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*Legacies*

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**Paulo Freire: Education for Development****Moacir Gadotti and Carlos Alberto Torres**

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Brazilian philosopher and pedagogue Paulo Reglus Neves Freire (1921–1997) came of age in the turbulent years of transition from authoritarian conservative government to authoritarian populist government in Latin America. This historical transition was interrupted in the 1970s by a series of dictatorships, resulting in a perverse cycle of authoritarianism and lack of democracy in the region (Torres, 2004). Freire was born into a middle-class family in Recife, capital of the Brazilian State of Pernambuco, on 19 September 1921. The experiences of his family during the Great Depression, which started in 1929, set the tone for his later concern for the poor, and influenced his perspective on education. Freire enrolled at Law School at the University of Recife in 1943, where he also studied philosophy and the psychology of language. Rather than a career in the law, however, he became a secondary school teacher of Portuguese. In 1944, he married Elza Maia Costa de Oliveira, a fellow teacher, with whom he had five children.

In 1946, Freire became Director of the Department of Education and Culture in the Brazilian State of Pernambuco. It was in this role, working primarily with the illiterate poor, that Freire began to develop a non-orthodox philosophy of education and literacy. His original work in the 1950s and early 1960s was deeply connected with the question of education for development, and particularly how to link education and citizenship building.<sup>1</sup> Here his work on literacy training was among his foremost contributions to educational science (Brown, 1978). In 1961, he became the first director of the Department of Cultural Extension of Recife University, and in the following

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The authors of this paper are founding Directors of the Paulo Freire Institute (PFI). The first Paulo Freire Institute in São Paulo, Brazil, was created in 1991 by Moacir Gadotti, Carlos Alberto Torres, José Eustaquio Romão, Francisco Gutierrez and Walter García, with the contributions of Paulo Freire as ‘patrono’ and signatory of the organizational charter of the Institute in São Paulo. In the following years, a number of other PFIs were established, including the Paulo Freire Institutes of Portugal, Spain, Italy, Argentina, India, South Africa, Taiwan and Korea (in formation), and PFI of the University of California at Los Angeles in the USA.

1. Though it would be fair to say that Freire was not interested in studying the connections between education and work, it is also fair to argue that his contribution to literacy training, from his work in CESI to his work in Chile, in the process of Agrarian Reform, had formidable implications for economic development.

year, was able to put his theories to the test: 300 sugarcane workers were taught to read and write in just forty-five days, using 'circles of culture', in which the students were encouraged to learn through dialogue with the educators. The success of this experiment led to the creation of thousands of 'circles of culture' across the country, supported by President Goulard. In 1964, however, a military coup overthrew the Goulard government, and Freire was arrested.

Freire was accused of being a communist and a subversive; he was jailed for seventy days and then offered exile instead of continued imprisonment. He was not to return to Brazil until 1980. Thus exiled from his homeland, he moved first to Bolivia and few months later to Chile, where he worked for the United Nations; he later connected with the left wing of the Christian Democratic party. In this period he earned his living by working as a researcher on the process of agrarian reform in Chile, leading to his criticism of the notions of extensionism.<sup>2</sup> It was also in Chile that he wrote *Education, the Practice of Freedom* (first published 1967) and his most influential work, *Pedagogy of the Oppressed* (published in Portuguese in 1968).

In his earlier work in Brazil, Freire had been exposed to the theoretical paradigm of popular education. The new theories of development and political theory that he encountered while in Chile completed his formative period (Gadotti and Torres, 1992; Torres, 1990), the foundation that would make him one of the most prominent popular educators in the history of the region. This formative experience extends to his early exposure to the nascent philosophy of Liberation in academic circles, and Liberation Theology in Church circles.<sup>3</sup> In fact, it is this radical combination of theories that made his message so appealing at the time, and that made *Pedagogy of the Oppressed* his emblematic book, a classic now translated into more than forty languages, and with sales of nearly one million copies in English alone. Freire's work moved in different directions during his exile; his contributions — as an advisor — to education for development in the emerging Portuguese-speaking African countries after their wars of liberation (such as Guinea Bissau and São Tomé e Príncipe) were particularly intriguing (Harasim, 1983).

Freire was able to return to Brazil in 1980. On more than one occasion, when asked of his plans upon returning to Brazil, Freire responded that he had come back to relearn Brazil, especially to listen to the Gramsci which was being popularized in the favelas, shanty-towns and countryside. He joined the Workers' Party (PT) in the city of São Paulo, and acted as a supervisor for its adult literacy project from 1980 to 1986. After the PT won the municipal elections in 1988, Freire was appointed Secretary of Education

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2. See Freire (1979, 1991); de Lima (1981); Williamson (1988).

3. Because of the impact in Catholic circles of his first book entitled *Education, the Practice of Freedom*, and particularly his concept of education for liberation which influenced the Medellín documents of 1968, Freire is associated with the emerging movement of Liberation Theology and is seen as one of its founding intellectuals.

for São Paulo. His wife Elza had died in 1986; Freire married educator and author Ana Maria Araújo Freire.

Freire never abandoned his concern for the connections between education and socio-economic development. It was this, together with his concern for democracy and citizenship — although he did not renounce his class perspective — that articulated his work throughout his life. Yet, he did not address the question of development from the perspective of the economist, but rather from the perspective of the political and pedagogical scholar-activist trying to reinvigorate the question of ethics in education and its implication for citizenship building. Freire was first and foremost a Latin American *pensador* — a thinker, an intellectual (Gadotti and Torres, 1991; Torres, 1996).

### Education for Development: The First Freire

Freire's first book, that made him a celebrity particularly among the Christian educators in the region, and that was so influential in the writing of the Medellín documents of 1968,<sup>4</sup> is entitled *Education, the Practice of Freedom* (Freire, 1967). It was connected with his doctoral thesis, defended at the University of Recife in 1959.<sup>5</sup> Yet it was his second book, *Pedagogy of the Oppressed* that catapulted him to international fame.

The underlying thesis of his historical analysis is that the roots of Brazilian democratic inexperience are found in the type of colonization that it suffered. It was this 'predatory colonization', involving the use of slave labour and the excessive utilization of power on the part of the dominant elite, that engendered the 'muteness' of the Brazilian people, their seeming incapacity to speak for themselves. Therefore 'the democratic inexperience [is] rooted in truly cultural complexes' (Freire, 1967: 60). Moreover, he presents the exploitation of slave labour as a fundamental characteristic of the kind of societal analysis he undertakes: '[slave labour] from which arose a series of obstacles and, simultaneously, the impossibility of forming a democratic mentality, a permeable consciousness, experiences of participation and of self-governance' (ibid.: 67). This exploitation made the creation of 'community life' impossible; the demographic dispersion that characterized the vast feudal landholdings of the great estates, together with the growth of urban

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4. Documents issued by the Conference of Catholic Bishops of Latin America (CELAM), at their meeting in Medellín in 1968, launched an attack on international capitalism, poverty and social injustice. Although condemned by some as the work of radical leftist groups, the Medellín documents gave a profound boost to supporters of the emerging liberation theology.

5. Freire's dissertation was posthumously published by Editora Cortez in São Paulo in 2001, under the title *Educação e atualidade Brasileira. Tese de concurso para a cadeira de História e Filosofia da Educação na Escola de Belas Artes de Pernambuco*. It included a Preface by the founders of Paulo Freire Institute and a historical countextualization by Jose Eustaquio Romão.

nuclei and the unlawful use of power, gave rise to a marked individualism. The conclusion of Freire's analysis is that:

Without a doubt, it is the exacerbation of power that has characterized our formation from the beginning. It was the strength of this power around which an almost masochistic lust to be all-powerful continued to grow. Submission was part and parcel of this exacerbated sense of power. From this submission was born a consequent adjustment; accommodation rather than integration. Accommodation requires a minimal dose of critique. Integration, on the contrary, demands a maximum of reason and consciousness. (*ibid.*: 69)

Thus, the Brazilian people found themselves castrated from the start when it came to expressing themselves. Marginalized and devoid of civil rights, the common man found himself irredeemably alienated from any experience of self-government or dialogue: made constantly submissive, 'protected', the only way to react was by a clamorous outcry — the voice of those who are mute when faced with the growth of communities and never have the option of finding an authentic voice. This voice must be won by the people with the growth of new historical conditions that will provide the first attempts at dialogue (*ibid.*: 71).

Freire does not explain how the crisis of 1930 and the fall of the international stock market and consequent transfer of monetary focus from livestock to industrial interests stimulated the rise of an urban bourgeoisie, and proposals for a free market economy as a way to generate a workforce that would also act as internal market consumers, thereby beginning the 'Europeanization' of Brazil. This process was made possible by the abolition of slavery in 1888. Democracy appeared then to be a kind of politics that would bring with it a great change in consciousness, but:

Since it did not require the 'decomposition' of the Brazilian society, allowing the established powers to participate, it had exactly the opposite result: the alienation of the people through 'public welfare'. In a general way, it can be said that, with few exceptions, the common people were either marginalized from all these processes or participated in them as a clamorous mob without a discernible voice. (*ibid.*: 77)

When Freire suggests that the Brazilian people were submissive when confronting power, it is clear that he is interested in the objective process of colonization rather than in verifying the internal differences between colonized sectors or between the politics of colonization and what results another kind of politics might have brought to Brazil. His immediate conclusion is that the causes that gave rise to 'democratic inexperience' should be sought in the colonization process itself. It follows that the roots of the country's cultural backwardness originate from its very history. Thus, the possibility of elaborating a new Brazilian pedagogy conforms perfectly with the analysis of this concrete process and the detection of the cause of those cultural complexities that block the way to freedom. Liberalism — and to some extent we read this between the lines of his entire analysis — generates the individual's education as a function of the dominant power system. This makes

it an adaptive rather than a critical education. But it appears that Brazil was not able to reach even this adaptive phase of educational development. The popular masses received no education at all, or at best a ‘banking’ education in which the student was viewed as an empty account to be filled by the teacher. This ‘banking’ (or liberal) education, exposed in the paradigm of educational sciences (Torres, 1978), sanctions certain individual values in the context of its system: the teacher must scrupulously comply with the legal standards established by rules, sticking to her/his schedule and maintaining discipline, among other things. To ensure her/his pension, the teacher demands of the pupils punctuality, discipline and subjection to the rules as well as satisfying the requirements for entering and exiting the grade-level.

Freire counterposed this with a paradigm in which teacher and student are capable of dialogue and of problematizing<sup>6</sup> together, and in which the teacher has a guileless faith in the students. To the establishment, this was as absurd as proposing that the student grasp the world’s challenges which unite consciousness, reflection and practice in a single process. *Pedagogy of the Oppressed* implies the transformation of consciousnesses and of structures in the process of a Cultural Revolution. It is a pedagogy that proposes ‘to pass from being of the oppressed to being the pedagogy of all people in the process of permanent liberation’ (Freire, 1968: 52).

### **The Second Freire: To Africa and the Rest of the World**

After being forced to leave Brazil in 1964, Freire went to Bolivia and then Chile where he wrote *Education, the Practice of Freedom* and *Pedagogy of the Oppressed*. His influence in Latin America was illustrated by his teaching in the CIDOC-Center for Intercultural Documentation, organized by Ivan Illich in Cuernavaca, México. In 1969, Freire taught for a semester at Harvard University, which had offered him a visiting professorship, but the second phase of exile began with his move to Geneva in 1970 to work as a special education advisor to the World Council of Churches. The following year a group of Brazilian exiles created the IDAC (Institute for Cultural Action), and Freire, appointed President of the Executive Committee of IDAC, continued his work on conscientization.

In 1975, the Minister of Education of the Republic of Guinea-Bissau, Mário Cabral, invited Freire and the IDAC team to collaborate in the reconstruction of the country after the end of colonial control. This raised the question of what language to use to teach literacy — after all, Portuguese was the language of the colonizer — and how to organize a process of literacy training in a country devastated by a war of liberation. From this experience,

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6. Freire used the word ‘problematização’ to refer to a ‘problem-posing’ approach to language-learning that took into consideration the psycho-social and political contexts of the adult learners’ lives.

and Freire's immersion in post-colonial projects in Africa, arose a number of wonderful and important books, that demonstrated the radicalization of his thought, but also its applicability in contexts beyond Latin America (Freire, 1980, 1981a, 1981b).

### **Education for Social Change: Freire Returns to Brazil**

Cultural invasion is a central theme in Freire's work. As he states in his book *Extensão ou comunicação?* (1979: 43): 'now that we recognized that all the agrarian engineers, the so-called extensionists, created a cultural invasion, it is impossible to ignore the ostensible cultural invasion of the term *extensão*'. He concludes on the same page that the extensionist agronomist 'transforms all his specialized knowledge, all his techniques into something static, materialized, and mechanically extends them to the persons, indisputably invading their culture, their view of the world'. Freire understands cultural invasion as the penetration, in any society, of a foreign culture that imposes its ways of seeing the world: '[cultural invasion] is the penetration of the invaders in the context of the invaded, without respecting their potentiality to be, imposing their view of the world, breaking their creativity, and inhibiting the expansion of the invaded people' (Freire, 1968: 186, our translation). In criticizing extensionism, Freire was very concerned with the role of education in development.

Freire is clear about the basic objectives that an 'education for development' should attempt to achieve. It should 'provide students with the necessary instruments to resist the deracinating powers of an industrial civilization' (ibid.: 82). Here Freire pauses in his reflection, apparently to examine the meaning of work, of the social organization of work and the risks that exist in an industrial society. Education for development should be an 'education that makes it possible for people to fearlessly discuss their problems' (ibid.: 84), 'that is situated in dialogue' (ibid.: 85) and that 'makes it susceptible to a kind of rebelliousness' (ibid.). Freire appears to reiterate the individual's effort to affirm his/her ethics in the face of all this, something of the feeling of the importance of freedom that was born of the Gospel, which we would locate as the source of this reflection. This popular rebelliousness, usually very naïve and emotional, must be transformed into 'engineering', hence Freire insists that his 'education for development' 'is identified with scientific methods and processes' (ibid.). Furthermore, education should orient people in their lives. It should 'help people reflect about their ontological vocation as subjects' (ibid.: 52).

Freedom, democracy and critical participation are key ideas that initially constituted the core of Freire's pedagogy. Thus, he rejects the teacher-student dichotomy, suggesting that a deep reciprocity be inserted into our notions of teacher-student and student-teacher relationships. He rejects the school in favour of the more flexible arrangement of the 'circle of culture'.

He rejects the role of teacher as ‘factotum’ in favour of an animator or co-ordinator of the pedagogical experiences inside the circle. He rejects prescribed curricula and proposes instead a programme created in and with the people. The essential dimension of all this pedagogical process is dialogue. Freire concludes ‘critique is the fundamental note of the democratic mentality’ (ibid.).

### **The Last Freire: Eco-Political Pedagogy and the Citizen School**

In an interview with the *Revista Veja* of São Paulo (19 April 2000), Thomas Skidmore, a noted Brazilianist, argued that Brazil was wrong to try to copy models from the outside, and that it should seek its own path. He cited Paulo Freire for creating a pedagogy that provides an appropriate solution to Brazilian problems:

Brazil seems to believe that there are no other possibilities to discover new roads. And this is the country that produced the Paulo Freire Method of Literacy Training that has been studied and become famous all over the world. This method was left aside, and instead of using the popular culture to improve education, as proposed by Paulo Freire, Brazil reaches out to foreign formulas that do not always help.<sup>7</sup>

A year earlier, the famous American futurologist, Alvin Toffler, was invited by the Ministry of Education to speak about education and new methodologies of information. To the surprise of the Brazilian hosts he presented the Paulo Freire method, unequivocally stating that it was the most appropriate method to teach informatics. Alvin Toffler said that fifty years ago Paulo Freire had created a methodology that is used by the youth today; they spontaneously create ‘circles of culture’ to teach each other and to learn how to use computers. In just a few days they transform themselves into ‘professors’ of informatics, which demonstrates the efficacy of the global method of Paulo Freire.

These two curious and recent experiences in Brazil give us an indication of the currency and recognition of Freire today. In the last years of his life, Freire dealt with debates and themes that he had not addressed in earlier books, including ecology and the environment. On 17 April 1997, just a few days before he passed away,<sup>8</sup> Freire was talking about eco-pedagogy. In an interview at the Paulo Freire Institute, he talked of his love for the Earth, the animals, the plants: ‘I want to be remembered as somebody who loved the

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7. To quote from the original: ‘O Brasil age como se não houvesse mais possibilidade de descobrir novos caminhos. O país produziu o método Paulo Freire de alfabetização, que foi estudado e se tornou famoso no mundo. Ele foi deixado de lado e, em vez de usar a cultura popular para melhorar o ensino, como propunha Paulo Freire, recorre-se às fórmulas estrangeiras, que nem sempre ajudam’ (*Revista Veja* 19 April 2000).

8. Freire died of heart failure on 2 May 1997.

men, the women, the plants, the animals, the Earth', he said on that occasion. In one of his last books, *A Sombra desta Mangueira* (literally, *In the Shadow of this Mango Tree*, published in English as *Pedagogy of the Heart*, 1998), he speaks of the pleasure of breathing pure air, the joy of entering a river that has no pollution, of stepping on grass, or the sand on the beach. He criticized the capitalist logic that gives no value to those free pleasures, and substitutes for them the pleasure of profit. Capitalism substitutes the free happiness of satisfying human needs for happiness that can be bought or sold, but above all, for satisfying the needs of capitalism — not human needs, but needs imposed upon human beings by the search for profits. Freire did not separate human needs from the needs of the planet. When he died, Freire was writing a book about ecology. The book was published posthumously by his widow, Ana Maria Freire, in 2000. In it, Freire argues:

It is urgent that we assume the duty to fight for the ethical principles of respect of life of human beings, life of other animals, the life of birds, the life of the rivers and the life of the forest. I do not believe in the love [*amorosidade*] between human beings if we cannot become capable of loving the world. Ecology is gaining a fundamental importance at the end of the century. Ecology has to be present in every radical practice, be that critical or libertarian . . . . In this sense it seems a regrettable contradiction to make a radical progressive discourse, a revolutionary discourse and to have a practice that negates life — the practices of polluting the oceans, the waters, the fields, the devastation of the forest, and those which threaten the animals and birds. (Freire, 2000: 66–7)

Another concept highlighted in the last years of his life was the *escola cidadã* (citizen schools). The concept of *escola cidadã* is very strongly linked to the movement of popular and communitarian education, which in the 1980s resulted in the movement for a public popular school, as a model to be implemented in various regions of Brazil. The concept of popular education is the most important contribution of Latin American educationists to universal pedagogical thought. The *escola cidadã* is a new type of school that does not simply impart knowledge, but creates and administers knowledge. It is an eco-political and pedagogical project; that is to say, it is an eminently ethical project, an innovative school, constructing meaning while it is intimately connected to the world. In an interview given by Freire to the TV Educadora do Rio de Janeiro, on 19 March 1997,<sup>9</sup> he defined *escola cidadã* as the space that is assumed as the centre of rights and responsibilities, where citizenship is created. It cannot be an *escola cidadã* in itself and for itself: it is an *escola cidadã* insofar as it facilitates the building of citizenship among those citizens that use its space. An *escola cidadã* is a school that is consistent with freedom, and with its formative and liberating discourse. It is a school that is struggling for itself, and for all those who educate and are educated, so that they can be themselves. And because nobody can be himself or herself alone, an *escola cidadã* is a school of the community, of camaraderie (*companheirismo*). It is a school of common production of

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9. Paulo Freire archives (São Paulo).



knowledge and freedom. It is a school that can never permit a kind of cavalier licentiousness, but it can similarly never allow authoritarianism. It is a school that lives the tense experience of democracy.

The curriculum of the *escola cidadã* is considered the space of socio-cultural relationships. It is not only the space of knowledge but also the space of debates about human and social relationships, the space of power, of work and of caring, the space of respectfully living together (*convivência*). This is the link with ethics, with the notion of sustainability,<sup>10</sup> with the question of violence. The curriculum and the eco-political and pedagogical project of the school are inseparable realities. The curriculum reveals the political-pedagogical trajectory of the school, its successes and failures. If the school is to continue the project of its members — teachers, employees, students and community — the curriculum has to be intimately related to the life project of each one of them. That is why the curriculum needs to be constantly evaluated and re-evaluated. The project of an *escola cidadã* is considered, in terms of process and context, an institutional and individual life project.

Education for citizenship is at the same time an education for a sustainable society. *Escola cidadã* and eco-pedagogy sustain the principle that all of us, since we are children, have the fundamental right to dream, to make possible our projects, to invent. As Marx and Freire have argued, we all have the right to decide our own destiny, including the children defended by the distinguished Polish educator Janusz Korczak. Yet, the issue is not to reduce the school and pedagogy today to *tabula rasa* and build on its ashes the ideal *escola cidadã* and eco-pedagogy. We are not talking of an alternative school and pedagogy in the sense that these would have to be constructed separately from today's schools and pedagogy. Rather, it is inside them, starting from the schools that we have, and the pedagogy that we practice, in order to dialectically build other possibilities without destroying what already exists. The future is not the annihilation of the past, but its improvement.

On the basis of the intuition<sup>11</sup> of Paulo Freire, the Paulo Freire Institutes continue to reinvent his legacy. Our current problems, including ecological

10. See Gadotti (2008a). In this study, Gadotti quotes Leonardo Boff: 'The category sustainability is central for the ecological cosmos vision and possibly constitutes one of the bases of a new civilization paradigm that searches to harmonize human beings, development and Earth, understood as Gaia'.

11. We speak of Freire's intuition, in terms of both its normative and analytical dimensions. Carl G. Jung (1968) identified a number of functions in consciousness, and also distinguished the ectopsychic and the endopsychic. When he spoke of the ectopsychic functions ('a system of relationships between the contents of consciousness and facts and data coming in from the environment'; *ibid.*: 11) he described the functions of sensation, thinking, feeling and intuition. Intuition then, although mystical in the view of many, is very practical. Jung argued that 'Whenever you have to deal with strange conditions where you have no established values or established concepts, you will depend upon that faculty of intuition' (*ibid.*: 14). Jung was referring to anticipatory dreams or telepathic phenomena, but also to intuition in the day-to-day interaction with people, things and animals. Freire was able to let his intuition guide his theorizing, and we believe that much of what we learn in our lives is as connected to intuition as it may be connected to sensations, thinking or feeling.

problems, are provoked by our way of living; in many respects, school bears a great deal of responsibility for how we live. Our understanding of the world we live in and our way of life depends to a considerable extent on what the school does or does not teach, the values that are or are not transmitted, and the curriculum or the books that are taught or not taught.

We thus need to reorient education starting with the principle of sustainability, that is, to redress education in its totality. That implies a revision of curricula and programmes, educational systems, the role of the school and the teachers, and school organization. The notion of eco-pedagogy as developed by the Paulo Freire Institutes implies a reorientation of curricula to make us understand that we need to consider the planet as a unique community and the Earth as our mother, as an organism that is alive and in evolution; and to build a new consciousness of what is sustainable, appropriate and makes sense for our existence. We need to be gentle with our Earth as our home, our unique address, and to develop a sense of socio-cosmic justice, seeing the Earth as a victim of poverty and oppression. We need to promote life, to communicate among ourselves, to share, to problematize, to create new relationships, and to live with enthusiasm. We need to 'walk' daily in achieving these goals.<sup>12</sup> And finally, we need to develop an intuitive rationality, and an affectionate, not instrumental form of communication. As Frei Betto, the spiritual adviser of President Luiz Inácio Lula da Silva, argued at the moment of the latter's electoral triumph, the Brazilian people elected Lula not for the work of Marx but for the work of popular education and the presence of Paulo Freire. This, we believe, is another lasting legacy of Paulo Freire.

### **The Global Impact of Paulo Freire**

It is a fitting conclusion to briefly discuss the impact of Paulo Freire in international settings. The MOVA-Brazil, a social movement for literacy training that emerged during and continued after Freire's time as Secretary of Education in the Municipality of São Paulo, has extended its work throughout Brazil and its example is also reaching the neighbouring countries of the Southern Cone (Gadotti, 2008b; Torres et al., 1998). However, Freire's pedagogical approach has been taken up well beyond Brazil or Latin America. His method and theories were introduced into the world as a revolution of adult learning. His impact on literacy training, in particular, has stood the test of time, and is reflected in a multitude of initiatives, programmes and documents. Most recently, his contributions to adult learning have been highlighted as an inspiration by UNESCO (2009) in the Global Report of Adult Learning and Education (GRALE), used as a resource document in the

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12. This refers to the title of the remarkable dialogue at Highlander between Paulo Freire and Miles Horton — *we make the road by walking* (Freire and Horton, 1991).

VI CONFINTEA (May 2009, Belem, Brazil) — the most important decennial conference on adult education, attended by the majority of Ministers and Secretaries of Education, as well as other government officials and members of NGOs and social movements around the world.

At a more generic level, Paulo Freire is considered the originator of the theoretical model of Critical Pedagogy that has influenced the educational training of teachers, particularly in the United States, but also in several other advanced industrial societies. The work of Paulo Freire, and especially his *Pedagogy of the Oppressed*, reflects the quintessential nature of comparative and international education. Freire's critique of 'banking' education; the idea of education for freedom; the fact that his theoretical framework can be used to study the relations between class, race/ethnicity, gender and the state in education; and its role in illuminating the intricate relationship between politics and education through the paradigm of popular education — all of these have meant that Freire's message has made a deep and lasting impact on educational models, including Critical Pedagogy.<sup>13</sup>

The movement for popular education in Latin America, Africa and Asia owes a great deal of its theoretical foundations, methodology and praxis to the work of Paulo Freire and the pedagogues of liberation. After the crisis of neoliberalism, with the failure of the different models of structural adjustment in Latin America, and in light of the current global financial situation, these models of popular education have acquired renewed energy in the context of counteracting the crisis of capitalism, and are being used by social movements in new and original ways. The influence of Freire on contemporary scholars and practitioners has been well documented and the number of studies and doctoral dissertations show that research on Freire's epistemology, theory and methods has burgeoned.<sup>14</sup> Freire has been linked by some with the Swiss-Argentine psychologist, Enrique Pichón-Rivere. He has been compared by others to the Polish educator Janusz Korczak (1878–1942) who died together with 200 of his students in a Nazi gas chamber. Other comparisons have been made to Eduard Claparède, Pierre Bovet, Célestin Freinet, Bogdan Suchodolski, the new European sociologists of education, the American psychologist Carl Rogers with his model of student-centred learning, the work of Ivan Illich and his proposal of deschooling (which Freire disagreed with), as well as Lev Vygotsky and John Dewey.

Paulo Freire's pedagogy of the oppressed, his notion of constructivist pedagogy and his interdisciplinary approach have impacted on many disciplines and practices across the world. While his theories have crossed the borders of disciplines and sciences, his reflections have deepened the theme that he pursued his whole life: education as the practice of freedom. His theories spilled over into different fields of knowledge, from education

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13. From Carlos Alberto Torres' lecture in the course on Comparative Education, Professor Richard DesJardins, Danish School of Pedagogy, Aarhus, Denmark (27 October 2008).

14. For an analysis of some of these works, see Gadotti (1994: 109–43).

to health, from pedagogy to politics, from sociology to social work. His work took roots in many places, from the shanty-towns of Latin America to the *burakinin* communities of Japan. His contributions to the field of education could be compared to the efforts of those working on AIDS prevention, or to therapists working on ways to liberate human consciousness from early childhood traumas or personality disorders. There is no question that Paulo Freire's border-crossing perspective in the 1960s resulted in a transdisciplinary approach that has gained even more recognition in the new century.

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**Moacir Gadotti** obtained his PhD in Education Sciences from the University of Geneva, Switzerland. He is professor at the University of São Paulo (Brazil) and director of the Paulo Freire Institute. He has written many books, among them *Reading Paulo Freire: His Life and Work* (SUNY Press, 1994), *Pedagogy of Praxis: A Dialectical Philosophy of Education*, with a preface by Paulo Freire (SUNY Press, 1996) and *Paulo Freire: A Bibliobiography* (IPF, 1996). He can be contacted at Instituto Paulo Freire, Rua Cerro Corá, 550, 05061-100 São Paulo (SP), Brazil.

**Carlos Alberto Torres**, Professor of Social Sciences and Comparative Education and Diector of the Paulo Freire Institute at UCLA, is a political sociologist of education who has authored more than 65 books, and more than 250 research articles. His most recent book is *Globalizations and Education. Collected Essays on Class, Race, Gender, and the State*, with an Introduction by Michael W. Apple and an Afterword by Pedro Demo (Teachers College Press–Columbia University Press, 2009). He can be contacted at 1009 Moore Hall, Box 951521, Los Angeles, CA 90095-1521, USA.