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EDUCATION AND POLITICAL ACTION - A CASE-STUDY OF A PROJECT

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by

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ABSTRACT

Educational projects offering an alternative to the traditional, formal system are increasing in number. Many hold ideals of participative learning and the development of personal autonomy but are also committed to a particular political vision. The interest of this case-study lies in the consideration of how such educational values may interact with a call to support and act upon a set of beliefs.

This tension between open-ended educational work and directed action is a central problem in Paulo Freire's pedagogy. Freire talks of consciousness-raising as the process by which people become aware of the political implications of their personal situations. He advocates experience-based learning but also has an analysis of society which 'conscious' people are to realize. Conscientization, in these terms, is caught between a desire to have people take responsibility for their own learning and to teach a specific view of society. The learning process thus comes into conflict with the curriculum content with priority necessarily being given to one over the other.

Freireian concepts such as **dialogue**, **praxis** and **transformation** are central to many alternative educational projects although they are frequently ill-defined, containing contradictions and creating confusion. This may be reflected in their organizational structures as well as in their outreach work. This study considers the relationships between learning and action, individuality and unity and equality and expertise so as to articulate the difficulties faced by the project under discussion.

The aim of this study is not to provide a set of solutions for the project to adopt but rather to define areas of concern so that the project itself is better able to determine its own direction. The means by which these areas are uncovered and shared with interested parties is therefore of central importance. Thus the limits and possibiities of participant-observation as an evaluative approach are explored with particular interest in the setting up of the contract, the definition of the problem and the communication of the insights gained back to the project stakeholders.

The project selected for this case-study is 'End Racism and Sexism through Education' (E.R.A.S.E.), a small, Cape Town based initiative.

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CONTENTS

CHAPTER ONE

THE EMERGENCE OF THIS CASE

End Racism and Sexism through Education (E.R.A.S.E.) would describe itself as a community education project concerned with the abolition of racism and sexism. It started in 1983 with a small group of people in Cape Town who formed themselves into the 'Committee to End Racism in Textbooks' (C.R.T.). This group planned a number of campaigns and workshops over a five-year period and employed its first field-worker in 1988. By March 1990 there were three full- and one part-time staff members and the committee's role had developed primarily into a policy making and advisory one. The history and current structure of the project is described further in Chapter Three.

E.R.A.S.E. did not volunteer itself as a case-study but was selected for a number of reasons:-

(a) As a particular case, E.R.A.S.E. offered an interesting grounding for considering some broader issues of project organization and pedagogical practice.

(b) It was accessible insofar as it welcomed the researcher and the idea of being studied.

(c) Its area of involvement interested the researcher who wanted to learn something about current alternative educational practice in South Africa.

(d) It was appropriate in scale and so, it seemed at the time, containable within what was to be a minor dissertation.

CONTRACTS AND ETHICS

Determining the function of this case-study and my relationship with the project before the period of study (August 1989 to end January 1990) began was an important process. I first suggested that I focus on E.R.A.S.E. to a committee member who then invited me to a committee meeting where I could listen to proceedings and informally sound members out. They requested a more formal proposal which I wrote after discussing possibilities with three committee members individually. This took the form of a contract or 'Proposal of Commitment to E.R.A.S.E.' (Appendix A) and was accepted unanimously by the committee in July, 1989.

A couple of issues arising from this proposal need further explanation:-
A primary requirement of this study was 'that it is of use to the E.R.A.S.E. committee' (Appendix A, p.109). The committee were thus perceived as the commissioners and consequently had some control over determining the focus of my work. So, for example, workshops were to be critiqued rather than the project magazine, and structure and finances were only to be of concern insofar as they influenced the educational work.

In addition, this case-study was to be submitted in partial fulfilment of a Master's degree. It therefore had to satisfy academic requirements in terms of style and wider application and be aware of its eventual public nature. As the issue of confidentiality was an important one the 'Proposal of Commitment' reads:

> The committee will have the right to recommend to the case-study worker that information which is sensitive or might necessarily affect the public image of the project be excluded from the final report. (Appendix A, p.113)

This placing of the interests of the project above the interests of knowledge is not an easy area to justify in academic terms. The ethics of the case require discussion.

It could have been difficult to gain access to all information had the committee not felt that it had control over what happened to this information. By giving stake-holders a say in the editing I could thus do the research needed to illuminate the case beyond the specifics which could be named for exclusion. The committee was given no right to recommend that observation and opinion of the case-study worker be excluded, but only **information** which is finally of less relevance. There seems no harm in excluding confidential information when there is enough other material to provide the evidence necessary for academic argument. The risk of no permitted evidence to substantiate a point remains a challenge for the case-study worker should such a situation arise. How this is dealt with is itself an interesting academic discussion.

Richard Pring describes two categories of ethical theory:

> First there are those that stress intrinsic value of particular activities, irrespective of their consequences. Secondly there are those that judge the value of what is done much more by reference to the consequences.(1)

It is these consequences which are of concern to the researcher. Where observations are not 'of use to the E.R.A.S.E. committee' they are of no relevance. Where they endanger the project they refer us back to the arguments surrounding Galileo and Einstein and the question of the common good.

Some argue that what is useless or dangerous to a particular project may not be so to the general public. Truth must be pursued at all costs. This is an argument for objectivity

where the evaluator is to produce a fair report but is not concerned with the consequences of her work. Kirkup questions this as being both impossible and undesirable and quotes House for support:

> People being evaluated do not want a neutral evaluator, one who is unconcerned about the issues. A person on trial would not choose a judge totally removed from his own social system. ... Rather the evaluator must be seen as a member of, or bound to the group being judged, just as a defendant is judged by his peer. The evaluator must be seen as caring, as interested, as responsive to the relevant arguments. He must be impartial rather than simply objective.(2)

Impartiality implies a lack of favouritism but not the lack of concern for the consequences of an evaluation which objectivity may lay claim to. Had I felt at the outset that there may be a case formulated for the destruction of E.R.A.S.E. it would have been unethical to pursue the study in the manner I did. Had I decided this during the course of the study I would have had to withdraw. From the start there was a commitment to work on the project's development even though this might involve some hard and uncomfortable questions for E.R.A.S.E..

How this approach worked itself out in practice is discussed in the final chapter. Here the focus is on why the case-study was set up as it was, what it plans to do and how the central problem came to be defined.

PARTICIPANT OBSERVATION

The issues of impartiality, objectivity and editing rights give rise to the question of the role of the case-study worker while doing her study. After discussion with committee members it was decided that I should be a

'participant-observer'. People did not want to be observed in an apparently passive manner but rather wanted an ethos of 'give and take' from the start. Observation without participation would have inhibited people who could not know what the case-study worker was thinking nor what conclusions were being drawn. Mutual trust was an important factor:

> She (the case-study worker) is to spend the first month working with the active members of the committee so as to get to know them and their work and so as to give them the opportunity to do likewise. (Appendix A, p.111)

In addition, my work on the project was seen by the committee as something which would support the co-ordinator from the moment contact was made. She was the only full-time project employee at the time and her workload and isolation on a day to day basis were regarded as an urgent problem. To sit back and observe someone empty ashtrays, answer the telephone and plan a workshop simultaneously would have caused difficulties and unpopularity. The immediate demands of the project were beyond debate and necessitated my participation.

Such close contact during the period of evaluation gave rise to some interesting problems relating to the impact of one's own involvement in a process one is attempting to observe impartially. Does sweeping the floor, for example, change the project's behaviour more or less significantly than watching someone else sweep it? Is more revealed by sitting silently in a meeting or by asking questins of clarification or testing ideas in that same meeting? Generally I would argue that in this instance the more active role gave greater access to personalities and attitudes than the more passive would have done. I was always minuted as 'observer' in project meetings and, accepting that certain comments or questions may have influenced members, took care not to participate in any decision making. On the one occasion I

requested passive observer status I was excluded from the session on the grounds of inhibiting participants. (This incident is described in Chapter Four, p.71) In retrospect I would still assert that my participant-observer role was the appropriate one for this project.

This may not have been the case had the project had more people working on it or had the workers been less isolated, had I not had an active interest in the work it was doing and had I not been able to offer practical suggestions on the level of teaching methodology. These were not offered until the analysis of the workshop included in this study had been completed. This, initially verbal, workshop critique and my involvement with the project over the past few months may prove to be of as much use to the project as the final printed work. As Cronbach and Associates suggest:

> With some hesitation, we advise the evaluator to release findings piecemeal and informally to the audiences that need them. The impotence that comes with delay may be a greater risk than the possibility that early returns may be misread.(3)

Participant observation has facilitated this feeding back of findings or, to use Helen Simons' phrase, to 'democratise knowledge'.

EVALUATIVE APPROACHES

Evaluators are continually asserting that there is no one correct approach to a case-study but rather a range of options which may be selected, adapted and combined. These depend on the individual researcher, the nature of the project and the context within which it is working and on the requirements of the evaluation.

This study has aimed at being qualitative, grounding its observations on particular phenomena rather than on numerical counts which might conceal the subtleties of human behaviour. It has not focussed, in the Tylerian manner, on whether or not the project has met its goals but has rather concerned itself with the motivation underlying these goals and with the hidden messages conveyed by its actions. It has therefore not generally sought formal interviews but 'natural communication'[4] and has questioned statements on official documents rather than used them as certainties from which judgements could be made.

Different methods have been used so as to check, or triangulate, findings. Thus discussions have been coupled with observation, with setting up a workshop on the project's structure to include people on the margins of the project, with a questionnaire for learners, with reading the project literature and with attending meetings and workshops. It has been, in R.E. Stake's terms, **responsive** insofar as it has attempted to respond to the needs of the committee, to be accessible, to focus on activities rather than on stated intentions and to be interpretive rather than judgmental.

Hence it has focussed on **issues** as they provide 'a structure for continuing discussion.'[5] In Partlett and Hamilton's terms it has been an **illuminative** evaluation as, 'Its primary concern is with description and interpretation rather than measurement and prediction.'[6]

Illuminative evaluation also claims to concern itself with the wider milieu or context within which a project or innovation functions. This study has on the whole not attempted to explain or interpret the broader South African context. This would have been a full research project in itself and beyond the scope of this short study. Instead

the focus has been on E.R.A.S.E.'s particular practice in relation to the prevailing issue of radical education for political transformation. In addition to being more realistic this has also been more in line with the committee's, or stakeholder's, commission.

EDUCATION AND POLITICAL ACTION - THE EMERGENCE OF THIS FOCUS

> Beginning with an extensive data base, the researchers systematically reduce the breadth of their inquiry to give more concentrated attention to the emerging issues. This 'progressive focusing' permits unique and unpredicted phenomena to be given due weight.(7)
>
> **and**
>
> Responsive-evaluation procedures allow the evaluator to respond to emerging issues as well as to preconceived issues.(8)

Before embarking on this case study I had a number of preconceived notions including, most significantly as it turned out, that E.R.A.S.E. was an **educational** project. With this I had images of curricula and learners, of the mutual search for new truths and of respect for individual autonomy above all else. I had newly emerged from working within British Education and had limited knowledge of developments in alternative South African education.

It took me some time to realize that this was not such a project and that its name, E.R.A.S.E., was centred on the notion of ending racism and sexism. 'In Education' (the preposition had not yet been changed to 'through') had been tacked onto the end as a consequence of the project's history where the primary concern had been with fighting elements within the formal education system rather than with employing education as a strategy for ending racism and sexism. Its current work continued to be a campaign in

essence but had now spread beyond working against prejudice in the education system to targetting what it termed 'the community'.

What surprised me even more was the discovery that E.R.A.S.E. itself had always felt that it was an educational project and not primarily a political, cultural or campaigning project. Nevertheless it was using the language of 'movements', 'campaigns', membership', 'representation', 'accountability' and 'united action'. Contradictions had never been considered, in a manner reminiscent of the unresolved tensions underlying Paulo Freire's Pedagogy of the Oppressed. (Freire's educational theory is discussed in the next chapter.)

My own interest in the nature of educational, as opposed to directly political, work led me to pursue this apparent dislocation. The project was running into structural and directional problems, trying to function as a representative democracy acting on mandates on the one hand and to provide a series of workshops and a teenage magazine on the other. This problem, the co-ordinator confirmed, was reaching crisis point.

Thus the case of the relationship between education and political action emerged. This study focuses on the project's workshop programmes, asking how these work to influence or enlighten its participants and what E.R.A.S.E. expects from them in return. In this way the extent to which this project is able to support people in their learning (as one might expect in an educational programme) and the extent to which it gathers support for a cause or even itself (as in a political programme) is highlighted.

This study also discusses some organizational issues in this light - a support service is different from a recruitment

operation. Having raised these and made some provocative observations it leaves the project with an agenda of questions for consideration so that it may take some more informed decisions and thus regain its direction. These are presented in Chapter Five.

A CASE STUDY AS REFLECTION OF THE CASE

This case study explores the relationship between influence and knowledge, agreeing with Freire that no knowledge is neutral but also rejecting the notion of consciousness raising as a process of ideological indoctrination or persuasion. Education lies somewhere between directing people towards a particular perception or world view and making space for them to determine their own direction.

Here, between these covers, lies a tension similar to the one E.R.A.S.E. is caught within. A study to increase the knowledge available about a particular project is written but has to admit that it is neither neutral nor objective. It seeks to **educate**: 'Programme evaluation is a process by which society learns about itself.'(9) But it also hopes to be of some **influence**: 'The evaluator has political influence even when he does not aspire to it.'(10) A case-study which leaves its stakeholders unmoved or which provokes them to take decisions totally contrary to those the evaluator would recommend would be regarded as unsuccessful in raising the awareness of the decision-makers. It may even, as Freire does, defend its findings by concluding that these people have a 'false consciousness'.

Hence evaluation is an inherently political process as is a project aimed at ending racism and sexism. Both intend to stimulate further thought and so change, yet both also suffer a tension between forcing ideas and beliefs and

illuminating the case so that people may act autonomously from a more informed position. The issue of what to tell people, where to lead them and how, finally, to leave them to believe and act as they determine is as real for this case study as it is for E.R.A.S.E.'s work.

HOW THIS STUDY PLANS TO TELL, LEAD AND LEAVE

I have already suggested that my actual involvement in E.R.A.S.E. as participant-observer may have had as much of an impact on the thinking and organization of the project as this final document. In addition findings have been released 'piecemeal' both verbally and in written form by way of helping to check their validity and of testing reactions. Committee members have also had the opportunity to read drafts as they have been produced so as to be included in the editing process as described in the 'Proposal of Commitment' (Appendix A). Yet the committee has to date had no opportunity to respond to this study collectively. A seminar is therefore to take place at the time of submission of the final document. This will not be with a view to revising the document but rather to revising E.R.A.S.E.'s work and structures.

The paper I plan to present at this seminar will outline the major concerns of Chapters Two, Three and Four and then present an agenda for discussion as is done in Chapter Five. As objectivity has not been possible the outline of concerns may lead people in some respects. However, it will endeavour not to tell people what decisions to make or even to present detailed recommendations. Instead it will involve the committee, as the main stakeholders, actively in the decision-making process so hoping to hold them committed and responsible for the project's future.

OUTLINE OF FURTHER CHAPTERS

The theoretical basis for this case-study is developed in the second chapter where each of Paulo Freire's six principles of education are discussed in turn.

The tensions identified within this pedagogy are related to issues evident in E.R.A.S.E.'s history and current structure in Chapter Three and to its outreach work in Chapter Four. Here a single workshop session has been selected for discussion as much of E.R.A.S.E.'s work takes this form and as it provides clearly defined boundaries as a case within a case.

The fifth chapter takes the form of a letter to the project committee. It raises the questions this case-study has isolated as the most pertinent in a form intended to provide an agenda of 'matters arising' for consideration.

The final chapter, 'From the Particular to the General', is a concluding comment on the process of this study as it worked itself out in practice. In addition it summarizes the issues contained within a project which aims to communicate a particuar ideology but which is also concerned with initiating student-directed learning. It thus aims to draw the different interests of the study together for project evaluators and for those engaged in educational work.

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(10) ibid., p.3, (Thesis 10)

CHAPTER TWO

UNCOVERING THE CODES

That education and politics are inseparable is beyond debate. The nature and ethics of the overlap is not. While education aims to develop minds and politics aims to organize people, there is always the question of how education in practice organizes minds to a political end. Traditional education has made claims at impartiality or neutrality while radical pedagogues have criticised this more formal education, linking it to control and the maintenance of the status-quo. They have proposed alternative educational theories for the subversion of such control saying that education is for liberation and that liberation is a form of democratic socialism.

Fringe organizations and projects are perpetually being created with this end in mind. This may be construed as an attempt at counter-manipulation where the control of the old order is undermined so that alternative political visions can exert their influence. The problem of the role of education in the creation of personal autonomy and political affiliation continues as before.

The question of the distinction between political indoctrination and 'good' educational practice is pertinent to many alternative education projects. E.R.A.S.E., with its political vision on the one hand and its beliefs in democracy and the autonomy of the individual on the other, highlights this problem. How it functions according to these ideals is a central concern of this study.

This chapter describes and discusses the limits and possibilities of Paulo Freire's pedagogy so as to establish

a framework for the description and analysis of E.R.A.S.E.'s shifting direction and structure (Chapter Three) and its pedagogy in practice (Chapter Four). While the arguments presented around this radical pedagogy may serve to explain aspects of E.R.A.S.E. and similar projects it is also hoped that, through grounding this study in a specific project, the strengths and contradictions of such politicised education will be clearly illustrated.

Paulo Freire has inspired and continues to inspire many projects established to fight oppression. He has been central to the development of thinking on alternative, non-imperialist education for the past thirty years. His analysis of education, although influenced by Phenomenology and Christian Liberation Theology, has attempted to give Marxist theory the educational specificity it otherwise lacks. Many educationalists have adopted the concepts and terminology which he and his numerous commentators have generated without uncovering their basis and meaning. 'Consciousness Raising', 'Critical Thinking' and 'the Dialogical Method' have become 'good things to do' but these terms themselves can block off the conscious, critical dialogue they aspire to. They need to be de-coded.

Freire's philosophy of education can be outlined through a discussion of his six key principles:(1)

1. No education is ever neutral
2. Relevance - issues of importance NOW to participants
3. Problem-posing
4. Dialogue
5. Reflection and action (praxis)
6. Radical Transformation.

His supporters tend to elaborate on these, while his critics tend to question not so much the principles themselves as their interpretation and implementation. 'His (Freire's) worth remains at a rhetorical level ... rather than as a

guide for thinking about practice.'(2) The debate has thus centred on the interpretation of these six principles rather than on the cancellation of some and the inclusion of others.

Throughout this debate runs the question of the role of education in the realization of personal awareness and political change. The relationship between individual autonomy and group action and how this manifests itself in the learning milieu is a tension central to the discussion in this chapter. Each of the six principles is explored with a view to developing their possibilities towards the democratic, politicised and practicable pedagogy alternative education projects are seeking.

1. NO EDUCATION IS EVER NEUTRAL

Education is concerned with learning and so with things to learn about or knowledge. As there is no one known truth or fixed reality knowledge is selected or shared according to subjective values. Those who claim to be objective and to encourage the exploration of all points of view are overlooking issues of multiple realities and approaches and are rather considering all points of view from a particular point of view. This is what Giroux has termed the 'Internal Consistency' position where critical thinking is, in fact, not critical or self-examining:

> Traditional views on the nature of critical thinking have failed to support Nietsche's call for a critical search for the truth. This is true, not only because textbooks and pedagogical approaches in the social studies have objectified prevailing norms, beliefs, and attitudes, but also because of the very way in which critical thinking has been defined. The most powerful, yet limited, definition of critical thinking comes out of the positivist tradition in the applied sciences and suffers from what I call the Internal Consistency

> position. According to the adherents of the Internal Consistency position, critical thinking refers primarily to teaching students how to analyze and develop reading and writing assignments from the perspective of formal, logical patterns of consistency. In this case, the student is taught to examine the logical development of a theme, 'advance organizers,'; systematic argument, the validity of evidence, and how to determine whether a conclusion flows from the data under study. While all of the latter learning skills are important, their limitations as a whole lie in what is excluded, and it is with respect to what is missing that the ideology of such an approach is revealed.(3)

This 'objective exploration' is a claim frequently made by education seeking domestication. Disguised as neutral, descriptions and explanations fall within an unquestioned context. There is a product in mind be it the fair-minded, solid citizen of the British Public School or the passive, role-fulfilling product of the South African Government School. Such education reproduces and perpetuates dominant social norms and economic patterns and so cannot be neutral.

Curriculum designers selecting content decide what knowledge is most useful for society and so, it concludes, for its learners. Verwoerd's assertion, for example, that those deemed to use spades and dig need not learn Mathematics is in line with the Platonic view of a highly educated, ruling élite and a mass of others whose education has been tailored to match their jobs.

While these curriculum designers may be aware of the limits they are placing on their learners, other perpetrators of domesticating education may not be aware of the subjectivity of this 'objectivity'. Bell Hooks describes her black, American, History teacher pledging allegiance to the flag as one such victim of unconscious domestication:

> ... American women, irrespective of their education, economic status, or racial identification, have undergone years of sexist and racist socialization that has taught us to blindly trust our knowledge of history and its effect on present reality, even though that knowledge has been formed and shaped by an oppressive system...(4)

This teacher will have assimilated her knowledge of history passively. It was presented as truth beyond question and remains unquestioned in a 'colonized' mind. Critical pedagogues hold that it is up to the teacher to understand and expose the hidden curriculum of selected knowledge, so encouraging learners to question or be critical of what they learn and how they learn it. '... students should be taught the practice of thinking about practice.'(5)

The terms within which content and process are problematised are, however, limited by the language and conceptual patterns of the thinkers. A teacher, Maxine Greene asserts

> ... must become aware of how his consciousness intends - or grasps - the world he inhabits. ... Most important, the teacher can become self-conscious about his role in the sense-making process. If he recognizes this role, he will have intensely personal reasons for clearing up ambiguities and for raising questions about what 'reality' means, what 'truth' means, what 'the good' implies.(6)

In addition to revealing the myth of neutral education there is the issue of what to put in its place. Radical educationalists of early nineteenth century Britain developed alternative curricula in accordance with what they defined as 'really useful knowledge' for those who were engaged in working-class culture.

While the content was radically different from traditional institutional education, the acquisition of a particular

body of knowledge was still highly valued. Useful knowledge was not only to be practical and relevant but also involved a search for ultimate truths so that change could be effected accordingly. 'Once these truths were understood, the old world would indeed be shaken.'(7)

Freire, instead of focussing on final truths, writes of 'the process of knowing' and of the transitory nature of knowledge. It cannot exist as an independent entity nor can an individual think in isolation. 'It is not the "I think" that constitutes the "we think", but rather the "we think" that makes it possible for me to think.'(8) Knowledge is thus a process of thinking together and continuing to think together, it cannot live independently from the knowers and their changing realities.

This gives rise to the problem of where knowledge comes from. All people have knowledge in that they have histories and experiences. This is what they bring to the 'classroom' (or formal learning environment) for discussion. However, some issues will be discussed and analysed and so generate new ideas while others remain untouched. There is still a selection process. In addition the 'teacher' (or co-ordinator) will facilitate the discussion so ensuring that the analysis moves in a direction which corresponds with the desired ideology. New knowledge is thus controlled as meanings are imposed.(9)

No education is ever neutral. The issue is rather how control is exercised and how knowledge is developed within individuals and groups. Freire speaks of education as being either for domestication or liberation and Marxists and Liberals alike uphold the notion of education for individual autonomy and liberation. What they mean by this, to what degree this is possible, how to set about achieving it and to what end remain urgent questions.

2. RELEVANCE - ISSUES OF IMPORTANCE NOW TO PARTICIPANTS

> Teachers and students (leadership and people), co-intent on reality, are both Subjects, not only in the task of unveiling that reality, and thereby coming to know it critically, but in the task of re-creating that knowledge. As they attain this knowledge of reality through common reflection and action, they discover themselves as permanent re-creators.(10)

By understanding and relating one's own experiences to the wider context a person, according to Freire, moves from being a passive object in society to an alert subject and so an agent of change. As long as people are uncritical objects they, like animals, adapt to the outside world through reflex. They are not thinking participants.(11) While cognitive theorists would not accept this dichotomy of animal versus critical the notion of a transition from one to the other is an important aspect of Freire's thinking.

Freire asserts that useful, or relevant, education enables people to participate in the 'transformation' of their society. It is therefore education for action rather than education for the sake of knowledge which cannot be applied. People are born into a world but they need, he says, to be with the world or conscious of their history and context. Education which is relevant thus helps people to become aware of immediate realities and the underlying reasons for social problems. They are no longer submerged in the consequences of reality but, through **conscientizaçao**, have become 'humanized'.(12)

Helping people to understand their natural and social world is also an important feature of Marxist Education. In addition, 'School teaching was to embrace the problems of everyday social and economic life. Theory and practice were to be linked.'(13) This ideal holds that without this understanding, autonomous revolutionary participation in the

overthrow of capitalism or in the running of a new socialist society is not possible. For Freire too, consciousness raising relates directly to current issues and aims to provoke action for change.

While asserting the autonomy of the individual in taking action this pedagogy is not admitting to the ideological constraints it is placing on the conscious individual. This is a central problem. People are being encouraged to talk of their own experiences but their thinking about these is being steered in a particular direction. In this respect radical education is laying itself open to criticism on its own terms of personal freedom. It is saying that 'no individual is fully conscious until she holds the ideology we hold. People go through different phases of consciousness, from the naïve to the critical but do not reach the higher levels until they are socialist revolutionaries. At this stage they are "free" to act as we act.'

Peter Berger takes this criticism of consciousness raising further saying that '... a crucial assumption of the concept is that lower-class people do not understand their own situation, that they are in need of enlightenment on the matter...'(14) Teaching is thus a business of bringing people towards one's own state of consciousness.

There is little dispute over the idea that education should be relevant to the needs of the learners. It should relate to their lives and, through understanding, give them greater control. People are thus conscious subjects rather than passive objects. But once again there are tensions between self-directed learning and teacher influence and between individual and group action.

The concept of student-centred learning perhaps marks an attempt to resolve this. Here education by formal transmission, or one-way flow from teacher to learners, is unacceptable and the problem-posing, issue based approach is to be adopted. This brings the discussion on to Freirian principles of specific teaching and learning methodologies.

3. PROBLEM-POSING

Two basic approaches to educational practice may, at risk of oversimplification, be described as

(a) the 'banking' approach where information is transmitted from teacher to student in an unquestioned, mono-logical manner, and
(b) the 'problem-posing' approach where issues are discussed and explored through the active participation of the entire group.

While educators may be radical insofar as the content of their teaching is anti-establishment, they may have more difficulty in changing their teaching style. '... in their desire to obtain the support of the people for revolutionary action, revolutionary leaders often fall for the banking line of planning a programme content from the top down.'(15)

Giroux maintains that the educational left can be divided into two categories: those who focus on **content** and those who focus on **process** or strategy. 'Content-focussed radicals have not yet moved beyond their static notion of knowledge as a set of radical ideas to be transmitted to students. Yet, if the notion of student as subject is not to be denied, what is needed is a definition of knowledge which recognizes it is not only as a body of conceptual thought, but also as a process which demands radical

educational relationships.'(16) Classroom dynamics thus, according to Giroux, have to reflect the democratic and participatory society which education is seeking to build.

However, these two strategies seem not to marry easily. Speaking of alternative education in South Africa, Prinsloo asserts that

> ... the major area of conflict is likely to be between those who seek to democratise education within a framework of equality of opportunity and those who seek to construct a form of mass education that contributes to socialist practices.'(17)

Freire advocates a combination of the two with socialist content growing naturally out of participatory processes. The implication is that if oppressed people consider their problems together they are sure to recognize the evils of capitalism and so fight for a socialist society.

A look at progressive primary education in the United Kingdom demonstrates that this does not necessarily follow. Here the problem-posing approach and child-centred learning has been embraced so that learners may explore and pursue their own needs and interests. The teacher's role is to facilitate this self-direction providing support and resources where appropriate and to foster social skills of co-operation and communication.

Yet those emerging from this progressive education will not necessarily be anti-capitalist and pro-socialist. Many practitioners would quake at the thought. No education is neutral but the problem-posing approach is not the solution to liberatory education as the banking approach is not the sole process for domestication.

Problems may be explored within fixed realities, solutions and courses of action only being perceived within that given framework. Different groups may, for example, be exploring the issue of soil-erosion in an area. They may all come to the conclusion that over-grazing is the problem but each may decide on different solutions or courses of action according to their world views. One perceived solution may be that the herders should reduce the size of their herds or move elsewhere. Another idea may be to sink an irrigation well so that the land may produce more grazing and make life more sustainable for the herders. A third group may look to the structure of that society, the marginalization of herders and the relative drop in the price of livestock. It may conclude that education therefore has to be revolutionary, changing the structure of the society and the dynamic of market forces.

Each group has adopted the problem-posing approach, none has been told directly what to do and each has decided upon a different course of action. These do not necessarily challenge the status quo. However, participants in each group may well feel that they have contributed to the solution as they have faced the problem together rather than being presented with a given course of action.

Freire would have to argue that conscientization only occurred in the third of these groups as the others sought to reform rather than transform reality. 'The right is by its nature incapable of being Utopian, and hence it cannot develop a form of cultural action that would bring about conscientization.'(18) The other groups have merely generated a 'false consciousness'.

> I was one of three minds,
> Like a tree
> In which there are three blackbirds.
>
> (from Wallace Stevens, 13 Ways of Looking at a Blackbird)

The difficulty lies in knowing one blackbird from another and in recognizing the 'false consciousness'. Each may feel Utopian from its own perspective and judges the other accordingly. Although plans of action may vary the radical conviction that there is only one correct analysis remains.

The problem-posing approach could, in fact, be used as a powerful tool of domestication as people consider themselves to be acting on free will while they are in fact being moulded into a particular world-view. This process can thus be more subtle and so more effective in achieving submission to the desired way of thinking than transmission-style education. This issue will be taken further when applied to some workshop activities in Chapter Four.

4. DIALOGUE

The role of the co-ordinator or teacher is clearly vital in the impact of the problem-posing approach on learners. The idea, according to Freire, is that the teacher be as much of a learner as the learners, exploring the problem as an equal with the group. This is done through dialogue.

> ... the practice of problem-posing education first of all demands a resolution of the teacher-student contradiction. ... Indeed, problem-posing education, breaking the vertical patterns characteristic of banking education, can fulfill its function of being the practice of freedom only if it can overcome the above contradiction. Through dialogue, the teacher-of-the-students and the students-of-the-teacher cease to exist and a new term emerges: teacher-student with students-teachers.(19)

This process, where the teacher is also learning from the students, may be regarded as 'more democratic than simple student-centred teaching.'(20) The teacher is not only a

resource for the students to call upon but is also in the class to learn. Yet the issue of authority remains even though this authority may be 'on the side of freedom'.(21)

This idea of the benevolent teacher is a reflection of Freire's Christian humanism. He asserts that teachers do not have to be of the oppressed class themselves but must rather empathise with such people and be committed to the achievement of their freedom. Their role is thus, through dialogue with the learners, to challenge perceptions so enabling people to take action for themselves.

Youngman argues that to achieve this effectively the teacher must have the theoretical background and ideology with which to direct proceedings and criticizes Freire as being vague on this issue. 'The whole process of "challenging" the learner's perception of reality only becomes possible when the educators consistently question the dominant ideology as expressed by the learners.' He goes on to explain why the notion of teachers and learners as equals in the classroom is invalid by adding...'An account of education for critical consciousness must therefore accept head-on the superiority in terms of theoretical understanding of the teacher and must also specify the content of this theoretical understanding.'(22) Teachers must therefore not simply be 'on the side of freedom' but must be radical thinkers, or Marxists in Youngman's terms, themselves.

Ira Shor elaborates on this difference between teacher and student, explaining that 'the dialogic teacher is more intellectually developed, more practiced in critical scrutiny, and more committed to a political dream of social change, than are the students.'(23) It seems then that a major distinction between Traditional and this Liberatory discourse is that the former re-inforces the status-quo while the latter challenges it **and** proposes another reality.

A dominant discourse is replaced by a counter discourse but the learner is still tethered to the world-view of the teacher, albeit more subtly. 'The teacher is different not only by virtue of her or his training but also because the teacher leads a transformation that will not happen in class by itself.'(24)

With this inequality between teacher and student it seems inevitable that the teacher will be at the centre of the consciousness-raising activity. In addition, there is an underlying assumption that all learners will be opposed to the same oppressors, that it is a matter of 'us versus them'. These two factors may contribute to suppressing dialogue which will consequently not be as equal and open-ended as critical pedagogues make it out to be.

While a teacher may do her best to create the circumstances in which everyone can speak openly there is always the problem of many voices and of self-censorship of ideas which individuals may deem ideologically unsound for present company or not worth mentioning. Elizabeth Ellsworth, in an essay entitled 'Why Doesn't This Feel Empowering?',(25) describes the concept of the student voice as a shared process where students bring definition and meaning to their world as a 'Repressive Myth'.

> ... while critical educators acknowledge the existence of unequal power relations in classrooms, they have made no systematic examination of the barriers that this imbalance throws up to the kind of student expression and dialogue they prescribe.(26)

And, in describing a course which she herself ran, Ellsworth asserts that 'Things were left unsaid, or they were encoded, on the basis of speakers' conscious and unconscious assessments of the risks and costs of disclosing their understandings of themselves and of others.'(27)

This problem is frequently considered in terms of the level of sensitivity and consciousness of the teacher. Teacher as Stranger[28] and Teachers as Intellectuals[29] are two titles which come to mind. Both writers, M. Greene and H. Giroux, see the teacher as 'helper' and 'enabler', as someone who is to 'help them to learn how to think and discover and probe.'[30]

But Ellsworth questions this:

> As an Anglo, middle-class professor ... I could not unproblematically "help" a student of color to find his/her authentic voice as a student of color. I could not unproblematically "affiliate" with the social groups my students represent and interpret their experience to them.'(31)

One is reminded of the time Freire declared 'I am also a woman' when asked about the women's struggle on a Brazilian television programme. Needless to say, many women disagreed and he in turn considered them 'naïve'.[32]

Even a group of people sharing similar circumstances will not necessarily all experience the same oppression. Individuals may join up with others whose experience is closest to theirs. In this way affinity groups may form within the larger group. Of a course designed to combat racism on a university campus Ellsworth explains:

> Once we acknowledged the existence, necessity, and value of these affinity groups, we began to see our task not as one of building democratic dialogue between free and equal individuals, but of building a coalition among the multiple, shifting, intersecting, and sometimes contradictory groups carrying unequal weights of legitimacy within the culture and the classroom.(33)

Hence affinity groups learnt not to undercut one another in their struggle and individuals did not have to sacrifice their autonomy to the whole.

While a teacher may learn from her students, learners will have had experiences which the teacher and other learners can never experience and so never know. What is needed, Ellsworth asserts, is 'a Pedagogy of the Unknowable'(34) where difference is recognized as essential for constructive tension, dialogue and so growth. While people can share some knowledge they cannot come to own all of what another person knows. The power structures, partial knowledges and subjective interests of all those in the learning environment need to be explored through dialogue. In this way courses of action which support, rather than undermine, the different affinity groups can be planned together.

This brings this discussion to the relationship between reflection and action and Freire's fifth principle.

5. REFLECTION AND ACTION (PRAXIS)

> The act of knowing involves a dialectical movement that goes from action to reflection and from reflection upon action to a new action.(35)
>
> ...there is no conscientization outside of praxis.(36)

The notion of continual movement between reflection and action, or praxis, is central to Freire's pedagogy. Knowledge is not inert but exists in the world which creates it: it is changed by the world and it changes the world. Yet knowledge alone cannot transform the concrete situation. It, he claims, is inextricably linked to an action which challenges the concrete and so enables people to recreate

their world. People learn when they reflect on their actions.

> Teaching happens when a student begins to understand what he is doing, when he becomes capable of giving reasons and seeing connections within his experience, when he recognizes the errors he or someone else is making and can propose what should be done to set things straight.(37)

While reflective learning may be only one form of learning it is regarded as crucial to the changing of behaviour as it is not merely the accumulation of additional knowledge but the recognition of latent knowledge.

> One of the most important areas of learning for adults is that which frees them from their habitual ways of thinking and acting and involves them in what Mezirow (1978, 1981) terms 'perspective transformation'. This means the process of becoming critically aware of how and why our assumptions about the world in which we operate have come to constrain the way we see ourselves and our relationships.(38)

Freire looked to the cultural, as opposed to the psychological, influences on learners' thinking and behaviour so that their attitudes and experiences could be related to their specific social and political contexts. Yet the emphasis on making connections between past and present and on being aware of one's attitudes and their roots remains a pre-requisite in his theoretical work not only for personal change but for social revolution.

Experiential learning is regarded as being central to Progressive Education. Experiences may be simulated in the classroom through role-play, games and the like or they may be planned in the classroom and enacted in a corner of the wider world. They are reflected upon afterwards so that

participants may learn from them and so be motivated into further action.

People bringing their own histories and experiences into the classroom or formal learning environment for discussion and analysis is another form of experiential learning. This is the point of initial contact in Freire's pedagogy. Through discussion of immediate concerns theory should begin to emerge which may be used to re-examine these experiences more critically. Points of intervention may then be identified by thinking, conscious people who, having gained some theoretical distance, may then act.(39) Actions are never final but precipitate fresh dialogue, new theories, changes in situation, and so more action. Society will never be finally transformed, it will always be transforming. (The issue of transformation and the contradictions apparent in Freire's view of historical change is discussed further in the next section on 'Radical Transformation'.)

This continual movement between reflection and action may be compared to 'The Action Research Spiral'. Action researchers are actors and researchers, observing, reflecting, planning and acting more or less simultaneously. 'Through discourse among participants reflection leads to the reconstruction of the meaning of the social situation and provides the basis for the revised plan.'(40) Similarly critical pedagogues hold that 'Theory must be seen as the production of forms of discourse that arise from various specific social sites.' Theory cannot be generalized or universalized as each social site 'provides diverse and critical insights into the nature of domination and the possibilities for social and self-emancipation.'(41) In these terms all conscious people are action researchers, maintaining an 'objective-subjective dialectic' and so 'simultaneously transforming the world by their action and

grasping and expressing the world's reality in their creative language.(42)

This assumed relationship between dialogue ad action has exposed Freire and those who have adopted and extended his ideas on praxis to some criticism. What one believes does not always determine what one does. There is not always a rational link between values and actions while knowledge of a particular phenomenon need not necessarily point to a particular set of practices.(43) In fact one frequently does not act at all on the knowledge one has as there is not always anything one might want to do. In addition, certain actions demand skills which a potential actor may not possess. Knowledge does not necessarily provide learners with the ability to act.

Praxis in practice has thus been questioned: What compels people to act on knowledge? What enables them to do so? What happens to individual concerns in collaborative involvement? Is this really a democratic process? How does the teacher or co-ordinator negotiate the stake she may have in particular theories and actions? None of these questions is answered by Freire's pedagogy.

The issue of democratic collaborative involvement has already been raised in the context of 'Dialogue'. However, the question of how dialogue itself may motivate action is a different one. 'One seeks in vain through Freire's work for a clear exegesis of the dynamics whereby reflection leads to action, conscientization is a party to praxis.'(44) A group, for example, may come to an understanding of the underlying causes of their problems but these may be as global as the dynamics of market forces or as pervasive as the legacy of colonialism. Such an awareness may overwhelm rather than provoke action. Ways in which small groups or individuals may address these huge structural problems

remain unexplored in the literature on conscientization. The actual business of political action is left aside as an assumed result of critical pedagogy. Freire has a positivist, goal orientated view of education when he asserts that 'the demasking of reality that is not oriented toward clear political action against this same reality simply lacks sense.'(45) Who is to take responsibility for this orientation and how people then unite in political action are issues which remain not only fluid but unexplained.

'Empowerment' seems a crucial concept in this regard. If education is to be liberatory learners need to gain the confidence and necessary skills to act on behalf of themselves and their communities. Passive learning demands passivity while active, dialogical learning encourages involvement and participation and so fuller ownership of new knowledge. Although this latter process may be a more effective way of internalizing understanding, it cannot claim to empower people in their dealings with the outside world. Education may facilitate the process but people can only finally empower themselves for authentic political action. Praxis may be desired by a liberatory pedagogy but it cannot be dictated.

> For a thought to change the world, it must first change the life of the man who carries it. It must become an example.
>
> (Albert Camus, Notebook V, September 1945-April 1948)

6. RADICAL TRANSFORMATION

> ...I know very well that to simply substitute an ingenuous perception of reality for a critical one is not sufficient for the oppressed to liberate themselves. To do so, they need to organize in a revolutionary manner and to transform the real world in a revolutionary manner.(46)

On the one hand Freire asserts that to 'name the world' is 'to change it',[47] but on the other there is a recognition that this is not sufficient for liberation. A teacher, as a 'revolutionary leader', will have specific strategies for change in mind. Her students may suggest further possibilities for discussion. Education thus provides a forum for the exploration of realities and of the possibilities for change. But while 'naming' may be an aim of critical pedagogy it is not clear in Freire's writings whether the role of such education is also to help people to organize their new-found consciousness into united political action.

Theory and practice need to inform one another and so remain separate entities in a dialectical relationship. They should never 'collapse' into unison but should rather keep each other 'at arm's length.'[48] 'Liberation is a social act. Liberating education is a social process of illumination.'[49] Education for liberation may thus nurture and sustain political action but it cannot finally determine what learners will do or effect change on its own.[50]

As liberating education is only part of the process of social change, other social movements and political organizations are essential. Learners may be motivated to take their ideas for intervention from the classroom back to their communities, interest groups, organizations or political movements so as to plan their actions with these groups. What Freire fails to communicate is the relationship between his proposed pedagogy and political organizations. While his education aims to motivate people politically it opposes the rhetoric and sloganizing characteristic of unified political action. Such action

provides 'real world' experiences for critical analysis in the classroom.

This tension between the process of conscientization and political organization may be a necessary dialectic for transformation. It begins to explain why political groupings in South Africa today tend to run education programmes. These, however, generally aim at winning appreciation and support for that organization's work and ideology rather than at conscientization in the sense of building awareness and autonomy.

The idea here is that once people are conscious they will think as that organization thinks. 'Teachers' minds have been bought out by their ideologies so that they can perceive only one option as the true option. Hence conscientization to the idealogue can come to mean the adoption of the only one perceived option.

This refers especially to the educational work done within specific political organizations. There is the additional issue of educational programmes, such as E.R.A.S.E., which are independent of such established groupings but which also hold a political ideology. Learners on these programmes are not being channelled directly into a specific activist organization but may rather be led to the ideology which brings them to join such an organization. An independent educational project may thus be less directive in determining exactly where people place their political energies than a programme which is part of a particular political organization. However, it still shares the problem of steering people's thinking in the direction of a particular ideology in the name of conscientization.

When Freire asserts that 'Conscientization is a joint project in that it takes place in a man among other men, men

united by their action and by their reflection upon that action and upon the world',[51] educationalists need to be clearer than he is about what they mean by 'men united by their action'. Does their action have to be common or are they rather united by the fact that they are acting against their own perceptions of oppression in their own different ways?

While movement between action and reflection is continual, it seems that not everyone in a learning group has to be taking the same action at the same time but will rather be bringing their individual experiences and actions to the group for discussion. If, by contrast, the learning group is to set out to agree on common action some members are sure to lose their voice. (This issue has already been discussed in the section on 'Dialogue'). To expect this is to undermine the notion of education for personal liberation or 'autonomy'.

This conflict between education for united action or education for individual autonomy and so democracy marks a cornerstone of the 'education for transformation' debate. Giroux argues that people need to make a total break with the past, that they need to be liberated 'not only from those traditions that legitimate oppressive institutional arrangements, but also from their own individual history,i.e. that which society has made of them.'[52] Others argue that no one can be independent of their society or circumstances and that autonomy should rather be perceived as an awareness of and responsiveness to internal and external forces so that an individual can make informed choices.[53] Individuals are intersubjective or 'constituted through the social domain'[54] and cannot break with their past and society completely.

Consciousness raising can thus be perceived as a process whereby learners 'become visible to themselves through an understanding (and even appreciation) of the cultural traditions that have influenced their way of understanding.'(55) It invites a new awareness or openness to the world. People may, or may not, then act upon their new perceptions in order to effect certain changes in their lives and society. In this way education may contribute to the transformation of aspects of society and so reform it as a whole.

When Freire writes of transforming the world in a revolutionary manner he is speaking from a Marxist viewpoint of the political and economic power structures of a society and of the political organization and united action necessary to transfer this power from the hands of one class to another.(56) Whether or not this kind of revolution really constitutes 'transformation' is too great a philosophical question to confront here as is the question of whether or not it is possible or desirable for a society to undergo radical transformation. It may be that such far-reaching change can only evolve gradually as the sum of piece-meal re-adjustment and reformation. If this is so, liberatory education has a significant part to play.

As we are what our histories have made us and as education seeks to create an awareness of this rather than a blanket denial of who we are, the much-used slogan 'Education for Transformation' could do with being challenged.

IN CONCLUSION

> The revolutionary project is engaged in a struggle against oppressive and dehumanizing structures... Their (revolutionaries) role is to seek the most efficient and viable means of helping the people

> to move from the levels of semi-intransitive or naïve transitive consciousness to the level of critical consciousness.(57)

Freire describes the process by which people move from thinking beyond problems of pure biological necessity ('semi-intransitive consciousness') to engaging with questions of causality. Here he identifies two stages of consciousness, 'naïve transitivity' and 'critically transitive consciousness' and describes the role of radical education as being to help people move through these stages to 'critical consciousness' rather than fall into the trap of 'sectarian massification'. He sees this 'fanaticised consciousness' as a distortion which may be developed in people who have a 'naïve transitivity' and are 'permeable' to dialogue but still grasping for slogans. The consequence is a predominantly emotional and uncritical relationship with the world which is inclined to activism and lacks reflection.

Radical education, by contrast, seeks dialogue rather than polemics, seeks causal principles and is open to continual questioning and revision of findings. It aims to increase the individual's capacity for choice and not to impose choices so that people may become 'humanized' rather than 'massified'.(58)

In this sense radical and liberal education have much in common. But a major difference is that those radicals such as Freire who subscribe broadly to Marxist social theory also see education as contributing to the revolutionary overthrow of capitalism. Not only is it not neutral but it anticipates action towards a specified end. C.A. Bowers describes this as a contradiction in radical pedagogy:

> Although these educational theorists express a clear preference toward a communal form of social organization, and are bitterly opposed to

> competitive and exploitive forms of individualism, it is not clear how a community could ever exercise authority over its members if the reflective judgment of individual members did not coincide with the collective truths of the group.(59)

The dual goals of autonomy of the individual and of socialist revolutionary action present an uncomfortable tension throughout Freire's writings on pedagogy. While both these goals may share a commitment to radical change a choice has to be made between either trusting the learners to make the choices they perceive as being desirable or treating individual autonomy as secondary to the attainment of a particular vision of society.

A radical education project is in an ambivalent position: It believes in the integrity and independence of the conscious individual but, perhaps more urgently, it has values and ideas which it wants people to understand and assimilate. It subscribes to 'consciousness raising' and to 'social transformation' and has, through its involvement, made itself a stake-holder in what this transformation is to be. It exists so as to facilitate social and political change. Hence, while individual autonomy and critical awareness may be seen as essential in the creation of a new society, the driving force behind many such projects is the overthrow of current practices such as racism, sexism and capitalism. This may be considered a prerequisite for the establishment of a socialist democracy. If this is so, a project may choose the tactic of education for the attainment of specific changes in political structures rather than education for personal choice and democracy.

Learners working towards the realization of pre-determined political goals are vulnerable to the 'manipulative paternalism' characteristic of education for 'massification'. Freire describes this form of populist

leadership as being characteristic of a society where people have emerged to a 'naïve transitive state' but have not yet developed a fully critical consciousness. While admitting to the sensitivity of this issue he argues that 'political manipulation paradoxically accelerates the process by which the people unveil reality' and that populism 'is manipulative, yet at the same time a factor in democratic mobilization.'(60)

Without entering the debate of whether the end may justify the means there is the issue of education as a mobilizing force where group action takes precedence over individual reflection. It refers us back to the problem of the distinction between an educational project and a political organization and of how the two might relate to one another.

What seems to matter finally is how learners are led to perceive their role. Ethical problems arise when people, through experiential learning and dialogue, feel that they are thinking for themselves but are in fact being directed into voicing particular dogmas. If they are not conscious of their dependent state the danger of uncritical 'sectarian massification' looms large.

However, a project may decide that the achievement of its political vision is 'the most <u>effective and viable</u> means of helping the people to move ... to the level of critical consciousness'(61) (my underlining) in a transitional society such as South Africa. If so it needs to acknowledge that individual autonomy is secondary until such time as its vision is achieved and **let this be known** both to itself and its learners. Strictly speaking it is then not a radical educational project but an initiative which is paving the way for future radical education.

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CHAPTER THREE

IMAGES, PURPOSES AND PEOPLE: E.R.A.S.E. AS A PROJECT

In October, 1989 about forty people from the Western Cape were invited by the E.R.A.S.E. co-ordinator to discuss how they perceived the project's present work and what direction they felt it should be taking as an organization. This was an attempt at consultation with people who had been involved with the project to different degrees and in different capacities. Some could be called 'learners' who had attended one or more sessions E.R.A.S.E. had run, while others were union officials or workers from projects with similar concerns and yet others had expressed an interest in the magazine, ERASER.

Asked to describe E.R.A.S.E. as they saw it, groups reported back the following points:

E.R.A.S.E.

(a) is a project which wants to fight racist and sexist attitudes because they are real problems;
(b) fights to wipe out sexism and racism in society - especially in education;
(c) highlights racism and sexism and how it is used by certain people;
(d) is concerned with sexual harassment;
(e) exposes incest;
(f) corrects mistakes and brings in new ideas;
(g) is concerned with the daily lives of the community at large;
(h) is an organization developing from a minority group determined to enforce a reality of life that most people undermine;

(i) is a group of people engaged in the struggle;
(j) is a movement of people - trade unions, high schools and organizations;
(k) does not only aim at ending racism and sexism but at liberating South Africa through the Freedom Charter;
(l) is an education project; and
(m) is a propaganda vehicle.

These descriptions give rise to a number of observations: Most regard E.R.A.S.E. as an activist organization: It 'exposes', 'fights', 'corrects', 'liberates' and even 'enforces a reality'. It draws its authority from the values and ideals it upholds and from its stated task of ending racism and sexism. Thus we gain a sense of a battle into which combatants are drawn. As this battle is concerned with attitudes (racism and sexism) which give rise to certain practices ('incest' and 'harassment') it can be argued that E.R.A.S.E.'s concerns arise out of an intellectual understanding of cultural conditions and their political causes. It 'corrects mistakes and brings in new ideas' as it has a view of what is wrong and what is needed.

A few of these listed perceptions give a different image of E.R.A.S.E. - it 'is an education project', 'is concerned with daily lives' and 'highlights racism and sexism'. Here it is not necessarily 'a propaganda vehicle' but a project engaged in helping people to recognize, or 'highlight', issues which may effect them in their daily lives.

By dividing this list into two such groupings the tensions between directed activist and open-ended, reflective education work within E.R.A.S.E. become clear. The leaning at this October meeting was towards E.R.A.S.E.'s ideological and activist work but, as is discussed later, the project

has moved the other way at different stages in its history. This fluctuation is a demonstration of the ambiguity prevalent in Freire's philosophy where, as is discussed in the previous chapter, conscientization is aimed at developing both personal autonomy and a particular political stance.

The notions of 'education project' and 'propaganda vehicle' were left unchallenged alongside one another when given as definitions of E.R.A.S.E. The contradictions between the content imposed by propaganda and the process of learning encouraged by education were not identified. However, a project worker took care to explain that the 'Freedom Charter' and 'the struggle' were not necessarily synonymous and that unity in opposition was one of the project's main principles.

At times of intense political activity within South Africa 'Unite and Fight' is a common call amongst opposition groups. As the pressure eases so do these groups turn to their own development more systematically. A project may in this way focus on supporting the action of the struggle at politically charged times and then become more reflective when the heat is less intense. While this movement between action and reflection, or praxis, may describe the shape of political development the issue of a project's educational role remains unresolved. Whether it is to seek support for itself or to channel people into particular activities or to help people to start thinking about issues for themselves so that they might take responsibility for their own activist orientation are questions which have to be asked. While these aims are not mutually exclusive they do beg the question of primary motivation.

HISTORY

E.R.A.S.E. emerged in its initial form in 1983 as a campaign to subvert or counter Christian National Education and the textbooks it used to further its ideology. Called 'Committee against Racism in Textbooks' (C.R.T.) it was a small, unfunded group co-ordinated by an employee of an alternative education project. It sought supporters who would take up its fight and so put pressure on existing structures to change. In early 1984 C.R.T. organized a campaign in response to the withdrawal of Chinua Achebe's novel, Arrow of God, from the Department of Education and Culture syllabus. This took the form of a public protest meeting. It called on students, parents and teachers to 'Resist!! Respond!! Reject this Move!! [1] so involving people in an active campaign against a department which was perceived as excluding anti-establishment African literature.

The committee then shifted the emphasis of its concern back to raising the awareness of those being subjected to racism in textbooks and other media. To this end it planned a two-week focus and called upon students, parents and teachers once again to 'Organize a Programme at Your School, Creche, Library or College.'[2] As each of the twenty-two participating institutions organized their own programmes these varied widely. However, reaching an understanding of the concept of 'race' and 'racism' was a common stated aim with groups highlighting ways in which racism was perpetuated in their learning materials. At a meeting, or 'Saamtrek', held at the end of this 'focus' the need to plan practical action was stressed with participants being divided into groups to discuss:

- How can we combat racism at the various levels in our educational structures?

- How can people, teachers and students jointly, take up the campaign against racism?(3)

This activity gives rise to a number of observations: While the strategy was up to participants to discuss it was taken as given that a campaign to combat racism in the education system had to be mounted. This was decided by the committee rather than by participants. There is no documented record of what action participating groups did take subsequent to this.

One could conclude therefore that the programme was directed more by the needs of the planners than the participants. The lack of follow-up work suggests that what groups then went on to do mattered less to the committee than what direction they, the committee, moved in next. The call to action was more ritualistic than serious. Thus the whole programme did more to spread the name of C.R.T. and raise some of the questions it faced than to enable different groups to select their own future directions.

The project then broadened its focus from textbooks to education more generally, changing its name to Committee Against Racism in Education (C.A.R.E.) in 1985. It also moved beyond the school curriculum to include working with what it described as 'the community beyond just its educational institutions.'(4) At this stage there was no indication of what was meant by 'community' nor of how the project would function in this sector. However, it remained essentially an issue-based campaign with a clear political motive and a sense of the importance of personalized awareness raising, or education, for broader and more long-term support.

In early 1986 a funding proposal and constitution was produced by the committee (Appendix B). This was aimed at

boosting its activity with funding being requested for a co-ordinator, a resource collection, workshops and a newsletter.

In addition this document includes a paragraph:

> Racism and racialism have penetrated every fabric of South Africa's way of life and if anything effective is to be done, the effort will have to reach the community beyond just its educational institutions. And mainly because so little attention is given to negate its evil effects, it is hoped that the initiative our Committee has taken will be the start of an ongoing and growing movement.(5)

This massive extension of constituency and goal (to start a movement) has an evangelical ring. Activities were no longer to be contained within a particular campaign but were to transform South Africa's very 'fabric'. This objective does raise questions of the committee's perception of itself. It is calling for support in its campaign against racism and so giving itself the role of leadership. Awareness raising is aimed at winning recruits to a movement. By wishing to provide both the education and the political initiative the issue of the degree to which an educational programme can be directive and expect united action is raised. This has already been discussed in the section on '<u>praxis</u>' in the previous chapter.

While funding was forthcoming from a foreign non-governmental organization there was a lull in activity until a co-ordinator was appointed in May 1988. The extensive and confused objectives of the 1986 proposal and the numerous other commitments of committee members seem to have contributed to this quiet period.

In 1988, when a paid co-ordinator was employed by the committee, the project re-named itself 'End Racism and

Sexism in Education' (E.R.A.S.E.) as it 'felt that it was essential to address Racism's twin, Sexism, as well'.[6] It was also decided to focus on youth and workers as 'specific targets'[7] as they were perceived as being the most effective way of 'taking up racism and sexism in the community'.[8]

In September of this year (1988) a second budget proposal was written spelling out the project's intent to counter sexism as well as racism (Appendix C). In addition it spelt out the aim 'To make people aware that no such a thing as 'race' exists - only as a strategy to divide people.' This aim differs from the others in that it is not action orientated but rather concerned with the teaching of a particular concept of race. The content of the curriculum was assuming greater importance.

A number of workshops and programmes have since been organized by E.R.A.S.E. for youth and union groups. While the majority of this work has taken place in the Western Cape E.R.A.S.E. has also worked nationally. Most significantly this work has included three visits to a student group in Paballelo, a township in Upington, two sessions with mineworkers in the Kimberley area which were arranged through their union and single sessions at teachers' training colleges in Pietermaritzburg, Kimberley and the Witwatersrand. The project has been invited back to all these areas.

These workshops have focussed on aspects of racism and sexism, attempting to give them definition and explore their causes. An example of one such workshop is discussed in some detail in Chapter Four. Meanwhile it is important to note the different possible workshop aims of exploration of personal attitudes and experiences, explanation or communication of an ideology, motivation to action and

recruitment to the project's work. The changing emphases of these aims are indicators of the project's shifting educational and political motivations.

A CONTINUUM

It may be useful to envisage two extremes in the way in which people are invited to pursue issues. They lie at each end of a continuum along which initiatives concerned with these issues may be placed. At the one end is a pre-packed package of preconceived ideas which people are persuaded to accept. The concern is with communicating content. At the other end is the open-ended approach to discussing issues where there are no prescriptions but rather a willingness to tolerate different conclusions. The concern is with facilitating a process so that people may develop within themselves.

As no education is neutral and as political activism includes a range of views amongst its actors it is impossible to situate education and politics at either end of this continuum. However, educational work is more aware of facilitating a process of understanding while programmes of action are more concerned to have their views heard. The two co-exist in tension with one another and are yet inseparable.

Projects focussing on specific issues may be seen as moving between these two extremes. They aim to motivate action towards the attainment of an ideal but sometimes realize the importance of awareness raising if long-term change is to be generated. People thus need to be educated in order to articulate and act upon their own interests which also so happen to be the interests of the project.

E.R.A.S.E. may also be seen as shifting position on the continuum, seeking to achieve what it regards as a positive equilibrium between theory and practice, independence and united action, exploration and recruitment. Its history reveals a tendency to be pulled first in one direction and then in the other. This has created an unresolved tension which is central to the functioning of the project and has contributed significantly to both the creative dynamic and the problems it faces today.

It is within these inter-related concepts of education and political action that E.R.A.S.E.'s past and present structures and work are described here. This chapter takes an anthropological view of the project office, the people involved, the forms of activity the project engages in and then discusses the issues it faces in relation to its structure. Chapter Four provides an analysis on a single workshop by way of illuminating the tensions between the project's stated and unstated aims and of analysing what is achieved in practice. Through gaining some insight of where this project lies both structurally and in the work it does it is hoped that future directions may be determined with greater clarity.

THE OFFICE

The physical environment of the project office provides some clues as to how the workers view E.R.A.S.E.'s position in relation to the political context within which it operates. This image, conveyed by furniture, decoration and wall hangings communicates an ideological message to people entering the workplace. Their reaction is, of course, subjective. Without conducting a formal survey of consumer attitudes one is forced to rely on individual perceptions: nonetheless I regard this as a valid approach as it

highlights some apparent contradictions between the organization's stated goals and the image it presents.

E.R.A.S.E. is based in a single large room on the first floor of a church building in Salt River. Its furnishing is sparse and its wall-space is filled with the red and black E.R.A.S.E. banner, posters and photo-copied articles.

This analysis will only consider the displayed posters as they are both a prominent office feature and the items which travel out to workshops or sessions being held in other places. They serve to convey the identity and purpose of the project and its workers.

Israel Scheffler describes educational slogans as providing 'rallying symbols of the key ideas and attitudes ... They make no claim either to facilitate discourse or to explain the meanings of terms.'(9) The slogans on the E.R.A.S.E. walls have a similar function, speaking for the project in the form of undisputed statements. They tell us, for example, that socialism is a good thing ('Long Live Socialism') while sexism is not ('Phantsi Sexism'). Women will unite against their oppressors. ('You Strike a Woman, You Strike a Rock ... You too will be Crushed!') Bosses divide the oppressed in order to rule them ('They Divide us to Rule us'). These 'key ideas and attitudes' help to provide the project with a unifying focus. The language itself establishes a territory within which individuals may grant themselves and each other the power and authority to operate. It defines the boundary between insiders and outsiders by defining which knowledge is to be regarded as useful and worthwhile.(10) It is assumed that insiders understand the territory within which they are acting.

An outsider who looks right in terms of dress and bearing and says and does acceptable things brings with them the

consequences of assumed affiliation and understanding. A room filled with slogans and statements leaves no space for counter arguments. An individual may take on the line of the surrounding ideology and so, it is assumed, the extended ideology as well. They become insiders without saying a word.

In addition to the consequences of assumed affiliation there are those of intimidation and alienation. If the newcomer's dress or bearing is out of keeping with the general ethos they may feel excluded. To draw on previous observation: 'This sort of display defines and expresses the politics of the organizing group, but it seems possible, at the very least, that it will also work to intimidate many other people who do not exactly share these explicitly asserted faiths and this can work against any possibility of developing the involvement of a wider public, or of expanding the constituency of the political ideas one supports.'(11)

For a project seeking to build on the knowledge and experience of the learners this can present problems. Either one feels at home with the prevailing ideology and ethos or one does not. There is no opening for discussion or challenge as one is being **told** what is right and good. These slogans do not teach but rather present a bid for support. Those who agree with their stated ideology will, it is hoped, become involved with the project's work. Others are excluded on entry.

The office thus projects the image of a group seeking affirmation of its beliefs. It invites us to join in its campaign to end racism and sexism but does not, at this level, encourage the exploration of issues as one would expect from a project which perceives itself as primarily educational.

THE PEOPLE

The Steering Committee

The Steering Committee includes all staff members plus six nominated individuals. Two of these individuals have been on this committee since the project's beginning (1983) and no-one has resigned unless they were moving away from Cape Town. New-comers have been co-opted by the committee and include selected individuals with experience in education and project management. Hence the committee has generated its own membership.

Ever since 1984 there has been an attempt to have representation from the groups with which E.R.A.S.E. works on the Steering Committee. These groups include trade unions, S.R.C.s, women's groups and other educational and cultural projects E.R.A.S.E. has worked with. However, this idea of a representative committee as opposed to a committee of co-opted individuals has never worked in practice. It raises issues of democracy, membership and the primary function of the project to be discussed later in this chapter.

The Steering Committee is the project's policy-making body. It meets every couple of months and includes discussion on the presented staff report and on proposed future plans. It is also responsible for the raising and spending of the budget. It does not concern itself with day to day issues but rather aims to give support and guidance as it is called for.

This committee is also responsible for the appointment of staff. Excepting for the past two appointments these have been made by general agreement. The two recent appointments were made by a sub-committee of the Steering Committee and comprised of two non-staff members and a staff member.

Formal interviews were conducted. (These procedures of appointing staff are commented on in the following section on staff.)

Staff

The staff of E.R.A.S.E. has increased dramatically over the past six months. In August of 1989 there was one full-time paid co-ordinator who had been with the project since May 1988. Another part-time assistant had recently left the project for personal reasons. In September (1989) the voluntary worker on the project magazine, ERASER, was given a half-time post which was converted to full-time in late January, 1990. In October (1989) a quarter-time resources worker was appointed and in February 1990 a second full-time co-ordinator joined the staff. Thus in February 1990 the project had three full-time members of staff and one quarter-time resources worker.

A number of observations need to be made in terms of the background and skills of these people and how they came to be appointed. These help to explain why the project functions as it does and how it may develop in the future. Until the recent February appointment all the staff were under the age of 22 and, while two had been active within political organizations, none had had any teaching experience or training. All were known to the project or members of the committee before they were appointed. The resources worker was the only one who had a formal interview and was selected from amongst a group of people invited to apply for the job by the co-ordinator.

An unsympathetic judge might conclude that E.R.A.S.E. employees form part of a sub-culture which is closed to outsiders. It works to fulfill its own needs and functions as an intellectual and cultural grouping which recruits those it can rely on to further its ideology. It cannot

look beyond the bounds of this grouping as it fears being confronted with an alternative analysis which would create conflict or force it to question itself. This would not be welcome in a project which is aiming at spreading its established set of beliefs. Critical thinking to such a project is only acceptable insofar as it enables people to think as it thinks.

A sympathetic judge may be more aware of the constraints placed on a project by the current political climate in South Africa. She might argue that there is a state of emergency and one has to be aware of potentially destructive forces. E.R.A.S.E. is guided in its work by an ideology and does subscribe to a particular way of doing things. Interviews with unknown applicants can only be superficial tests while those whose work is known can provide a guarantee of ability and an understanding of the issues at stake. To spend time training someone who may then be unsatisfactory is impractical when resources are scarce and when there are appropriate people already known to the project.

The recent appointment of a second co-ordinator indicates a greater confidence in reaching beyond the immediate network. The project now perceives itself as established. The post was advertised on the two Cape Town/Western Cape university campuses and one complete unknown came to the interview and was a seriously considered contender. The person who was appointed had been introduced to the project previously but was still a relative outsider. She was a few years older than anyone on the existing staff and had had considerable teaching experience in an alternative Namibian school and in the informal sector. While the interviewing panel took care to ask about her political and feminist views she was finally selected because of her superior educational

background. The impact this is permitted to have on the project in practice can only be assessed at a later date.

Others Involved

While E.R.A.S.E. does not support any particular political grouping it would be true to say that the Cape Action League (C.A.L.) supports it. This support is not financial but rather takes the form of publicity for the project through its publications and invitations to speak at meetings. E.R.A.S.E. also has access to its materials for use and further distribution. The C.A.L. booklet on Race and Racism is an example of such a free resource.

Why and how projects come to be sustained by a particular political ethos at this stage in South Africa's history is too complicated an issue to deal with here. It bears further research. In brief however, E.R.A.S.E. was initiated by a group of people sharing a similar ideology. Its perception of 'race', for example, was that which was articulated most forcefully by C.A.L. It was also known to a particular group of people and so demand led in terms of whom it worked with.

A survey of the project's work demonstrates increasing involvement of a wide range of organizations from different political groupings (see 'Forms of Activity' p.59). Calls of 'Long Live A.N.C.' (see p.72) and perceptions of the project's support of the Freedom Charter (see p.45) indicate that E.R.A.S.E. is not associated with a different grouping by learners.

For this to be reflected at staffing and committee level may take some time yet. E.R.A.S.E., if it genuinely wants to bridge ideological differences at this level, will have to consider the status of its message in relation to its desire to raise people's consciousness of racism and sexism more

broadly. While it is entitled to have a point of view it needs to ask itself how tolerant it is prepared to be of other points of view and what the limits of this toleration may practically be. Again the question of where it lies on the continuum of imposing its point of view on the one hand and being entirely open-ended on the other is raised.

FORMS OF ACTIVITY

A survey of the project's outreach work over the past six months helps to give a more general picture of the direction E.R.A.S.E. is taking and of the fact that it has succeeded in making contact with people over a broad socio-economic base.

E.R.A.S.E.'s outreach work between 1 August, 1989 and 31 January, 1990:

Media production
- two issues of its magazine, ERASER, distributing 1 500 copies in the first instance and 3 000 in the second;
- pamphlets on National Women's Day;
- a range of stickers and badges

Unions and workers
- ran two programmes for striking union workers on sexism and prejudice. This involved different unions and groups of about 200 workers each.
- ran a four hour workshop for 500 mineworkers in Kimberley (by invitation of their union).

Student groups
- ran a two day workshop in Pietermaritzburg with 25 Community Project Workers and Theological students;

- addressed 200 students at a teachers' training college in Kimberley and subsequently had a meeting with 20 of them;
- facilitated two separate workshops with groups of about 30 school students each. E.R.A.S.E. was invited to do this by an organization which was hosting them from up-country. (One of these workshops is described in Chapter 4.)

Outreach meetings
- two with Paballeo township students to discuss pamphlet creation and how to run a campaign;
- one with college students on issues relating to District Six;
- one with squatter camp residents on concerns of women;
- one to set up seminars through unions in Stellenbosch;
- several with student representatives in Khayelitsha township to organize a weekend programme which then had to be cancelled due to detentions.

Talks
- one to a group of businessmen;
- one at the opening of a community hall.

Stalls
- one at a conference;
- one at the opening of a community hall.

In addition to the above there were two gatherings of about 60 people each invited by the project to the office. The first was to celebrate National Women's Day and the second was to discuss future directions for the project itself.

This survey reveals the 'one-off' nature of the project's activities. It has worked with no group on a regular basis and there has been a lack of forward planning and direction. The project itself has articulated this as a problem and plans to set up and sustain programmes now that the contacts

have been made and a second co-ordinator with educational experience has been appointed.

Many of the project's contacts have been made through other service organizations and unions. The motives for these invitations have varied from a need to fill a slot, to a more philanthropic desire to help E.R.A.S.E. become better known, to a perception that racism and sexism are issues which particular groups need to confront. E.R.A.S.E. needs to check both its own and the host organisation's motives before agreeing to run such sessions. This is addressed more fully in Chapter Five: A Letter to the E.R.A.S.E. Committee.

The stickers and badges produced by the project were born out of the idea that E.R.A.S.E. should initiate a movement to end racism and sexism. They were also intended to popularize the project with the E.R.A.S.E. logo clearly visible alongside the slogans. They serve as small but concrete demonstrations of a number of issues relating to the structure and aims of the project. These badges highlight questions of whether E.R.A.S.E. seeks to attract or give support, of whether it aims to lead a movement or act as a service body and of whether it is essentially an activist, campaigning project or an educational one.

PRINCIPLES AND INTERESTS

E.R.A.S.E. has always been clear about its principles. At a meeting to re-draft the constitution in November 1989 the proposed three were: Unity, Democracy and non-Racialism.

Underlying these principles is an appealing and powerful ideology which provides a framework within which subscribers may think. There is a firm view of what exists (racial

capitalism), what is possible (non-racial socialism) and what needs to be done (end racism and sexism).[12] Action is aimed at the attainment of a political end.

A discussion of these three principles for the constitution included no mention of how the project would set about achieving them. When I, as participant-observer, asked whether the new constitution planned to spell out any educational concerns the group acknowledged that its commitment to 'educating' was missing from the suggested 'Preamble' as well as from the 'Principles' and 'Aims and Objectives' and that it was important to rectify this omission. The need to address these concerns was thus noted but concrete suggestions were left to the co-ordinator to propose at a later date. The co-ordinator later added that she felt alone in trying to translate the ideological construct into an educational framework and that help in this area would be welcomed. The project's move towards the ideologically assertive end of the continuum (described earlier in this chapter) seemed to be a reflection of the experiences and interests of those working with it at the time rather than a conscious decision to move away from education as a vehicle for change.

This feeds the unsympathetic judge's view of E.R.A.S.E. as a self-perpetuating sub-culture as discussed in the previous section on 'People'. The project, one could conclude, exists so that individual interests may be furthered and its direction is shaped in accordance with these interests. While the course an initiative takes will often be determined to some degree by the talents and inclinations of the initiators, the extent of this bias should be continually reviewed.

CAN E.R.A.S.E. BE A MOVEMENT?

At the October 1989 meeting, called to discuss E.R.A.S.E.'s work and future direction, people put forward a number of descriptions of the project. These are listed at the start of this chapter. Their responses include the words 'project', 'organization', 'movement', 'vehicle' and 'group'.

When groups at this gathering came to defining some of these terms those considering 'committee' included the warning that '... this selected group can just take over so membership stops having a say.' A 'movement', by contrast, was described as something with a broad aim which could unite people with different ideologies and from different organizations. It was to be action orientated. One participant, reporting back for his group, compared a movement to a soccer team as 'it's a body with a certain goal. They play hard to win.'

The notion of a movement had appeal and the idea of E.R.A.S.E. as anything else dissolved with a shift in terminology rather than a consciously taken step by all those present. Project staff later described this event as 'the launch of E.R.A.S.E. as a movement,' but the implications of this were not fully realized at the time.

An influential aid agency policy document defines 'movement' as 'the organized endeavour of marginalized groups in a broad sense, proceeding from shared interests, seeking to exert influence on power centres and, in the end, aiming at sharing of power'[13] (my underlining). For E.R.A.S.E. to be a movement in itself cannot be possible in these terms. Feminism, for example, can be described as a movement but it did not spring from a committee or project called

'Feminism'. Similarly a movement aiming at ending racism and sexism cannot be owned by a single 'marginalized group'.

There is the additional question of where E.R.A.S.E. seeks to exert its influence. It is no longer concerned with 'power centres' in the form of departments of education and publishers but has rather shifted its focus to 'the community' so possibly re-defining its perception of where the power really lies in the term. Others were also making this point:

> It has become clear that the future evolution of educational policy in South Africa will be determined more and more from below. It is only a matter of time before the people are able to take the schooling of their children in their own hands and formulate education policy for themselves ... which is to say, for all.(14)

E.R.A.S.E. was also re-defining its angle of attack saying that the future formulators of educational policy, 'the people', need to be brought to recognize and resist the evils of racism and sexism. This would enable them to ensure that this ideology was not perpetuated in the education system which they would be creating and which would in turn generate our new society. Or, to rephrase this, the target was no longer set on the existing textbook writers and policy makers but on the future ones.

In discussion the co-ordinator agreed that E.R.A.S.E. perhaps could not be the 'movement' it had declared itself to be at the October 17th gathering, but should rather be described as 'a project in the process of building a movement'. This is still a perception of E.R.A.S.E. as a lone builder rather than a supporter. While there is no other project or organization with the same specific aims and ideology as E.R.A.S.E., many alternative education, cultural and community projects, not to mention political

organizations, would assert that they are working towards the abolition of all forms of prejudice. They are 'proceeding from shared interests' and as such E.R.A.S.E. is part of a broader movement. Its individual ideas on the nature and impact of racism and sexism can contribute to the overall debate within this forum and so strengthen it. E.R.A.S.E. can support the building of a movement but it can neither be that movement nor work in isolation.

HOW FAR CAN DEMOCRACY GO?

> A democracy in which everyone has an equal responsibility in everything would be oppressive for the conscientious and licentious for the rest.
> (T.S. Eliot)

E.R.A.S.E.'s idea of itself as a movement builder and so a leader resulted in structural problems for the project. With its strong ideological construct and relatively weak educational framework unions and Student Representative Councils began, during 1989, to question its mandate and ask for democratic representation.

The consequence of this was the disbanding of the Steering Committee in October so that 'a more democratic structure could take its place.' However, there was no such structure established and therefore no-one to nominate representatives to the proposed new co-ordinating committee. Previous attempts to involve user organizations in committee meetings had failed with individuals frequently being invited but not arriving.

In addition there was the problem of what constituted a 'user organization'. Many had only had passing contact and could not be expected to sustain such committed interest.

E.R.A.S.E.'s efforts to democratise its structures may have served to alienate some of the membership. A college student criticised it as a 'lip-service organization'(15) and went on to explain that it did not provide the service it claimed to provide. He was seeing the project as a service organization which was only paying lip-service to its actual job. There was clearly some discrepancy here as to how this student, as learner-user, perceived E.R.A.S.E.'s function and what the project was in fact doing.

Different user membership expectations, the projects desire to meet these and its own evolving goals were in constant conflict with one another and needed to be addressed urgently. In practice many 'users', including union representatives, S.R.C.s, other organizations and individuals, seemed to look to E.R.A.S.E. for the services it offers rather than a stake in its policy-making.

CONCLUDING COMMENTS

By January 1990 decisions made at the October restructuring meeting had been forced into revision. The notion of a democracy in which elected representatives from the general membership had the time and inclination to participate fully in the project's policy and decision-making processes, working voluntarily for E.R.A.S.E. rather than simply enjoying its services, seemed somewhat idealistic and impracticable. There was a realization that democracy may mean participation and power-sharing within given structures but that these structures exist to support the project and the work it is doing rather than to satisfy those who would like the project to function on a broader mandate. The steering committee, as described earlier in this chapter, was therefore revived.

E.R.A.S.E. met these problems because it had not defined its role for itself or its expectations of its users. Learners were not perceived as learners as much as people to join the movement and support E.R.A.S.E. The lack of follow-up work confirms this view. Its work was more the nature of a publicity campaign than of a consistent and planned educational programme.

This small project cannot be a movement on its own but it can encourage and enable people to determine their own political action. As discussed in Chapter Two, theory and practice need to inform one another so that liberatory education nurtures and sustains action but does not finally own learners by determining what they do.

E.R.A.S.E. needs to clarify its position. It is a project, campaigning around issues which may be described as political and running educational programmes as a central strategy for mobilizing people. It has recently changed the preposition in its name from 'in' to 'through'. It is now 'End Racism and Sexism <u>through</u> Education.' This is to reflect its interest in awareness raising rather than in countering current educational practices. However, it still has the goal of ending racism and sexism and so remains essentially an activist, campaigning project. Education is a means to a particular, pre-determined end. Consumers vote with their feet. This service, like any service, will respond to their demands as well as it possibly can within its capacities and constraints.

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CHAPTER FOUR

PINK AND BLUE WILL NEVER DO - THE E.R.A.S.E. CURRICULUM IN ACTION

E.R.A.S.E. has a body of knowledge or, more precisely, a set of beliefs which it wants people to understand and translate into action. It perceives this as its central role. 'E.R.A.S.E. sees itself as getting people to identify, confront and challenge both racism, racial prejudice and sexism wherever they find themselves.'(1) The content of this curriculum includes the project's definitions of racism and sexism and explanations of how these 'isms' work to divide and exploit people.

The strategy for communicating these beliefs is largely educational: 'We are involved in running workshops, mainly with students and workers, to identify and highlight racism and sexism as they encounter it, in so doing motivating them to fight it.'(2) Hence workshops are a means of 'getting people' to fight racism and sexism. This refers us back to the problem presented by Freire's 'positivist, goal orientated education' described in Chapter Two. Not only is there an ideology to be communicated through workshops but the planning and running of such sessions is controlled with a view to achieving certain objectives. This chapter concerns itself primarily with the less visible implications of these objectives and how they work themselves out in practice.

Bernstein's idea of **frame** as 'the degree of control teacher and pupil possess over the selection, organization and pacing of the knowledge transmitted and received in the pedagogical relationship'(3) provides a useful concept for the discussion of E.R.A.S.E.'s pedagogy. He describes 'strong framing' as a reduced number of options in 'what is

transmitted and received in the context of the pedagogical relationship.'(4) Students thus have a limited and largely predictable hold over proceedings which are generally controlled by the teacher or co-ordinator.

E.R.A.S.E., as a project which endeavours to be relevant to learner needs and interests and to use participatory learning techniques would, as Freire would, perceive its pedagogy as being weakly framed with opportunity for maximum learner input and initiative. An overall impression of an E.R.A.S.E. workshop is not one of a teacher transmitting a body of information to a number of passive students but rather one of interaction and dialogue. The 'problem-posing approach' as described in Chapter Two would be perceived as the dominant methodology with the 'banking' style being limited to the formal speech which usually falls within such a session.

These initial impressions need to be questioned. An exploration of a particular E.R.A.S.E. workshop in this chapter raises the issue of the degree to which a methodology which broadly subscribes to Freire's principles of education (as outlined in Chapter Two) can 'frame' learners. The 'problem-posing approach' need not imply weak framing but may rather be a means of getting people to feel that they are participating as equals to the teacher while their contributions are in fact being used to a particular predetermined end. What follows is an examination of this dynamic through a close discussion of a couple of workshop activities and through highlighting some additional issues raised by the workshop more generally.

THE WORKSHOP: OUTLINE OF CONTEXT AND CONTENT

December, 1989 and E.R.A.S.E. had been invited by another, larger organization in Cape Town to run a 3+ hour workshop on 'Sexism'. It was to be for a group of about forty high-

school students from two towns in the Northern Cape. They were to spend a week in Cape Town and the host organization, knowing what E.R.A.S.E. had to offer, had arranged a programme for them. The teachers accompanying the students had been consulted and some of the students had been informed that there would be such a workshop. Sexism, however, had not been identified as an issue of concern by the participants. It was rather a part of the host organization's curriculum.

E.R.A.S.E. had agreed that I could attend this workshop as an observer as opposed to my usual role of participant observer on such occasions. The host organization later over-ruled this, saying that observation would inhibit the students. It was therefore taped and videoed and the students were given a questionnaire to complete at the end of the session (Appendix D). This analysis is based on this evidence, on my experience of previous E.R.A.S.E. workshops and on subsequent discussion with the E.R.A.S.E. co-ordinator who facilitated the workshop.

In addition to the co-ordinator, who was central to the running of this session, five E.R.A.S.E. volunteers went to assist. Their role was largely to work with the different smaller groups while group-work was in progress. One such volunteer also ran the 'Letter Answering' activity and another described E.R.A.S.E.'s history to the group.

What follows is a breakdown of the order of events with an approximate estimate of time spent on each one:

(a) E.R.A.S.E. was invited to run the workshop and the co-ordinator met with the organizer from the host organization to discuss issues to be raised during the session. (1+ hours)

(b) Before the session began E.R.A.S.E. workers put up a display in the area to be used. This included the large E.R.A.S.E. banner, a number of charts describing the

project's work and a poster reading 'Phantsi Sexism' (Down with sexism). (10 mins)

(c) Workshop began. Brief introduction to the project and the session by an E.R.A.S.E. volunteer. (5 mins)

(d) Co-ordinator stepped forward and called 'Phantsi Sexism Phantsi' so calling for the 'Phantsi' response from the group. She then repeated the same for 'Racism' and 'Sexism' again. (1 min)

(e) Picture Activity (to be described later in this chapter). Led and summed up by co-ordinator. (35 mins)

(f) Poem about socialization and sexual stereotyping. Recited by the volunteer who had introduced the workshop and the co-ordinator. (2 mins)

(g) Freedom song. Sung by all. (5 mins)

(h) BREAK (10 mins)

(i) Answering Letters Activity (to be described later in this chapter). Led by another E.R.A.S.E. volunteer. (60 mins)

(j) BREAK

(k) Some 'Phantsi' and 'Long Live' calling (as in a rally) Initiated by E.R.A.S.E. workers. (1 min)

(l) Summing up of 'Letters Activity' by co-ordinator. Followed immediately by 'Amandla' call and response. (6 mins)

(m) Prepared speech delivered by co-ordinator, ending with 'Phantsi Sexism' call and response x3. (13 mins)

(n) 'Sexism in Your Area.' Participants divided into two groups according to their town of origin. Their task was to discuss how sexism was evident in their particular area with especial reference to 'Home, School, Community, Church and Sports Clubs.' (20 mins)

(o) Reconvene. Freedom Song followed by calls of 'Amandla'; 'Phantsi-Sexism, - Racism and -Capitalism'; and 'Long live Socialism'; and 'Long Live the A.N.C.'. (3 mins)

(p) Report backs from the two groups as described in (n) (6 mins)

(q) Co-ordinator to whole group: 'Any questions?' (no response.) continues ... 'Well, I have one question: Now what can we do?'
Response: 'Phantsi,' followed by laughter.
Co-ordinator: 'We can't just say 'Phantsi'. What does that do?' (laughter) 'We feel privileged to be here today as it's not often we get a chance to hear what you have to say about your communities and where you come from.' (2 mins)

(r) 'What is E.R.A.S.E.?' Volunteer who introduced the programme and the co-ordinator outlined the project's history, current activities and publications. (6 mins)

(s) General question and answer session. (30 mins)

(t) Participants filled in questionnaires. (Appendix D) (8 mins)

(u) Session closes. Many students bought the ERASER magazine and there was a shortage of E.R.A.S.E. stickers. Each participant was given a compilation of material entitled 'Careers in a Sexist Society'. Teachers from both towns invited E.R.A.S.E. up to their areas to do further work with their groups.

In summary this workshop could be described as having had three group-work activities (as described in (e), (i) and (n)); a formal speech and some less formal linkages including songs, questions and slogan calling. This analysis will focus initially on two of the group-work activities (See 1. 'Picture Exercise' and 2. 'Answering Letters' following) It will then discuss issues demonstrated by other features of the workshop (see numbers 3-6 following).

WORKSHOP ANALYSIS

1. Picture Exercise

Procedure:

(a) Participants are divided into groups of about six.

(b) Each group is given a picture of a person and asked to describe that person: where they live and work, their marital status and anything else which occurs. They are also asked to give the picture a title and to think of a question they would ask that person if they were to meet her/him in the street.

(c) Groups report back to the larger group.

(d) The larger group is given the opportunity to ask any further questions they may wish to ask about the people in the picture.

(e) Co-ordinator asks: 'Why do you think E.R.A.S.E. asked you to invent these stories?' and proceeds to sum up, pointing out ways in which judgements are made from physical appearances and our tendency to stereotype. She goes on to say that all people are individuals and that one cannot leap to such conclusions.

What this activity sets out to achieve:

(a) To involve people in discussion from the beginning of the session so relaxing them and drawing them towards the issues of concern.

(b) To make the point that ...'we all have prejudices in ourselves. The whole point of the exercise is to get us to look at ourselves and see how we've been socialized (by our upbringing) to judge other people.'(5)

How this plan worked itself out in practice:

All concerned would agree that this activity succeeded in involving people. It was a starter exercise which gave everyone something to focus on (the pictures) and talk about. Personal knowledge or opinions were being asked for, so engaging participants immediately.

The second aim of looking at how we judge people is more complex. The co-ordinator felt that the point she had wanted to make was adequately made. A couple of participants selected it as 'the most useful aspect of the workshop' saying in their questionnaires that it 'demonstrated that we are sometimes racist and very sexist in our everyday behaviour, even though we fight against it.'

But the question to be asked here is to what degree this activity actually does get us 'to look at ourselves' (see second aim). People were initially asked to describe a person from a picture. They had to invent a life-style and a personality based on this limited knowledge. Thus they were encouraged to make judgements which could lead to stereotypical statements. The activity set out to demonstrate how we 'jump to conclusions' and so involved an exercise where it was difficult to do anything else. The group had to agree on statements thus forcing a common denominator to be found. The single question they could choose to ask the person in the picture followed the description and so tended to be based on agreed generalizations.

The co-ordinator's rationale for doing this was based on her observation that people make assumptions about other people on the basis of how they look all the time. This was a way of demonstrating the point. In other words she was anticipating behaviour and so 'framing' participants by asking them to make judgements for her own purposes.

In her summing up after the groups had presented their pictures the co-ordinator made her points by relating them to things participants had said: 'Why did you assume this person was a man?', 'Did you say he had six children because you expect black people to have many children?' The group, which was now an audience, had no opportunity to respond to these questions either at the time or after her

input. Without a period for reflection or further discussion participants could neither internalize the experience nor develop their own theories about how people are classified and how this effects their lives. The theorizing about the experience or activity was done for them by the 'teacher'.

2. Answering Letters

Procedure:

(a) Participants are divided into groups of about six.
(b) Each group is given a letter describing a personal problem and asking for advice.
(c) They are given fifteen minutes to read the letter and discuss the problem.
(d) Groups are told to devise a dramatic sketch which presents a solution.
(e) Groups then report back by reading the letter they started with, summarizing their discussion of the problem and presenting the sketch or solution.
(f) Facilitator sums up, talking of the wider causes of the various problems by relating them to the structure of society and the nature of institutional oppression.

What this activity sets out to achieve:

(a) To encourage participants to talk openly about the problems faced by themselves or people similar to themselves.
(b) To initiate discussion on how these problems may be solved.
(c) To locate these situations in a broader structural framework.

How this plan worked itself out in practice:

Learners who filled in the questionnaire at the end of the workshop overwhelmingly selected this as the 'most useful aspect of the workshop'. Their reasons can be summarized by two responses:

'It is practical and if you see it you can understand it better.'
and 'It taught me how to deal with certain problems.'
One admitted to having one of the selected problems himself and said that this session had shown him, 'more or less', how to resolve it.

The second aim as outlined above was met. The first and third need further consideration. Firstly there was the desire to be relevant. The problems had to be real to the participants. In this activity groups were given a particular problem letter. These had been drawn up after discussion with the person from the host organization who had some knowledge of the communities from which the students came. Hence, while there was an attempt to reflect 'typical problems', participants had no say in the selection of the situations. The activity ran the risk of presenting a problem to a group which was either irrelevant or not a priority.

The E.R.A.S.E. co-ordinator explained that it may have been difficult to elicit certain problems from participants as there were some situations which were so common as to have become a 'fact of life' and others which people would not talk about. She cited fathers abusing daughters as an example, saying that this would not have arisen within a group discussion. This relates to the 'culture of silence' of which Freire speaks and leaves facilitators with the issue of how to build on personal experiences which persons do not offer. It may be that some compromise needed to be sought with both facilitator and participants having the opportunity to voice problems from which groups could select those they would like to explore.

The third aim of situating the different problems in a socio-political context was left to the facilitator's summing-up at the end of the activity. As in the picture exercise an analysis was provided for the learners. Here

they were told, for example, that the wife-beater was oppressed by his boss at work and so needed to exert power at home. Capitalism and employer-worker relations were at the source of the problem.

Leaving the facilitator with the final word meant that statements of ideology were left unchallenged. They were presented as correct and therefore unproblematic. In addition the assumption that all those present were children of workers and the assertion of an 'us and them' situation as the root of all the problems risked inaccuracy as well as alienation.

Participants were never encouraged to explore the causes of the problem but were rather left to discuss the situation itself and devise a scenario which contained the solution. They were thus initially led to believe that personal problems could be individually solved. It was only after this presentation of solutions that they were told that such problems arose out of huge structural injustices and that these forms of institutional exploitation must be fought. How best to embark on this massive and daunting task was not discussed.

However, the questionnaires indicate that participants were left untouched by the facilitator's concluding analysis and gained all they did from the group work and presentations. If the final phase is regarded by the project as containing an important part of their curriculum it must be approached differently and so re-structured.

3. Dialogue and Equality

Towards the end of this workshop the co-ordinator told the participants, 'We feel privileged to be here today as it's not often we get a chance to hear what you have to say...' (See (q) of outline). But how much listening was in fact happening and how much opportunity there was for such interchange is a question to be asked.

The Freireian ideal of dialogue seeks to foster equality between teacher and taught but, as was discussed in Chapter Two, does not necessarily do so. The Letter Answering activity demonstrated this issue insofar as the letters themselves acted as boundaries within which dialogue could take place. Because they were pre-determined they excluded issues unknown to the facilitator and so maintained the gap between learners and learned. The facilitator was the initiator who held and controlled the material.

Discussions during this workshop tended to take the form of question and answer sessions with E.R.A.S.E. workers, and sometimes a teacher, doing the answering. On occasion points were elaborated upon by different people so giving the impression of a discussion. These were generally presented as explanations rather than as explorations of an issue. One group had the answers and these had to be communicated to the other. This problem may have been exacerbated by the number of facilitators (or E.R.A.S.E. workers) present. The six of them were dotted about the room so that comments could pass from one to the other giving a sense of discussion but excluding those who were there as learners.

Another opportunity for dialogue was provided when learners were divided into their two home town groups to discuss 'Sexism in Your Area'. (See (n) of outline). This was probably the closest the workshop got to reaching mutual exploration as the facilitators sat back and became listeners. Yet even here there were problems: Firstly the groups had about twenty people in each, making them too large for everyone to contribute. And secondly their set task was limited to identifying sexist practices for reporting back. They had thus to apply the presented explanation of 'Sexism' to current realities. Once again there was no call for analysis of the causes or the development of a discussion on what could best be done.

Lists were requested and so lists were produced with the curriculum still kept under control.

According to 13 questionnaire respondents E.R.A.S.E. workers both told them what to think and helped them to think for themselves in the course of the workshop. Four said they were only told and the remaining two that they were only helped to think for themselves (Appendix D, question 7). Participation seemed to make most people feel that they were not only contributing opinions but were also thinking for themselves. As the boundaries for participation were carefully delineated and as contributions were then explained according to a particular ideology one could argue that dialogue misled people into believing that they were thinking creatively while they were in fact being manipulated.

4. Teaching Negativity - The Speech

E.R.A.S.E., as reflected in the co-ordinator's thirteen minute speech during this workshop, has a strong sense of 'the enemy'. A paraphrase of this could read: 'Racism and sexism must end. This means that structures, such as Apartheid and Capitalism, must be abolished. These structures uphold racism and sexism in order to create the divisions which allow them to maintain power. Divide and rule is their policy. The fight against racism and sexism therefore entails opposition to the perceived social, political and economic causes and destruction of the institutions within which they manifest themselves. These are personified by the bosses while the workers, although sometimes misguided, constitute the forces of good. To be against racism and sexism one either has to be a worker or on the side of the workers.' This, at risk of oversimplification, is the essential content of the E.R.A.S.E. curriculum.

A battle is thus set up with 'us versus them'. Opposing and abolishing existing structures in order to transform society

is an idea frequently emphasised by Freire and other radical pedagogues. Transformation and rejection are inseparable. 'The essence of the category of transcendence lies in its refusal to accept the world as it is. Its posture is based on the political and moral imperative that things must change.'(6)

Youngman criticizes this negativity in Freire saying, 'We know in general terms what Freire is against - alienation, dehumanisation, oppression - but we do not know what he is advocating. For this reason, his talk about revolution often appears rhetorical.'(7) Similar criticism could be levelled at E.R.A.S.E.. The project advocates socialism as an answer and has an ideal of a non-racist and non-sexist society but the emphasis is on **erasing** racism and sexism. Building alternatives, such as a language which does not alienate or diminish women, is not a priority.

The aim therefore is to 'clear a space so that new things can move in.'(8) E.R.A.S.E. has a specific role within a liberation movement of which it is a part. There is a fear that transformation will not be total and that racism and, more especially, sexism will be absorbed by post-apartheid structures unless they are actively abolished. Freire speaks of these negative features saying that, 'Through these cultural remnants the oppressor society continues to invade - this time invading the revolutionary society itself.'(9)

For some the nihilistic nature of such radical education is problematic:

> The 'cultural remnants' that 'invade' the revolutionary movement are to be purged; in this view the new only survives as it is sundered from tradition. Added to their tendency to make discontinuity a necessary aspect of social reform is the notion of the individual as being able to achieve a form of emancipation from all oppressive societal influences.(10)

Individuals, Bowers argues, cannot simply abandon their histories as this 'ignores the basic insight that most of an individual's cultural knowledge is not learned at the explicit and rational level.'(11) By overlooking these insights 'Giroux and the other liberation theorists cling to the Enlightenment myth that individuals, through the exercise of critical thought, can emancipate themselves from the hold of tradition (culture).'(12)

Bowers calls on Maxine Greene and Daniel Bell for support in his rejection of the notion that individuals need to annihilate their past if they are to control their futures and in his assertion that consciousness raising should rather be a process of becoming more aware of how the past impinges on our present thinking. By making people 'visible' to themselves and to their relationship with history they may, instead of seeing themselves as victims of a system, come to realize their intersubjectivity with the world. Thus critical education is not a matter of individuals with raised consciousnesses damning the world but rather a process whereby people become more aware of their place within their society and communities so that futures with selected elements of both the old and the new may be built together.

While E.R.A.S.E. may agree with this in theory this workshop speech, like many of the speeches outlining its beliefs, did not reflect a positive thrust of creating things together but rather spoke of demolition and the problems created by 'them'. As a piece of political rhetoric this may have won support. But as an educational exercise aimed at helping people to understand problems and find ways to act and so change their lives it seemed to disarm rather than empower.

5. Ideological Unity - The Linkages

To the average educationalist the most striking aspect of this workshop would have been the singing of freedom songs and calling of slogans. (See (d), (g), (k), (l), (m) and

(o) of the outline). These demanded the participation of all in the expression of an ideology. This ideology had been displayed around the room before the session began (see (b) of outline) thus re-enforcing the sense of 'we're in this together and we're agreed on these issues.' (The section on the office environment in Chapter 3 discusses the impact of such displayed slogans more fully.)

Prinsloo criticises Freire on the grounds that 'The Freirean curriculum is not located with any sense of facilitating group formation and group identity in the context of struggle.'(13) E.R.A.S.E. could claim that this is exactly what it is doing and agree with Prinsloo who goes on to say that

> ...organized workers' movements in South Africa have found active expression of culture by way of song, dance and plays to be a unifying and strengthening educational experience and supportive of other learning that occurs through the processes of organizational activity.(14)

Freedom songs and slogan calling have become part of alternative South African culture and are indeed a unifying force. They enliven a workshop and seemingly bring people together. The emphasis here is on 'seemingly' as facilitators do not know what participants are thinking and who is feeling alienated as they go through these communal motions. Other points of view may be being excluded from other parts of the workshop by the rhetoric of these linkages.

There have been other E.R.A.S.E. programmes where similar song and slogan-calling activities have taken place. But on a number of these occasions they were initiated by the participants themselves. One could argue that space was made for 'the active expression of culture' but that this culture was not used by the project to gain approval on a political level or to force a unity which could in fact threaten personal autonomy.

It may be that E.R.A.S.E. seeks ideological kudos and so ensures that its political views are made known and gain approval. By supporting a particular struggle they win support for themselves. It may also be that it values unity above autonomy. In fact, the project identifies unity as its underlying principle. Its workshop may then be not so much an educational experience for the individuals participating but rather a way of mobilizing support for a struggle. The project then also needs to ask whether this is the most effective means of sustaining action in the long-term. Once again our attention is focussed on the issues raised by the Freirian notions of 'praxis' and 'transformation' as discussed in Chapter Two.

6. Translating Education Into Action For Transformation

Freire makes the mistake of calling for personal autonomy and united action simultaneously while E.R.A.S.E. suffers a similar problem based on its desire both to educate and mobilize.

This workshop enacts this conflict, its desire for action overwhelming the educational content. The 'Phantsi' and 'Long Live' calls, the freedom songs and the rousing speech where 'the bosses' were named as the targets demonstrated the urgency of ending sexism in the eyes of the project. It seemed that this was not the time for exercising the language of measured educational work but rather for calling for immediate action.

When the co-ordinator asked participants the inevitable question, 'What will you do?' (See (o) of workshop outline) the only answer was 'Phantsi'. The laughter which followed indicated the futility of such a notion. Yet this question towards the end of an isolated workshop perhaps invites such a response.

There was no other opportunity within the workshop for students to make promises to act. The E.R.A.S.E. co-ordinator regretted the lack of a 'What Can I Do' session, saying there had been no time for the activity they had planned in this respect. For her this omission was a problem as one aim of the workshop had been to lead people into making a commitment to action.

But it could also be suggested that the workshop did not need such a session as commitment to action after only one afternoon on an issue is a rash expectation. Thinking is seldom perceived as action. It may lead to the adoption of causes and so possibly action. But it is not the function of a workshop, nor even a series of workshops to channel people into particular activities. As discussed in Chapter Two, an educational programme can only make suggestions. A workshop which enables people to go away and think is a success.

The problem of education for action lies in the expectation of instant action. It denies the slower and more meaningful process of thinking and internalization. Participants may of themselves move on to more direct organizational or political action or they may decide simply to live their re-formulated attitudes. Either way individuality and personal autonomy have been recognized while action is more deeply motivated and so sustainable.

IN CONCLUSION

The activities first described on pictures and answering letters shared a number of features:

(a) They both set out to make points which had already been decided upon.

(b) While learners were given the opportunity to participate, they were asked to do particular things which were generally predictable. (Make judgements on

physical appearances and enact solutions for domestic situations.)

(c) The analysis of their different contributions was left to the facilitator at the end.

(d) There was no opportunity for the learners to apply, test or develop this theory within the context of the workshop.

Further issues raised by this workshop more generally include:

(a) Ways in which dialogue and the problem-posing approach can strongly frame learning.

(b) Problems inherent in the gap between teacher and taught and how these may be re-inforced.

(c) The emphasis in the project on rejection and negativity and the educational implications of this.

(d) The tension between unity and respect for personal autonomy and difference.

(e) How a desire to motivate action may limit the educational possibilities of a workshop.

This workshop analysis demonstrates how participants have, in the terms described at the beginning of this chapter, been strongly framed. They have had little control over the organization and content of this workshop. People were involved in proceedings but their involvement was directed to a particular end. This was the consequence of the project's desire to get its message across.

What the session actually did communicate or teach is an important one. The questionnaire, filled in at the end, indicates that people had become more aware of how sexism can manifest itself in daily life. Fourteen of the nineteen respondents said that they would, on their return home, spread the information while four said that they would be more aware of their behaviour and so try to change. The remaining one wrote, perhaps most realistically, 'Ek sal nog sien' (I shall still see).

Spreading the word is thus the most possible action in the minds of most. They feel they have gained information which they would like to pass on. Yet this emphasis on dissemination also raises the question of what the workshop did not enable people to do. It did not provide them with any new skills to change their lives. People need training in skills such as assertiveness and conflict management. So, for example, the previously described letter answering activity with the enacting of solutions to problems could have initiated discussion and further work on developing such skills. However, the opportunity was lost as the co-ordinator's commentary at the end quickly turned to a presentation on the causes of these problems.

A single workshop can only be a beginning but E.R.A.S.E. needs to be clear about what it wishes to begin and about what it wishes to do beyond this beginning. This issue of defining direction and purpose is the focus of the next chapter.

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(6) H.A. Giroux, Ideology, Culture and the Process of Schooling, The Falmer Press, London, 1981, p.121.
(7) F. Youngman, Adult Education and Socialist Pedagogy, Croom Helm, London, 1986, p.182.
(8) Discussion with committee member, September 1989.
(9) P. Freire, Pedagogy of the Oppressed, Penguin Education, England, 1972, p.128.
(10) C.A. Bowers, 'Culture Against Itself: Nihilism as an Element of Recent Educational Thought,' Unpublished paper, University of Oregon, 1984, p.25.
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(12) ibid., p.27.
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CHAPTER FIVE

A LETTER TO THE E.R.A.S.E. COMMITTEE

This chapter aims to provide a working document for the project committee. It presents the major issues requiring consideration and outlines a sequence of questions aimed at helping the committee to reach some clarity on the project's purpose and priorities. It is written as a letter so as to keep the audience uppermost in the mind of the reader and so as to speak in a more direct and personal tone to the committee itself.

30.1.90

Dear E.R.A.S.E. Committee

Over the past six months you have involved me extensively in your work and made me feel welcome and trusted. For this I owe you great thanks. You have made yourselves vulnerable by requesting that your work be studied and so, potentially, opened the project to considerable criticism. I am now returning that trust by telling you what I think your strengths and weaknesses are. While I am not in a position to choose the direction you take, my involvement in your work has enabled me to locate the project's possibilities, problems and ambiguities. I see little point in listing recommendations for you to accept or reject as you see fit and more worth in giving you my impressions and in helping you to consider the issues they raise. In this way it is hoped that you will be better able to formulate your own policy.

Your strengths lie essentially in the people you have working for E.R.A.S.E. The staff are committed to the project and receptive to criticism and new ideas. The co-ordinator is a very good communicator and draws a wide range

of people to the project and its concerns. It would be unfair to comment on the second co-ordinator as she has only recently been appointed. However, her strong educational background holds much promise for the project's future. You have an extensive network of contacts and an ability to keep in touch with people. You have the capacity to organize events and to attract people to them. In addition there is the pull of the project's focus: ending racism and sexism. The cause is a topical one which many of the young people and workers who constitute your target group want to discuss and learn more about.

E.R.A.S.E.'s most significant weakness lies in its lack of consolidation and forward planning. The project is expanding rapidly and so facing all the problems associated with growth and increasing demands from outside. It has become reactive, taking things on with little space to assess, follow-up or plan. It rarely feels able to turn down requests.

With this problem resolved others would become easier to concentrate on. The project needs to become more aware of educational processes and of the impact its workshops have on people in the long term. Your aims in this respect are unclear. The recently proposed draft of the constitution talks of 'People learning by and through their own experiences,' but also outlines an ideology to be communicated: 'To make people aware that no such a thing as *race* exists - only as a strategy to divide people' (Objective 2.3). The difficulties and contradictions implicit in this tension between open-ended learning and the communication of a specific analysis manifest themselves in workshops.

In addition the project aims to provoke people to action through awareness raising but has not recognized the importance of skills training in bridging this gap. Here I refer to group skills, communication, conflict resolution,

negotiation and training skills all of which are needed if racism and sexism are to be confronted sensitively and constructively.

There has, within the project over the past four months, been considerable discussion on the topic of what kind of organization E.R.A.S.E. actually is. Talk has been of movements, committees, democracy, membership and accountability. At the recent January Steering Committee meeting you decided that the project should think of itself as a service organization and re-name itself 'End Racism and Sexism through Education' (as opposed to the previous in). While these decisions have clarified a direction along which to think, they have also raised a number of concerns.

'Through' tells us that this is now a project interested in the educational process while the 'End Racism and Sexism' still points to a campaign with a political goal. Hence we have a project which uses education as its strategy for mobilizing people around particular issues.

This points to a central question: Where does the project leave people in terms of awareness and their ability to change their lives around issues of racism and sexism?

I would suggest that a single workshop as is characteristic of the exposure most get to the project teaches something about how racism and sexism manifests itself in daily life. It may also make people want to be less racist and sexist themselves and to oppose such behaviour and attitudes in others. But they will not in this workshop have started to acquire any of the skills needed to do this. They will also not have had the opportunity to assimilate E.R.A.S.E.'s analysis of the underlying causes of racism and sexism nor to formulate and articulate their own theory.

E.R.A.S.E. needs to decide on its priorities for workshops and, more generally, on the kind of impact it would like to

have in the future. It needs to reach greater clarity of its educational and political motives and of how these can best inter-relate and support one another. This should help you to assess the objectives listed in the suggested 'Guidelines for a Constitution' to be discussed by you in March.

The next task is to ensure that these objectives are realized or that your work is achieving what it sets out to achieve. In this respect I have selected several areas of concern and listed them as agenda items with some leading questions for you to discuss. I shall proceed from the notion of E.R.A.S.E. as a service organization which offers particular publications and programmes.

Membership

This problem has run parallel with the confusion over what kind of organization E.R.A.S.E. would like to be. Membership implies some kind of communal ownership and control over the project. The project in turn can claim to represent the views of a body of people. Political and campaigning groups have members. The definition of what constitutes a member has been discussed within E.R.A.S.E. over the past few months. But: Why does E.R.A.S.E. want members? What are they to do for the project and what is the project to do for them? The idea of a broad, voting membership can only create a false democracy when the constituency is forever changing. Why can people within the project not simply be termed staff, volunteers or committee members? Why, in short, has membership been such an issue?

Accountability

How do you ensure accountability through the project's structures? Is there any formalized system of reviewing staff and work? What should the Steering Committee be representative of both educationally and politically? What compromises have to be made with finding appropriate and committed representatives?

Accessibility

This relates to the concern about whether E.R.A.S.E. works nationally or confines itself to the Western Cape. It has already worked in Kimberley, Upington, Pietermaritzberg and Johannesburg as well as locally. How far is the network to spread? Should you take on more nationally, keep supporting only the groups you have previously worked with or endeavour to confine your work more strictly to the Western Cape? What do your resources allow for? This is a time for hard choices. Accessibility has to be planned as does inaccessibility. To give some people a better service others need to be excluded. This problem also needs to be considered in terms of what types of groups you plan to work with, as is raised in the next item on workshops.

Workshops

In addition to the issue of workshop intention, which this letter has already focussed on, are the questions of planning, attendance and follow-up work. When is it appropriate to work directly with students and workers and when is it more effective to work with their teachers or union leaders? How would these sessions differ in form and content? Do questions about aims and functions of workshops raise further questions about what methodology you employ? What is the impact of a session with twenty people as opposed to four hundred? How far is it practically possible to plan ahead? Under what circumstances can you refuse an invitation? How can you best involve host organizations and participants in the planning? Is follow-up work always necessary? What other organizations can groups be referred to and how do you finally break free from a group?

Voluntary Workers

The problem of the amount of support volunteers are entitled to and need as against the amount of assistance they actually are can be a difficult one. How do volunteers function within the project at the moment? What is their

role in workshops? How much do they actually contribute? What do they get in return? Should E.R.A.S.E. take on anyone who shows an interest or be more selective? To what extent should volunteers be channelled into specific programmes and tasks and to what extent can the project allow for new initiatives?

Campaigns

These tend to involve intensive, high-profile work. Because their demands are so immediate they tend to dominate the more long-term work for their duration. Does E.R.A.S.E. mean to run specific campaigns? What do you hope to get out of these? How effective can they be without follow-up or other types of work? Whose responsibility will they be? How will this effect the overall programme? If they are so resource demanding, why run them?

ERASER

ERASER claims to be a 'Teenage Magazine against racism and sexism'. To what extent is it attempting to reflect and support the project's work and to what extent is it an independent resource? Is it essentially an educational tool encouraging informed debate or a propaganda vehicle furthering a particular point of view? Whose views are expressed? Who has the final say over what is included and excluded? (These questions also apply to poster production.)

The Newsletter

What is the function of the proposed newsletter? Is it to inform people of what E.R.A.S.E. is doing? If so, to what intent? Is it to keep people informed about who, beyone just E.R.A.S.E., is doing what and about current events? If so, who is to be on the mailing list? Is it to encourage discussion on issues of racism and sexism? If so, how is it going to set about this?

Resources

The type and quantity of material collected must depend on whom this collection is aiming to serve. Is it for project workers in need of stimulating ideas for its outreach work, for students and others wanting information or outside for teachers and trainers wanting material on methodology? Who has priority? What do other resource collections in Cape Town have to offer? To what extent do you need to duplicate? As your budget and staffing is limited how practical is it to advertise this collection broadly? How accessible are your materials to the project workers themselves?

IN CONCLUSION

- It is important to know what you cannot do so that you can focus on what you can.
- Consider how your resources limit you in terms of budget and numbers and skills of people.
- Undercommit yourselves for a certain period so that you can plan ahead.
- And finally: What's in a name? You have changed the preposition from 'in' to 'through': End Racism and Sexism <u>through</u> Education. Is it finally possible for education on its own to achieve all this? I would suggest not. But education can contribute to the process. Perhaps E.R.A.S.E. should see itself as a contributor rather than as a project which can transform society on its own.

With Best Wishes

RV

CHAPTER SIX

FROM THE PARTICULAR TO THE GENERAL

This chapter is written as an overview of the case study, reflecting on the issues raised and which I, as case-study worker, could and could not resolve. These are divided into two areas of concern: firstly that of the method and process of the study itself and secondly that of the actual case, or the relationship between education and political action.

CASE STUDY METHOD

Chapter One outlines the contract set up between myself and the E.R.A.S.E. committee and my role as participant-observer (also see Appendix A). It explains why the committee was given some control over the editing process, how the focus of the study developed and how, finally, the committee was to be given the opportunity to respond to the study as a group with a future to plan.

Participant-observation was perceived by both the committee and myself as the most acceptable way of getting to know the project.

> An evaluation probably will not be useful if the evaluator does not know the interests and language of his audiences. During an evaluation study, a substantial amount of time may be spent learning about the information needs of the persons for whom the evaluation is being done. The evaluator should have a good sense of whom he is working for and their concerns.(1)

Working intensely within the project for a month (and less so for the following three) provided the opportunity to observe informally, to be integrated into the daily routine and to gain a sense of the prevailing ideology. It did, in fact, help to define the focus of the case. This involvement also meant that observations could be made known and responded to at the appropriate moment, so both increasing their impact and providing a forum to check their validity.

However, participant-observation also created problems, the major one being the question of how to maintain an overview which was not limited by identifying too closely with those concerns which were urgent to the project at a particular moment.

> Changes in policy, fashionable concern over particular issues, organisational structure of the patterns of the culture can cause the focus of the research to move or be displaced.(2)

While such shifts may serve the immediate needs of the project there was the danger that they would sidetrack the more far-reaching issues. The perspective which is the advantage of having an outsider study a project could have been lost. So, for example, the debate over how best to organize membership and representation threatened to take over from the more fundamental questions of whether such concepts were appropriate to this particular project in the first place. By becoming absorbed as a participant the problem of providing more general, long-term insights increased. It was important to remain conscious of this difficulty throughout my involvement with the project.

The prime motive of the study, 'to be of use to the E.R.A.S.E. committee',(3) did nevertheless guide the method of research and the final presentation. The committee

wanted help with understanding what the project was doing in its outreach work and with identifying possibilities for future development. No one specific problem had been named, but there was rather a sense of too much work and too little direction. The case, as it came to be defined in terms of the interaction between learning and action and how they may co-exist within a single project, was a response to the committee's need to find a framework within which to consider its work.

However, this framework raised interesting questions at the editing stage: The committee met with myself to discuss the content of Chapter Three ('What is E.R.A.S.E.?'). We were faced with the problem put so succinctly by Cronbach:

> Commissioners of evaluations complain that the messages from evaluations are not useful, while evaluators complain that the messages are not used.(4)

Education, members of the committee explained, could not be separated from politics and this, so it seemed to them, was what I was attempting to do. They felt that I was criticizing the project for its political thrust and had not grasped the concept of 'campaigning' which I had introduced (admittedly a British aid-agency import).

We therefore entered into a phase of negotiation which was largely focussed on the terminology used to describe certain phenomena. By using commonly understood concepts and through more careful definition on my part a clearer picture of the issues at stake emerged.

> It is in negotiation with 'insiders' that social researchers learn 'to speak the truth', by feeding back to them their public translations of private knowledge. Methodology expresses an ethical relationship between 'outsider' and 'insider', and not the application of a battery of 'objective' techniques.(5)

The editing process thus helped to avoid the problem of uselessness described by Cronbach. It also meant that committee members read the script closely and had to enter into discussion on what they found inaccurate or confusing. This, they agreed, was a learning experience in itself.

Yet the question of what the committee finally does with this case-study remains. MacDonald points to how people accept or reject conclusions 'according to the degree of respect they feel towards those who make them, or the degree to which the conclusions coincide with their beliefs and self-interest.'(6) It is hoped, but not guaranteed, that having negotiated and agreed upon an interpretation of the case the committee will be in a position to relate to the conclusions, or areas of concern, which the study has isolated in an undefensive and thinking manner.

The 'Letter to the E.R.A.S.E. Committee' (Chapter Five) aims at guiding this process. Stake describes the evaluator as someone who 'chooses media accessible to his audiences to increase the likelihood and fidelity of communication.'(7) This letter, with its emphasis on issues to provoke discussion, hopes to provide such access. What the committee does with it is crucial in assessing the impact of this study. A day has therefore been set aside for the committee to meet and work through the issues and questions it raises. I, as the author, have been asked to introduce this discussion.

The main task here will be to assist the committee in ordering the central concerns so that decisions then taken may reflect the priorities of the project. One question may thus be answered by a previous decision. However, it may also throw that decision back into question, so highlighting the implications of certain previously agreed upon policies

and serving as a check. By working in this way it is intended that the committee will not only direct the project's work more consciously but will also have a clear, articulated knowledge of why it has selected that direction.

The focus therefore is not to be on assessing whether or not certain goals have been reached but rather on understanding what these may be, how they can be worked towards and what may reasonably be expected. Unlike the market researcher who is concerned with assessing the marketing of an unquestionably good product, the idea here is to study how the work of the project, or the product itself can be improved upon. Critical, introspective thinking is being called for so that the project can clarify its own priorities and direction.

THE CASE ITSELF: EDUCATION AND POLITICAL ACTION

This study, in addition to helping E.R.A.S.E. to think about itself, aims at exploring the limits and possibilities of certain trends in alternative educational projects. These trends are encapsulated in the six Freireian principles which are frequently subscribed to by such projects and which are discussed in Chapter Two.

Paulo Freire does not resolve the tension between consciousness raising, or learning, and his preconceived sense of the ideology a raised consciousness would hold. Any consciousness which has not come to his view of democratic socialism is 'submerged', 'naïve' or 'false'.(8) He also assumes a natural and continuous movement between action and reflection, saying that the one nurtures and sustains the other. '... reflection - true reflection - leads to action.'

E.R.A.S.E., with its comparable approach to educational practice, clearly demonstrates the problems inherent in this approach: it wants to help people to think but it wants them to think in a particular way. Consequently it tells them what to think. The manner of doing this is subtle in that it calls on participation and the sharing of experience so that people are apparently thinking for themselves. In practice these contributions are interpreted for them in terms of a particular ideology. Participant involvement is used to prove a particular point. (For a more detailed discussion of this process see Chapter Four.)

Alternative education is frequently so engrossed in exposing the indoctrination inherent in traditional education that it fails to recognize comparable problems in its own practice. The methodology may differ in that one is monological and the other is experiential but the outcome, in terms of teaching a set of beliefs and values, is much the same.

The assumption that knowledge will lead to action is also problematic. People may learn to recognize oppression or prejudice but still lack the ability to act on this knowledge. What the radical pedagogy under discussion has failed to recognize is the importance of skills training in bridging this gap. How to work within groups, to negotiate and manage conflict, to be assertive and articulate in the face of opposition, are all skills which can be developed. However, neither Freire nor E.R.A.S.E. nor a number of other projects wishing to initiate action through education have concerned themselves with the question of how this translation takes place or of their ability and capacity to take responsibility for this complex process of skills training.

E.R.A.S.E. has also enacted the problems inherent in being perceived as both an activist and an educational

organization. On the one hand it has aimed to mobilize people and spearhead a movement and on the other it has wanted to practice a critical pedagogy. It has thus been caught between its desire to act on the mandate of a broad membership and on its need to follow a professionally guided programme to which users may subscribe if they so wish. This conflict between being a populist movement and an independent voice is a source of structural difficulties for many such projects. The tension is between the frequently stated ideals of democracy and accountability and the practical need for decision makers to be informed and efficient.

In its recent reaffirmation of the Steering Committee and the continued inclusion of nominated individuals with specific skills, E.R.A.S.E. has taken a step towards the side of a professional service-orientated organization. It has recognized the validity of self-governing groupings and of a critical voice to challenge the general trend if and when necessary. Yet it still aims at motivating people to act against racism and sexism and so has not abandoned its core goal. Critical pedagogy aims at developing thinking, autonomous individuals and so can stimulate and inform action but cannot dictate it. An educational project may therefore provoke certain actions but cannot call on people to commit themselves to them.

IN CONCLUSION

E.R.A.S.E., in defining its work, is realizing that 'having direction' is not necessarily 'directing people'. Educational programmes have goals and therefore direction but cannot, by definition, **tell** people what to think and do or **be told** themselves by broad constituencies which have limited knowledge of these programmes and no responsibility

to them. It is now, when it meets to work through the 'Letter to E.R.A.S.E.' (Chapter Five) and to discuss a new constitution, at the point of articulating what these goals are to be.

Projects have been accused of this syndrome:

> 'Would you tell me please, which way I ought to go from here?'
> 'That depends a good deal on where you want to get to,' said the cat.
> 'I don't much care where -,' said Alice.
> 'Then it doesn't matter which way you go,' said the cat ...
>
> (Lewis Carroll, Alice in Wonderland)

E.R.A.S.E., however, has never not cared. Its eagerness to be helped was indeed one of the things which drew me to the project. But my response to Alice's initial question, like the cat's response, cannot be to provide an answer. It must rather be to identify and raise the appropriate questions. These are aimed at helping the project committee (or Alice in the cat's case) articulate for itself where it wants to get to at this stage of its development.

The role of this case-study has been to contribute to a process of discovery. It has done this through observing a project and placing the issues these observations raise within a framework which describes a central problem. May the journey continue. After all:

> **An evaluation of a particular program is only an episode in the continuing evolution of thought about a problem area.**(10)

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(4) C.J. Cronbach and Associates, Toward Reform of Program Evaluation, Jossey-Bass, San Francisco, 1985, p.3, (Thesis 9)

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APPENDIX A

Proposal of Commitment to E.R.A.S.E.

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July 1989

Proposal of Commitment to E.R.A.S.E.

This case study on E.R.A.S.E. is being carried out to fulfil two sets of needs: Firstly the E.R.A.S.E. committee has specified its expectations from such a study in terms of helping itself to critique and develop its work while also introducing it to some new ideas and resources. Secondly it is to be submitted as part of an M.Phil. degree and so will have to meet specific academic requirements. As a 'mini-dissertation' the final report will have to be read and made available beyond the confines of the project itself.

While any study of any project needs to define its limits and possibilities at the outset, it is especially important that a clear understanding between the case study worker and those involved with the project is reached before a more public piece of work is initiated. The function of the case study, the role of those participating in it and questions of confidentiality and to whom the case study worker is accountable all need to be addressed here.

(a) The function of this case study:

The chief aim, of this particular study is that it is of use to the E.R.A.S.E. committee. It intends to look at aspects of its work so that it can help it to understand what it is actually doing and what further possibilities exist. Through its close interest it aims to support people on the project by giving them some additional tools with which to think about their work.

The Committee is asking not only for current practice to be evaluated but also for exposure to new possibilities so that current limitations and future options can be wisely assessed. Its questions to the researcher are focussed on their workshops, seminars and the resources the project uses:

1. What is E.R.A.S.E. wanting to do and what is it actually doing?

2. What is and is not working effectively in relation to preparation, follow-up and the sessions themselves?

3. How can E.R.A.S.E.'s work develop in these respects?

4. What particular issues would be most appropriate for the seminars to focus on?

While these questions focus on E.R.A.S.E.'s outreach or field-work and while the case study will do the same, it is clear that a number of internal structural and organisational concerns will arise as developments and constraints are considered. Issues relating to the role, composition and funding of the committee and its work will be relevant to the case study worker when looking at the actual work of the project and making recommendations. So, for example, recommendations to develop a new resource are impractical unless there are people to do this and money to pay for it. Current systems for dissemination of resources would also need to be understood. Involving teachers' unions in text-book campaigns could carry questions of forms of membership and affiliation. However, if E.R.A.S.E. does not want to give particular information or include the case study worker in particular meetings she cannot insist on co-operation.

(b) The Role of the Case Study Worker

The case study worker is to be both a participant and an observer of the project over the next six months (August 1989 to January 1990). She is to spend the first month working closely with the active members of the committee so as to get to know them and their work and so as to give them the opportunity to do likewise. This involvement could include day-to-day office work such as sorting out resources as well as attending any workshops or meetings.

Having become acquainted with some aspects of E.R.A.S.E.'s work it will be necessary for the case study worker to share some of her observations and to provide project workers with further ideas and resources. Her role here will be more facilitator than observer as she will need to devise and run, say, three workshops where concerns, interests and new possibilities can be raised. These should concentrate initially on outreach practice and resources but could turn to analysing E.R.A.S.E.'s structure and potential organisational changes in due course.

Throughout this period there should be a range of discussions and interviews with committee members as well as with project users. These will be set up by the researcher and participation will be voluntary.

Finally the researcher will be responsible for producing a full report which is to be made available to all those who wish to see it.

(c) The Role of the Project Workers and Users

While participation in this case study is voluntary, it is hoped that those involved in the project will take an active interest in the research being done. This contribution will necessarily take some time : the researcher will need to have aspects of the project explained, there will be interviews, discussions, feed-back sessions and workshops. Participants in these may also need to spend some time assimilating, adapting and experimenting with some new ideas and resources.

The draft report or 'mini-dissertation' will also need to be read and the committee will be asked to participate in editorial decisions before a final version is submitted to the University of Cape Town.

(d) Confidentiality and Accountability

Although it was the case study worker who initiated the idea of doing a case study on E.R.A.S.E. she perceives herself as being responsive to the interests and concerns of the committee as the main stakeholders in the study. The case study aims to be of assistance to the project and therefore needs to be accountable to it. Project users and other outsiders contributing to the study are entitled to an accurate account of the project's work and this will be carried out as far as is possible. However, it is the positive development of the project itself to which this case study is committed and it is, therefore, the committee to which it is finally answerable.

All interviews will be conducted on the principle of confidentiality. None of the material collected will be used without the consent of the interviewee. No names of individuals will be used. Outside institutions and

organisations (other than E.R.A.S.E. itself) will remain anonymous unless they specifically ask to be named.

The case study worker will be committed to discussing her conclusions and recommendations fully and openly with the committee. These should not be perceived as judgements but rather as stimuli for further discussion and decision-making where the committee feels necessary.

The final report for submission to UCT will then be carefully negotiated with the committee as it is E.R.A.S.E. which will have to live with the consequences of this study in the long term. The committee will have the right to recommend to the case study worker that information which is sensitive or might unnecessarily affect the public image of the project be excluded from the final report.

Above all it is hoped that there will be continuous and open communication between all those involved throughout this study so that issues are dealt with as they arise and so that everyone can learn positively from the experience.

- - - - - - - - - - -

Ruth Verfeld

APPENDIX B

Funding Proposal and Constitution
for the Committee Against Racism in Education : 1986

FUNDING PROPOSAL FOR COMMITTEE AGAINST RACISM IN EDUCATION (CARE)

1. Introduction

Racism and prejudice are very much part of the South African way of life.

To counter these evils and eventually eradicate them from the daily lives of every South African is going to take a long, conscious and determined struggle. And to conduct such a struggle in an affective and meaningful way will need resources and understanding at every level of the community's experience. But most important, in the process of struggling against racism and prejudice and all the anti-social values that they generate, it would be necessary to look at creating an alternative way of life. Our Committee, we hope, is a small attempt at contributing towards the creation of such an alternative.

2. Objectives

Our aim is to use every possible means to counter the unhealthy effects of racism and prejudice found in the community from pre-school level to life beyond the school.

Racism and racialism have penetrated every fabric of South Africa's way of life and if anything effective is to be done, the effort will have to reach the community beyond just its educational institutions. And mainly because so little attention is given to negate its evil effects, it is hoped that the initiative our Committee has taken will be the start of an on-going and growing movement.

It would also be important to give some idea of the possible alternatives that there are to a racist society and to show how racism is constantly being fought in other countries such as England and America.

Our aims could be broken down to broadly cover the following:

2.1 To develop, collect and make resources that could be used at pre-school and school level, as well as in the community at large to counter the racism to be found in books, songs, poems and reading material generally found in libraries. These could take the form of fact sheets, scientific papers, video cassettes, films, posters, etc.

2.2 To look at all forms of media where racism manifests itself and to bring this to the attention of the community.

2.3 To look at the songs people sing, the books they read, be it for educational purposes or for purposes of entertainment, game people play, the toys children play with and are encouraged to buy, the TV programmes that are shown, the newspapers people read - in all to look at and criticise every possible medium that is used to shape the lives of people, both young and old.

2.4 To work out a programme of action with teachers, students and parents and other organisations that could mobilise the broader community into counteracting and negating the racism and prejudice they experience in their daily lives and to initiate a programme that would bring into existence an alternative set of values to replace them.

This could include the collecting and writing of alternative, non-racist reading material of songs,collecting and the making of alternative toys, developing games that could encourage an alternative to the highly competitive games children play, conduct workshops, seminars and meetings to work out ways and means of achieving our aims.

2.5 To give publicity to our programme through organising plays, puppet shows and the making and displaying of relevant posters.

These we intend distributing to and displaying at creches, day centres, schools, at play grounds, libraries and wherever we think useful.

2.6 To publish a regular newsletter to give coverage to the work the committee does as well as to publish articles on Racism generally and give some idea of the work done around this problem in other countries such as Britain and America.

2.7 Most important, to help set up committees in as many places and institutions as possible and eventually work towards some on-going co-ordinated campaign around the problem.

3. Structure

At this moment the committee is composed of a group of individuals. They do not as yet constitute an organisation neither

are there any organisations represented on the committee. The aim, however, is that the committee should eventually be composed of representatives of organisations - parent, student and teacher organisations as well as unions and interested individuals.

Nothing, however, is final about how the organisation will be eventually structured except that it will strive to be as democratic and non-sectarian as possible.

4. A Brief History of the Activities of the Committee since 1983

The committee was initiated mid-1983 and organised its first event, a seminar, in September 1983.

Since then the committee has organised various activities. The most prominent was a two-week Focus on Racism held from the 7th to the 19th May 1984. The main idea of the two-week focus was to get as many institutions involved in looking at the various ways in which racism manifests itself in school books, library books, songs, toys, games and through the media generally. This culminated in a Saamtrek (get together) on the 19th May 1984 at a central venue. The report on this Saamtrek is attached.

We are also attaching other reports, posters, a copy of a newspaper report and notices of some of our activities. These are to give you an idea of what we have done thus far. You will notice that attention is being given to all levels of education - from pre-school to matric. level.

In this context we would like to make the point that generally teachers and senior students know enough about what is wrong in prescribed and available reading and educational material and that what is needed is to create the necessary structures to enable people to start taking action about these wrongs at every possible level and in every possible form.- petitioning the various educational departments about the adequacy of prescribed material, submitting memoranda to publishers about the need to be more selective about the material they publish, especially that intended for children, organising focus weeks and various other activities that would get people more actively involved in a campaign such as ours.

We have collected a fair amount of resources on racism and sexism and have established contact with organisations and individuals in countries such as England and America who are working on the same problem.

As a start to setting up a resource centre, we have acquired the use of a

room where the Inter-Church Centre is situated at 247 Lower Main Road, Observatory. We are busy equipping it to store our resources and to serve as an office.

5. The Budget

5.1 Introduction

Since 1983 when CARE started its activities, all the finances needed to conduct these activities have come from the members themselves and from funds raised by them through fund-raising efforts such as curry and rice evenings. But these funds were never enough to sustain the organisation for too long. And because the demand for funds and resources has become too much for a small group of people to meet, outside assistance inevitably had to be sought.

5.2 The amount we are requesting is to cover the costs of at least one year's activities. At this moment in time we foresee a situation whereby we would probably be needing some form of outside assistance for the next three years after which, hopefully, we will be able to generate sufficient funds from within our own ranks to be able to function without outside assistance.

Our budget would basically have to cover the costs of a part-time or full-time organiser/administrator; the purchasing and making of resources; and the administration of our resource centre/office.

The majority of the people serving on the committee are fairly committed to the work of other structures as well as having to earn a living. The work of the committee has become so important, however, that it has become necessary to employ somebody on a full-time basis to do this work. More and more people, organisations and institutions are making demands on the resources we have built up. Also organisations and institutions from various parts of the country are beginning to call on us for assistance to run workshops as well as for resources.

Our proposed budget then would be as follows:

Salary for one full time or part time organiser/ administrator at R500 per month	R6 000,00
Rent at R40 per month	480,00
Travelling costs at R100 per month	1 200,00
Expenses for Resources	3 000,00
Administration costs of R100 per month	1 200,00
Newsletter	1 120,00
Workshops - at least one per month at R100 per workshop	1 200,00
Equipment - a tape recorder and tape	1 800,00
	R16 000,00

General Remarks

Please note that the name of the Committee was changed. Initially, it was known as the Committee on Racism in Textbooks but subsequently changed to CARE.

_____

(Convener)

Cape Town
February 1986

Telephone Numbers

021/ (Home)
021/ (Office)
021/ (Office)

THE CONSTITUTION

1. NAME

The name of the Committee shall be the Committee Against Racism in Education hereinafter referred to as CARE.

2. AIMS

2.1 To counter the unhealthy affects racism and prejudice found in all forms of media especially in educational material from pre-school to matric material.

2.2 To develop, collect and make resources to help individuals, organisations and institutions to effectively implement 2.1.

2.3 To do research about how and where racism and prejudice manifest themselves.

2.4 To work out a programme of action to counter the ill affects of racism on our educational institutions.

2.5 To assist in the creation and collection of alternative non-racist, non-sexist educational and recreational material.

2.6 To bring out a regular newsletter to propagate the activities and findings of CARE.

2.7 To set up Committees similar to ours wherever possible.

2.8 To strive to eliminate all forms of racism and racialism prevelant in the community.

3. MEMBERSHIP

Membership shall be open to any individual, organisation or institution which subscribes to the aims of CARE.

4. THE EXECUTIVE

4.1 An executive committee composed of elected officials shall be responsible for the day to day running of the organisation.

These officials shall be elected by the individuals and representatives of organisations and institutions participating in the activities of CARE.

4.2 Nominations and elections of this executive shall be from the ranks of all those regularly participating in the activities of CARE.

4.3 Meetings shall be held as regularly as found necessary but shall take place at least once per month.

4.4 A quorum shall be 50% of the elected executive members.

4.5 The executive committee shall be composed of a

Chairperson

Secretary

Treasurer

Organiser/Administrator, and

Two extra members.

4.6 The organiser/administrator shall be a full-time worker in the organisation and an ex-officio member of the executive with no voting rights.

4.7 The elections of officials and the executive shall be held once a year at a general meeting of CARE.

5. THE ORGANISER/ADMINISTRATOR

5.1 The organiser/administrator shall be appointed by the executive.

5.2 The organiser/administrator shall be responsible to the executive committee for his/her activities.

5.3 The job description of the organiser/administrator shall be worked out by the general body of CARE.

6. The establishment of branches of CARE shall be the responsibility of the organiser.

7. FINANCES

7.1 The finances of CARE shall be the responsibility of the treasurer who shall submit regular financial reports to the executive and the general body.

7.2 Funds shall be raised through the South African Committee for Higher Education (SACHED). The director of SACHED, has agreed to do this and has also agreed that SACHED shall act as trustees until such time that CARE has set up its own trust.

8. AMENDMENTS

Amendments to the Constitution shall be through two thirds majority of the individuals and representatives of organisations and institutions actively involved in the activities of CARE.

APPENDIX C

Funding Proposal and Report for the Committee Against Racism in Education : 1988

C.A.R.E. PROPOSAL

INTRODUCTION

1. The project was initiated in 1983. During its existence, the project has faced many difficulties. Those difficulties ranged from not having resources in the beginning to state repression during the last period.

From 1983 to mid 1985 the committee was involved in activities at pre-schools, high schools, teachers unions, universities and amongst youth groups. It ran workshops, seminars, meetings and produced a wide range of media. Most of the work during that time was done on a voluntary basis or with the assistance of an organisation like SACHED (South African Committee on Higher Education).

In 1986 and 1987 the project received funds (R18 000.00) from TROCAIRE, an agency in Ireland. The committee had difficulties in finding a suitable person to co-ordinate the project. Thus its time was spent on restructuring itself and producing and collecting resources. Although we had received funds, none of the money was spent during that period.

In May this year a person to co-ordinate the project was found. The report covering the period May to September 1988 is enclosed in the proposal.

2. WHY THE NEED FOR THE PROJECT

The South African State has been built on an ideology that divides people in "race" groups on the basis of their skin colours, their backgrounds and the language that they speak. This ideology of apartheid has been institutionalised and over many decades has become entrenched in the very lives of the people of our country.

The vast majority of people in South Africa identify themselves as "Coloureds", "Indians", "Africans" and "Whites". Not only do people see themselves in these terms, they also believe that they are either superior to others or that they are inferior. "Racism" , "racial prejudices" and racial stereotypes are found in the textbooks, media, cultural, sports and every other medium that exists to further entrench the State's ideology.

The project has decided in its area of work to include sexism. Black women in South Africa are the worst off sector of the population. Not only are they discriminated against because they are black but also because they are women. They are the "illegal" migrants, they are forced to become slaves in the backyards of the affluent while their children starve to death in the homelands - they are the worst paid workers. Today black women still earn R100.00 per month. The need for the project is real since no project exists that focuses its work specifically on an awareness programme around the two social evils viz racism

and sexism.

AIMS

* To actively combat racism and sexism where it exists.
* To make people aware that no such a thing as "race" exists - only as a strategy to divide people.
* To identify racism and sexism in media, textbooks, audio visual material and to highlight it.
* To assist the community in overcoming their own racism and sexism.
* To produce "counter-media" that informs people about the context of magazines.
* To produce resources for students, youth and teachers that are non-racist and non-sexist.
* To disseminate information and materials in both the rural and urban areas.
* To build structures that can fight against racism and sexism in schools, pre-schools, trade unions etc.

PROGRAMME FOR 1989:

WORKSHOPS

* To run workshops in schools, with youth groups and other community organisations on a weekly basis.
* To train volunteers to assist in running workshops.

SEMINARS

* To organise and host two major seminars focusing on Racism and Sexism in Education.

MEDIA

* To produce 5 posters highlighting racism and sexism.
* To set up an editorial committee to produce a bi-monthly magazine for youth around the Racism and Sexism.
* To produce a quarterly newsletter of the project.
* To produce stickers, badges and other popular media to make people aware.

RESOURCES AND RESEARCH

* To do ongoing research around education and its content.
* To produce material that can be used in schools, pre-schools etc that is non-racism and non-sexist.
* To review books for childrens' textbooks and highlight the content.
* To review films and other media.

BUDGET FOR 1989

RESOURCES				
Subscriptions				2.000.00
Producing and Photocopying				4.000.00
Workshops				
12 major ones				2.000.00
2 national seminars				10.000.00
Transport				
R200.00 per month				2.400.00
1 airfare to Johannesburg				500.00
1. Salary for full-time co-ordinator R900 x 12				10.800.00
2. Salary for 1/2 time researcher R500 x 12				6.000.00
3. Free-lance = artist R 4000				4.000.00
4. Rental for office space R500 x 12				6.000.00
5. Telephone 100 x 12				1.200.00
6. Electricity 40 x 12				480.00
MEDIA				
4 quarterly newsletters	(3000)	=		12.000.00
6 teenage magazines	(3000)	=		12.000.00
5 posters		=		4.000.00
Booklets		=		10.000.00
TOTAL AMOUNT		=	R	87 380,00

REPORT ON C.A.R.E.'S ACTIVITIES MAY/SEPTEMBER 1988

A meeting was called at the beginning of May 1988 for the Committee Against Racism in Education (C.A.R.E.) to restructure itself as funds had been made available for the employment of a full time worker and the setting up of an office.

The committee consisting of a few individuals involved in various aspects of education, then felt that it was essential for us to address Racism's twin, sexism, as well and we thus renamed ourselves the Committee Against Racism and Sexism in Education.

As a first priority we felt that it was very necessary for us to bring out a brochure informing organisations and structures what our committee was all about and what we sought to do. As a practical way of breaking down racism we decided to bring it out in three languages v.i.z. English, Afrikaans and Xhosa.

As another way of becoming more widely known amongst people we set up a stall at the International Childrens' Day Festival where we handed out our brochure and sold stickers and badges which we had printed to popularise our committee. A highlight amongst the children were the balloons which we sold with slogans written on them like " Robert says, "All children are equal!", "Thandi says," Girls and boys all should help with housework!" etc.

The Committee had an initial workshop in which we looked at the most effective ways of taking up racism and sexism in the community. We identified youth and workers as the two major focuses in the community and the specific targets for the various projects we intended running.

We ran numerous workshops with various youth groups in which we sought to use various creative ways in which to take up these two issues. Sketches was one very effective way in which we could highlight racial and sexual stereotyping by depicting very real life situations which youth in particular could identify with very easily.

Just to draw on an example from one of our workshops in a township, Bishop Lavis, with 12 - 15 year olds we put on 3 sketches in which we: 1. depicted subject choice where a particular boy wanted to do Home Economics and it was looked at as unnatural and various attitudes expressed by various school mates. 2. depicted a domestic situation in which a mother comes home tired from work and has to do all the housework when she has two unemployed sons at home who see that as womens' work 3. depicted a SRC (Student Representative Council) meeting in the middle of a political crisis and how a woman student tries to raise the issue of being sexually abused by a teacher (which is very rampant in black schools) and how this is looked upon by her peer students as being irrelevant etc.

After the sketches we find that youth readily respond to

questions etc as it is so easy for them to relate to these situations. By and large girls do not participate as readily in discussions as boys as socialization teaches them to be passive etc and not be full, equal participants of society.

Another creative way in which we addressed Sexism specifically at a church youth programme in another township with youth aged roughly 16 - 26 was to highlight sexual stereotyping by introducing ourselves as beings from outer space and getting the audience to describe human beings and specifically women and men.

This was a very good way of breaking the ice and getting the audience to be active participants of the programme. Later we split the group of 60 young people into 4 groups in which each group received a letter which they had to answer dealing with problems arising out of sexual stereotyping. At the end of the programme when the various groups reported back on their discussion they raised many of the issues which we hoped to highlight.

Out of various workshops done with youth it became apparent that music was a major way in which the ideas and values of young people were formed and we decided to run workshops in which we look at the current songs on the charts and rewrite the words in a more progressive way.

As we have identified youth in particular as being a very important target area to put forward the ideas of anti-racism and anti-sexism it became apparent from the workshops which we are running that in order for us to mobolise youth around these two principles that the methods employed would have to be of a very creative nature.

We decided that a teenage magazine in which we would take up issues such as music, romance, fashion, sport from an alternative position was a very worthwhile project to embark upon. Suggestions for the content of the magazine are:

1. Quizzes highlighting sexist and racist stereotyping.
2. Reports on sport activities at schools/community.
3. Interviews with young women and men on different issues which would highlight racism and sexism.
4. Personal column "Dear Ann" of letters from readers on their problems such as relationship problems, brothers coming home later than sisters, sharing of housework etc.
5. Picture love story with an alternative approach.
6. Music - songs that are sexist and how students through workshops we have run have changed the words.
7. What youth do with their spare time in Guguletu, Rylands, Bonteheuwel.
8. A focus on drugs and gangsterism.
9. Film reviews
10 Video reviews

We are aiming at bringing out our first copy by November 1988 and are setting up an editorial with some of the youth which we have

mobolised through the workshops.

On another level we have also been in touch with unions and were asked by NACTU in Stellenbosch to do a programme for National Womens' Day and will also be running a programme on Racism and Sexism for the NACTU Boland launch which will be taking place at the end of October. We have also been working with other unions to run workshops especially with women workers on issues such as equal work for equal pay, maternity rights, childcare and a host of other issues.

We have also been working with medical students and have set up a group at the university of Cape Town. As a concrete way of breaking down racism we have started running language classes and the medical students specifically will be participating in these. There is a lot of work that can and MUST be done around the issues of racism and sexism and the committee through field work is realising more and more just how much scope there is for us to work.

APPENDIX D

Student Questionnaire (In Afrikaans and English)

E R A S E

END RACISM AND SEXISM IN EDUCATION

15 DURHAM AVENUE, SALT RIVER, 7925

VRAELYS

Voltooi asseblief na die afloop van die werkswinkel met ERASE

1. Is jy geken in verband met die werkswinkel oor seksisme?
   Ja_____ Nee_____

2. As jou antwoord JA is, wanneer (a) voordat jy Kaapsatd toe gekom het._____
   (b) Eers nadat jy hiernatoe gekom het._____
   (Merk as jy geken is met die werkswinkel)

3. Het jy seksisme as 'n probleem in jou lewenswyse geidentifiseer voor die werkswinkel plaasgeind het? Ja_____
   Nee_____ (een)

4. In watter besondere aspek(te) het die werkswinkel jou gedagtes geprikkel?.

_____
_____
_____
_____
_____
_____
_____

5. Voel jy dat jy genoeg geleentheid gehad het om al jou gevoelens by die werkswinkel te uiter? Ja_____
   Nee_____. Verduidelik asseblief:_____

_____
_____
_____

6. As jy baie min aan die bespreking deel gehad het,vertel asseblief waarom.

_____
_____

_____

7. Dink jy dat ERASE werkers, jou denkwyse beinvloed het of slegs vir jou gehelp het om self te dink.
   (a) beinvloed_____
   (b) gehelp_____
   (c) beide beinvloed en gehelp
   (Merk slegs een)

8. Op watter praktiese wyse glo jy dat jy nou seksisme in jou eie lewenwyse bekamp beveg of tee werk?

E R A S E
END RACISM AND SEXISM IN EDUCATION
15 DURHAM AVENUE, SALT RIVER, 7925

---

9. Wat sou die eerste ding wees dat jy in die verband sal doen wanneer jy keer na Namaqualand/Uitenhage?

---

10. Watter aspek van die werkswinkel het jy die mees belonend gevind?_____Waarom?_____

Is jy manlik of vroulik? Manlik_____ Vroulik_____

BAIE DANKIE VIR JOU SAMEWERKING!

QUESTIONNAIRE. Please fill this in at the end of your workshop with ERASE

1. Were you consulted about having a workshop on sexism? Yes___or NO___
(Please tick the answer you agree with.)
2. If your answer was Yes, When? a) Before you came to Cape Town_____
or b) Once you were here_____ (Tick one)

3. Would you have identified sexism as a problem in your life before the workshop? Yes____ or No_____.(Tick one)

4. What in particular has this workshop helped you to think about?

_____

_____

_____

_____

_____

5. Do you feel you had enough of a chance to say what you wanted to say in this workshop? Yes____ or No___.Please explain: _____

_____

_____

6. If you were quiet or said very little during discussions, please tell us why.

_____

_____

7. Do you think the E.R.A.S.E. workers told you what to think or helped you to think for yourself? a) told me____
b) helped think for myself_____
c) a bit of both a) and b)_____ (Please tick one)

8. In what ways do you now think you can practically fight sexism in your life?_____

_____

_____

_____

_____

9. What will the first thing you do in this regard be when you return to Namaqualand?

_____

_____

10. What aspect of this workshop did you find most useful?_____
Why?_____

_____

WITH MANY THANKS.

P.S. Are you male or female? male or female (Please tick one).