

The ArtnCite People's Multiversity

Compiled By Ray L. Baker Jr.

The ArtnCite People's Multiversity (APM) is an essential weapon in the struggle to liberate humanity from all forms of exploitation and oppression of humans by humans. While the goal of liberating humanity from all forms of exploitation and oppression is constant, this educational proposal is a living document subject to change as new information is uncovered relative to educational systems, the world, and the people in it.

The APM is a free university with or without walls, which promotes education for all ages from the cradle to the grave. Its classrooms are anywhere, from existing schools and universities to pool halls, parks, homes, cars, beauty and barber shops, auto repair shops, bakeries, shoe shops, tailor shops, farms/gardens, prisons, inside the military, factories and any workplace, or any place people are willing to teach and learn. Throughout history, educational systems have reflected the worldview, goals, and aspirations of the societies or entities that developed them.

In the U.S. today, the educational system supports the capitalist system, which is driven by the profit motive, with all its exploitation and oppression, wage and sweatshop slavery, poverty and misery for millions of people, mass

incarceration, and mass homelessness—all in a land of apparent plenty. It is a system in which housing, food, healthcare, and medicine depend on one's ability to pay. These factors and many others comprise an outright act of genocide against Black people, Native people and the poor.

But the wealth that the people, in mass, have created is hoarded in the pockets of a very few rich people at the top. This wealthy class is the hidden hand that runs society, including the government, which, today, at the behest of this rich class, is on the fast track to full-blown fascism.

It is a system that stockpiles weapons of war, including nuclear weapons. These weapons are not just for defense but to violently suppress and control the tens of millions of people, domestically, that it robs daily, and this system also maintains armies and weapons to protect the multinational corporations, The World Bank, The International Monetary Fund and The World Trade Organization as they rob people around the world of their natural and human resources.

It is also a system that is a major polluter of the oceans with plastics but, with reckless abandon, is a principal contributor to global warming, rendering the entire planet Earth increasingly uninhabitable.

The educational system that we are developing reflects our worldview, goals, and aspirations. In first place is the elimination of all forms of exploitation and oppression in the world. To do this, we must completely overthrow the capitalist system and all forms of the state, whether capi-

talist or communist.

To arrive at a world free of exploitation and oppression, we must begin now to denounce and remove all forms of exploitation and oppression of women, all bosses, kings, overseers, dictators, oligarchs, queens, all political parties and states, capitalist or socialist. To be brief, all hierarchical institutions.

We are fighting for a society that is run from the bottom up, with people freely associated in decentralized, horizontally organized, self-governed co-ops, communes, and/or collectives with others who have similar needs, goals, and desires. Mutual aid and solidarity are cornerstones of such collectives.

The goal is to create small, self-contained units that meet all the human needs of those in the collective—food, shelter, clothing, education, health care, childcare, elder care, home, auto and computer repair, rodent and pest control, recreation and entertainment, defense, and whatever is needed by the group members.

The next step is to federate the collective with other independent collectives, locally, regionally, nationally, and globally, but without regard for local, regional, national, or international boundaries that the oppressors have set up.

Another part of our process and worldview is to help empower workers to organize themselves in every factory, plant, workshop, field, plantation, sweatshop, or any workplace to resist the day-to-day crimes of exploiting their labor, an inherent feature of capitalism. Resistance units must be established in every workplace. And just as the

workplaces must be federated or united with all the other workplaces, the resistance units must be federated with other resistance units locally, regionally, nationally, and globally—ultimately to create a global general strike to bring down the capitalist system of exploitation and oppression globally and completely and to prevent it from coming back.

The APM seeks to re-awaken the hunger to learn in all those who were forced to drop out of school for whatever reason. This includes all those public school children in American society who drop out before graduation for many reasons. One reason for massive dropouts is the profound negative effects of the current education system, which is a culturally insensitive, abusive tool for behavior modification.

The current educational system is fundamentally a test-oriented lesson in adapting to oppressive conditions, and at best, it perpetrates the force-feeding of concepts and values that are often irrelevant and antithetical to the best interests of the basic masses today.

The APM seeks to help invigorate those older people who have had to leave school for economic reasons, to care for families, or for those who have had to leave school because of the high cost of a quality education. The APM also seeks to expand and deepen education for those who have graduated from the current system of generally backward miseducation.

The APM will open up avenues to render all art accessible to the masses and aid the masses in using art for joy, expression, and liberation. This includes painting and drawing, sculpture, photography, theater and film production, editing, motion graphics, animation, street theater, theatrical forms, poetry, fashion design, music, swimming, and other sports.

We will learn and teach subjects from first aid to medical science, from simple math to subatomic particle physics, from paper planes to space travel— all areas of healthy food production—gardening/farming, vertical gardening, growing indoors under lights, organic hydroponics, quadraphonics—all without harm to humans, animals or the environment. APM will have no limits on what can be taught and learned—whatever is required for immediate community improvement, pleasure, and for the total emancipation of humanity from the system of exploitation and oppression.

The APM will put forth a considerable effort to work with students, teachers, and parents to transform existing schools and universities from capitalist, corporate models of individualistic, competitive, "me first," money above all, detention/behavior modification centers into loving, caring centers that help people become active participants in "shaping the economic, social and cultural organizations

that affect their lives and help foster a society based on human development.

While we will leave no stone unturned in the struggle to transform existing educational institutions into institutions for liberation, we must recognize the supervision that the ruling class exerts over these institutions. From the nature of teacher training to department requirements on the job, the ruling class has set a taunt and ever-tightening ideological noose around teachers' necks.

Even before and on the road to liberation, these schools must play a huge role in disseminating all things necessary to liberate humanity and transform society continuously to higher and higher levels of meeting the needs, wants, and desires of the broad masses of humanity.

Education, as we know it, is a tool of capitalist oppression and exploitation. Education is leading the backward charge of mass disabling culture, which socializes people to police themselves against their own freedom. Education and politics are joined at the hip, and no matter what the course is, it points in a specific direction toward some convictions about society and knowledge. The question, then, becomes whose politics will prevail.

Education for Liberation

The time has come for the oppressed to create educational forms which can be used to liberate themselves.

For the most part, the educational forms that the

world has endured at the hands of the rising capitalist class for the past 400 or 500 years must be swept into the dustbin of history. This is true because this education supports and conforms to capitalist exploitation.

The oppressive system of education that we have known can offer precious little for liberation because it was not constituted for this purpose. Each level, primary, secondary, and college, is separated from the preceding one, and they are anti-democratic in methods, content, and objectives.

Due to continued selective filtering, the number of rejected people in the U.S. schools and universities is constantly increasing. These schools foster a sense of inadequacy and inferiority, and the rejected often graduate from the little detention centers, the schools, to the big detention centers, the prisons.

From the standpoint of the dominant ruling class, the main task for systemic education is to make reality opaque, and to reproduce the dominant ideology. Dialectically, the teacher whose dream is liberation must be teaching against the reproduction of the dominant ideology and for the production of liberation—to unveil reality.

The form of education imposed by the dominant class, as it relates to the oppressed, teaches not only how to talk, dress, eat, walk, and think like the ruling class but, more importantly, teaches the oppressed how to protect their own slave chains.

We must approach this education transformation with the understanding that education does not shape society.

Society has historically shaped education according to the interests of those with power.

At this writing, in the rapid descent of the U.S. into fascism, we have a vile band of billionaires, like Elon Musk, Peter Theil and Donald Trump seizing all branches of government—the executive, legislative, and judicial and seizing major cultural institutions like the Kennedy Center, canceling innocuous plays like “Hamilton” calling it too “woke.”

In their attempts at a fascist sweep of society, the education system is not left out. They are attempting to crush any semblance of “Diversity, Equity and Inclusion.” They are banning books and taking critical race theory out of the schools. They are on a mission to dismantle the U.S. Department of Education altogether.

We call these fascist, billionaire fools, and their ilk, paper tigers with clay feet, and we shout from the mountain top that the people will have the last word!

Therefore, as we revolutionize education, we must revolutionize society as a vital part of the process. We don’t aim to seize power but work to ensure that people have power in their hands from the bottom up.

In the current educational system, democracy is betrayed through the old authoritarian methods. In our transformative process, we must remember that there is no such thing as absolute ignorance or absolute wisdom. Teachers should be learning along with those they teach.

When students are free to express their restlessness,

doubts, and curiosity and to ask questions, it can often give the teacher a new angle, enabling them to engage in more critical reflection.

An excellent way to look at the role of the liberatory teacher is not that they have the indisputable truth to impose on the learners but that they have something to propose—ideas to put forward. As with the revolution, education is not done for students but with them.

Especially in the area of older youth and adult education, instead of a teacher, the progressive form promotes a coordinator instead of lectures, dialogue, instead of pupils, group participants, instead of alienating syllabi. These compact programs are "broken down" and "codified" into learning units.

In liberatory education, learners must be called upon to think critically about the conditioning of their own thought processes. They must be helped to grasp the fact that the traditional form of education is presented to them simply as something to which they must adapt themselves.

This liberatory form of education rejects mechanistic, abstract forms and promotes teaching adults how to read about awakening their consciousness. As a word, problem, or phenomenon from the students' immediate world is apprehended, its causal links are also comprehended.

The more accurately women and men grasp true causality, the more critical their understanding of reality will be, and the more they will abandon magical explanations of the world.

A critical understanding of the world leads to critical actions, while a magical view leads to magical responses to the world. Liberatory education must offer people the means to supersede their magical perception of reality and facilitate their intervention in the historical process.

The progressive form promotes a form of education that is itself a creative act capable of releasing other creative acts and one in which students develop the vivacity and impatience that characterizes search and invention.

The liberatory method of education is based on dialogue and empathy between two poles who are engaged in a joint search. While remaining critical, this dialogue is nourished by love, humility, hope, faith, and trust.

The oppressed have suffered a long nightmare of a learning process in which thought language is absurdly separated from objectivity, and the mechanisms used to interject the dominant ideology are never discussed.

The oppressor's educational message is that learners should passively accept packaged knowledge, memorized somewhere else by the teacher, to be deposited into the student for the student to memorize. We must advance the act of learning into a creative act, which involves a critical comprehension of reality.

A reading of a text must demand a reading within the social context to which it refers. We must do the same with math literacy and other subjects, constantly connecting the pursuit of knowledge to the immediate needs in which the learning takes place and then to causality from the larger world in general

This educational fight must also carry beyond the classroom into the community for teachers and students alike.

Liberatory education in existing educational institutions must go beyond criticism of the subsystem of education and rise to the criticism of all of society. Existing educational institutions must become centers where people are challenged to mobilize or organize themselves to get liberated.

In the U. S., the pushback against the uprisings in the sixties for open and free education and education along liberatory lines has been met, beginning with the Reagan and Nixon presidential administrations, with a tremendous upsurge in the costs of higher education, making it almost an elite affair, the crushing of free colleges and the crippling of millions of lives with criminally high student loans.

Apart from severe punishment for teachers who deviate from the ruling rich class educational plan, a teacher who fights for liberation in the classroom must learn to navigate around students' rejection of liberating pedagogy. A part of this "push back" climate or conservative restoration has made students less willing to take risks.

Resurgent authorities have imposed on students such things as careerism, new testing and curricular requirements, ethics of self-interest, and dismal regimes of back-to-basics; students worry about getting jobs. They want to know how any course helps them gain skills and credentials for the tough job market. Such a repressive, business-oriented milieu makes students resist experimental

pedagogy.

Today, there is a push to ban books and whitewash oppressive, exploitative, and racist parts of American history as if these things never happened.

Paulo Freire and Ira Shor have brilliantly dialogued about liberatory education in existing capitalist educational institutions in A Pedagogy for Liberation, published by Bergin & Garvey Publishers, Inc. Massachusetts.

The APM promotes education for critical consciousness/education for liberation. At the literacy level, this method immediately separates itself from all forms of education in the abstract in that it is about simultaneously learning the word and the world.

It is a problem-posing, dialogue-based, interactive partnership between student and teacher both as subjects and the thing to be studied or analyzed as a mediating object between them. The group puts forward the word, problem, or situation to be mediated, and it comes from their immediate world and promotes dialectical thinking.

The educational form of the APM recognizes the multiplicity of modes of oppression, with one example of this being the exploitation of women within the dynamic of race and class.

The educational system here will span from basic literacy--the learning of the word and the world techniques of Paulo Freire, the Yo si Puedo literacy techniques used to develop one of the world's highest literacy rates in Cuba, language learning and literacy techniques developed by this author as a successful language arts teacher,

coupled with the tenacious search for other effective methods and tools with an eye toward constant new knowledge, renewing, relearning and re-analyzing what we already know.

Here is a brief look at one of the things that this author did as a language arts teacher, which proved to be amazingly effective. In my experience, all the students knew the alphabet or what is commonly called their “ABCs.” They also knew the vowel and consonant sounds. They possessed a number of the requisite tools for reading but could not crack the code between spoken and written language.

I would write on the board consonant combinations like et, et, et, et. Then I would say if you put a “p” in front of the et what is it, they would shout pet. If you put an “L” in front of it, what is it? And they would shout let. If you put a “B” in front of it, what is, and they’d say bet.

Then I would go to say “op.” Put a “T” in front of it; what is it? The refrain would be top. Then put an “M” in front of it, which would be mop. Then I would follow a similar plan with, say, “at.” Put an “S” in front of it, and they would yell sat. Put “CH” in front of it and it would be chat.

This exercise is only limited by lack of imagination. One could use as an example “it,” “ay,” or any number of combinations. However, my experience was that after a few examples, a tremendous light turned on among the students.

Today, there are countless fun recordings that sing songs and interesting rhymes and stories that are tremen-

dous tools for learning language and math. We must use them, and we must invent/create our own. It is vital to keep learning fun as much as possible.

It is mainly the inventive and creative power of the unleashed masses that will be our greatest asset in teaching and learning. We mustn't think about catching up with anyone but soaring, with our knowledge for liberation as high as we can go. In light of that, here is a method of adding numbers that is far superior to what is generally taught in the oppressor's schools.

The only rival of this method of adding is the calculator.

To add a problem, we begin at the bottom of the first column and add the figures until the sum is ten or more. We then make a dot and reject the ten. The dot is to indicate that one ten has been rejected. We proceed with the excess of ten, which is the number remaining after the ten has been rejected, and continue to add until the sum is again ten or more. We make another dot to represent the second ten. We then continue up the column similarly, placing a dot for each ten rejected and carrying through the excess number.

When we have finished the column, we place the final excess number in the answer, count the dots that represent the tens that have been rejected, add their sum to the bottom figure in the next column, and add this column in the same manner, making a dot for each ten rejected. All the columns are added in the same way.

When we have finished the last column, we count the

dots representing the tens rejected from this column and place their sum in the answer, which completes it.

Example:

43.6

8.27.

9.46

327.

6.2.5.

436

5.7.9.

476.

9.6.7

5619 ans.

Explanation: Beginning at the bottom of the first column, we have $6+7=13$. Before proceeding, we reject 10 of these 13, placing a dot to indicate ten have been rejected. We take the remaining three and add it to the next figure, $3+9=12$. We again reject ten and make a dot to represent it. Taking the remaining two and continuing up the column, we have $2+6+5+13$. Making another dot we reject 10 and continue: $3+7=10$, another dot, $6+7=13$, another dot, leaving 3. $3+6=9$. We place 9 in the answer. We find we have 5 dots. We add 5 to the bottom figure of the next column and continue as before, adding in the same manner and making a dot for each ten rejected, placing the final excess number of each column in the answer and adding the sum of the dots to the bottom figure of the next column.

The sum of the dots in the last column is the finishing figure in the answer.

While we may meet in tailor shops, bakeries, and auto repair shops, the dialogue may well include these specialties and others. Still, it will ultimately be about the workings of the whole world and all things necessary for liberation.

Not only must we leave no stone unturned in finding places in the community to carry out whatever education is necessary and possible, but we must also conduct a rigorous program of educational exchange, not with governments but with liberation-minded people worldwide.