WHY DO WE NEED POPULAR EDUCATION TODAY?

Peter Mayo,
University of Malta

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ADULT EDUCATION AND ADULT EDUCATION

• There is of course education and education, adult education and adult education, popular education and popular education

• Ideological underpinnings and values driving it are important

• Values driving mine are those of social justice and democracy

• Of dealing critically with life and not simply of adapting to what is present in life...the status quo

• Popular education based on non neutrality: on whose side are we on when educating? Big business and its corporate demands or genuine substantive democracy? To accommodate or transform the system?
Popular education is necessary because:

• of its potential for providing an alternative to the kind of technical rational fix that characterises much of what passes as formal education.

• Several parts of the world where people have had little access to formal education. Popular education has proved to be an alternative route.

• This alternative kind of education needs to be recognised.

• In the same way as UNESCO recognized non-formal education in past
Without romanticising it or any education for that matter...

• popular education has the potential to foreground knowledge, learning and wisdom traditions given lip service in the mainstream hegemonic education traditions.

• They have the potential to keep these traditions alive, preventing them from disappearing through *epistemicide*.
Knowledge and learning promoted through popular education...

• can help revitalise formal education itself.

• The work of popular educator Paulo Freire and its impact on the lives and praxis of teachers who teach against the grain for social justice testifies to this.

• Of course it has to be a popular education which tackles issues and encourages teaching-learning dynamics from the perspective of subaltern groups of people.

• Must have their emancipatory interests at heart. popular not populist.
Major challenges for popular education?

• Transforming popular spaces and events that capture the popular imagination into well-organised liberatory education experiences

• To allow its participants to read and write not only the word but also the world critically.

• Key in this age of fake news and the construction and establishment of false regimes of truth which render criticality a major casualty.

• Popular education for critical media literacy, as with Barbiana.
Popular not Populist

- Despite its clear ideological underpinnings certain knowledge needs to be learnt. Cracking power code.
- not to restrict people to the *margins* of political life.
- the political implications and ideological contingencies involved need to be explained.
- egs. teaching a colonial language such as English not as a purely technical activity but in a manner which highlights its imperial and social stratification functions.
- *One ought to be careful not to throw out the knowledge baby with the ideological bathwater.*
Should FHS play greater international role?

• It has been doing so for donkey’s years but: No cargo style transfer.

• FHS transformation into residential agricultural colleges in Tanzania during the time of Julius Nyerere's presidency.

• Highlander Folk High School (image right) in Tennessee USA for leadership preparation in the Civil Rights Movement.

• Popular university in certain parts of Spain

• Experiments are not to be transplanted but must be reinvented (Paulo Freire).

• Reinvented for a whole new way of life (Raymond Williams)
In this age of duplicity, ‘fake news’ and avoidance of the ongoing search for ‘truth’ (so-called post-truth):

• Critical literacy/conscientisation

• Capturing and making proper use of the ‘living word’ to free it from misuse that can render it a cliché, meaningless and the basis for platitudes and populist assertions.

• The ‘living word’ at its most genuine connects with people’s ad communities’ ‘structures of feeling’ (Raymond Williams), something deeply felt but not articulated by everyone.