Free Spaces and Service Learning
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> I know of no safe repository of the ultimate powers of the society but the people themselves; and if we think them not enlightened enough to exercise control with a wholesome discretion, the remedy is not to take it from them, but to inform their discretion by education.
>
> Thomas Jefferson

Democracy is not only about elections, constitutions, and institutions. It is also about the democratic development of the people. With that broader understanding of democracy in mind, the question is, how can higher education contribute?

The struggle to create a living democracy through education for democracy requires what John Saltmarsh has recently called the shift to civic learning in the service learning world. There are vital traditions to draw on. As higher education institutions like the CSU campuses reclaim their democratic purposes, understanding civic engagement as an identity not a set of activities, the process will generate enormous change in America. Service learning offices can serve as "free spaces" in catalyzing such change.

The following essay addresses this process, in three themes:

Free spaces: First, it outlines the concept of "free spaces" and their role in the tradition of education for democracy.

"Seeing Like a State": Second, it sketches the "technocratic politics" that has come to dominate American society, thwarting the democratic promise.

Service learning and the movement for democracy: Third, it sketches ways service learning offices can act as free spaces for building a movement to overcome technocracy and to renew the promise of democracy.

1) Free spaces: America's great wellspring has been the democratic energy of the people. This energy has taken the form of public work that builds and sustains the

commonwealth – from schools to public universities, libraries to park systems. Democratic energy also has taken shape in broad democratic movements that have arisen to challenge injustices, inequalities, corruptions, and deformations of the democratic promise, seen and unseen. There are stirrings of such a movement again.

In *Free Spaces: The Sources of Democratic Change in America*, Sara Evans and I examined broad democratic movements in American history, asking, how is it that ordinary people, steeped in experiences of subordination, at certain moments and in certain settings develop the courage, spirit, and confidence to assert themselves, to become participants in the affairs of society rather than spectators and victims? What are the roots not simply of movements *against* oppression but more positively of those movements that enlarge opportunities of participants and the vision of democracy?

We looked at the African American freedom struggle, the struggles and campaigns of women for full inclusion in public life, workers efforts to organize, and populist movements among small farmers. In each case, we discovered what we called "free spaces" at the heart of democratic movements. Free spaces can be defined as

> Public places in the life of communities in which people are able to learn a new self-respect, a more assertive collective identity, public and political skills and habits, and values of cooperation, self-reliance, the dignity and sacredness of the person, concern for justice, and concern for the general welfare.

Free spaces are "schools for democracy" owned by participants themselves. They exist on and across the borders of communities and larger networks. They combine face-to-face relationships with public dimensions, involving a mix of people and perspectives beyond one's immediate personal ties. They are infused with norms of egalitarian exchange, debate, openness, and intellectual development. In free spaces, people develop democratic agency. They shift from conceiving themselves as victims or narrow interests, and learn to see themselves as shapers of the world and as citizens.

Free spaces can be found even in settings that seem overwhelmingly oppressive. Thus, for instance, African American slaves in the American south found space in churches and informal religious groups for self-definition, for organizing, and for insurgent cultural alternatives to conventional view of democracy in the midst of extremely brutal circumstances. Christian religious services and practices were originally taught to slaves by slave owners in an effort to break their ties with African roots and socialize them into passive, docile roles. Yet Christianity provided rich materials for strategies for everyday resistance (for instance work songs and Gospel music) as well as far ranging radical democratic visions of a transformed racial and political order. Martin Luther King and others built on this insurgent heritage to claim and to transform definitions of American democracy, freedom, and citizenship.

Our studies illuminated such free spaces through American history. In the 1960s, both Sara Evans and I had also had powerful personal experiences with free spaces at Duke University. Places like the Methodist Student Union and the campus YMCA formed a space that was open, educative, and relational, a radical contrast with the repressive, segregated culture of the South in those years. They were the main places that brought white and black students together in the segregated south. I vividly remember the sometimes electric conversations about segregation, religion, democracy, poverty, and movements in the third world that took place in such spaces. People like Helen Crotwell, long time chaplain of the Methodist Student Union, and Elmer Hall, director of the Y, had mentored generations of students to raise questions, to learn how to organize, and to think broadly.

As we have worked with educational institutions, formal and nonformal, in the Center for Democracy and Citizenship, we have discovered traditions of free spaces that weave through America's educational history.   Sometimes free spaces grew up

from within communities and had immense impact on formal education.

Thus, a vision of education for democracy was powerfully articulated by Jane Addams, co-founder of the Hull House settlement in Chicago which functioned for decades as a free space. Hull House helped to inspire broad movements like the concept of the school as a social center for community life. Addams saw education as about "freeing the powers" of people for public creation and contribution. In her 1902 volume, *Democracy and Social Ethics*, Addams argued that the educator has a role beyond simply informing the student: "We are gradually requiring of the educator that he shall free the powers of each man and connect him with the rest of life. We are impatient to use the dynamic power residing in the mass of humankind, and demand that the educator free that power."

Hull House created strong partnerships with higher education, pioneering in extension classes, helping to shape the scholarship at leading academic centers like the philosophy and sociology departments at the University of Chicago. The most important aspect of all these efforts was their public, open, diverse quality. This public quality included recognition of the need for political diversity: "The Settlement recognizes the need of cooperation, both with the radical and the conservative, and ... cannot limit its friends to any one political party or economic school." It meant that college educated participants were part of a common lot. Contrasting the Settlement philosophy with cloistered colleges, Addams argued that residents of Hull House "feel that they should promote a culture which will not set its possessor aside in a class with others like himself, but which will...connect him with all sorts of people by his ability to understand them as well as by his power to supplement their present surroundings."

Hull House impacted in other ways on public and land grant higher education. Thus Liberty Hyde Bailey, the formative philosopher of the cooperative extension

system who chaired the Country Life Commission outlining the philosophy and plan for extension, or the county agent system across the country, saw cooperative extension as "rural settlements." Its goal was to help generate a movement for rural revitalization. Dean of Agriculture at Cornell, Bailey was also a theorist of education for democracy. He argued that "Every democracy must reach far beyond what is known as economic efficiency, and do everything it can to enable those in the background to maintain their standing, and their pride, and to participate in the making of political affairs."

Bailey's approach was to integrate specialized knowledge into a much more comprehensive vision so that graduates would be able to help sustain and create what were in effect free spaces for democratic education in the communities where they worked after graduation. "Students in agriculture are doing much more than fitting themselves to follow an occupation," he wrote. "They are to take part in a great regeneration. The student in agriculture is fitting himself for a great public work." College-based rural extension workers – county agents in agricultural, home economics, and 4-H -- could play pivotal roles if they helped communities develop their own problem-solving capacities. Bailey continued, "Real leadership lies in taking hold of the first and commonest problems that present themselves and working them out. I like to say to my students that they should attack the first problem that presents itself when they alight from the train on their return from college. It may be a problem of roads; of a poor school; of tuberculosis; of ugly signs along the highways." The point was not mainly the specific problem. Rather, it was the fact that the public work of problem-solving created opportunities to develop community capacities for self reliance and democratic change.

This philosophy spread through many colleges and universities degree programs and professions. It prepared professionals who saw themselves as citizens working with

other citizens to build vital local civic cultures. Thus, Hubert Humphrey traced his political career to the democratic skills and values he learned in his father's drug store in Doland, South Dakota. "In his store there was eager talk about politics, town affairs, and religion," Humphrey wrote in his autobiography, *Education of a Public Man.* "I've listened to some of the great parliamentary debates of our time, but have seldom heard better discussions of basic issues than I did as a boy standing on a wooden platform behind the soda fountain." The store functioned as a cultural center, public space, and lending library because his father was a citizen pharmacist and a citizen businessman. He saw his work as developing the democratic people of Doland. It fed the broad populist and civic movement of the New Deal.

Free spaces like the drug store took many forms, from union storefronts to Rotary clubs. They created a nonpartisan root system schooling people in skills of everyday politics across differences in education, income, and partisanship. They were seedbeds for democratic movements like the civil rights, or freedom movement. The 1960s' freedom struggle built on a vibrant culture of civic development and democratic education that had been nourished for decades in the free spaces of black churches, schools, beauty parlors, and elsewhere. These generated a robust sense of citizenship as co-creation of democratic society. Dorothy Cotton, director of the citizenship schools organized by the Southern Christian Leadership Conference in which I worked as a young man during the freedom movement put this powerful sense of agency simply in a song: "we are the ones we've been waiting for."

2) **"Seeing Like a State":**

> "Would it be dangerous to conclude that the corrupt politician himself, because he is democratic in method, is on a more ethical line of social development than the reformer who believes that the people must be made over by 'good citizens' and governed by 'experts'?" Jane Addams, 1902

The narrowing of democracy that Jane Addams warned about, contrasting the corrupt neighborhood politician with outside experts, has been long-developing and it has been caused by the spread technocratic politics. Working in South African over the last several years, I have seen how technocratic politics has spread around the world, including new, vibrant democracies like South Africa's. The anthropologist James Scott in his important book, *Seeing Like A State* shows the often disastrous consequences for human life of progressive governments that look on ordinary citizens with condescension. Today, technocratic politics shapes our institutions and our definition of democracy throughout America. Higher education has played a key role in this process.

"We all have to follow the lead of specialists," wrote Walter Lippmann, a trendsetter in the early 20th century. In his view, a growing body of opinion "looks to the infusion of scientific method, the careful application of administrative technique." Science was the model for public policy. Technocrats were the model actors. An editorial in *The New Republic* avowed, "the business of politics has become too complex to be left to the pretentious misunderstandings of the benevolent amateur."

These trends became codified in post-war, expert-centered conceptions of democracy. Thus, Seymour Martin Lipset defined democracy as elections in his 1960 work, *Political Man*. "Democracy in a complex society," wrote Lipset, "is a political system which supplies regular constitutional opportunities for changing the governing officials, and a social mechanism which permits the largest possible part of the population to influence major decisions by choosing among candidates." Today, technocratic politics has reached extremes. Major political campaigns use all the techniques of modern marketing to sell the idea that the candidate is a superhero.

A specific paradigm of the citizen undergirds such ideas: the general population, no longer seen as civic producers who need to develop skills, habits, and modes of

democratic thought, are reconceived as clients and consumers serviced by experts. By the 1950s, a service delivery pattern had spread widely. Unions closed neighborhood store front offices. YMCA problem-solving projects were replaced by racquet ball courts.

Key to this process has been a long term shift in the identities and practices of academics and professionals who are trained by them. Thomas Bender describes this shift in *Intellect and Public Life* as the change from what he calls "civic professionalism," in which specialization was an emphasis in a larger, strong civic identity, to "disciplinary professionalism," in which the reference group of professionals became others like themselves. This meant that training in professions such as teaching, business, health, or ministry became disconnected from the histories and cultures of community life. As Bender put it, "In [the] largely successful quest for order, purity and authority, intellectuals severed intellectual life from place."

Thus, for instance, in seminaries, according to Mary Fulkerson, a professor at Duke Divinity School who studies the evolution of theological education, practice courses typically pertain to matters internal to a congregation such as preaching and counseling. The skills and knowledge of engagement with the places in which congregations are located – ways to understand communities' economic and political life, culture, and history; action skills to work with people of diverse doctrines – are missing. When such elements are absent in their education, professionals become one-way service providers, not citizens working with fellow citizens in living places.

Technocratic politics has several expressions on campuses and beyond. It takes the shape of "expert knows best" research that posits the model researcher as detached, objective, and "apolitical." It appears in approaches that treat students as customers to be entertained and amused, generating a culture on campuses that sometimes has disastrous consequences such as bing drinking and date rape. It

emerges in pedagogies that treat students as passive recepticals to be “filled up” with facts and information, with little or no attention to what they bring or how they might function as co-creators of their education.

Perhaps most subtly but with damaging consequences for civic life, technocratic approaches take the form of pity and solicitude toward those seen as poor and powerless victims in need of rescue. Such a politics can shape service experiences as apprenticeships for professionalized service delivery. All of us are familiar with this charity approach in service.

Finally, technocratic politics also appears in much of student activism on campuses today in which the “organizer” remains firmly in control and politics is seen as the struggle of good against evil. As I describe in my recent book, *Everyday Politics,* issue organizations based on the canvass all use a formula developed in 1974:

- Focus on concrete, winnable issues;
- Target an enemy who can be used to dramatize and personalize the issue;
- Mobilize forces for change through highly emotional appeals.

The canvass embodies a view of politics as a zero-sum struggle over scarce resources pitting the forces of innocence against the forces of evil. In citizen action groups like ACORN or Clean Water Action or the PIRGs, narrowly scripted issue campaigns and a rigid ideological stance dominate. Public leadership development that teaches students to understand the narratives and interests of those with whom they disagree is slighted. The open, diverse political atmosphere of places in the Hull House tradition disappears.

Typically, canvassers are given a prepared script to deliver along with a nightly fundraising quota; they also solicit signatures for petitions. It is extremely hard work. Canvassers talk constantly about the “burnout” that comes from such scripted, narrow, and often manipulative encounters with citizens. During the summer, tens of thousands

of young people canvass, and a remarkable number of those who try it quit within a few days – fifty or sixty percent, at least. Still, large numbers survive the initial experience and go on to participate in a canvass culture. Though there has been no systematic analysis of the effects of the canvass on the public, the canvassers, or the broader political culture, the scale of the door-to-door canvass is so vast it seems likely to be significant. Columbia University's Dana Fisher, formerly a director of the national PIRG canvass, estimates that at least 150,000 young people, mostly college students, survive the initial cut each year. At Princeton 10 percent of the student body has canvassed. In Pennsylvania, as many as 15-20 percent of public university students may have tried it. Conservatively, over the last generation this amounts to 3.5 million people who have canvassed. More broadly, this kind of politics has come to structure the organizing around issues across the spectrum. Every issue gets posed as a question of good versus evil, left and right. We need a different and genuinely democratic politics.

3) **Service learning and the movement for democracy**

> "The world is deluged with panaceas, formulas, proposed laws, machineries, ways out, and myriads of solutions. It is significant and tragic that almost everyone of these proposed plans and alleged solutions deals with the structure of society, but none concerns the substance – the people. This, despite the eternal truth of the democratic faith that the solution always lies with the people."
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> Saul Alinsky, *Reveille for Radicals* 1946

Saul Alinsky in 1946, like Jane Addams in 1902, anticipated the growth of technocratic politics that replaces the "the democratic faith" with "myriads of solutions," structures rather than people. The challenge today, if we are to renew the democratic faith, is to create 21st century versions of free spaces like the Humphrey drug stores or the campus ministries in the segregated south. There is no quick fix but there are noteworthy beginnings. I am convinced that service learning offices can be examples.

Three elements are key.

Spreading everyday politics of public work

> "Our kids generally come into Public Achievement feeling hopeless about the tremendous problems they see in their communities -- drugs, crime, prostitution. Public Achievement unleashes hope in kids that they can actually take action to change things."
>
> Joe Groves, Teacher, Minneapolis

For eighteen years, the Humphrey Institute's Center for Democracy and Citizenship and its colleagues have translated lessons from successful broad-based citizen organizing into other contexts based on the strategic assessment that educational institutions and social services now stifling civic agency are potential seedbeds for democratic renewal. The work began with the observation that a new generation of citizen organizations in networks like the Industrial Areas Foundation (IAF) holds important but unnamed lessons for creating free spaces for democratic education and a different kind of politics.

These networks – the IAF, Gamaliel Foundation, Pacific Institute for Community Organization and others – include 133 local organizations, made up of approximately 4,000 member institutions, with more than two million families involved. They incorporate a mix of groups – Catholic, Jewish, Muslim, Protestant congregations, schools and unions. They address issues of concern to low-income and working class populations like schools, policing, wages, housing and medical coverage. Such groups depend upon a philosophical, not a partisan politics. They teach the disciplines of work across lines of racial, faith, partisan, and economic difference. Such organizing is seen as different than "mobilizing" on left and right in which organizers define issues, script the action, and use techniques like the canvass to get people out. In broad-based citizen efforts, organizers are coaches while citizen leaders take center stage. Citizen ownership of politics is stressed, based upon respect for public potentials of ordinary people. What is called the "iron rule" counters the condescension of much service-

delivery: “never do things for others what they can do for themselves.”

Partnerships of the Center for Democracy and Citizenship have adapted lessons from such broad based organizing. Key to this has been free spaces in which people have the ability and space to experiment, choose their own issues, undertake real, sustained work on problems, learn everyday political skills of dealing with difference, and develop a lively intellectual culture. In Public Achievement, for instance, teams of young people, ranging from elementary through high school students, work over months on a public issue they choose in teams that are conceived as free spaces. They are coached by adults, who help them develop achievable goals and learn political skills such as power-mapping, one on one interviewing, chairing meetings, and teamwork with others who are not their buddies. Teams address a large range of issues, including teen pregnancy, racism, violence, and school curriculum. They discuss broad political concepts such as power, self-interest, citizenship, and public work.

Service learning networks on campuses are often full of opportunities for students, staff, and faculty to learn the skills and habits of everyday public work politics. But it takes an explicit challenge to the apolitical stance of some service learning, as well as more self-conscious work by service learning staff as “democracy coaches.”

These dynamics have become clear at Colgate University, a liberal arts school in Hamilton, New York, that has integrated everyday politics of public work into the student affairs and student life programming at Colgate. Led by Adam Weinberg, dean of the college, Colgate decided to move beyond a focus on civic values to focus also on political skills and habits. Conversations with students had made it clear that students cared about community life. The lapse was in student skills. “Our students lacked the basic skills needed to do the work of democracy,” Weinberg explains. These include, in part, public speaking, active listening, conflict resolution, negotiation, and organizing. To

teach such skills students also needed a much more robust definition of democracy, citizenship, and politics. Student discourse reflected contemporary wisdom: democracy is either formal structures or apolitical acts of charity. "We wanted students to understand democracy as something they were responsible for producing." Colgate developed a comprehensive civic education effort built around civic engagement as the everyday politics of public work and democracy as a society, not simply elections.

To effect this has required a self-conscious challenge to the service paradigm that took hold in students affairs work in the 1970s. "Our fixation on services has turned our campuses into fancy hotels," writes Weinberg. "For this generation of students, the services and programming model reinforces the tendency to see entitlements when they should see responsibilities, to be focused on achievements when they should be driven by personal development, and to be over-programmed consumers of services when they should be reflective producers of educational outcomes." Weinberg argues that "Living in a democracy [means] learning to live and work with people you may not like." Thus, "We remind students that the roommate who is 'driving them crazy' will someday be their neighbor, family member, co-worker, or ally on a local issue." Colgate changed the role of residential advisor from someone who delivers programs and adjudicates conflicts and complaints to that of democracy "coach," working with students to address the everyday problems that erupt all the time, in increasingly diverse residential halls. Colgate is developing residential advisors as community organizers. "Rather than asking them to think of themselves as rule enforcers or problem solvers, we want our RAs to think of themselves as coaches who organize teams of students in their units to tackle problems. We want them to get students to feel ownership and to take self-directed actions to build community."

Weinberg gives the example of a late night noise fight on a residential hall floor.

"Under the old student services model, we responded like a hotel responding to complaints…With the democracy education model, we talk to students about the expectations of living in a community in a democratic society. We get them to work with each other to be problem solvers."

The service delivery mentality in student affairs can apply to service learning programming on the academic affairs side as well. "There are large pressures to become technocrats in service learning," one service learning director at the CSU conference told me on March 4. "We will have to work in new ways to become political educators and coaches who see students as co-producers of democratic change and their own learning experiences."

Developing civic professionals

Service learning can also be a learning context for developing lasting civic identities in which students learn to think of themselves as citizens first and specialists second, contributing to the civic life of their communities as a core dimension of their future work. The seeds of this are found in ideas such as learning communities and sustained, reciprocal partnerships that involve communities and people from higher education. These begin to create living democratic experiences.

We have seen such democratic experiences at work on a large scale in the Jane Adams School for Democracy, a learning and public work partnership in the West Side neighborhood of St. Paul. The Jane Addams School and the broader West Side Neighborhood Learning Community that has developed from it is a partnership with Hmong, Latino, and East African communities. More than 1000 students from area colleges and universities have participated in the Jane Addams School since 1997.

In the Jane Addams School, students learn to think of themselves as "members" not students doing "service projects." The theme is that "everyone is a learner and

everyone is a teacher." This creates a sharply different experience of co-learning and co-creation. It also has generated different thinking about professional practice generally. Jane Addams School has spawned a neighborhood wide initiative in which the whole community and its institutions – from parents to libraries, businesses, community organizations, and nonprofits – have claimed authority for the education of children. Many new forms of collaboration have emerged. For instance, in the summer of 2004 seventeen youth and community organizations collaborated to design, fund and coordinate a nine week summer day camp, and neighborhood residents and parents were among the teachers hired to run various learning modules. The camp emphasized community locations, topics and resources. A West Sider Educators' Institute shows teachers the resources of community life.

Other partnerships suggest possibilities for students learning democratic professional practices and identities through whole professions, with careful attention to the relational learning involved. For instance, the efforts of William Doherty, a professor of family social science and his students have learned to function as democratic organizers with families on issues like over-scheduling, media violence, the pressures of consumerism and other destructive cultural trends, show how professionals can make contributions to citizens' reclaiming civic authority. Their partnerships, Families and Democracy, have discovered that developing democratic professional practice requires careful mentoring. It is not mainly "book learned." It involves skills of listening, understanding community life, developing political talents, and, most subtly, professionals' developing a new, deeper civic identity. It also involves making explicit the tacit political and civic skills of those already engaged in public professional work. These partnerships have also begun to generate seedbeds for civic agency, with large political and democratic potential. For instance, the Community Based Parent Education

initiative undertaken with the parent educators network in Minnesota – which each year involves more than 250,000 parents of young children in parent education classes -- has developed an approach that enriches parent education with strong public dimensions. Its mission is to develop the capacities of parents for deliberation and public work on issues related to their children's well-being. Parent educators and parents have found that every issue of parenting – from toilet training to bed times and aggressive behaviors – have public dimensions that can be acted on by individuals and groups. A project with the department of Family Practice and Community Medicine in the university's academic health center called "citizen health care" has recently gained attention nationwide from family practitioner departments that want to begin to spread it across the country. These are the core principles of Citizen Health Care:

1. The greatest untapped resource for improving health care is the knowledge, wisdom, and energy of individuals, families, and communities who face challenging health issues in their everyday lives.

2. People must be engaged as co-producers of health care for themselves and their communities, not just as patients or consumers of services.

3. Professionals can play a catalytic role in fostering citizen initiatives when they develop their public skills as citizen professionals in groups with flattened hierarchies.

4. If you begin with an established program, you will not end up with an initiative that is "owned and operated" by citizens. But a citizen initiative might create or adopt a program as one of its activities.

5. Local communities must retrieve their own historical, cultural, and religious traditions of health and healing, and bring these into dialogue with contemporary medical systems.

6. Citizen health initiatives should have a bold vision (a BHAG--a big, hairy, audacious goal) while working pragmatically on focused, specific projects.

Service learning experiences when they are conceived and organized as preparation for professions that work *with* others to solve problems and build communities not provide services and solutions *to* needy clients or customers have

enormous potential to spread models like these. Service learning can become a seedbed for politics that transforms the technocratic patterns that now rule America.

Creating public forums

Finally, we need a wide-ranging debate about what democracy means. Like earlier democratic movements this will require free spaces in which people can analyze and challenge conventional wisdom. Service learning offices are strategically located to help stimulate and spread such discussion and debate. Taking up this challenge will require such offices overcoming their sometimes therapeutic, protective stance toward students. Service learning offices need to welcome the opportunities created by the inevitable tensions, conflicts of views and interests inherent in community connections to prepare students for action and leadership in the rough and tumble of public life.

Democratic peoplehood was once summed up in the United States by the term commonwealth. Four states are official commonwealths, but it isn't just a form of government. Commonwealth means becoming a democratic people as we undertake the practical work involved in creating and taking care of the things we have in common, from schools to libraries, parks to universities.

Today, the loss of democracy's meanings is illustrated by the fact that though President Bush rhetorically champions democracy in the world, democratic development and the commonwealth are missing from his vision of an "ownership society." Plans to privatize parts of Social Security and abolish the estate tax focus on "me" rather than "we."

A deep understanding of democracy is also absent from the Democrats' message. The Clinton administration's "reinventing government" program redefined citizens as government's "customers." In a dubious sign of progress, congressional Democrats in a retreat in the winter of 2005 heard from Berkeley linguist George Lakoff, who argues

that the liberal message should be "government as nurturant parent." His frame turns citizens into children.

Millions of citizens became active in the 2004 election for the first time based on their desire to turn the country around. Most saw the campaign as a beginning, not an end, but the nation remains sharply divided. To take the next steps, it is necessary to remember, discuss, and debate earlier meanings of democracy and to forge public relationships across the "blue-red" divide to revitalize democracy as a way of life, not simply as elections. By 2008, we need hundreds of campuses where students, staff and faculty challenge any candidate from any party who declares his or her intent to fix our problems for us and who treats us simply as customers and clients.

Higher education can't do this alone. Diverse strands of democratic ferment that renew, explicitly or implicitly, a larger concept of democracy as the work of free citizens, not simply government, are necessary allies in this process. Such movements include democratic professional practice like Families and Democracy (see http://www.findarticles.com/p/articles/mi_m0AZV/is_4_41/ai_97724253); broad citizen organizing, as well as the new movement for place making (see for instance http://www.industrialareasfoundation.org and also www.pps.org); the movement for civic environmentalism; the movement for sustainable agriculture; the movement to restore balance in work and family life (see http://www.simpleliving.net/timeday/), and many others (see www.cpn.org for an overview, as well as the web site of the Center for Democracy and Citizenship, www.publicwork.org).

These are global questions. Although the United States professes to be the world's tutor on democracy, in fact other societies have much to teach us. In South Africa, a left-leaning government with pressures to deliver on problems like poverty, housing, joblessness, and HIV/AIDS, sometimes evidences extreme forms of the

technocratic mindset. But global leadership in a new democratic politics may also come from South Africa, whose history of deep, community-level politics during the long anti-apartheid struggle continues to nourish robust alternatives (see www.idasa.org.za).

Thus, public intellectuals such as Jeremy Cronin, Edgar Pieterse, Nomboniso Gasa, Xolela Mangcu, Peter Vale and others are outspoken critics of what Black Consciousness leader Mangcu calls “technocratic creep,” the service delivery paradigm that eclipses the agency of ordinary people. In housing, according to Mangcu, “a bricks and mortar approach [has] dominated the urban discourse…The result is a supply-side housing policy that focuses on the number of houses to be built with very little regard for demand side issues such as employment, quality, and community building. Poor people now live in remote RDP houses that are worse than apartheid matchbox houses.” Mangcu calls for an alternative everyday politics, pointing to examples from South Africa’s struggle history as well as recent practice.

One key feature of everyday politics in South Africa is the development of professionals who work *with* people, not simply deliver services *to* them. *Voices of the Transition*, a lively study of South Africa’s democratic changes since 1994, illustrates such practices. For instance, Metsi Makhetha, formerly with the Housing Ministry, questions the growing emphasis on evaluation, as conventionally understood, in development. “I continue to ask myself elementary questions…that lurk beneath the surface of scientific rigour and objective control,” she says, “questions about the utility of ‘objective indicators’ when we are dealing with the complex and fluid dimensions of associational life of ordinary people in their variable contexts.” Makhetha calls for collaboration with poor people in designing sustainable communities.

Higher education has a crucial role to play in an information age by creating conversations that make clear the links among diverse movements here and around the

world that have philosophies of living democracy but different languages for describing it. This requires the ability to generate discussions with the spirit of Jane Addams -- open and pluralist, welcoming diverse views and interests.

There is an urgency to this challenge. Today, “the Mall of America” is generally seen as a shopping center in Minnesota, rather than that great theater of democracy in front of the Lincoln Memorial in Washington where generations of citizens deepened democracy’s meaning. As T.S. Eliot put it, we have lost wisdom in knowledge, and knowledge in information.

"What is wealth?" "What is politics? “ What is a good life and a good society?" "What are the benefits and dangers of globalization?” “What is America’s proper role in the world?” “What is the constructive role of the market – and what are its limits?” “What is the proper role of government?” “How can we deal with exploding costs of entitlement programs in ways that highlight their intergenerational civic convenant, not simply their private benefits?” “What is a citizen?" “What is democracy?” Such questions need to fill our campuses and our communities beyond them, through discussions and debates in teach ins, town meetings, forums, coffee conversations, book clubs, dorm discussions. I believe service learning offices can become seedbeds for developing philosophy of a new democracy. They need to rise to the role of architects of intellectual conversation about the largest questions of our age.

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