

REVOLUTION

and

PEDAGOGY



Interdisciplinary and Transnational Perspectives
on Educational Foundations

Edited by E. Thomas Ewing



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INTERDISCIPLINARY AND TRANSNATIONAL
PERSPECTIVES ON EDUCATIONAL FOUNDATIONS

Edited by
E. Thomas Ewing

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Softcover reprint of the hardcover 1st edition 2005 978-1-4039-6920-0

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First published in 2005 by
PALGRAVE MACMILLAN™

175 Fifth Avenue, New York, N.Y. 10010 and
Houndmills, Basingstoke, Hampshire, England RG21 6XS
Companies and representatives throughout the world.

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ISBN 978-1-349-53111-0 ISBN 978-1-4039-8013-7 (eBook)
DOI 10.1057/9781403980137

Library of Congress Cataloging-in-Publication Data

Revolution & pedagogy: interdisciplinary and transnational perspectives on educational foundations / edited by E. Thomas Ewing.
p. cm.

"The conference from which this collection of essays derives, *Revolution and Pedagogy: Interdisciplinary Perspectives on Change*, was convened at the Ohio State University, Columbus, Ohio, April 18–20, 2002"—Acknowledgements.

Includes bibliographical references and index.

1. Critical pedagogy—Congresses. 2. Education and state—Congresses.
3. Social justice—Congresses. I. Title: Revolution and pedagogy.
II. Ewing, E. Thomas, 1965—

LC196.R47 2005
370.11'5—dc22

2004058730

A catalogue record for this book is available from the British Library.

Design by Newgen Imaging Systems (P) Ltd., Chennai, India.

First edition: May 2005

10 9 8 7 6 5 4 3 2 1

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ACKNOWLEDGMENTS

The conference from which this collection of essays derives, *Revolution and Pedagogy: Interdisciplinary Perspectives on Change*, was convened at the Ohio State University, Columbus, Ohio, April 18–20, 2002. It was proposed as a project to the Center for Middle Eastern Studies (Dr. Alam Payind, Director) and received initial logistical and material support from that Center and from the Center for Slavic and East European Studies (Prof. Halina Stephan, Director), as part of the Centers' respective U.S. Federal Title VI-funded programming. Subsequently, a major grant from Ohio State University's Mershon Center (Prof. Ned Lebow, Director) and additional contributions from the Department of Near Eastern Languages and Cultures supported the conference and this publication.

Besides the essays published here, additional presentations at the conference were by Shelley Wong (Ohio State University) on strategies and ideologies of teaching English in the People's Republic of China; Sharofat Mamadambarova (Khorog State University, Tajikistan) and Sunatullo Jonboboev (Tajik Technical University, Dushanbe, Tajikistan) on the Aga Khan Humanities Project and post-Soviet reforms in Central Asian pedagogy; Eva-Marie Stolberg (University of Bonn) on Bolsheviks and experimental pedagogy in the Soviet Union; Brian M. Puaca (University of North Carolina) on postwar German Exchange Scholars in the United States; Murat Ozturk (Yale University) and Ertan Aydin (Cankaya University) on the pedagogy of the People's Houses in revolutionary Turkey; and Hyunjing Shin (University of Hawaii) on critical/radical pedagogy in Confucian environments, specifically in Korea.

The convener of the Ohio State conference wishes to thank the members of the program committee, Shelley Wong, Yucel Demirer, and Saba Boland, for their assistance, the sponsors for their material support, all the presenters and audience at the conference for their vigorous oral commentary on the delivered papers, and especially Tom Ewing for his energetic editorial supervision of this volume for publication. The editor wishes to thank Margaret Mills for organizing the conference and initiating the effort to publish these chapters, Amy Nelson for her advice and encouragement, the Mershon Center at the Ohio State University for its continuing support, and all the contributors for taking time out from their many other commitments to continue working on these chapters.

Margaret A. Mills, Conference Convener
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SHAKING THE FOUNDATIONS
OF EDUCATION
AN INTRODUCTION TO REVOLUTION
AND PEDAGOGY

E. Thomas Ewing

In 1925, at the age of seven, a young boy named Rolihlahla began attending a Wesleyan missionary school located not far from the eastern coast of South Africa. The first in his family to attend a formal school, this child was enrolled by his father, who “had the great respect for education that is often present in those who are uneducated.” In preparation for his first day, Rolihlahla acquired new clothes: in place of the customary blanket, his father took a pair of his own trousers, cut off the legs, and tied them around the boy’s waist with a string. According to the boy’s later recollections, “I must have been a comical sight, but I have never owned a suit I was prouder to wear than my father’s cut-off pants.” In addition to the change of clothing, however, entry into the Western school also brought a new name. As was becoming customary in South Africa under colonial rule, indigenous names were not used by Whites, “who were either unable or unwilling to pronounce an African name, and considered it uncivilized to have one.” On the first day, the teacher, Miss Mdingane, gave this child a new first name, which would, over the course of the next three-quarters of a century, become famous throughout the world: Nelson Mandela (Mandela 1995, pp. 6, 13–14).

Mandela’s education continued through boarding schools for elite African children, higher education at the University College of Fort Hare, correspondence study for a law degree, and 18 years imprisonment on Robbens Island, which Mandela later referred to as “the University because of what we learned from each other” (Mandela 1995, p. 467). Mandela developed a deep appreciation for education, not only in terms of his own life, but also for its implications for all South Africans struggling for freedom, democracy, equality, and opportunity. In his memoirs, Mandela describes how his perspective was shaped by the school boycott of 1955, which challenged the institutionalization of white domination through curriculum

and policies:

Education is the great engine of personal development. It is through education that the daughter of a peasant can become a doctor, that the son of a mineworker can become the head of the mine, that a child of farmworkers can become the president of a great nation. It is what we make out of what we have, not what we are given, that separates one person from another. (Mandela 1995, p. 166)

While the boycott failed, in the sense that most African parents resigned themselves to apartheid schools, the government was forced to make some modifications in its policies and even Prime Minister Hendrick Verwoerd had to admit that, in Mandela's words, "education should be the same for all." Ultimately, Mandela argued, apartheid in education "came back to haunt the government in unforeseen ways," because these racially separated schools "produced in the 1970s the angriest, most rebellious generation of black youth the country had ever seen" (Mandela 1995, pp. 169–170, 483–484).

As these statements suggest, South African education could serve both liberating and repressive functions (Comaroff 1996, pp. 28–29). Educated in white-dominated schools integrated into the emerging apartheid system, Mandela recognized that his schooling, among other influences, provided the knowledge, integrity, determination, and confidence to succeed as a lawyer and a political leader, while also providing clear evidence of how African civilization and Africans as people were treated as inferior. In the movement against apartheid, schools provided both the instruments to be used in this struggle and the institutions, values, and structures against which this struggle was being waged.

Mandela's education led him to follow a revolutionary path. Committed at a young age to the cause of liberating South Africa from repressive rule by the white minority, Mandela became a leader in the African National Congress, and then the main proponent of the decision to renounce exclusively nonviolent tactics against the intransigent and oppressive regime. The discovery of plans for armed struggle led to his arrest and trial in 1964, which was followed by 27 years of imprisonment. While in prison, Mandela welcomed news of guerilla warfare as evidence that the African National Congress had "engaged the enemy in combat on their own terms" (Mandela 1995, p. 439). In 1976, Mandela responded to news of black schoolchildren's resistance with this statement smuggled from prison: "Between the anvil of united mass action and the hammer of armed struggle we shall crush apartheid and white minority racist rule!" (cited in Sampson 1999, p. 271). Even after his release in 1989, Mandela steadfastly refused to renounce violent tactics while the South African regime continued its repressive policies, insisting that it was "the reality and the threat of the armed struggle that had brought the government to the verge of negotiations" (Mandela 1995, p. 568).

Yet, within South Africa and throughout the world, Mandela has now become a powerful symbol of how political revolution can be achieved through peaceful reconciliation. In his autobiography, Mandela described his

evolving understanding of the dialectic of liberation and oppression:

It was during these long and lonely years that my hunger for the freedom of my people became a hunger for the freedom of all people, white and black. I knew as well as I knew anything that the oppressor must be liberated just as surely as the oppressed . . . When I walked out of prison, that was my mission, to liberate the oppressed and the oppressor both . . . For to be free is not merely to cast off one's chains, but to live in a way that respects and enhances the freedom of others. (Mandela 1995, pp. 624–625)

On this “long walk to freedom,” Mandela has repeatedly identified education as a key to revolutionary change. In 1990, during a triumphal visit to the United States just one year after his release from prison, Mandela declared: “Education is the most powerful weapon you can use to change the world” (quoted in Howe and Lewis 1990, p. 1). In 1997, as the first democratically elected president of South Africa, Mandela declared that “the power of education” is essential to the processes of “nation-building and reconciliation”:

Our previous system emphasized the physical and other differences of South Africans with devastating effects. We are steadily but surely introducing education that enables our children to exploit their similarities and common goals, while appreciating the strength in their diversity. (Mandela 1997)

More recently, during a celebration of his eighty-fifth birthday, Mandela echoed his declaration from a decade ago when he made this pledge: “I will spend the rest of my days trying to help secure a more educated and healthier South Africa. Education is the most important solution that we can use to change the world” (“Mandela” 2003).

Embedded in these statements about education, as more generally in Mandela's life and in any struggle for meaningful change, is a crucial tension between pedagogy and revolution. The path through education into public activism, the emergence of schools as contested sites for domination and resistance, and the promise of new leaders to provide education for all are common themes across revolutionary cultures and pedagogical contexts (Comaroff 1996). Mandela's education as a revolutionary also demonstrates the tensions inherent in this relationship. Pedagogy can be both conservative and radical, just as revolutions can be liberating and repressive. Both categories are invested with complex and contradictory meanings; their juxtaposition offers important insights into their far-reaching reverberations.

This collection explores the tensions between and within processes of revolutionary and pedagogical change and continuity. By focusing on those enacting pedagogical activities in revolutionary contexts or pursuing revolutionary agendas in pedagogical contexts, these eight chapters provide an innovative and sophisticated exploration of complex directions and forces. These revolutions include the struggle for independence in the Philippines, the Russian revolution that led to the communist Soviet Union, the Egyptian campaigns against British colonial authority, the development of Kurdish

national identity in the context of Turkey's modernization, radical and reformist educational movements in Western Europe and the Americas, the Palestinian struggle for self-determination, and the contemporary debate over national and religious identity in India. The subjects of analysis include "conventional" topics such as school policies and curricular content, as well as more "nontraditional" pedagogies such as public celebrations of holidays, participation in international exchange programs, and the incarceration of political activists. The interdisciplinary and transnational perspectives emerge from the explicitly comparative approach of each chapter, from the application of a wide range of disciplinary approaches, and from authors' locations that transcend narrow geographical or academic categories.

In this sense, the materials and interpretations presented in this collection truly "shake" the foundations of education, for they call attention to the embedded contradictions and tensions in the pedagogical project as well as the emancipatory and constraining implications of revolutions. As discussed in the final section of this introduction, these chapters explore, challenge, and certainly complicate the powerful assumption in the field of educational foundations that schools are inherently conservative institutions that, seemingly inevitably, reinforce the dominant structures of a given social order. By exploring revolutionary pedagogies and pedagogical revolutions from these interdisciplinary and transnational perspectives, this collection suggests new ways of considering the foundations of education in the worlds of the past, present, and future.

REVOLUTION

The revolutions examined in these chapters include social forces and political changes that transform structures, anticolonial movements that challenge external authorities by asserting national interests, state-directed transformations that impose "modernization" on "traditional" societies, and radical movements within ruling groups that pursue new directions of change from inside the dominant order. The category of revolution encompasses all these patterns because the category itself encompasses multiple meanings, processes, and outcomes. The Russian revolution in 1917, the establishment of Filipino independence, or the modernization of Turkey are large-scale transformations; the decision to educate girls, the act of writing by a political captive, learning a traditional approach to drumming, or putting a uniform on a teacher are small-scale changes. Yet, they are all revolutionary, because they each involve a transformation—or a reproduction in a different context—of an established or imposed order. To appreciate the complexity of this category, this section provides the contextual background needed to understand the case studies while also highlighting distinct features of each revolution.

In the case of the Russian revolution (chapter 2), E. Thomas Ewing focuses on two texts produced on either side of two revolutionary divides: Moscow schoolteacher E. Kirpichnikova's article preceded the 1917 revolution that ushered in a fundamentally new political system, while educator

A. Savich's 1939 article appeared a decade after Joseph Stalin's "revolution from above" resulted in even more far-reaching changes in Soviet society and culture. The comparison of these two articles reflects, on the one hand, the continuity of discourse that transcended revolutionary transformations, as both authors dealt with the similar question of how schools could pursue equity while recognizing apparent differences between boys and girls. On the other hand, such a comparison also illustrates how the major changes of the Russian revolution found expression on the more subtle level of "taken-for-granted" assumptions. Whereas Savich wrote with confidence that coeducation was necessary because it was consistent with the goals of socialism, Kirpichnikova's article was part of a real debate about coeducation in the face of entrenched conservative opposition and government reluctance to pursue such a seemingly revolutionary change. While neither the 1917 revolution nor Stalin's "great break" had gender equity as an objective, these articles demonstrate how revolutionary changes in political and ideological spheres had indirect, yet equally significant, repercussions in the pedagogical realm. Even here, revolution and pedagogy maintained their contradictory relationship, as a dramatic reversal in public policy—from actively opposing to strongly supporting coeducation—stood in sharp contrast with persistent similarities in pupil behavior and teacher practices.

Cati Coe (chapter 4) also takes up the challenge of interpreting institutional revolutions. In Ghana, the impetus for educational change came in part from a change in the regime, even as the intentions and implications of the new leadership were constrained by the extent of compliance, coordination, or resistance at the local level. This revolution began with the seizure of power in 1981 by the Provisional National Defence Council (PNDC), which replaced a succession of military governments that had governed Ghana for most of the two decades following independence from British colonial rule. During the period covered in this chapter, the PNDC combined anticolonial and anti-Western rhetoric with neoliberal accommodations to the demands of global capital and deliberate efforts to extend government power domestically. Ghana thus provides a case study of an institutional revolution, in which schools become instruments intended to reinforce, rather than challenge, the interests of an elite. As this chapter also demonstrates, however, the effort to use cultural policies to achieve definite aims remained dependent on existing structures, relations, and interactions. While the Ghanaian government may have seen culture as a sphere independent of global economic forces, and thus more susceptible to control by a government searching for markers of authenticity, Coe's interviews with teachers, observations of classroom rituals, and close reading of texts demonstrate the persistent contradictions of this revolutionary context.

Twentieth-century Turkey provides a different model of institutional revolution. As chapter 6 by Yucel Demirer clearly demonstrates, however, the process of change was neither unilinear nor all-inclusive. In the new Turkish republic that emerged following the Ottoman defeat in World War I, a series of state-initiated reforms pushed a radical "Westernizing" agenda in such spheres as religion, women's rights, and education. The ideology of

“Kemalism” that emerged in the 1930s and persisted for decades to follow combined populist nationalism with state-directed economic modernization, cultural secularization, and social transformation. In order to promote a new Turkish national identity, however, the government deliberately, and at times forcibly, suppressed alternative identities perceived as obstacles to this modernizing agenda. The tensions of the revolutionary project thus found expression in the contradictory location of the Kurdish minority, for whom the suppression of rights and the denial of opportunity served as a stimulus for strengthened national identity and broader dissatisfaction with the state-building project. As Demirer indicates, the articulation of national identities through a public discourse of celebrations illustrates the dilemmas of an institutional revolution, which acquires authority only to the extent it persuades the population of the legitimacy of promised transformations.

In his discussion of popular pedagogies as forms of political engagement, William Westerman discusses societies ranging from the avowedly revolutionary, such as Cuba in the early 1960s and Nicaragua in the early 1980s, through societies undergoing dramatic social changes, such as nineteenth-century Denmark and the southern United States in the 1960s, to those governments that forcibly suppressed radical pedagogies, such as Brazil in the 1960s and 1970s. Westerman’s study begins with a Danish movement to define a national identity in opposition to its dominant neighbors and consistent with democratic, egalitarian, and popular ideals. From this perspective, the shaping of a modern nation drew upon and also reinforced the spread of popular schools, which taught children and adults to think of themselves as part of this larger community. A century later, revolutionary governments such as Cuba’s Castro regime or the Sandinistas in Nicaragua drew upon this tradition to make popular education into a means of mobilizing the masses, especially the rural peasants, to support the radical policies of their new government. These regimes sponsored literacy campaigns in which the teaching of basic skills were accompanied by political indoctrination, yet, as Westerman argues, the structure of the lessons mattered as much as the content of the materials. Popular pedagogies also emerged, however, in less conducive environments, including the segregated regime of the southern United States and the military dictatorships of Latin America. In these contexts, where state-supported political and social structures maintained repressive regimes, alternative pedagogies such as the Highlander School in the United States and the “pedagogy of the oppressed” in Latin America attracted followers who saw popular education as a path to political empowerment. While none of these states ever fully realized the principles of the folk school and popular pedagogy movements, the lessons learned by followers became part of the broader cultural, educational, and political context in which these individuals sought to create a better society.

The Filipino struggle for national independence, first against the Spanish and then against the United States, defines the revolutionary context for Roland Sintos Coloma’s study of the life and work of Camilo Osias (chapter 1). The guerilla war waged against Spanish imperialism, which ended in 1898 with annexation by the United States, promoted a growing sense of Filipino

nationalism emphasizing a distinct sense of identity. While United States authorities encouraged certain kinds of national development, they also preserved and even strengthened the existing colonial relationship between indigenous communities and imperial power. The contradictions of these policies were evident in the life of Osias, whose education and career were promoted by specific American policies, such as English-language schools, the *pensionado* program, which sent Filipino students to American colleges, and the creation of an indigenous corps of educators and school administrators. Yet even as Osias and many other Filipinos pursued these opportunities, a distinct national identity emerged that challenged this unequal relationship. The Filipino struggle for national independence was thus a revolution in which indigenous elites drew upon—or “identified with,” in Coloma’s theoretical framework—even as they challenged—or “disidentified with”—this relationship between subordinate actors and dominant forces. The emerging identity of Osias thus provides a means by which to understand the strategies of a subordinate group rebelling against a dominant system with which they share key values and more importantly seek to emulate. Philippine independence in 1946 marked the end of the anti-imperial struggle, yet Filipino national identity continued to be shaped by the legacies of this colonial relationship.

The Egyptian struggle for national independence followed a similar trajectory, as advocates of self-determination challenged English authority even as they sought to build upon certain aspects of this colonial relationship. In chapter 3 by Barak A. Salmoni, multiple revolutionary processes occur simultaneously: the independence campaign begun in 1918 by national leaders known as the *Wafd* (delegation), a cultural revolution intended to overcome “backward” indigenous traditions in pursuit of modernity, and a feminist movement that associated women’s emancipation at home and in society with progress toward national self-determination. In Egypt, as in the case studies discussed in the other chapters, internal as well as external influences shaped revolutionary trajectories. Prominent Egyptians, like nationalist leaders in India, southern Africa, and the Arab world, hoped that the Versailles peace conference would fulfill wartime promises of national self-determination in the colonial sphere. The disillusionment with the European response served to stimulate a nationalist movement that would achieve independence in 1922 and continue to pursue full emancipation from English control over the next three decades. By viewing European power as both the inspiration for and the obstacle to this campaign for national self-determination, Egyptian leaders occupied a contradictory position relative to the outside world. In Salmoni’s discussion of texts by educators such as Huda al-Sha’rawi, Ahmad Lutfi al-Sayyid, Amir Boktor, and Asma’ Fahmi, the contradictions of this revolutionary position were evident in the expectation that a genuine Egyptian woman would be educated in a Western-style school with an Egyptian, Arabic, and Islamic curriculum that would prepare her to serve the nation by becoming an ideal daughter, wife, and mother. Yet, these contradictions should not obscure the significance of these revolutionary appeals for the education of girls and the equality of women in the context of the developing Egyptian national community.

The most contemporary revolutions explored in this collection, involving present-day India and Palestine, share the characteristic of being directed against governments that were themselves established through anticolonial struggles. In his study of Palestinian political captives in Israeli jails, Esmail Nashif examines the period after the first *intifada* (uprising) of the 1980s, when an older “generation” of Palestinian activists imprisoned in the late 1960s and throughout the 1970s were joined by a new wave of younger activists. The Palestinian captive community has broad political objectives—to establish an independent state—but also has more subtle transformative goals—including a redefinition of morality and interpersonal relations within the Palestinian movement, an articulation of alternative identities, and, most importantly for the purposes of this collection, a strategic use of education to resist, evade, or mediate the oppressive power and authority of the prison. Yet the campaigns examined by Nashif work in contradictory ways as well. To the extent that the prison itself becomes a site for transformative practices, both the structures of imprisonment and the agency of captives become forces for change. Revolution thus acquires dual meanings: a political campaign waged by a nationalist movement against an occupying force and a transformative project in which institutional forces as well as personal agency contribute to the formation of alternate subjectivities. By exploring the experiences and language of these political captives, Nashif explores the tensions as well as the potential of revolutions that occur simultaneously on the multiple levels of individual identity, institutional power, and political mobilization.

The Indian case study by Nandini Sundar asks how a state with revolutionary origins has been transformed from within by advocates of a more exclusive vision of political community. Until its removal by the voters in the 2004 elections, India’s government led by the Bharatiya Janata Party (BJP) pursued a Hindu nationalist platform that has departed from the more inclusive and intercommunal approach pioneered by Mahatma Gandhi under British colonialism and sustained to a great extent subsequently by the Indian National Congress. During the half-century after independence, however, alternative political movements, including the Rashtriya Swayamsevak Sangh (RSS), have advocated extreme versions of Hindu identity politics. In chapter 8 by Sundar, the efforts of the RSS to transform Indian education through such instruments as the history curriculum, the creation of alternative schools, and the celebration of sectarian holidays constitute a kind of revolution from within, as a political organization pressures the government to pursue a radical new policy. Sundar’s study demonstrates how the underlying forces that shaped the Russian, Turkish, and Ghanaian revolutions and the struggles for national self-determination by Filipinos, Egyptians, Palestinians, and Kurds remain relevant in the contemporary world. The shift to identity politics, the emergence of nongovernmental organizations, and the structures of globalization have not eliminated fundamental questions of who holds power, whose interests are being served, and what people are willing—or unwilling—to do in order to pursue—or obstruct—significant changes.

PEDAGOGY

Pedagogy incorporates pupil interactions and teachers' practices, textbooks and curricula, celebrations and rituals, and the discourse of educational administrators and policy advocates. Pedagogy thus includes, but also transcends, the classroom and the school. One of the shared goals of these chapters is to follow Christine Heward's lead in moving beyond "structural" issues, such as policy and enrollment, to examine the "social relations" embodied in the pedagogies that occur in revolutionary contexts (Heward 1999, p. 3). In each chapter, therefore, pedagogy is ultimately a matter of relationships: between political captives and prison structures, in chapter 7 by Nashif; between the advocates and opponents of an equal education for girls, in chapters 2 and 3 by Ewing and Salmoni; between the forces promoting a dominant culture and those engaged in various forms of resistance, in chapters 1, 5, and 6 by Coloma, Westerman, and Demirer; or among proponents of different strategies of cultural transmission, in chapters 4 and 8 by Coe and Sundar.

Yet even this outline simplifies relations that are—both in the unique circumstances studied in each chapter and in the collection taken as a whole—illustrative of the layers of complexity inherent in the category of pedagogy. In chapter 4, the focus is on different approaches to teaching and learning culture in contemporary Ghana. Educational reforms implemented by the state made "cultural studies" into a required part of the school curriculum. In this context, however, the effort to use schools to disseminate a definition of culture that legitimated the PNDC and its neoliberal policies conflicted with the multiple definitions of culture articulated and propagated within communities by chiefs, teachers, and other elders. The complex relationship between central state institutions and local authority ensured that schools became sites for struggles, however concealed or denied, over the meaning of "authentic" culture. Approaching schools as spaces in which competing meanings were articulated, enforced, and contested by multiple actors, chapter 4 reveals the complexities of pedagogy in a revolutionary context. By comparing the formal curriculum with behaviors observed in a classroom and with teachers' own explanations of why they acted and spoke in certain ways, Coe deconstructs the pedagogy of cultural studies into its multiple, and to some extent contradictory, elements.

In Nashif's study of Palestinian political captives, the pedagogical context is radically different. Prisons censored information, restricted communication, and made totalizing claims on space, bodies, and behavior. Yet the prison itself became, in the words of former captive Hasan Abdallah, a site for learning that was "far more sophisticated" than the university. In this context, captives developed an approach known as *thaqafah* (culture) to reconstitute, reaffirm, and strengthen Palestinian identity. Reading/writing were located at the center of *thaqafah* as practices that simultaneously refuted the imposed identity of "captive" and asserted the alternative identity of Palestinian national activist. Pedagogy in this context thus refers to a complex set of informal mechanisms of teaching and learning: older captives teaching new arrivals about survival

techniques, captives who spoke foreign languages teaching them to others, lessons in military science that drew on the texts of revolutionary commanders, exposure to liberation texts produced in other contexts, and organized efforts to propagate the distinct ideologies of different Palestinian organizations.

Folk schools and popular pedagogies emerged as efforts to transform societies from below, through processes of teaching others to have faith in their own capacities. In each case examined by Westerman, leaders articulated theories that attracted followers into institutions, movements, and organizations dedicated to radical change: N. F. S. Grundtvig's Folk Schools designed to integrate Danish peasants into a sense of national community, Myles Horton's Southern Mountains School, which taught a generation of American labor activists and civil rights leaders to challenge entrenched structures of political and economic oppression, and Paolo Freire's method of teaching the oppressed to read the word as well as the world. In each case, pedagogy was simultaneously grounded in an immediate social reality while also seeking to transcend and transform the confines of the surrounding context. As Westerman argues, the movement of pedagogies from theory to practice involved both radical challenges to the status quo and gradual accommodations to reconstituted forms of oppression. Yet, the theories themselves mattered, regardless of the outcome, because they placed everyday practices and language at the center of the educational process. In this sense, the suppression of an organization, the end of a school, or the cooptation of a movement become part of a continuing dialogue, as the inspirational principles as well as the cautionary lessons reemerged in other contexts to reaffirm the dialectical relationship between pedagogy and revolution.

Pedagogy also refers to the efforts of "nongovernmental organizations" influence the content and context of education. In contemporary India, a network of private schools, a growing presence on educational boards, and direct control of public organizations allows the RSS to promote an explicitly anti-Moslem and anti-Christian agenda that defines a vision of history and community exclusively Hindu in orientation and composition. Through an exploration of contemporary educational discourse as well as field studies in the Chhattisgarh state, Sundar describes how the RSS and its front organizations disseminate their message of religious supremacy, cultural intolerance, and militant identity. Observations of classroom practices and school rituals, conversations with teachers and parents, and textual analysis of educational materials illustrate Sundar's argument that the RSS is pursuing a revolutionary transformation of and through the schools. The fact that RSS schools are considered temples—a designation articulated and reinforced by behavior, dress, and speech—confirms the extent to which this organization challenges both traditional and modern definitions of public education. Sundar's conclusion offers a more pessimistic evaluation of how revolutionary and pedagogical strategies serve to affirm, even as they conceal, the powerful operations of a hegemonic system.

The broadest definition of pedagogy emerges in the study by Demirer, who focuses on the ways in which elites use cultural traditions to reinforce bonds