POLITICAL EDUCATION 101 PRIMER

CENTER FOR CONSTITUTIONAL RIGHTS

True political education doesn't happen in isolation, it is most effective communally.

Political Education as defined by maya finoh

An approach rooted in the study and analysis of the social, political, and economic forces at play in our world(s): through the act of raising critical consciousness, political education underpins movements. Political education is the first step towards collective action.

Critical Consciousness, *developed through political education*, is an awareness not only of the structural realities that impact you, but also an understanding of your own capacity/agency to play a part in the ongoing struggle for collective liberation.

Political Education in Practice

collective action
participating in transformative social change

political education
study and analysis

critical consciousness
understanding your own agency

historical movement examples of political education:

The Combahee River Collective Pamphlet

A new framework for liberation: The Combahee River Collective Statement advanced "interlocking oppressions" and an identity politics rooted in the material conditions of marginalized people's lives.

Organizing against violence: In 1979, Combahee circulated a self-protection and resource pamphlet after a series of murders of Black women and girls in Boston's Roxbury neighborhood received little media attention. They later organized a rally and memorial.

Black feminist organizing: In the 1970s, working-class Black lesbian feminist socialists organized for a politics that confronted racism, sexism, homophobia, and capitalism together.

Mississippi Freedom Schools

Education as liberation: In the early 1960s, fewer than 5% of Black Mississippians had graduated high school due to generations of racist barriers to education.

A movement at scale: By the end of Freedom Summer in 1964

50+ Freedom Schools

2,100+ Mississippians Reached

Students as co-creators: SNCC designed Freedom Schools around a participatory model where teachers and students created knowledge together, influenced by organizer Ella Baker.

"The major job was getting people to understand that they had something within their power that they could use, and it could only be used if they understood what was happening and how group action could counter violence."
— Ella Baker

PRINCIPLES OF POLITICAL EDUCATION AT THE CENTER FOR CONSTITUTIONAL RIGHTS

1. The purpose of political education is to develop a foundation of shared theoretical analysis and sociopolitical understanding of what is happening to our people and why, so that we can most effectively work together to overcome it.

2. A shared understanding of society is a necessary preparation to actively work towards transformative social change. Political education is a vital aspect of one's movement work, as Assata Shakur said, **"theory without practice is just as incomplete as practice without theory."**

3. Political education draws from the practices of popular education to meet audiences/students where they're at, ensure familiarity at all levels, assume collective expertise, and believe in the capacity of all to participate in shared learning.

4. Political education is a rigorous practice that is historically deep and geographically broad.

5. Political education is a communal process of deepening our collective critical consciousness that requires shared spaces of learning and provides opportunities for individual study and reflection.

PE&R HUB AT CCR

The political heart of CCR, the Political Education & Research team disseminates grounded political analysis and conducts movement-directed, in-depth human rights research. Rooted in CCR's long history of fighting for justice alongside communities under threat, the team also develops advocacy resources such as fact-sheets, curricula, messaging guides, white papers, and coordinates public educational programming.

How can I work with the PE&R hub?

I need support with creating a syllabus that folks in my collective can use to study together...

We can support you with the development and design of a bespoke curriculum! We can tailor it to focus on a particular social movement, political theory, or historical moment.

I'm interested in planning an educational event with CCR that encourages community building and reflection. We need more third spaces!

We can collaborate with you on a variety of public programming such as teach-ins, webinars, film screenings, and in-person panel discussions. We also occasionally hold classes and political education workshops too! (Check out ROOTED, our latest series! Class recordings, worksheets, and resources are available on the course website at arootedtoolkit.com).

We have some research needs! We'd like to document some human rights violations/abuses and we need additional support to take this project on.

We can guide and conduct movement-directed, in-depth human rights research rooted in a commitment to social and political transformation.

We have an idea to bring a group of activists, scholars, and artists together to learn from each other and build relationships of solidarity

We can coordinate convenings, roundtables, and solidarity study tours with you.

What other kinds of advocacy materials do you all create?

We can co-create FAQs, emergency briefings, primers, messaging guides, and United Nations (UN) submissions.

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