? Who can define the situations when violence *must* be used?

It is alarming that criticism of the violence of guerrilla heroes cannot be expressed; after all, they have the blessings of many Catholic priests, as if holy wars had returned. No doubt today's hero is the guerrilla fighting injustice and the Argentinian fighting against British (so-called) 'colonial fetishism'. But why is the common denominator always the same? A few men take power in the name of the masses, decide for them and on their behalf. The panorama of violence that the new Latin American pedagogy incites can be illustrated by Reich (1972):

... your inability to take what belongs to you, to secure what you had gained in the bloody battles of the Paris and Vienna barricades, in the American emancipation or in the Russian revolution. Your Paris ended in Pétain and Laval, your Vienna in Hitler, your Russia in Stalin, and your America could end in the régime of a KKK. You knew better how to win your freedom than how to safeguard it for yourself and others.

6. So far, the pedagogy of liberation has worked under the following assumptions:

a. As with the aristocracy in pre-revolutionary France and Russia, the oligarchies and structures of power are rigidly and permanently established in Latin America. Therefore, educational efforts are concentrated on the liberation of the 'oppressed' by violent methods and not on the possibility of changing the 'oppressor'.

b. There is something basically 'wrong' (or at least 'undesirable') about the masses; Freire calls it the 'naive' or 'ingenuous' consciousness, and his method consists precisely in changing the 'magical' consciousness into a critical consciousness.

c. Education, as in capitalist countries, must be directed toward competition and the acquisition of skills that will bring material benefits, if not to the person, then to the state.

d. Both in theory and method, violence against women remains invisible; when acknowledged, it is left to be resolved 'later', when the Heroes of the Revolution find time.

It should be important to note that all these assumptions are interrelated, mutually supporting and all lead to the perpetuation of violence – more so

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than in 'imperialist' countries, because 'in order to survive' the entire population must be armed. But peace education, education for liberation – that is, education for change leading to revolution – *is* the revolution as long as its goals are non-violent, i.e., raising consciousness around the pillars on which Western oppression and violence have traditionally rested.

7. Studying the political dimensions of a liberating education means trying to understand clearly the complex relationships between men and women and seeing the ultimate connection between those relationships and violence. To disregard the bases of Western oppression is to disregard the only possible solution to violence, because in order to exercise oppression or violence, Western man must first place women in subjection: this would be like speaking of the proletarian revolution without mentioning class struggle, for example. Most revolutions are made for half the population only. A historical analysis of revolutionary education reveals precisely that the situation of women has changed little and that men seem closer to a destructive dependence on machismo than ever before.

8. It is interesting to point out that most of the adjectives used in Western culture about women are also used in reference to the Third World. It is not unusual to hear it said, for example, that Latin Americans are emotional, undisciplined, unable to observe confidentiality, and naive. Therefore, to hide personal feelings, to be critical, disciplined and to act secretly (especially in association with positions of power) is manly and powerful – but also basically inhuman, undemocratic and anti-social.

The Revolutionary Hero believes that his world should really be as the Western Man has defined it; the most important things are not compassion, the expression of emotion, the capacity to share problems openly and discuss them freely within the communities. It is more desirable for him to set free expressions of hatred against 'oligarchies', 'capitalism', 'transnationals' and any other abstract enemies. Consequently, he is distracted from truly producing a society where freedom, love and mutual caring are the most important reasons for social organization and education.

9. Androgyny in peace education (García, 1981) cannot be interpreted as a simple device which permits men to cry (Homeric heroes and Napoleon did cry), but rather as a revolution in the social behavior of men and women that leads to peace at the personal, national and international levels. In other words, it means the social adoption of values traditionally connected with women, since values traditionally connected with manhood readily lead to mutual destruction and degradation. Somehow, people have the intuition that this is the only possible solution to the most pressing problems

confronting humanity today. If no one knows exactly how to proceed, it should not be forgotten that the basis for drastic change has been laid by many responsible people all over the world.

Confusion may be accounted for by the conviction that an old order is ending and a new one is taking its place, although its exact development and functioning cannot be interpreted or understood concretely. However, social confusion and unrest of this kind have been described in detail in connection with the fall of such strong systems as the Roman Empire.

10. *Oppression* is not a problem of the oppressed but a human problem of the oppressor. The so-called naive person may suffer oppression, but there is no pathology in him because he (or she) is basically human, trusting and trustworthy. The pathology resides within that definition of manhood which man has been forced to adopt whereby he is led by the hand to destroy other human beings, nature and himself for the sake of proving his manhood.

11. Assuming there were a consensus on the meaning and implications of 'critical consciousness', and assuming it had been acquired, there is still no evidence (particularly in the micro-social context) that this alone would enable people to shape their environment. On the contrary, false expectations created by educators, bring great disappointment to the population – which is very often abandoned to its fate.

12. The task of the peace educator is to ameliorate the manifestations of oppression, racism and sexism, particularly among those who hold power; to penetrate the oligarchic structures by taking into consideration the women and children that form part of them, who may be influenced by principles of justice, humanity and compassion.

13. The Revolutionary Hero behaves like his previous oppressor. The imitation is achieved so well that his mind is totally closed to finding non-violent solutions to daily problems. He continues to be brutalized and to brutalize his people, his women, his 'enemies'. Michele Wallace (1979), describing the Black Revolutionary, says:

He has become a martyr. And he has arrived in this place, not because of the dependency inflicted upon him in slavery, but because his black perspective, like the white perspective, supported the notion that manhood is more valuable than anything else.

As long as he was able to hold onto his own black-centered definition of manhood, his sense of himself was not endangered. But it was inevitable, as the time that he had been in this country lengthened, that he would get the black and white perspectives confused. He is unaware that he has accepted a definition of manhood that is destructive to himself and that negates the best efforts of his past.

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14. Since the opinions of women have not played an important part in the social problem-solving processes (Big Decisions are made secretly by Big Men), it is believed that violence is really the only way to resolve social conflict; the Revolutionary Heroes easily become the heroes of society because the intimate feelings of women have little significance in the social context. Western culture has made women mere witnesses of the Great Decisions. But to accept or support male violence is 'naive' human conduct that should be challenged and made critical.

Since the leadership of all revolutionary movements is still in the hands of men, leaders of the 'oppressors' and leaders of the 'oppressed' continue to keep intact Western structures of power and violence based on the subjugation of women. Although some efforts have been made in Cuba and Nicaragua, these efforts are mostly to 'masculinize' women, making them adopt militaristic conduct. Liberation in these countries, therefore, means a paternalistic concession to enter fields previously the exclusive domain of males, a palliative prescribed in the name of equality that only serves to increase violence.

15. The so-called 'weak' characteristics that have been associated with women in Western civilization are precisely those which are absolutely essential to the world's survival – what Flax⁵ calls 'socially useful labor', that is, caring for people, interpersonal relationships, beautiful personal environments, raising children, attending to the needs of daily life. The values associated with this work should permeate all work and replace much of the competitiveness and isolation so prevalent in paid occupations.

Flax is also right in noting that work should not be organized according to the maximization of profits, but rather according to the fulfillment of human needs, both in supplying services and for providing job-satisfaction. The growth and development of children, for example, should not only be a woman's work, not because bringing men closer to children is a 'women's liber dream' of relief, but because it can be an effective way of curtailing man's violence.

Why? We see two reasons: first, that the confinement of women to their homes as the only source of social responsibility for child care and daily domestic tasks frees men to concentrate on, among other things, the development and perfection of war machinery; secondly, that the absence of close personal contact with children (on whom humanity depends for its future) makes men 'manly' – that is, lacking compassion and the opportunity to draw on the source of the deepest emotions linking human beings to each other, feelings that are indispensable for the survival of the species.

Perhaps this is a reason why women find it more difficult to participate in wars and to accept the institutionalization of violence. Their training has

been that of direct contact with the source of life, direct contact with the personal sacrifice that is required to fulfill the daily and tedious tasks that are indispensable to human life.

16. Research issues for peace education in Latin America should lead us to gain a better understanding of the mechanisms that perpetuate violence and clarify the ways through which women may take an active part in the development of educational principles for the socialization of children for a non-violent world.

Notes

1. The concept of 'Little Man' is borrowed from Wilhelm Reich (1972), cited below.
2. In fact, this idea was not so new – cf. the writings of Andrés Bello in the early 19th century, and his 'Address delivered at the Opening of the University of Chile, September 17, 1843'. In *Anthology of Andrés Bello*. Washington, DC: OAS Publications, 1981.
3. Both Illich and Reimer worked at the Center of Intercultural Documentation, Cuernavaca, Mexico.
4. Cf. Paulo Freire: 'In my first works, I made hardly any reference to the political character of education. Nor was reference made to the problem of the social classes or their struggle . . . I wasn't able to clarify the *conscientization* process as I was doing in practice, thus creating a gap between the theory and the practice . . . I didn't do it because I was influenced by ideologies and was a naive bourgeois intellectual. Because of this failure, I allowed experts and the naive to appropriate the concept of *conscientization* for themselves; above all, in Latin America it was utilized and defined in clearly reactionary terms.' *Temas de Educación Política*. Lima, Peru: Ed. Tarea, 1976.
5. References to J. Flax are taken from J. Wirtenberg (1980), cited below.

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