

DEMOCRACY THROUGHOUT THE SYSTEM

Merrelyn Emery, (1993, 2018)

This part of *Participative Design for Participative Democracy* contains the three original documents in Emery (F's) thinking about extending democratization, the second design principle (DP2) from the small group or organization level to the integrated enterprise, whole system and governmental level. The first paper is extracted from his most recent thinking published as *Towards Real Democracy*, 1989. In his introduction to this new volume Emery writes:

“Twenty and more years of experience with worker participation in industry has radically changed the perspective both for democracy and for the role of adult education. The change in the first perspective is immensely more important - a change that suggests that the democratic process of ‘government by the people’ might actually become a true ‘university of life’. This is not a theoretical paper. It is concerned with extrapolating to politics from practical experiences in the democratization of work. (p.iv)”

Thus the nexus of adult education and participative democratic structures is highlighted. If adult educators, and indeed all educators, are not concerned about promoting organizational environments which automatically produce learning, they will have to be content with knowing that they are aiming only for second best, always attempting to fill in the gaps and redress the damage done by structures inimical to learning.

The ‘Adaptive Systems’ paper marked the high point of a trip to India at the request of Professor Nitish De, sponsored by the National Labour Institute, New Delhi. In typical style, all the critical questions and issues raised and the first answers provided appear to have stood the test of time.

Following its presentation, we visited several sites in India only to find that India had its own indigenous examples of the jury system being applied to management in industry. It was clearly an idea whose time had come once again, and it demonstrated once again the spontaneous and simultaneous springing up of initiatives around the globe, as intuitive adaptive responses to needs created by a changing environment.

The experience was similar to discovering firstly in bits and pieces that the world’s oldest continuing culture, that of Aboriginal Australia, was based on DP2. Parts of India also had either never left DP2 or were reverting to it as needs dictated. Many had realized that there had been a significant cultural deterioration since the British brought them DP1 and were deliberately looking for modern ways to recover.

The third paper was a submission to the Minister for Industry and Commerce following the report of the Jackson Committee on manufacturing industry. It addresses the actual structure and operation of an industry council as a participative rather than representative democratic body. As such it serves as an example or analogue for other purposes.

In the fourth article, the principles, rules and logistics of the jury system are elaborated as they would need to be in the political or governance arena. Together, they form a set of basic guidelines for the extension of participative democracy from the single organization to the total societal infrastructure - the need for which was outlined in the first paper of this volume, the Agenda for the Next Wave.