

## Editorial

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This issue has been produced against the background of a terrible world scenario, especially in the 'Middle East', characterised by an ongoing genocide of a particular ethnic group and a war that can escalate towards WWII which may well be the war to end all wars and the planet on which it is waged. This situation indeed furnished the global adult education community, and the entire education community for that matter, with a series of pressing challenges.

One is reviving the idea of an Educated Public engaging in well informed debate, predicated on reason and feeling, to address questions from all sides and not simply ethnocentrically.

The debate would be informed by robust research and respect for those agencies that provide it which must be supported and not be made the object of repudiation as had unfortunately been the case with Covid-19. In an age when it is becoming increasingly difficult to separate fact from fiction, often through abuse of the intellect, human or otherwise, this becomes more urgent than ever. The quest for and pursuit of 'truth' remains a key imperative for critical adult education and all education.

Education, and Adult Education, would necessitate communication under democratic conditions at all levels, as Jurgen Habermas, who departed this world while this journal issue went to press, is famous for having written, though recently arousing controversy, among many who revered him, for his jaundiced view of the 'Middle East' situation. Respect for the institution, the UN, created to sustain this global 'public sphere', in the aftermath of two catastrophic World Wars, is necessary. The UN is a key institution which has served, through UNESCO, as an enabler of adult continuing and popular education over the years. The mega rich who currently dominate the world in an era of techno-feudalism, as Yannis Varoufakis calls it, treat this institution with contempt.

Critical education, including critical adult education, would continue to be an antidote for a world when might is portrayed as right and which decrees that the strong flex their muscles and the weak suffer what they must. Under these situations, which have characterised hegemonic powers and their foreign expansionist policies for years, talk of 'democracy' comes cheap and farcical. When any government, which is popularly elected and acts in the interest of the sovereign nation that chose it, is toppled by

colonial covert and overt actions, to gain access to precious resources such as oil, talk of democracy sounds hollow. The post WWII history of 'exporting democracy' through military offensives renders the concept a sham. It is, in many cases, such as Iraq, Venezuela and Iran, a ruse to simply accommodate the demands and geopolitical interests of some, notably the so called 'seven sisters' multinational oil companies.

And yet educators continue to resist and stimulate dreams. They offer a semblance of genuine critical democracy in the pockets in which they operate as has always been the case with popular education, often blurring the boundaries between different age groups in contrast to formalised 'Western' inflected education. Many such examples were presented at the 2025 Critical Adult Learning and Education (CALE 2025) conference in Malta last November. This particular issue of *Convergence. An International Adult Education Journal* comprises some papers originally presented at the conference, namely Roberta Piazza's Keynote and others by Jesus Jaime-Diaz, Sandra Vatrella and Maria Chiara Caló, Ana Luisa Costa, Henrique Vaz and Isabel Menezes and Sabina Barbato. Others from the conference and perhaps also from the annual November UNESCO Chair 'small' seminar will appear in forthcoming issues. This issue also provides us with other material. These include Yasuko Nagai's work on Indigenous people in Australia and Carlo Orefice and Antonio Vigilante's article on Ivan Illich, on this intellectual's Birth Centenary(1926-2026), and Aldo Capitini. The latter's concept of 'Omnicrazia' should resonate in light of the concerns regarding grassroots democracy expressed earlier.

The articles on Indigenous populations, in this issue, bring to mind the superb work of Dip Kapoor from the University of Alberta in Edmonton, Canada. A contributor to *Convergence* in the past, he is well known for his work among 'Southern' Subaltern Social Movements, notably the Adivasi in India. Alas, Dip was taken from this world too soon last year. Ali Abdi, his long time friend and collaborator, pens a tribute to him. In addition, Heribert Hinzen provides a tribute to leading German figure in politics and Adult education, Rita Süßmuth.