ADULT EDUCATION COUNCILS

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ADULT EDUCATION COUNCILS

BY RUTH KOTINSKY

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Foreword

The Social Relevance of Councils

ADULT education councils are not isolated social phenomena, without precedent and without setting. Individuals and representatives of local organizations interested in adult education do not come together to carry forward common purposes entirely without patterns of similar cooperative activity in other areas, nor do they gather without stimulus in the particular conditions and temper of the times.

These councils have some antecedents reaching back into the dawn of history, as well as some very recent examples to follow. From the beginning of time men have held councils—councils for ceremonial purposes, and councils called to determine what to do in the face of threat or danger. The ceremonial councils of the primitives bespeak the gregariousness of man, his sense of enhanced prestige from feeling himself a recognized member of a group with an intimate place and share in the common life, his warm and glowing reaction when he finds himself rubbing shoulders assuredly with "his own." Councils of war, in contrast, and councils held to determine action in the face of famine and plague, connote early recognition of the values that lie in pool-

ing the suggestions of the wise before taking definitive action in important common affairs. No one man can decide alone what to do; his experience is limited, he may overlook essential relevant factors, his judgment may be in other ways erroneous. Before embarking upon a plan with much at stake, it is surer and safer to garner the experience and judgment of all who may have something valuable to contribute. Furthermore, the warriors who must fight in a campaign and the subchieftains who must lead in a migration should have their say in arriving at a decision and giving it its form; otherwise there may be disaffection among the leaders and consequently much individual suffering and great peril to the common good.

Remote and dissimilar as these tribal powwows may seem from the regular meetings of the local adult education council (hurried executives with other things on their minds, luncheon of something and peas, speech on a topic seemingly irrelevant to the crucial issues of life), ancient powwow and modern council nonetheless do have certain common elements. Ceremonial aspects are not lacking in the latter; those engaged in adult education like to come together with their fellows. It gives them a sense of belonging, a consciousness of the way in which their endeavors are shared by others. Their stature is increased and their activities given wider import in their own eyes by the mere exchange of experience, just by gathering together, becoming acquainted, and speaking with one another.

Nor are councils of adult education formed without some stimulus in the common environment. The tribal powwow is called when war or famine threatens; something must be done which can be done better after the taking of common counsel. The adult education council likewise forms and meets in re-

sponse to some far less clearly defined and tangible but none the less real sense of difficulty. Almost automatically, a notion arises to the effect that the problem can best be defined and a program of action formulated to solve it through the cooperative effort of all concerned, rather than by each working alone, hampered by limitations in experience, insight, and outlook. If everybody who feels the same uncertain disquietude shares his sense of it with others, perhaps it can be given a name, perhaps it can be nailed for what it is, and perhaps something can be done about it.

In this councils of adult education are not unlike other modern phenomena of their kind. There are housing councils, consumer councils, community planning councils, councils of social agencies, councils on the problems of the foreign born, national research councils, and so on, in a long list that reaches beyond ready enumeration; people interested in the same problems come together to think through to a working consensus, to plan and act in harmony, if not in unison. Usually they take this step in response to some confusion of mind, some uncertainty as to how to proceed when confronted by the demands of a new situation.

But though these contemporary councils—of housing, or consumers, or adult education, or whatever—have ceremonial aspects and express common efforts in the face of uncertainty, other characteristics distinguish them sharply from their primitive prototypes. The tribal council was a traditional institution. When it met to decide upon and plan a military campaign, all the adult male population gathered together; all were warriors, and all belonged to one tribe. The object in view was clear, and the methods for attaining it were in the main ready to hand, having been devised in the course of tribal experience and trans-

mitted from generation to generation. As modern society is organized, the having and holding of councils is far more complex and difficult.

The modern council, for example, has to be created; it has not existed from time immemorial, a universally accepted institution, replenishing its membership gradually as one generation gives way to the next in endless succession. It must devise its own methods of attack upon the problems that confront it, and these problems themselves are nebulous and awkward to grasp, abstract and difficult to translate into immediate action. Primitive man knew no such novel problems and he had an already established council and procedure for dealing with the limited variations in the kind of common threats he encountered—a council which maintained its basic *modus operandi* by a tradition only minutely modified with the passing of the centuries.

Baldly stated, the primary fact that councils now have to be consciously and deliberately brought into being seems scarcely worth mention. Yet it implies the crucial aspects of the whole development of councils in the contemporary social scene. For it means that the culture of an industrialized society offers insufficient ready-made channels through which those who share related interests and responsibilities may come to know one another, become aware of their community of concerns, and work together toward the solution of their common problems. This holds true for all individuals and groups; adult education workers are but one example. Though they all share one of the community's essential tasks they are strangers to one another; and though they all labor in adjacent institutions they are still without means of intercommunication and cooperation. When they form councils they are deliberately attempting to offset this

handicap, and councils are hence socially significant in origin, in that they represent a conscious attempt to build into society a type of structure which now it lacks.

A second characteristic which differentiates the modern council from its primitive antecedents is likewise related to the fragmentation of contemporary society. No tribal warrior, hunter, or tiller of the soil could fail to sense his relationship to others engaged in similar work. Among those engaged in adult education, in contrast, there is much disparity in background and training, much difference in type of activity and immediate objective, much variation in institution and agency, medium and method through which each works. Consequently, none is sure just what it is that he shares with others who, like him, respond with a sense of belonging to the term "adult education." The museum director and librarian, the vocational night school principal and teacher of English to foreigners, the forum leader and home demonstration agent find it difficult to define just what it is they all have in common, other than that adults are supposed to learn one thing or another as a result of their ministrations. All of their activities went on before the term "adult education" came into general use as a category supposed to blanket them all. All respond "Present!" when the adult education roll is called. But just what it is that they as a group are attempting to further stands as an aching confusion somewhere deep in consciousness, seldom even brought forth for examination, criticism, and inquiry.

This confusion of thought is one of the factors bringing them together—this frustration in the definition of sufficiently inspiring ultimate purposes, shared by all. Perhaps together they will succeed better than they have succeeded alone in laying hold on

that to which their lives are to all intents and purposes dedicated, to which they give the best hours of their days and the cream of their energies. And after they have defined these more remote purposes, these effects on the lives of people, these improvements in ways of living, feeling, doing, they will be in a better position to make their more immediate objectives and their present methods of working more congenial to the one task, now only vaguely felt, which binds them together.

This phenomenon of a group coming together to define common purposes, to discover the elements of cohesion among themselves, is not without its significance in regard to social confusion in general, and the lack of adequate means for developing commonly accepted ends and purposes. The minute division of labor and high degree of specialization characteristic of an industrial society make it difficult to see and feel the worth and bearing of even socially essential tasks. The man who sowed and reaped to feed his tribe or family had an immediate and realizing sense of the portentousness of his activities and of his responsible interdependence with the group looking to him for food. Not so with the migrant agricultural laborer who puts the seed in the ground with an automatic drill and moves on; to him the fact that he plants the food of the world has little meaning. He goes through a mechanical process, first on one field and then on the next, with minimal awareness of the social meaning of his work. In forming councils, and through them seeking common purposes, adult education workers may well be seeking also the social relevance of their activities. The times are troublous; what is the value of our lives and our work in relation to social threat and international turmoil? What is the meaning of what we do to the individuals with whom we are in contact, and what effect does it

have upon the conditions under which they—and we—must seek the satisfactions of existence?

In this connection it is important to note another development: the American Association for Adult Education has only recently embarked upon a program directed toward making the adult education movement a more keenly edged and skillful instrument for increasing awareness of democratic values. As one aspect of this program it proposes "to encourage leaders of high ideals to form community councils, and state and regional associations for adult education." The underlying assumption is that through the meeting of minds on the part of adult education workers the educational experiences of adults may be made to further their awareness of what is at stake as democracy is threatened, of what it is that they may be obliged to relinquish; and the underlying hope is that they will consequently be better able to forestall jeopardies and realize upon promises in the current confused situation. Thus the social significance of councils may relate to their dynamic social effects in the future, as well as to the social nature of their origins and to the social confusions and incoherencies of which they are an index.

It has been the purpose of this study to examine and interpret the history of councils from the point of view of their potentialities. To stop with a critique and appraisal of their success to date would be unjust. Councils are for the most part too young, the great majority of them having come into existence during the past ten years, and their task is in very fact a pioneering venture. Under these circumstances it seems more to the point to seek indices of their success where they may be found, and to summarize difficulties, pitfalls, and failures only in order that they may be avoided by councils now under way or still to be formed.

Furthermore, it has seemed wisest on the whole to attempt to generalize upon the experience of many councils, rather than to cite instances and cases. The reason for this lies only partly in the fact that councils are highly personal institutions, their fate profoundly affected for good or ill by personalities. More important, it is because their inner workings are influenced by multifarious other local factors which make the "particular go" of any given instance inapplicable elsewhere as it stands. Furthermore, it has been impossible to study all councils over the country, and consequently designation of one or another would undoubtedly prove in a sense unfair, since it would omit reference to excellent examples for lack of adequate information.

This does not mean, however, that the statements of this discussion have been made without valid substantiating evidence. Moving spirits—directors, officers, and board members—of more than twenty-five councils have given generously of their time to tell what these councils have been doing; why they were organized; the problems and difficulties of program, finance, organization encountered along the way; and what their own theories, hopes and aspirations were for the particular council to which they were themselves related. Inaccuracies, omissions, and vagaries of interpretation are the responsibility of the reporter, who met everywhere with a helpfulness and sincerity that speaks well for a widespread faith in the values of sharing experience and points of view.

Gathering this information has had joys and rewards beyond the broadening of intellectual horizons; friendships old and new have flourished richly in the discussion of a common interest in adult education and councils formed to further its effectiveness. For all of this—information and ideas about councils, enlighten-

ment on related problems, generous helpfulness far surpassing the requirements of courtesy, and friendships established and reestablished en route—it is impossible to make mere superficial acknowledgment. A deeper appreciation must instead find expression in the lines and spaces of this volume.

The Potentialities of Councils

Purposes and Motives

MOTIVES leading to the formation of councils are mixed and purposes actuating council activities are vague; yet implicit in them lie promising indices of the proper functions of councils and their potential contributions to the adult education movement.

Actually, inquiry regarding the purposes for which a council was initiated almost always gives rise to a moment of blank confusion and some minor embarrassment. "Why get together, why organize, why have officers, constitution and by-laws?" are not questions frequently asked. Organization is a great American habit; it comes by second nature. The question, "For what purpose did you organize in the first place?" sounds about as sensible as "For what purpose did you breathe in the first place?" Despite all the famed individualism of the American public, "Come on, boys, let's all get together" works like a magic password up and down the Main Streets of the New World, and it has undoubtedly wrought wonders of material advancement. "Getting together" has validated itself as a means for building the material basis for a great civilization; it has still to be proved as an effective means

for reaping the human values which such a civilization should make possible. Meanwhile, organization, getting together, establishing formal groups remains a common way of the people, and is no more consciously undertaken or carefully scrutinized than any other culturally accepted pattern of behavior.

Consequently it is relatively easy to initiate a council. All that is necessary is for someone of recognized standing to write a letter saying, "Some of us in town think it would be a good thing to organize a council of adult education. Don't you think so, too? Won't you come to a meeting next Thursday evening a week and bring others who may be interested?" The response is always surprising beyond all expectation; there have been numberless groups and kinds of adult learning activities going on that "nobody has ever heard of." But the small, the humble and the meek, those without publicity and fanfare, in odd corners and hidden back rooms, all hearken to the cry of "Adult education out!" and all assemble eagerly, panting to organize. Everybody comes, and the council is formed on the spot.

Then comes the rub. Now that we have a council, what are we going to do with it? What are its purposes? And how can these purposes best be achieved? What is the council for, and what should it do in order to give body and meaning to the things that it stands for? In more than one instance a council already organized has been obliged to spend considerable time trying to determine what the purposes of its organization were. In bewilderment its members grope to find the intention of their original coming together. Now we are here; we have a council. A council is an instrument for certain ends. But what ends?

More frequently the council group does not confront these questions directly, staring them in the face over any considerable

period. The awful silence is filled with words—comforting and temporarily satisfying. A constitution is hurriedly drawn, complete with a list of purposes. Often the statement of these "purposes" comes readily enough, and seldom does anyone object to them as they are first presented.

This in itself should give some pause to those who sit around the council table. Are all of them really so much of one mind as to what their common purposes are? Have they, working separately in a number of different sections of the field, really arrived at such great unanimity? How did this come to pass, since they had so few previous opportunities to speak and think together, to create among themselves a common understanding of their common task, a working consensus in regard to their cooperative purposes? Wasn't it just for a chance to do some speaking and thinking together, to open the channels of communication among themselves, that they came together in the first place? How does it happen that they have their common purposes already laid out without trouble, without racking of brains or wrangling dissent, without differences or arguments?

The answer is comparatively simple. Statements of "purposes" are couched in such broad and general terms that they may be interpreted to mean anything under the sun, and consequently mean nothing in particular. Usually they are "to increase awareness of the educational needs of adults," or "to build appreciation of adult education as a lifelong process," or "to improve and coordinate the adult education programs of the community." It all seems safe and noble enough. Fine phrases throw no stones; they give rise to no qualms and no resistance on the part of the council's founding fathers. But neither do they provide sufficient guides to action.

The trouble therefore begins when the fine phrases must be translated into program. Now we are a council. Our purposes are written out on paper. How shall we interpret these purposes? What shall we do? Sometimes a council group accepts an interpretation that stops short at a common program of publicity and information-giving, telling adults about all the classes and other educational opportunities available to them, and telling those who must support these programs all that there is of value to support. But more frequently these self-same statements of purpose are interpreted to mean changes and improvements in what is going on, making the adult education program of the community more coherent, fuller, richer, better adapted to serve the educational needs of adults. But how improve, and what constitutes improvement? What are the ultimate purposes of the program, and how may the needs of the adults in the community be defined? The questions are difficult. The problem of interpretation begins all over again. It all seems too much. Everybody starts to seek a way out and resort is ordinarily had to forgetting purposes and concentrating for the time being on mutual acquaintance and the exchange of experience.

It cannot be gainsaid that it is a function of a council to provide for the exchange of experience—after such fashion that the experience of each participant is thereby enriched, and his work therefore goes on with keener sensitivity to all that is involved in it, and with means and ends better correlated. But in a new council, floundering to find its program, the exchange of experience most frequently means a series of testimonial meetings at which each council member reports what his own agency is doing—telling the tale after his own fashion, without reference to the interests of the group as a whole. As a result, everybody

gets a bit bored after four or five meetings, and eventually everybody gets so unutterably bored that attendance dwindles close to the vanishing point. Consternation. What to do?

Well, let's have a survey. When we have facts, then we can act. When we act we'll be moving, presumably toward our purposes, and everybody will be interested again. There usually follows an orgy of indiscriminate fact-finding: sometimes as to what courses are offered to whom by whom and with what degree of response (in terms of numbers of participants); sometimes as to what adults already engaged in some educational enterprise came to get; sometimes as to what adults not now engaged in any educational enterprise think they might like to do, were they to feel themselves moved to join a class, go to a forum, make more use of the local library or museum, or whatever. But after all the facts are in nobody knows what to do with them. Here they are, boys, we have the facts; but what shall we do now? And the weary old round is begun again, the quest for instrumentalities by which the council group once assembled may somehow act together to define and achieve their common purposes.

THE RELEVANCE OF MOTIVES TO THE COUNCIL'S BASIC TASK

To burlesque the early activities of councils after this fashion is to do their actual accomplishments violent injustice, as subsequent chapters make clear; yet it only exaggerates what is in many instances an actual state of affairs, and at this point it serves to underscore the crucial importance of purposes in giving direction to council activity. As a matter of fact, even the vague phrases in which purposes are ordinarily stated can foreshadow an indispensable role for councils of adult education. But to do

so they must be interpreted in the light of the underlying motives impelling to the formation of councils in the first place.

Whatever the specifics of each particular instance, the motive behind the initiation of councils and their continuing principle of cohesion is a conviction on the part of a number of individuals that they can do certain things better when working in collaboration than when working separately and in isolation from one another. They are certain they can do their own jobs better for understanding what is going on elsewhere; and they hope that somewhere, if they can only identify it, there is a great common denominator of potential individual and social value to their activities. This value could find fuller realization were they to seek it together and then build accordingly—working either each through his separate agency, or as a council group.

The immediate objectives of those who are engaged in one or another aspect of the education of adults are and probably should remain to a degree different. The efforts of the parent education worker are directed toward the improvement of home and family living; the adult vocational teacher is primarily and immediately concerned with developing the skills required for the performance of some specific vocational task; the librarian's particular job is to make available the written materials which will serve all of these; the museum director is responsible for deepening appreciation of those aspects of life to which his particular museum is devoted; the expert in civic education and forum leadership must give his first attention to public awareness of crucial social and economic questions; and the teacher of adult elementary education has as his more proximate objective the imparting of those knowledges and skills ordinarily imparted in the elementary school. Small wonder that when they first come

together it is difficult for them to find anything of common interest to say to one another. The museum director is bored by an account of the latest and best innovations in the teaching of English to foreigners, and the vocational evening high school principal has other things to think about than the curator's moochings over artistic versus educational displays.

Yet it remains forever true that each of these groups senses and feels itself devoted to some goal wider and deeper than the immediate and specialized objectives of the job it has in hand. There is some common welfare, some more satisfying life, some enrichment toward which all are groping. Each is likely to say, "It isn't just what we are setting out to teach—about children and the family, or English spelling, or lathe-turning, or public affairs, or whatever; just look at the way we approach the people who come to us—whether individually or in groups. We give them a chance to feel themselves real persons with a voice in what they undertake. We value them for their persons and their ideas. They respond to us as they do not respond to others, and we think they are happier individually as a result, and are better people in their multifarious relationships with others."

In addition, the parent education worker says, "Oh, yes, we want to improve home and family living, and that is important in and of itself; but just think what it means in the life of a man or woman to be a more intelligent parent, and just think what it means in the life of a nation to have many, many citizens raised in the homes of more intelligent parents." The teacher of the subjects of elementary instruction to adults says, "Yes, of course we are concerned with the skills of reading and writing and arithmetic, but think how important it is for the individual to be able to have full communication with his fellows in a highly verbal

society, and how essential for the body politic that each citizen be able to read and write!" And the vocational instructor says, "Yes, I spend my time deciding just the special tricks of lathe-turning, but think how important vocational preparation is to the individual, and how lack of trained personnel and bad occupational distribution are complicating an already too-serious economic maladjustment." And so on, right down the line.

No matter what the specialization of the teacher, he knows, or at least surely feels, that above and beyond somehow great values lie—not just the specific things the adult student can do as a result of his educational activity, but something of greater worth, a pearl of great price, both to the student and to the society to which he belongs. And it is these "plus-values" which each adult education worker shares with his co-workers in related fields; it is these that he can perhaps identify more clearly and achieve more fully by communion with his fellows—such communion that the particulars of each case are laid in their proper relationship, and all efforts pyramid toward an as yet ineffable something which all are attempting to achieve.

The council is the best means for arriving at some meaningful interpretation of these "plus-values," so that they may find fuller realization in all adult education activities. On the one hand, each group working by itself is taken up with the immediacies of its trade, and bids fair to continue to be taken up with them until the end of time; more specialized ends-in-view have to be thought through together before either more general and basic purposes or ways of achieving them emerge. On the other hand, such thinking cannot be satisfactorily conducted by a national group in the hope that the precipitate of its deliberations will filter down as definitive proposals to workers in all the far reaches of

the field. This holds true partially because there is no national group prepared to make definitive proposals; more basically it holds true because these proposals would in all likelihood tend to miss the living quality of that which the actual worker feels to be of such great worth implicit in his work. Furthermore, they would either operate as an edict or, more probably, remain empty verbalisms without embodiment in the actual processes of adult learning. Democratically speaking, common ideals are not developed through the pronouncements of the elect and, practically speaking, all concerned must think and study on a problem like this if they are to see and work it through. Consequently, councils or their counterparts are indispensable if the common ultimate objectives of adult education are to be usefully defined and to function in each particular learning situation.

The basic task of councils, therefore, is to define those problems and aspirations which their members hold in common, and to pool their creative energies in overcoming the one and realizing the other. Persons of such diverse backgrounds and immediate jobs do not identify themselves with the adult education movement just because they have so often been called upon to do so. All share an interest in the adult as learner. At a poor minimum this interest may be limited to the psychology of his learning in the classroom and to the particular knowledges and skills which adult educators would like to impart to him. At the same minimum it also includes those motives and pressures which bring him into the class, or the library, or the museum, or other institution designed to provide him with educational opportunity. At a rich maximum this shared concern spreads to include the quality of adult life. What new sensitivities, awarenesses, abilities, and ways of behaving will improve this quality?

What constitutes improvement in the quality? Psychologically and socially speaking, where are adults in general in relation to the quest for the improvement of life? What impelling motivations and what generalized educational procedures can be used to help them toward it? And what variations in the answers to all of these questions must be made as attention shifts from one group to another, one individual to another, one area of life to another—from family to job, from store to art museum, from literature to voting booth, with the shifting focus of specialized efforts in adult education?

Parenthetically, it is worthy of note that the "plus values" sketchily identified for itself by each sub-group in the movement —librarians, curators, teachers of vocational subjects, *et al.*—are almost always bipolar. They refer both to the individual and to the society in which he lives. He is to be a better person, enjoying life more fully, taking better advantage of his environmental opportunities, and growing in ability to increase these opportunities for all. Society is hence affected by his presence and the presence of others like him. As a result, there is improvement in the way men live, both individually and in their larger and smaller social relationships. Such mutually responsible and enriching relationships between the individual and his society are sometimes identified with the essence of democracy itself, and it may very well be that the ultimate purposes common to all adult education workers are closely related to fundamental democratic principles and values. Respect for the potentialities of the individual and reliance upon the free play of intelligence, for example, are both fundamental to democracy and also widely heralded as characteristic of the processes and outcomes of adult education at its best.

Whether or not it seeks them in some basic conception of democracy, the council is obliged to work out its framework of values and broad common ends if it is to make progress toward the achievement of any of the stated "purposes" it so glibly sets itself. As commonly phrased, one of these purposes is "to increase awareness of the educational needs of adults." If this awareness is to characterize adult education workers, they must have some clear-cut conception of what "educational needs" are. Do people need what they want? Suppose they want to learn the refinements of bootlegging. Do they need what the classicists think it is good for them to know? Consider the social outcomes of centuries of classical education in Europe. Without some system of values it is impossible to decide what motivations have educational possibilities, or the directions in which to guide any desire for learning.

If increasing awareness of educational needs is to characterize the public at large, then the purpose as stated probably implies a publicity program, and is closely allied to "building appreciation of adult education as a lifelong process." But how increase public awareness of fundamental and far-reaching values when those who give the community's adult education program its form and direction are not themselves quite sure, beyond certain inarticulate feelings and empty verbalisms, just what these crucial values are? Keeping adult education as a whole before the public eye may be useful in giving it a regular and recognized place in the community scene. But it must be remembered that public education for children and young people has become so regularized a part of the American scene that the public at large takes its values for granted; and it takes for granted also that

these values, whatever they are, will continue to accrue even when schools close for long periods of time, or school services are lopped off, or teaching standards are reduced. Appreciation of a kind that will lead to intelligent support in time of crisis can be developed only when the values of education are interpreted, rather than merely publicized, and when the public is fully aware of the dangers society at large—and they themselves as individuals—will run should these values be denied them.

This is an educational job, making the community aware of a service it performs for its own welfare, rather than a mere publicity job, telling people over and over again, "There is this class and that class, and this is a very good thing, and you ought to go to one or another, it is good for you." This latter is not a genuinely creative task, calling for the cooperative efforts of all who are interested in adult education as a social leaven and a boon in personal lives; it may be only generalizing the effort of each agency to make itself a success in terms of larger and larger enrollments. Larger and larger enrollments may be important, but they are not so important as more and more participation in better and better activities designed with educational intent. Furthermore, about publicity and securing larger enrollments a good deal is commonly understood and easily imparted, whereas about devising better and better activities through which adults may improve the quality of their individual and associated living there is only a very small general fund of knowledge and a great deal of confusion, and considerable frustration among educators of adults themselves.

What, then, about the purpose "to improve and coordinate the adult education programs of the community"? This, too, is a meaningless and possibly misleading phrase unless backed up

by common understandings about values and ultimate ends-in-view. What, indeed, is improvement, unless desirable directions of development are identified? There may be change, but who is to say whether the change has brought about anything more basically desirable than the *status quo ante?* And there may be more programs of the same sort—just more of them. But without widespread acceptance of certain common values, who is to say whether more of the same is as good as it might be?

Finally, it is impossible to coordinate efforts without knowing the ends to which they are being coordinated; coordination of troops for a parade is quite different from their coordination for battle. Many educational institutions do work largely on individualistic principles, protecting their vested interests, and seeking and seizing "business opportunities" wherever they may; consequently there is considerable duplication of effort, waste motion, and lack of completeness over the field as a whole. Resources are expended without sufficient regard for their most effective (and therefore economical) disposition in relation to all the resources available and to all the demands on these resources. All this is true, and it is also true that with the resources for adult education inadequate for the task in hand, it is stupid and wasteful for each contributor to work in isolation from all the rest, deploying his talents without regard for what else may be available and what else needed.

Yet coordination of effort can be accomplished only when there is general agreement as to common ultimate goals and the basic conditions for working toward their attainment; all other coordination is a snare and a delusion, so meager and so partial as to be not worth all the shouting. In a society where six milk companies serve the same block, a sudden concern for "dupli-

cation of effort" in one particular area is suspect. At best it is akin to concentration of outraged righteousness on the charity families who get two turkeys at Thanksgiving, side-by-side with bland indifference to millions undernourished. Actually, all it amounts to is an attempt at regulation of *laissez-faire* in the competition for students. And in general it has proved about as successful as any other attempt to modify the evils of business competition by moral suasion. The only way coordination—a valid integration of efforts and programs—can take place is for all planning to be done in the light of common accepted goals, in endeavors valued for their social significance and worth to individuals rather than for their success as business enterprises.

Thus all the kinds of loosely phrased purposes usually set forth in council constitutions are worthy and welcome, provided they are predicated upon some system of values accepted by the group. But the prime task is to build a shared conception of these values, preferably in more or less articulate form; then the fulfilment of purposes as stated will constitute ways of realizing the values, and other ways may be found in addition. Particular and concrete projects of many types may lead in these directions if so regarded and directed; and still other projects may properly fall to the lot of the council merely because they are important and can be conducted by no other means.

The Difficulties of Councils

Implementing Purposes with Programs—I

ATTENTION has already been called to the difficulties many councils encounter in attempting to devise a program, and the actual activities by which councils eventually attempt to fulfill their purposes frequently fall short of their mark. All of this is true. And yet it is also true that an occasional council is doing a bang-up job in implementing its purposes with one or another activity carried on at a high level of excellence, and with always increasing awareness of what it is about. These isolated instances feed the conviction that councils as a whole may fulfill their promise as instruments for bringing order out of and meaning into the adult education program of the community. A critical examination of these activities, then, should provide some clues as to the ways in which councils as a whole may function more fully and more fruitfully.

As hinted earlier in this discussion, the activities of councils may be roughly divided into two types, those which have to do with better dissemination of information as to what educational opportunities for adults are already available, and those which might be described as more creative in character, reaching out

after a better conception of a community-wide program and seeking means to realize it. The former type, here discussed first, is far easier to institute and conduct, and is far more often exemplified.

This type of activity is itself divisible into at least two major subtypes, one, providing information to the individual inquirer as to where he may find this or that educational opportunity (enroll to study one subject or another, find guidance in the fine arts, or books on political and social issues, for example) and the other, spreading information broadcast over the community publicity-wise—through calendars of events, radio programs, newspaper columns, or whatever.[1]

PROVIDING INFORMATION FOR THE INDIVIDUAL INQUIRER

One of the most common, though by no means universal, services undertaken by councils is the maintenance of a central file of information on all the adult education activities, both formal and informal, in the community—opportunities offered by agencies connected with the council and those provided by other agencies, not so connected, as well. The primary intention of these information services is to make it easier for the individual who feels moved to engage in some type of educational activity to discover where, in what institution or agency, he can find that which he seeks.

The scope and organization of these services vary widely, as indeed they must, with the size and type of community being served

[1] Speakers' bureaus are not included here because in actual council practice they are more closely related either to financial support for the council or to its interest in furthering the forum movement in the community.

and the resources at the disposal of the council itself.[2] In metropolitan areas—where there is much going on, and frequently very good and useful opportunities are offered in obscure and remote places—making and keeping the file and dispensing information from it may become a major undertaking, requiring considerable staff, time, and administrative supervision. In other localities, where there is a paucity of educational opportunity, and the potential adult student is not confronted either by a bewildering series of alternatives or lack of any one single promising source of information, frequently a mere directory of agencies has been deemed a sufficient guide.

Central files of information are sometimes maintained in the council's offices, and sometimes in the library. Sometimes, too, the council's headquarters are in the library building; sometimes the council has no office, but the librarian is a council officer and maintains the file in his own institution. It stands to reason that if the council's offices are unattractive or inaccessible, there is little point in housing the file there (provided that it is not so large and unwieldy as to require the space which only the council has to offer, and that the council staff is not required to dispense the information). Furthermore, unless the council has some way of making widely known to the public the fact that it has such

[2] It would be inappropriate here to discuss the details of maintaining these files, their mechanical aspects, or the type of information it has been found wise to have on hand, like hour and place of meeting, cost, type of instruction, other services available in the agency providing the course, etc. These are the technicalities of maintaining a central information service, and remain the same whether the service is maintained by a council or by some other agency. Councils interested in such details may inquire directly of councils which do maintain information services; a list will be supplied upon request to the American Association for Adult Education. The same holds true of all the activities discussed in this chapter and the next.

information and is ready and eager to dispense it without cost, the whole may lie inert and unused except for referrals from member agencies. (A prospective student of horticulture goes to enroll for a course at the university extension; the university extension offers no such course this year and refers the student to the council office for information as to where the course is offered by some other agency.)

The library, on the other hand, is coming more and more to be regarded by the public as the source of many kinds of informational services. Balked for lack of any other way to find out about something available in the city, it is almost "natural" for many people to turn to the library. Moreover, in several libraries the availability of service on this kind of problem is not hidden under a bushel. The file is placed in the lobby, so that every user of the library is almost obliged to fall over it as he enters. There it is; if he is not interested for himself, he can and does tell those among his friends who want to know. This is of course not always the case. Some libraries keep their information file carefully hidden away, as documentary evidence of some sort or other, and never let anyone know it is there unless a definite and somewhat forceful request is made.[3]

Problems in Maintaining Central Information Services

The problems which councils have in maintaining and conducting these services are twofold: getting the information re-

[3] Instances of this sort are usually confined to libraries which maintain the files themselves, without the guidance and assistance of a council group. It does not of course always take a council to maintain a central information service on adult education; any agency which has both the requisite resources and some access to the public can provide the same service. This point is discussed later in the chapter.

quired to keep the file complete and up to date, and dispensing it in proper fashion to the public. Amazingly enough, the groups and agencies providing educational opportunities are sluggish about reporting them, or reporting changes in them. Some of these groups and agencies are unaware of the existence of the file through which potential students and participants may be reached, but even many of the agencies actually represented in some fashion on the council are slow and neglectful about keeping the service informed. It is the specific task of no one staff member in the agency to attend to the matter; it somehow just doesn't get done, even though it is obviously to the advantage of the agency to have its courses and other educational activities listed. Thus considerable time and energy are necessarily spent by the council in keeping the file up to date, revising long-established announcements, and recording new developments on the local adult education front. And time and energy are always at a premium in council undertakings. If the work is handed over to clerical assistants, it has to be paid for; if it is conducted in a spirit of service by some council member, such as the librarian, it means that time, energy, effort are wasted on routine tasks when they are so badly needed for the more creative aspects of the council's program. Some councils have found a way out in W.P.A. help; others have found that the discontinuity of such help in their cities only adds an element of confusion.

The problem of dissemination is more complex. One aspect of it has already been mentioned: letting the public at large know that the service is available to them, without charge and without embarrassment. This is sometimes overcome by certain types of publicity, discussed below. But a more difficult aspect of the problem arises from the falsity of the hypothesis that the

individual inquirer always comes to the council office fully aware that he wants a course in mechanical dentistry or esthetic dancing. Very often he hasn't the least idea what he wants—"would just like to take up something again." Or he may be seeking vocational guidance. Or he may be an emotionally disturbed person looking for a way out through whatever comes to hand—"a case." In many instances his ends are obscure; the means to their achievement are difficult to identify and may not lie in adult education activities as such at all. In brief, information about educational opportunities can not be dispensed to human beings like pounds of packaged sugar. Indeed, there has been some controversy as to whether it is right and proper, sound and in accord with professional integrity, for a council or any other agency to dispense such information unless the services of a trained counselor are available. It is thought by many that without this care information may be either of no help or even detrimental to the continued interest of the student, who may consequently become a nuisance to the class, institution or agency to which he is referred.

This contention cannot properly be discussed here, because the problem must be faced, not by councils alone, but by any agency which undertakes to dispense information about educational opportunities. It is in no way peculiarly related to the cooperative thinking and working of council groups. However, councils which plan to institute information services may well give concerted attention to it,[4] and councils that conduct or

[4] In giving attention to the problem, councils do well to have the help and guidance of counselors from a number of fields—vocational guidance, personal and family guidance as it is conducted by the psychiatric social case worker, perhaps even psychoanalysis—to learn the uses to which information

otherwise sponsor central information services are responding in a variety of ways. The fact that it is a problem is recognized not only by experts in adult education and counseling, hypersensitive perhaps to the niceties of the situation, but by other persons unspoiled by professionalized preciosities, who find it their jobs to sit behind information files and speak to the people who come in with questions. Yet some council groups remain sublimely and stubbornly indifferent. They let the thing ride along, leaving the persons who answer questions to suffer their own sense of frustration and inadequacy. Other councils, recognizing the problem, still continue to operate on the assumption that it is better to incur the risks and dangers of information-dispensing without trained counseling than to fail that group of inquirers who know what they want but don't know where to find it. Still others, more self-conscious, seek to define and delimit the work of the information services in such way as to minimize the dangers and remain as far as possible within the confines of what can be fully and competently accomplished with the available personnel. Another expedient has been to rely upon counselors, rather than clerks, where these can be supplied through the professional projects of the W.P.A.

For there is no inherent reason why all information-giving of this kind should not be implemented with the best and most skillful counseling that can be devised—except that the necessary financial resources are usually lacking. One council has found at least a partial solution by stimulating the necessary cooperation

may be put by various types of personalities at various stages of their development. They do well also to hear at first hand the difficulties of the actual information-dispenser on the job, especially when he is willing to impart his complete bafflement at the types of requests that come in. In addition, there is an extensive literature worthy of study.

of other agencies, rather than expending its limited resources in doing the little it can on its own. In collaboration with the local university, the city office of the State Employment Service, the N.Y.A., and the W.P.A., it has established a large and carefully guided counseling service for all and sundry. The nucleus of the scheme is vocational guidance—complete with technical testing —for young people; but unemployed youth have other difficulties than their unemployment, and older people come wandering in for help on educational as well as vocational problems. The educational and recreational facilities of the community are on file, and the file is used by trained counselors in general guidance as well as in serving those who come seeking specific information.

Council Analysis of Experience with Information Services

These are the major difficulties encountered in conducting information services, and some of the ways in which councils have been attempting to meet them. But there is sometimes another role played by these selfsame services. On rare occasion, their by-products are used to gain information of other kinds. In one council, careful record is kept of requests for educational and training opportunities not available in the city. When enough people to constitute a class in astronomy, say, have inquired and have been told that there is no such class, the group is assembled and an instructor found for it.[5] Thus, in a sense, a summation of the requests for currently unavailable educational activities provides one kind of index of what is lacking in the adult education

[5] In this particular instance, the class is almost always made available, at least at the beginning, by the council itself, rather than through agencies already established in the community. The advisability of this practice is a moot question, discussed later. (Pp. 71 ff.)

program of the community. Though such an index is rough indeed, and no council should rest content with it as sufficient basis for judging the adequacy of available educational opportunities for adults, nonetheless it does reveal certain lacks.

There has been at least one other attempt to use experience with an information service as a means for the critical revaluation and reconstruction of the adult education program of a community. The council in one metropolitan area has analyzed the contents of its file to provide a comprehensive picture of the adult education opportunities available, and intends to make similar analysis of the requests brought to its information service. Unfortunately, its experience to date with critical and creative discussion of the data revealed has been anything but encouraging—probably at least in part because of the pervasive difficulty of fostering fruitful discussion in any council group.

This is not the only council that keeps some record of all inquiries brought to its information service, but it is the only one now attempting to make any substantial use of these records. Generally speaking, they are "just filed," in case some use should some day turn up for them, or in order to lend credence to such claims for "quantity output" as the council may want to make in the future. Most councils dispense with records of interviews altogether. In some instances this is because resources are not available for recording. If the reference librarian, for example, is the person who dispenses information from the files, he may well be too pressed to keep records, and the time he spent on record keeping might be questioned as the time spent in dispensing information is not. In other instances, failure to keep records is due to a conviction that it is wiser not to ask the individual seeking information anything about himself.

According to this latter point of view, seeking a learning opportunity is usually accompanied by no little embarrassment, and the seeker frequently wants to insure the privacy of his somewhat shamefaced enterprise by remaining entirely anonymous. An additional factor derives from a public distrust of free service; like free coupons, it is suspect lest it carry with it a harrying aftermath of high-pressure salesmanship. Safer, then, to protect oneself by answering no questions. Whatever the causes, it is said that adults in pursuit of educational activities are reluctant to give information about themselves, and should not be compelled to do so if the primary intent is to facilitate their quest for educational opportunity. In contradiction to these contentions, those councils that make a point of getting information from the "patrons" of their information services say that the supposed reluctance to answer questions finds such slight substantiation in practice that it can to all intents and purposes be disregarded. There seems to be a definite cleavage of experience along these lines, accounted for perhaps by a difference in the situation of the interview, the degree of privacy and hurry that characterize it, the personality of the interviewer, the general atmosphere of the place. The whole question might be considered one of those technicalities not properly discussed here, were it not that the analysis of these requests might in fact constitute a promising point of departure in achieving valid and basic council purposes.

Central Information Services as a Council Function

It is appropriate at this point to ask in how far these information services, no matter how ill or well conducted, serve the purposes for which councils are and should be established. They do not seem a particularly appropriate means for developing a

public appreciation of the values of adult education, either for individual adults or for the society in which they participate; they do not even lead adults to pursue educational activities; nor do they encourage support for the maintenance of educational opportunities. What, then, about furthering "coordination" among the adult education programs of various agencies, and providing opportunity for the enriching exchange of ideas among adult education workers? The collection of material for the file and the retailing of it is a piecemeal job, not a unifying and integrating one. In and of itself, it leads to no critical appraisal of what the total program of adult education of the community looks like, of what it is good for, or of who is doing what and how appropriately.

Analysis of the contents of the file may constitute a step in this direction, and analysis and interpretation of such requests as come to the place where the file is kept may prove fruitful in adapting programs to the present motivation and desires of the public now consciously seeking educational opportunities. A combination of the two would seem to offer a promising point of departure (though not a complete or sufficient basis) for the critical and constructive examination of the current adult education program of the community. Such a process of analysis, criticism, interpretation, reconstruction is distinctly a council function. This is something for which councils do and should exist. Without some formalized and regularized channel for the exchange and rectification of ideas, the evolution of thought and practice in regard to adult education is bound to be slower than it might otherwise be. But, as a matter of fact, though the council constitutes such a formalized and regularized channel, its members do not ordinarily make full use of their own experience in

the maintenance of a central information service. Few councils gather the material on which to base even the first crude statistical analysis of their contact with the inquiring public. Some councils gather the information but do nothing about summation and analysis. And even when a summation is made, the results are seldom used as a beginning step in the cooperative evaluation of the community *status quo* in adult education. One discussion, two discussions, and the whole thing drops.

So the information service does not, as a matter of fact, lead to either coordination of effort or the fruitful exchange of ideas. It is a clearing house of information, rather than of ideas and experience, and is designed as a service to the public rather than as a help to council members. From a strictly logical point of view, a real question can be raised as to whether a council is required to run it; practically speaking, the library frequently runs an information service without council support.

Under these circumstances, can the maintenance of the information service, as such, without the summation and interpretation of experience gained in conducting it, be justified as an appropriate council activity? The decision would seem to lie in answers to such questions as these: Is such a service required in the community? Is there no other way of getting it performed? Is it easier to get support for it when the council undertakes the job than when it is undertaken by some other agency—both financial support and support phrased as active cooperation on the part of agencies conducting educational programs for adults? Does the public make more use of it when the council conducts it? And do public and agencies alike have greater confidence in the impartiality of the information given out if the venture is managed by the council than if it is managed by any other

agency, like the library, for example? Is the council likely to be more sensitive to the counseling problem inevitably involved in dispensing information?

The preponderance of answers to these questions is not likely to be negative. Little profit or influence accrues to the private or endowed agency for diverting any of its resources to so generalized a public service. Therefore the task would devolve either upon the public schools or the library, and, although the library seems unexceptionable, the public schools, since they almost always conduct a series of classes for adults, are suspect as interested parties. And, as a practical matter, both schools and libraries today are all too frequently struggling to maintain their services on decreasing budgets. They are not likely to be in a position to take on anything else, no matter how valuable they may estimate it to be, and no matter how logically they may feel that it belongs among their proper responsibilities as tax-supported agencies in the educational service of the public. So that, by and large, if the combined opinion of the council is to the effect that the central information service is important, it will in most instances be obliged to undertake the task itself—as a service which will not be accomplished by any single agency, and so would best be tackled by all agencies together through their council. In these terms it is usually fully justified.

On the other hand, should the preponderance of answers to questions of the kind suggested prove negative, there seems to be no basic reason why the council should not hand the job over to some other agency, and gladly, lending its support and assistance as necessary. Under these conditions, it would be possible for the council to do the interpretative and analytical job of thinking through the contents of the file and the requests for service in

quite the same fashion that it would if it were running the service itself; meanwhile its meager resources would be released for other projects more surely provocative of critical thinking and creative planning on the part of its constituents.

In brief, then, it may be said that the central information service, which is a relatively common activity of councils, does ordinarily constitute one of their proper functions, even though no loud banzais are due it as a means of giving coherence or direction to the local program of adult education viewed as a whole. Furthermore, the possibilities that lie in experience with a central information service are very seldom fully exploited for the furtherance of the more basic purposes of councils, and for the same reasons that using the results of surveys and other compendia of experience ordinarily fall so sadly flat: educators of adults are not on the *qui vive* to make their own collective experience telling in the revision of their work, and even if on the *qui vive,* are woefully lacking in techniques and methods for putting this experience effectively to use.

PUBLICITY TO THE PUBLIC AT LARGE

Council publicity for adult education is in some ways related to the provision of specific information to the individual inquirer through an information service. In the first place, the information service is in some instances so publicized as to bring the whole of the adult education program of the community to the attention of the public at large. Second, in some localities it is sometimes possible to use certain means of publicity (such as directories of agencies conducting adult education activities or weekly calendars of educational events for adults) both as substitutes for the central information service and as means

for informing and inspiring potential participants scattered throughout the adult population.

Third, publicity programs, like information services, are relatively technical undertakings that can be conducted entirely without council support. Advertisers and public relations counsels may want to lay their heads together about publicity programs, but creative thinking along these lines is not the primary responsibility of educators of adults. Any creativeness that may be involved is more closely related to the problems of publicity itself than to giving new direction to adult education as an integral aspect of American life. Neither can it be seriously argued that publicity leads to a greater appreciation of the values of adult education on the part of the public. It may make more people aware of what is going on, and occasional plugs about the importance of lifelong learning may also make them aware of the fact that other people—mostly educators of adults—think that it is a good and important thing. But of basic values and crucial importance they can gain no conception from publicity; indeed that is not the function of publicity. Nor is it ever argued that the publicity program of councils has anything to do with those of their purposes which relate to "coordination."

Consequently, publicity programs are conducted by councils largely for the same reasons that councils conduct information services: because it is important to keep the public informed about what is available, and no one agency is able and willing to do the job for the group as a whole. Neither does any single agency often object to the tooting of its horn in unison with the tooting of other horns in the same orchestra. If it is doing some tooting of its own, a little more can do no harm. And if it is a small enterprise, without means or opportunity for laying its

program in a favorable light before the public, then it is glad indeed to let its small voice find amplification in the midst of a program of publicity for adult education in general. The council performs a service for it which it can not perform for itself.

Directories and Calendars

The number and variety of means used by councils to give publicity to the adult education program of the community can only be suggested here. Directories of agencies and weekly or monthly calendars of events, widely distributed, can do much to keep at least a wide sector of the public informed as to the activities in which it can participate if it is so inclined. But these materials are seldom broadcast sufficiently to perform this function in any very adequate way; usually no great effort is expended to distribute them widely throughout the city, so that they are obvious wherever people congregate. Scanty mailing lists are made up largely of the names of persons interested in adult education from a professional rather than a personal point of view. As a result, directories and calendars frequently constitute a kind of information service for workers in the field, rather than a means of publicity to the public at large.

Furthermore, insofar as directories are concerned, they get rapidly out of date; they are difficult and expensive to compile and produce, and very soon they are of drastically reduced value. Unless they are widely disseminated, they are of little service to anyone, except as an alternative to an information service, or as a temporary enumeration of the agencies in large or small measure engaged in adult education. In one city the problem of publication costs was met by inducing the publisher of an enterprising newspaper to print the directory in the format of his

paper. He even supplied the services of a cartoonist to design an appealing cover. The fact that this cover prominently displayed the name of the newspaper detracted in no way from its effectiveness. But even here, for some reason, though the directory was printed in great quantity, the publisher showed no disposition to distribute it as a supplement to the paper and the task of dissemination fell back again upon the council.

The type and quality of these directories vary widely. Some include only those agencies which are members of the council (a device for augmenting council membership and membership dues), and others include every fire company that has a band. The problem of inclusiveness, if thoroughly discussed by the council, might provide a beginning on the questions, "What exactly is adult education, and what is not? What are the criteria of educational experiences?" But the opportunity is seldom if ever pounced upon. The question of what to incorporate and what to exclude is sometimes put up to a small committee, which usually works out some logically reasonable delimitations; sometimes it is left to the footworkers, whose judgment is ordinarily nil. The information given about each agency in these directories also varies widely, from a descriptive account of its fundamental educational aims and a broad general account of its program to a detailed statement of classes, hours, fees. The advisability of one scheme or another depends of course upon the general purposes for which the directory is planned.

Newspapers and Radio

Newspapers and the radio are also used as media for publicity. Sometimes incidental publicity accrues to the council and therefore to adult education in the community when the council ini-

tiates a newsworthy enterprise or sponsors a meeting at which nationally known speakers hold forth. But at this point it is appropriate to consider only those newspaper features and radio programs which appear regularly and are specifically designed to make the public aware of the educational facilities available.

Among the newspaper features, two types have been most common. One is the weekly publication of the calendar of events in the newspaper, rather than on weekly or monthly fliers. And the other, considered by many to be preferable because of its "human interest," is a series of three or four questions, purportedly asked by real persons at the information service, together with the answers. These appear once a week or every day, in the evening paper, coupled with the announcement that information of this kind is available free through the local adult education council at such and such a place. The careers of both these types of features have generally proved checkered, in and out of the newspaper with the whims of changing publishers, managers, and editors.

Publicizing adult education activities over the radio (as distinct from ventures in adult education using the radio as a medium) is also subject to the whims of the radio stations and what their successive program directors think may be all right to use as innocuous filler in odd moments of sustaining time. Sometimes the calendar is presented over the air, accompanied by comment on the importance of continued study throughout adult life. Sometimes one agency and then another uses the council's time on the air to tell the public what it has to offer. Sometimes the representative of the agency tells his tale in response to the questions of an interlocutor. And at least one radio family composed of adults and young people has gone on from one

group of educational activities to another every Sunday for about two years.

The fact that it does not require a council to conduct such publicity is indicated by developments in one or two cities where chambers of commerce have been willing, and even anxious, to include adult education activities along with sports on their own weekly calendars of events. (On the whole, chambers of commerce do a better job of getting their fliers scattered conspicuously about the town than do adult education councils.) And, in at least one instance, when a local radio station allotted time to the council for the broadcast of a calendar of new classes and interesting lectures scheduled for the week, a competing local station countered on its own with a program announcing lectures, drama, art exhibits and concerts.

But if a publicity program, like an information service, is not essentially a council function, nonetheless it must be granted that it does give the members of the council group a chance to do something together, a common task for which they can all feel responsible. And this has its decided advantages. If the persons engaged in the various activities which fall into the general category of adult education are to have a sense of belonging to a movement which has at its core an essential wholeness, then they must in some way build this sense. At present it cannot be taken for granted. And it does not emerge, full blown, as soon as a council or association is formed.

The relevant question is whether the cooperative maintenance of a central information service or the conduct of a general publicity program is the best or even a promising means of building this sense of cohesion in the group. It is perhaps necessary in the

first place to say that neither a feeling of cohesion nor an increasing tendency toward conscious analysis and interpretation of ultimate common objectives grows readily out of council discussions alone. This may be due in some measure to the type and quality of the discussions in which councils have for the most part engaged, but the fact remains, and there is little reason to suppose that it will change of itself in the near future. Some believe that in councils, as in any other learning group, there must be a common enterprise for common understandings to develop. Discussion is vague and empty without some proximate point of common reference. If the different activities of adult educators do not seem sufficiently common, then some more obviously shared task must be contrived if shared new understandings are to emerge.

Furthermore, Americans are great "doers." They are uncomfortable unless they are always up and at something. Thinking, planning, talking together without something tangible, concrete, objective and relatively immediate as a result seem like a "waste of time." Preoccupation with material change, perhaps an outgrowth of the urge and the need to conquer a continent, has made them apprehensive and uncomfortable about speculation and meditation. The sharing of ideas and the building of notions may reshape a culture, but they don't promise much by way of shifting the arrangements at the registration desk, or augmenting enrollments, or increasing the circulation of nonfiction. The exchange of ideas is unfamiliar; "nothing much has ever come out of it." Let's get busy and do something. Well, I don't know where to send prospective students who want to enroll for something we can't offer. Neither do I. Why, only last Tuesday evening a man came, and he wanted ornithology, and

I couldn't help him. That sounds as though we ought to have a central clearing house of information, doesn't it? Let's have one. Motion. Second the motion. Discussion (desultory, about details of the service). Motion carried. A central clearing house.

It is almost impossible to prevent this sort of thing from happening in a group that meets to discuss common problems. The more fundamental of their problems cannot be solved right away, and they soon grow restive with talk about them. So they turn their attention to more practical problems about which some immediate action can be taken. Then they are doing something, and they feel quite comfortable, even a bit smug and virtuous, and all is well for a while. It would be foolish to deny the value of immediate attack on those problems which can be immediately solved by some kind of cooperative action. Why go on without a way of referring students if it is possible to provide a way?

But why should this recognized value interfere with the realization of other values? Why shouldn't some progress be made toward the solution of more ultimate problems, too? And why shouldn't the almost inevitable immediate attack upon the simpler problems be used as a springboard from which to take off in sharing wider areas of experience than just those represented in running the information service or the publicity program? Various possible points of departure have been indicated above. But the suggestion that information services and publicity programs be used for the more fundamental purposes of councils, that councils build upon them rather than merely operate them, is itself without much content. There are no guideposts as to how to proceed. In most cases where the effort has been made—as in the discussion of the analysis of available op-

portunities in one city—the response has been deplorably slack. Nobody wants to spend time discussing anything that he can't do something about tomorrow. And there is little use in scolding the nondiscussers.

But the challenge remains. It is the prize talk of educators in general to speak of building new attitudes and appreciations, new and more satisfactory ways of solving problems. The educators of adults in particular tend to emphasize certain types of new sensitivities and appreciations opposed to crass materialism in the culture—they stress the values of good talk, good reading, and a sense of well-being in worthy pursuits. If they are willing to set their shoulders to so ponderous and inert a wheel with the adult public at large, why shrink away from the same task in regard to themselves? Why not persist in the endeavor to make the present interest of adult education workers in relatively small and practical problems pay dividends in new common interests, appreciations, evaluations—and at long and not too indeterminate last, new ways of doing their jobs in the light of new understandings? Why not value the cooperative information service and publicity program for their potentialities as beginnings, as well as for their immediate practical usefulness as endings?

These two general types of activity represent at least a possible element of cohesiveness around which the group can and will begin to rally, and in most instances some such rallying point appears to be essential if the group is to live long enough to make any progress. Whether or not they constitute the best focus of early attention and effort depends upon many factors—those outlined above, and others having to do with the appeal and promise of various alternatives, some of which are described in

the next chapter. But it is to be most strongly urged that when such activities are initiated, some consideration be given to their remoter values as foundation stones for growth, as well as to their immediate and obviously apparent practical usefulness.

The Difficulties of Councils

Implementing Purposes with Programs—II

THE types of activities described in this chapter are designated "more creative" in contrast with the conduct of central information services and publicity programs. These "more creative" activities are sometimes of a kind engaged in by the council and its constituent members alone, and sometimes of a kind provided by them for others. The two are discussed together because they belong together in the efforts of councils to discover and define their proper functions.

COUNCIL MEETINGS

One of the first activities that comes to mind in connection with councils is the having and holding of meetings—for the exchange of ideas, cooperative thinking and planning, evolving new lines of thought and action on the part of each of the participants, molding a working consensus among them as to what they are all about in their common task. The value of all this stands so much to reason that it need not be elaborated, especially for readers convinced of the value of the free play of ideas as an essential facet of the democratic process.

Yet, astonishingly and dishearteningly enough, it has been precisely in meetings and in the free play of ideas that most councils have encountered their most dismal failures. There are outstanding exceptions, councils in which meetings have been held to good purpose, with a continuity which results in a sense of personal enrichment, enlightenment, and new competence on the part of the participants. But these exceptions are so rare as to be of the sort that proves the rule, and the rule itself should give pause to those deeply concerned with adult education.

Generally speaking, all councils begin with an organization meeting, and this is followed by a series at which each member tells about his work. Despite all their difficulties, these meetings are not without their values, some of them ceremonial in quality. People who feel themselves related, no matter how ill-defined the tie, derive a sense of well-being by the outward and visible signs of get-together. Furthermore, the get-together provides occasion for mutual acquaintance on a personal basis: a worker in one agency meets a worker in another agency, and on more than one occasion such acquaintance has borne fruit in mutual services established between the two agencies, sans grinding of council machinery, fanfare of committees, click of executive action, drone of minutes or reports. Still further, in the adult education movement there is good precedent for letting the left hand become keenly aware of what the right hand doeth, to the end that together they may do a better job.

But two facts must be recognized in this connection. First and foremost, unless these testimonial meetings are carefully planned, they tend to get so boring that in the long run they become a disruptive influence in the life of the council. Second, these very same values can frequently be achieved through other

means—meetings centering around other topics, meetings around the actual problems of the council's program, and activities other than meetings as such altogether.

On the whole, a year of luncheon meetings, with undirected reports about what the Y.M.C.A., the Y.W.C.A., the Y.M. and Y.W.H.A., the evening high schools, the settlements, the university extension, etc., etc., each is doing seems to be about all a council can stand. The educational director of the Y.M.C.A., or of university extension, or whatever, has usually been telling his story for a long time—to prospective students, to boards and committees, to associates whom he wants to impress at conventions and on trains going to conventions. It is his story, and he sticks to it without modification or adaptation, no matter what the audience. Consequently, the audience is frequently justified in not caring very much whether he tells it or not. It doesn't make much difference: the audience is not so concerned to be impressed as he is to impress them. Furthermore, when ten to twenty people have all told their stories, the fragments often fail to fit together: one person tells about publicity, another about increase in numbers enrolled, another about how to get teachers without paying for their services, another about a program innovation that seems far more important to him than to anyone else. Some rare bird may even tell about the gradual reconstruction of a program in response to certain identified factors and new sensitivities—but neither the factors nor the sensitivity play any great part in the work of his listeners.

Everybody knows that a written symposium requires careful planning, many letters to the different authors, and considerable editing and rewriting; but a spoken symposium, in the form of a succession of speeches, is supposed to take form of itself. It just

doesn't. More and more busy executives get busier and busier, until there is practically no one left to hear the last of the tales. Unless the council has some other important activity under way, or its officers are very determined, the person upon whom it is incumbent to call meetings just fails to call another. Why bother?—nobody comes.

In more than a few instances skillful planning has prevented all this. A number of alternative schemes have been tried and more are still being devised. One of these is to have all groups or agencies that carry on a given type of program—social agencies, or evening vocational schools, or art and music classes and programs—report on their work together. This forces the story of each program director out of its accustomed mold, and encourages consideration of the audience to be addressed in formulating both content and presentation. It also tends to replace the "impressiveness" of one person's accomplishments with the values of a field of endeavor. And last, but not least, it reduces the number of reportorial meetings. Sometimes all of the various stories, or a goodly proportion of them, are squeezed into one morning session, and the afternoon is left free for the subgroups interested in the separate areas to meet by themselves.

Another device has been to have the story of each agency's work told, but according to a pattern prescribed in advance. In one city, not only was a more generally symposium-like effect upon the audience built up in this way over the course of meetings; in addition, the major parts of the data for a thoroughgoing survey were gathered. If the outline is made through the collaborative efforts of the council members, this process in itself presents a challenge. What do they want to know when they say they want to become more thoroughly acquainted with all of the

adult education activities in the community? What is it important for them to come to know? Whom is it important for them to hear? In the instance cited speeches were written out in advance, and mailed to the whole prospective audience. Questions assured clarity and objectivity, and the speaker, in the discussion, could break through any confining bounds the outline might have imposed upon a true and full picture of the work and aspirations, guiding principles and ideals, of the agency for which he spoke.

Variations are too numerous to be detailed here; it is sufficient to suggest one or two ways in which attempts have been made to give intelligent direction, variety, and zest to meetings—meetings intended to foster mutual acquaintance among council members and common knowledge of the whole adult education program of the community. The point to be emphasized is that these meetings begin nowhere, get nowhere, and add up to nothing unless they are carefully considered and planned from the beginning. It may, of course, become expedient, necessary, desirable to reformulate a plan in midstream, but to meet without plan is almost sure to prove disastrous.

As intimated above, the values sought through meetings of this kind may sometimes be achieved in other ways. It is difficult to see, for example, why a council engaged upon an exhaustive survey must also sit through an exhausting series of talks about what one agency, and then another, and then still another is doing. The critical and interpretative study of the survey may achieve this same purpose and several others at the same time. But such considerations are not intended to suggest the complete suppression of accounts of work of different sorts being conducted in the city, or to imply that meetings of this kind should

necessarily be abandoned in favor of anything at all that can be substituted for them. In certain localities and under certain conditions they may constitute the best beginning place for a new council group. But they must be definitely regarded and planned as a beginning place, and not be indulged in just as something to do, or prolonged indefinitely as a poor substitute for a more conscious and concerted attack upon the fulfilment of council purposes.

When the exchange of experience through the recital of individual accomplishments has for one reason or another fallen by the wayside, the general tendency has been to abandon regular meetings altogether. The council is called together once a year to elect officers and transact such other business as the constitution prescribes for transaction by the group as a whole. Usually there is a speech, good, bad or indifferent, but never related to the council's specific affairs or the furtherance of its presumptive purposes. Sometimes this meeting is scheduled to coincide with the visit of a national celebrity in adult education, and sometimes *ad hoc* council meetings are called, long after any idea of regular meetings has been abandoned, in order to permit council members to hear a speech by whoever it may happen to be—a name in the brief annals of adult education, now faring through the town on some other mission.

Such meetings are not a bad notion. The members of all professions want to hear—and see—those who have made real contributions to their fields. The presence of a notable contributes to a sense of unity with a movement; the occasion is likely to be on the ceremonial side, and so to provide the lift of orderly ritual in relationships with fellow professionals. Moreover, sometimes the Big Boy has something of importance to say. In many in-

stances it is inspirational in quality, and in no derogatory sense of the term. Persons who are confined to catalogs and fees, grubbing around with cards, recruiting teachers, and contending with an unfriendly administration suddenly see their routines in a light less stuffy, their irks in a better perspective, their small irritations as aspects of larger problems. There is created a readiness to think and to strive anew to get at basic meanings and values, to bring them to completer realization amidst the welter of relatively insignificant little and isolated things to be done, and the relatively persistent obstacles always in the way of moving toward the big things.

But the inspiration scarcely lasts till the next morning; the local air is too attenuated to sustain it. The council does not often follow up the ideas presented for what they may mean in the local situation, or even encourage further exploration of these ideas in the speaker's books. There is not much in its own program to give the same feeling of cooperative endeavor in a real and important movement. The moment passes. Furthermore, the visiting celebrity does not and cannot be expected to put his mind on local problems, to lend stimulus to undertakings that have bogged down for lack of creative local leadership. He comes and goes with a stock of ideas upon which he has been working; he is not in a position to help the people in a given council with the ideas upon which they have been working. Sometimes by chance what he has to say may cut a home-town Gordian knot or suggest a fruitful line of procedure in unraveling it, but only by chance.

In short, the trouble with reliance upon outside speakers is closely analogous to the difficulties of any disconnected series of lectures or forums. They are enlightening, they are stimulating.

But without a pattern of study and activity into which to play, they are relatively inert. Yet many persons, assiduous in criticism of the forum for this very reason, still rush to call a council meeting when there is opportunity to publicize and Get a Big Crowd Together, and at no other time.

In other councils an attempt is made to develop a program of meetings with some continuity, centering around a theme of common interest, and to stimulate small-group discussion of related topics. The theme may be democracy, or a new idea in regard to the basic values of adult education, or something else deemed appropriate by the program committee or suggested by the council as a whole. The basic dangers of the sporadic-speaker arrangement are avoided in this way, but unfortunately the discussion which results is as precarious of fruitful outcome as all discussion of educational topics is likely to be. Because of a dearth of adequate leadership for truly creative discussion, or on account of insufficient emphasis upon the implications of the discussion for those engaged in it, or due to the perennial distrust and dislike of talk about things "you can't do anything about"—the results in some cases have been disheartening even to those who are slow to discourage. In other cases they have reenforced faith in the values of discussion.

To this basic scheme there are several interesting variations. In one council, with a long history of common concern for education as a social instrument, monthly council meetings are devoted to an exploration of various social problems as they are manifested in the locality—problems like unemployment and relief, the social and economic adjustment of youth, intercultural and interracial relations, and so on. Every effort is made to have the presentation followed by careful consideration of its mean-

ing for adult education, first in broad terms, and then in terms of the specific programs of the various agencies represented. On some of these problems there are special groups and committees at work, but the whole council membership has the opportunity to think through educational implications.

A rather rare program of meetings was developed by a council conducting public forums—forums directed toward spreading enlightenment about needed improvements in local social conditions. In order to be sure of well-rounded and realistic presentation of many of these problems, the council met with the director of the city budget for two hours every week over a period of months. Having thoroughly acquainted itself with the technicalities and ramifications of local government finance in the budget office, this group has recently made the decision to acquaint itself with other city services, one by one, and is proceeding to do so after the same fashion—asking the administrator to speak to and with the group over a series of informal talks. It remains still to be seen just how this is to be refocused on the problems of adult education in the community beyond the council group itself and its plans for forums on public services. But even so, in the process there is a sharing of points of view about the social bearings and relevance of adult education in connection with the various services of a city administration.

Yet another council is focusing its attention upon the discussion of a complex and scholarly survey made a year or two back, but too indigestible for immediate and direct consumption—in part because overly detailed, and in part because filled with evaluative material likely to prove disruptive in a comparatively new group. The questions proposed for discussion give promise of stimulating a kind of thinking which may make adult edu-

cation a relatively consistent movement marked by common understandings as to directions and values.

Programs like these indicate that innumerable council meetings relate to other council projects already under way, and suggest that discussion in adult education councils, as elsewhere, proceeds best in relation to undertakings shared by the group. Sometimes the discussion then takes on a life of its own. Working and thinking toward the solution of the problems it defines become an independent undertaking, responded to with a sense of recognition and responsibility. Whether or not such discussion proves fruitful depends in part upon the richness and promise of the project to which it was at first related, and in part upon the determination and facility of the participants in taking all important relevant considerations into account.

This holds particularly true in the case of council meetings devoted to the discussion of projects under consideration but not yet undertaken. Rich educational values are inherent in these discussions, too, and they offer an excellent medium for the exchange of ideas and the building of common understandings. But these broader learnings are not a necessary concomitant of group decisions to do this or not to do that. More often than not, decisions are made on practical or political grounds, rather than after due consideration of their far-reaching educational or social implications. And only when proposed projects are seen in the light of such considerations does the discussion lead to broader and fuller understanding of what adult education is and should be about. The process is slow; it takes patience and it takes faith. But the faith it requires is no greater than that which every good teacher exercises day by day as he goes about the business of education through first one small experience and then

another, building toward a wholeness, a richness, and a direction in life.

It would be idle to dwell upon the crucial relationship between creative discussion and the basic purposes of councils. Progress toward the achievement of these purposes can be made only on the basis of common understanding of the goals and values of adult education, and the only way in which such common understanding can be arrived at is through mutually enriching discussion. The word "creative" is currently suspect, and rightly so; it has been bandied about irresponsibly, without definite referent. But the fact remains that there is a type of discussion in which each participant contributes from the angle of his own present experience and insight, and all emerge with a somewhat remade point of view. Nobody thinks exactly as he thought when the discussion began. The background of each has been enlarged by that of all; all are sensitive to more considerations than they were in the beginning; and all are somewhat closer in accord than they were before. Several new things have come into being, and consequently the discussion has been in a meaningful sense "creative": a new way of thinking has emerged, and a step toward closer agreement has been taken; individuals think to a degree differently and feel to a degree differently in their relationships with others in the group. These are the values of "creative" discussion, and they are difficult to achieve by any other process, especially in so abstract and ideational a field as education.

To state this fact is perhaps supererogation of effort; all of those either engaged or interested in adult education are supposed to be convinced to the soles of their professional boots of the values and virtues inherent in discussion. But for the most

part these values and virtues are seemingly valuable and virtuous only for others. The art of conversation is said to be dead in America. Evidently the art of cooperative thinking is likewise an ancient craft, long since obsolete, which has to be revived.

COUNCIL BULLETINS

In addition to calendars, directories, and other printed materials prepared primarily for the purposes of publicity, some councils publish semimonthly or monthly bulletins addressed to their own membership. Though these are not, strictly speaking, creative undertakings, they are discussed here because of their supplementary and complementary relationships to meetings.

Council bulletins, sometimes formally printed and sometimes informally mimeographed, are always short and concise. In general, they report events of interest in the local adult education field—the opening of new classes and the imminence of other types of educational activities, and news of the council itself, its projects and meetings. Sometimes council discussions are reported *post hoc,* and sometimes materials sent out in the bulletin in advance are supposed to serve as the basis of subsequent discussion. One or two of these bulletins also call attention to new and interesting books in the field, or to books on topics currently of interest to the council.

There is little that is not obvious to be said about these publications. They serve as a means of communication among council members. It would be queer indeed if educators did not appreciate information about books relevant to their professional interests. News items obviate the necessity for lengthening council meetings interminably with disconnected testimonial and announcement. There is good precedent for getting material basic

to forthcoming discussion into the hands of participants in advance. Those who are unable to attend council meetings can keep up through a very little reading made easily available, and when the council has a number of different committees at work, the bulletin becomes increasingly important. If the council covers a wide area, such as a state, for example, the printed word is almost essential as a means of communication, since frequent meetings and full attendance are a plain impossibility. And, in any case, the bulletin constitutes a mirror for council activities and furnishes an element of cohesion and continuity.

There is every reason, therefore, for councils to continue this sort of publication if they have the resources for it. It is worth noting, however, that these bulletins are merely a help to council proceedings, and not an essential part of them—especially in those instances in which meetings are relatively frequent and well attended. Under these circumstances, a question might be raised as to whether such a sheet is valuable enough to be worth the time and energy that it takes, in relation to all the other things to which the council might devote its limited resources.

VARIOUS TYPES OF EDUCATIONAL PROGRAMS

There is no more moot question than this among those interested in the purposes and functions of councils: are councils ever justified in sponsoring or conducting educational programs of any kind—discounting, that is, the educational effects of their own discussions and activities upon their own membership? By and large, there is considerable (though far from universal) agreement that a council should under no circumstances undertake to provide classes or discussion groups for the public at large. This makes of a council "just another agency." It "puts

the council into competition with other agencies," which are frequently its own constituents. It makes trouble. And the council is in no better position to conduct such activities than is any other agency. And it has its own business to perform. Thus runs the argument in general.

One or two exceptions are usually made. It is "all right" for a council to provide institutes and training programs for adult education workers, whether or not these workers are in any way related to the council. And it is even "all right" for a council to conduct, sponsor, operate programs for the public at large, provided that these programs be forums or town meetings, whether over the air or not.

Those who dissent from the basic argument, who believe that it is sometimes proper for councils to conduct educational programs for the public, marshal a number of considerations to buttress their position. One of these is analogous to that which lays the central information service at the council's door: sometimes there is no other way to provide a given kind of educational opportunity. None of the council's constituent agencies is willing to undertake it; each and all are willing to see the council group as a whole do it; and at least a majority is convinced that it is worth doing. This "gap-filling" argument usually overlaps another, namely, that it is the function of the council to demonstrate what is needed by way of new types of classes and discussions.

Then there are those who say that if progress is to be made in improving educational materials, methods, or curricula for adults, councils will have to pool the resources of their various constituent professional groups in both planning and conducting experimental programs. Each group engaged in the field is

characterized by a different background of training, lives in a different professional atmosphere, uses a different vocabulary, has its own traditions and taboos, its own cherished values and its own special methods for achieving these values. Forum leaders, for example, share one type of experience and give relatively common consent to a number of precepts related to attaining the aims of forum discussion as they see them. The "creative discussers," accustomed to the intimate give-and-take of ideas in a small group, are more sensitive to the emergence of new attitudes and ways of thinking, and have their own distinct methods for pursuing the particular goals for which they are striving. The group-work field tends to emphasize the emotional elements in the discussion situation, and focuses a great deal of attention upon the feelings of participants in their relationships among themselves and with the discussion leader. The parent education field shares some of this, but has in addition equated lay leadership with certain social values and outcomes as well as with the more intimate emotional effects of discussion upon group members. And so on. Some of the methods, sensitivities, and aspirations unique to one or another professional group are undoubtedly good, and would be good over far wider reaches of adult education than just those in which they are now operative. Others are almost surely bad, deriving more from the conventions and unexamined traditions of a relatively closed professional orbit than from unprejudiced evaluation, and should not continue to affect practice even within their present narrower fields.

Those who think it is distinctly the business of the council to conduct experimental programs for the public contend that this is the best way in which the various values which each profes-

sional group has to offer may be brought together, the wheat sifted from the chaff, the worthy ends-in-view significantly pooled to build a more tenable set of objectives for all. The methods devised by each group may also come under proper scrutiny and be more carefully and accurately gauged for the attainment of the now revised objectives. The conventional and habitual will be brought to light and discarded if it is conventional, merely, and a new and better amalgam will result from the pooling of what is found to be of worth.

A final argument in favor of conducting classes and discussion groups is that this offers a core of common experience around which to rally critical thinking; a better and more conscious interpretation of the field can be most readily built on the basis of a cooperatively conducted program. This argument is distinct from that presented above, which would stress cooperative planning from the beginning, so that the classes and groups sponsored by the council would themselves exemplify something novel, something which approaches a little more closely the ideal conception of all, representing the results of their combined experience. This latter would merely use educational groups and classes, no matter how conventional, as a focus for such critical attention as might be brought to bear upon them. Both take account of the fact that each man is caught up in his own job; the traditions, conventions, physical demands, and administrative or legal regulations laid upon him frequently make it almost impossible for him to take home what he has learned and put it to work at once. With the council group he can experiment and demonstrate. The experimentation and demonstration, coupled with the discussion which brought them into being, have their own effects. Ideas seep through. Even adminis-

trators in the long run are impressed by what is being done elsewhere. The demands upon the individual worker shift. He is now asked to make those innovations which he would not have been permitted to make before.

So much for the theoretical case on the conduct of educational programs, pro and con, as it is ordinarily stated. Examination of various types of educational programs actually operated by councils may facilitate the formulation of more adequate judgment.

Institutes and Training Programs

The arguments against sponsoring and conducting classes for the public at large are not ordinarily leveled against conducting brief training programs for adult education workers, whether or not these workers are already related to the council. Such training programs are not supposed to trespass upon the private preserves of any council constituent or other community agency, and there is not supposed to be any other way of getting the job done. In addition, there is a notion—usually not very explicit—to the effect that it is the proper function of a group of professional people to plan for the further training of groups within their own membership.

The first of these reasons smacks of rationalization. Is it true that no other agency can provide professional training institutes? Most councils strong and active enough to sponsor them lie in fairly large cities and in states relatively well served by institutions of higher learning. What about university extension? It holds training institutes for teachers, doctors, veterinarians, cheesemakers. Why not educators of adults? Furthermore, a number of agencies usually represented in the council regularly

run training institutes for workers in their own fields—Y.M.C.A. and Y.W.C.A. secretaries, recreation workers, parent education workers, etc., etc. Perhaps the underlying reason is not so much that institutes cannot be provided in any other way as that they constitute relatively safe undertakings for the council. They are usually too small and specialized to interest the administrator of the ordinary university extension program. And they don't get in the hair of the agencies that provide in-service training for their own workers because their own workers don't have to go: the institute can always be for the benefit of others.

In the latter of the reasons advanced for the propriety of councils conducting institutes there seems to lurk the germ of a promising idea. As long as the training of professional workers is left to colleges, universities, and employing groups and agencies, it is likely to continue along conventional lines. A body of material, a type of thinking, a method of procedure is set up, and it is far easier to use it again and again than to examine it afresh each time a class or group or institute is to be conducted, re-evaluating, remaking, and improving it always. Moreover, adult education is a new field, relatively free from the hampering impedimenta of traditional trappings. Frequently the more hidebound institutions are at a loss as to how to deal with it, and so on the whole do a worse job than they do in those fields that already have a "substantial body of knowledge and practice." Conversely, the youth of the adult education movement offers opportunity for building a body of knowledge and precipitating the values of practice after such fashion as to encourage continued experimental deviation and critical interpretation of accruing experience.

For these reasons, rather than for those more ordinarily

advanced, the local council seems fully justified in planning, organizing, and conducting training institutes for adult education workers. What more appropriate than for a group of professional workers, recognizing the necessity for further training of a kind that is really not otherwise available, to set about cooperatively getting it for themselves? And, since they are themselves educators, who is in better position to plan their own learning, to decide what it is that they want to explore together, and how, and under whose guidance? Such planning would provide for the kind of amalgamation of various backgrounds and types of professional experience recommended for the planning of experimental programs for the public. It would tend to assure the canceling out of the conventional as over against the uniquely valuable in each field. And it would provide an opportunity for the council to come together for the conduct of a cooperative enterprise with many possibilities leading out into the future for further consideration and development.

What is the evidence of actual experience? Several councils have conducted one or more leadership training institutes. By and large no attempt has been made to gather together various points of view, to use the council's resources for crosscutting the ideas and practices of many different professional groups. Most frequently the planning and publicizing of the institute has been left to a small committee, which has gone ahead as though it were making arrangements for any course at all, outside the council context. As might be anticipated, the resulting institute is sometimes mediocre, sometimes excellent, in accordance with the astuteness of the responsible persons and their luck with the people they choose as leaders. Sometimes it is day-long, sometimes three-day long, sometimes two-week long. It calls upon the

services of imported experts or relies upon home talent. Sometimes its purpose is to inform the program chairmen of local clubs that there is more than one way to conduct a meeting, and simple demonstrations of lecture, panel, discussion, dramatization probably suffice. Sometimes the purpose is to refine further the techniques of persons already relatively competent and sophisticated, and far more refined objectives, methods, and procedures are required.

No doubt many of these institutes have real value for those who attend them. But nothing distinguishes them as council undertakings. They might as well have been planned by a committee of the board of education, or by the extension division of the university, or by a committee appointed by any one constituent agency of the council. Sometimes there is no one else to do the job, and the council performs a service valuable in the community. But it is distinctly a service function, not a collaborating, mutually enriching and critical bit of experimentation.

To make any such generalization as this is always to do injustice to certain councils. In the case of every council activity, there are some instances in which the "same" thing is undertaken in a spirit and with an awareness which makes of it something in reality quite different. And it is always the exceptional example that gives the clue to the distinctive values of the council approach. In one city, planning for a leadership training institute was begun well in advance. A sampling of problems was gathered from leaders in a number of different fields, and these problems were analyzed for their samenesses and differences. As it turned out, the differences were negligible: no matter what the field, the questions covered about the same ground. Representatives from all the different divisions of adult education

were nonetheless called together to plan for the leadership of the institute, so that proposed discussion of the relatively uniform questions might represent different points of view. In order to stress the cross-fertilization of ideas, the groups into which the general meetings were broken up were not divided out by field, but by common questions, so that the more intimate smaller group discussions might continue the process begun in the main sessions.

In another city, an institute on recreational leadership constituted a phase of a wider movement to help the community think through and solve its recreation problem. It was intended to facilitate the initiation of an adequate recreation program by assuring the presence of at least a few leaders with some degree of training. The publicity attending the institute was part and parcel of more general discussion of recreational facilities in forum and newspaper, and was an integral phase of a total experiment in stimulating public responsibility for intelligent action on local social problems. Thus, in another way it came close to the core of the council's function, in that it was part of a distinctly experimental program.

Though these examples are cited, several other council-sponsored institutes over the country have approximated them in one or more respects. It is a rare case indeed, however, when both the planning of an institute and the actual manner of its conduct are characterized by a steadfast and determined effort to amalgamate experience rather than merely to provide a program.

Forums and Radio Programs

The council-operated town hall or forum, on or off the air, differs from the institute as a council activity in that it is ad-

dressed to the public at large, and not just to a group professionally interested in adult education. But, like the institute, it is a type of program which is ordinarily considered proper for a council to operate. This may be in part because the aura of sanctity has fallen upon forums in recent years, the more the merrier, and no questions asked. Nobody stands on his prerogatives, nobody kicks when the council sponsors a forum, and the council in quest of something to do seizes upon the chance to get busy.

This is not, of course, universally true. Many councils have never considered the conduct of a public forum, and at least one council which is itself the outgrowth of a previous local forum council no longer conducts forums. Several councils have been instrumental in initiating forum programs by helping to create independent groups to run them. And one council, anxious to stimulate the discussion of public problems whenever and wherever possible, has refrained from either running a forum itself or setting up a separate forum organization; instead, it has organized a speakers' bureau which supplies a reasonable number of speakers on request to its member agencies. Furthermore, agency representatives on the council have pledged themselves to make the first speeches, turn and turn about or according to special interests and abilities, as local groups attempt to initiate forum programs.

It is no doubt a legitimate function of councils to attempt to make sure that the community adult education program is well rounded, and there would probably be universal agreement that such a program is scarcely well rounded unless it makes ample provision for public forums. Yet there remains a question as to whether it is really the business of the council to run forums

itself. Radio forums on national problems are already available, and as far as forums on local problems are concerned, there are almost always other persons and groups willing and eager to take over the responsibility. Once they do take it over, the council can give its attention to other and perhaps related questions.

For example, rages like forums sweeping the country would seem to require the kind of balanced consideration that councils should be peculiarly adapted to give them. In recognition of the cruciality of wide public intelligence on questions of wide public concern, forums have been propounded as the way and the salvation. And there was and is considerable agreement that they are an excellent means, to be encouraged wherever possible. On the other hand, they have not proved so universally effective as was originally hoped in achieving the ends for which they were intended. It might have been recognized from the beginning that no one single type of program could of itself suffice. A multitude of different means would certainly give greater assurance of success, and forums themselves might be cured of some of their ills and deficiencies, might realize their ends more completely, if they were supplemented by other kinds of activities looking in the same direction but more accurately adapted to differing groups and circumstances. Further, there are now on the air some excellent commercially sponsored programs, not of the forum type but relating to public questions. Is there any way of taking such educational advantage of these that they will continue to be made available? In brief, there are swarms of problems to be solved in regard to means and media for public enlightenment on public policy. Experimentation on a wide scale is loudly called for. The responsibility lies directly at the door of the adult education movement, and the combined re-

sources of the council are not too great to make even a beginning. But, as a matter of fact, many councils continue in the old and established way, doing what could be done by someone else, rather than studying, experimenting, pioneering.

Here, as always, circumstances alter cases. There may be any number of different kinds of situations—both as far as what is available in the locality is concerned and the spirit and mood in which the council conducts the forum—which may make the task truly collaborative toward the fuller realization of the more basic aims of adult education. Sometimes there is no other way to provide for public discussion of local issues; for the time being, at least, the council must take over the job if it is to be done, and it may be a more important educational undertaking than any other in that locality at that time. Or, again, one council seems dedicated to the principle that it is the precise function of adult education to provide means by which the people may learn to conduct their public affairs more intelligently; its program accordingly revolves around a public forum on local social problems and issues. Two local newspapers report the discussions as news, one of them usually displaying the case in a favorable light and the other hostilely; but in any case people hear and read about important issues in the locality. Public action has resulted far more speedily than was anticipated. For example, the local recreation situation was deplorable, and a local recreation commission has been created—a commission designed on the basis of now widely understood facts about the administration of public education and welfare in the community. This council is really experimenting with means for making the people of a city conscious of their own responsibility for, and directive influence over, their own public affairs and services.

Just how far this is being accomplished it is impossible to say; for the moment the practical results of the forum constitute outward and visible signs of progress which may or may not include increasing awareness of democratic processes.

Classes and Night Schools

The conduct of regular educational programs for the public at large is the heart of the problem so hotly debated to and fro, largely between councils that operate such programs and those that do not. The issue also seems to come up from time to time in most councils seeking something to do, and seeing in the operation of a series of classes or a night school a possible task ready to hand.

The field as a whole exemplifies at least three types of interest in the conduct and sponsoring of classes. One type is represented by a more or less eleemosynary effort to provide the same educational opportunities for adults without money as are available to those who can pay. A second type is the demonstration of a new kind of class, usually on some topic not often before treated in the classroom. And a third is the community school, first love and whole reason for being of many councils, particularly in smaller and suburban towns. Though the three types are distinguishable, they frequently overlap: classes for the underprivileged are sometimes demonstrations, and both demonstrations and services to the underprivileged may characterize the community school.

Providing classes not supplied to the public by any other agency ranks among the main functions of at least one council. The present availability of a course is interpreted with reference to costs as well as to the actual existence of the course in the city,

i.e., if a course is available at a fee, but fourteen or fifteen people who can pay no fee want just such a course, the council attempts to supply it free of charge. The existence of a group of this sort large enough to form a class is most often determined through the central information service. A card-file record is made of the name and address of each person who says he wants a now non-existent free course in glass blowing, say. When enough of these cards pile up the council gets busy. A small advisory committee is appointed to organize the course, find an instructor and help him plan his work, observe the course in operation, and sometimes even raise money to pay for the instruction if it can not be secured gratis.

This particular council is in part the outgrowth of a local committee formed, during the early days of the depression, for the express purpose of providing vocational training and retraining as well as morale-building opportunities for the unemployed—to plan these opportunities, and to pay for them. With this background, it is perhaps no great wonder that the council has been able to conduct some one hundred different classes over the past five years. Costs are borne largely by private contributions, and other educational agencies don't object—much. (As a matter of fact, though most of the moving spirits of the council like to claim that there has never been any trouble on this score, some council members did grow uneasy lest their own bailiwicks be invaded, and a reviewing committee was formed to make sure that none of the council's contemplated classes would encroach upon anybody's territory. This seems to have restored peace, at least for the time being.)

The legitimacy of conducting classes as an integral part of the council's program is defended against all comers. It is main-

tained that these classes supply an obvious community need, and that they serve a demonstration function—the work is gradually being absorbed by regular community agencies. Actually, of the hundred classes offered by the council during the past five years, very few have been taken over—classes in child care, in household efficiency, in training for domestic service. And just what the demonstration demonstrates is difficult to determine. That a class can be formed around glass blowing, that there are fifteen people in the city who would take such a course if it were offered free, is indicated by the cards saved at the central information service. True, the public schools and the W.P.A. say that they do not have the necessary personnel, budget, methods, or materials, and the council does demonstrate that the personnel can be found, the methods and materials developed. But the classes actually taken over are not of the sort for which it is difficult to find either personnel or teaching procedures and materials —they all lie in well-developed professional areas. Furthermore, the procedure the council uses to find personnel and develop teaching methods is not different from that used in devising vocational courses in any number of technical fields. The whole business is frequently left to a few glass blowers and one or two other persons who may put some money into the project, all without benefit of much educational aid. There is little pooling of previous educational experience to make the new course a bright and shining thing for all to see, learn from, emulate.

In brief, rationalizations about demonstration values and absorption into the more regularized adult education programs of the community are thin. What the council does is to supply classes that otherwise would not be available, or at least not to the people who are now able to take them because the council

offers them free. (The council is vague as to whether many people who could well afford to pay for classes take advantage of the free ones; it does not think so. People who can afford to pay assume that they get better instruction when they pay for it. But enrollments in council courses on the whole are relatively small, and there isn't much chiseling, if any.) This, then, comes back to justification on the basis of patent community need. After all, there are only a limited number of agencies, most of them publicly supported, which are in a position to make courses and classes available to the public free of charge. These are usually already loaded with more than they can manage on their budgets. The alternatives before a council interested in seeing that educational demands are met seem to be either to stimulate such public interest in the problem that resources will be forthcoming, or to urge some private agency to find the funds for it, or to carry on itself.

The arguments in favor of the first two as over against the last have already been suggested, but in some cases it is clear that the last may be entirely justified. Another aspect of the problem, however, is seldom considered. Just because there is a demand—fifteen people want a course in glass blowing—does not necessarily imply that a course in glass blowing is the most important or even a good thing to provide. The demand itself requires examination and evaluation before it can be classified as a community need, and even after it has been so classified, there may be other needs to be served before it.

A few individuals claim that the planning and holding of classes offer the council excellent opportunity for thinking about just such problems, which lead eventually to fundamentals in adult education. The fact of the matter seems to be that other

kinds of council activity offer the same opportunity. And by all accounts it is just as difficult to call forth profound and rigorous thinking on this kind of program as on any other. Where there has been an eleemosynary air about the origins of the work, so much virtue attaches to getting good deeds done that it is sometimes particularly difficult to stimulate consideration of their quality or exact adaptation to ends. Meantime the council's energy and resources are expended upon providing classes and not upon the more creative tasks which lie ahead. It continues to function as the board of an institution might function, rather than in any essential way like a council—cross-cutting, amalgamating, and focusing the thought and experience of all concerned with the adult education movement.

It is of course true that relatively direct services to the underdog call forth a warmer response than does planning for the reconstruction of educational programs in the light of the personal goods and social benefits to be derived from them. The former lies in direct line with a long tradition: "the poor ye shall have always with ye," "noblesse oblige," etc., etc.; the latter is something relatively new under the sun, and does not bring the same comforting and homely glow of virtue. So that providing classes does build a certain kind of cohesion not ordinarily or quickly attainable in the more rarefied emotional atmosphere of activities closer to essential council functions. But unfortunately it is a "we-feeling" around a charitable rather than an educational objective, and so not very dependable in solving crucial educational problems.

Granted, then, that the mere supplying of classes may be only partial in terms of the potentialities of council endeavor, is it as reprehensible an activity for a council as some of those who have

raised their hands in holy horror have tended to imply? The very shame-and-horror criers are mightily impressed by the so-called community schools being developed in a number of smaller cities and suburban towns. What is the essential distinction? These community schools are the result of "council" action of a sort—usually a group of educators and prominent local citizens called together for the specific purpose of planning a series of evening courses free or at small cost for the people of the town, courses which are not otherwise available because of the smallness of the town. These groups do not ordinarily weigh and consider, seeking to devise the most appropriate form of educational activity for their own particular localities. They just know that there are evening courses available elsewhere—in large cities and in other nearby small towns, and not in their own, and they want some too. So they lay their heads and their resources together to get them, and good democratic procedure it is. But nothing educationally new is demonstrated, nor does it occur to anyone to think that the community school will justify itself only if it is taken over by the public school or some other local agency. There it is, and people come to it, use it, feel it to be valuable. And that is all there is to that. Why, then, all the skepticism about the provision of otherwise unavailable classes by the adult education council of a metropolitan area?

Perhaps the distinction is that in the big city this kind of "direct action" is unnecessary. There are already agencies which could be brought to see new areas of service and make provision for them, without setting up the council as another agency "in competition with" its constituents. And this is obviously true, but in and of itself it seems not so basic a distinction as to make the council-initiated-and-run community school notably praise-

worthy and council-initiated-and-run classes for the underprivileged notably blameworthy.

So much for supplying classes and night schools as such. But what of demonstrations? Some aspects of this question have already been discussed. Actually, the efforts of councils in this direction have usually been short-lived and disappointing. A class or group in some new activity, like book reviewing, for example, is organized to demonstrate that it has educational values, but neither the values nor the ways in which the particular demonstration brings them into being are identified. As a result, when these groups are assimilated by some other agency, it is plain to be seen that they are "just another bunch of classes." This sad outcome is usually charged to the conventionality of the institution that takes over and the rigidity of its teaching methods. Very likely there is much truth in this charge; but what is the good of a "demonstration" that does not carry over, at least in some small degree?

Occasionally a council finds a way to demonstrate the adaptation of teaching materials and methods through a cooperative attack. For example, the English courses readily available in a city that numbers many German refugees were designed for an entirely different group. The time it would take to modify these courses would be long. Social agencies, educational agencies, and council cooperated through a committee to devise the kinds of teaching materials and methods adapted for use in this particular group, to train the teachers, and to organize the classes effectively. In this case the council did not itself support or conduct the classes; instead it provided a channel through which collaboration took place. Though only one of its committees had the benefit of the experience, it is a kind of experience that might

be emulated by councils elsewhere, in thinking about educational processes for other purposes and with other groups. When there is less urgency, the job of thinking, evaluating, planning may probe deeper and yield richer results. Here, again, there are a few small candles guttering to indicate the way down which many councils might attempt to go.

SURVEYS

The lure of the survey to the council is beyond exaggeration. When discussions break down for lack of common interest and the group can identify no other promising project, lagging spirits rise and quavering pulses take on a new beat as soon as someone thinks to ask, "Well, wouldn't it be a good idea to have a survey?" Certainly, let's have a survey. Nobody will be hurt by a survey, and with a survey we'll have some facts. Weren't we foolish to try to do anything before we had some facts? Certainly, surely, of course, by all means, let's get busy, let's get some money, let's get some staff, let's have a survey, let's have some facts.

Yet the experience of councils with surveys should dispel the woe and soothe the sighing of those who are obliged to remain for a while deprived. (If only we could get some money, if only we could get some W.P.A. workers, if only we could have a survey!) There are meetings, there are decisions, a staff is gathered together, there is excitement, there is—at last, thank goodness—something to do. There are questions, there are blanks, there are corrections and amendments, there are insertions and deletions, there is a final form. There are mailings and interviews, there are filled forms, there is tabulating. There may even be a report. And then, what is there? The council does not know what to do with the findings, and all too frequently subsides exhausted into

a state of innocuous desuetude indistinguishable from death.

Thus the lesson of much experience. The reasons for it are not far to seek. Children of a material culture, Americans are convinced of the value of facts: without facts nothing can be done, with facts mountains can be moved; facts, almost any facts, have value in and of themselves. Even in the physical sciences, however, it is seldom that the student sets out just to gather facts, without first having defined his problem, established his hypotheses, come to some reasonable conclusion as to what kinds of facts will either prove or disprove the assumptions upon which his case rests. Otherwise he will have abandoned a proved methodology built up through the centuries. He will fumble, and very likely he will fail. On occasion he does just observe and record in order to define his problem, or in the hope of gaining clues to promising hypotheses. But in each case he knows that his problem must be defined before the facts he collects will prove telling.

When a council, in contrast, takes to the collection of facts in a survey, it does so most frequently without the faintest notion of just what, exactly stated, the problems are on which it wants the facts to be of help. Therefore facts are collected at random—sometimes a great amorphous mass of facts, and sometimes a small and measly but still amorphous batch. These facts lead nowhere because they were not construed to lead anywhere in particular, to throw light on specific issues, or to validate important assumptions.

Furthermore, facts about social phenomena are far more difficult to put to use than are facts about physical phenomena. Suppose, for example, a survey is so designed as plainly to validate one given assumption, namely, that two different agencies are serving the same kinds of people with the same kind of pro-

gram. The presumption that this is wasteful overlapping, detrimental to the program of the community as a whole, cannot be substantiated by facts alone, because judgments and evaluations are necessarily involved. But even if there is agreement that the duplication is wasteful and useless, it can scarcely be assumed that either of the two agencies will gracefully relinquish its prerogatives in favor of the other. Facts do not work miracles just because they are survey-found.

All of this would seem to indicate the advisability of a more deliberate course on the part of councils when the urge to indulge in an orgy of fact-finding first makes itself felt. The hurry and scurry of a survey cannot successfully gloze over an actual failure to agree about what the basic problems of adult education in the community are. Unless there is some such agreement, the survey cannot be intelligently planned in the beginning, and so in the end can serve no useful purpose. For this planning is not a purely technical matter. In the chatter preceding a survey, one motif is likely to repeat again and again: "Of course we must have adequate technical help. Of course we must have somebody who has had good professional experience in making out questionnaires and interview forms, tabulating and summarizing results, writing up reports." Without derogation to expert surveyors, it is clear enough that they are technicians; and it is the precise function of technicians to adapt known means for the achievement of stated ends. If the purposes of the survey are unknown, inexplicit, vague, or merely to fill up an awkward gap in the council's program, all the expertness of the expert will almost certainly prove futile. He will be called upon to create machinery, and create it he will, but under these circumstances it is likely to turn out akin to comic-page machinery, complex,

but without useful upshot. So a council must define the problem it is trying to solve, the uses to which it wants to put survey information, before it begins the frantic search for an expert.

Time and cooperative definition of objectives are also required to build widespread readiness to act upon the facts revealed by the survey, or the whole project may be balked when the moment comes to use findings in reconstructing programs. This readiness can probably best be built through a slow and careful process of common planning, and of facing together what it should mean if the survey happens to reveal this or that—planning and the drawing up of recommendations on the part, not of some small, isolated, administrative committee, but of all those who will be involved in putting survey-found facts to work.

The naïveté of the faith that facts of themselves remedy defects cannot be overstressed. In one city it is well known that there are practically no opportunities of the usual sort—classes, discussion groups, forums, museums, musical and dramatic activities—in all that section of the city which lies "on the other side of the tracks." The council (of which some large and influential section of the membership is deeply concerned with serving the underprivileged and equalizing educational opportunities) is at present very busily concerned with a survey. The basic assumption seems to be that if a survey can show, objectively, in plain black and white, what everybody concerned already knows, namely, that there are no such opportunities for adults across the tracks, the situation will begin to right itself.

It is true, of course, that almost all agencies are willing and eager to extend their services and expand their programs. Sometimes, however, there is considerable question as to whether they are genuinely seeking new opportunities to serve the community

and the individuals within it, or merely seeking new markets for their old wares. Thus, in the community referred to there are undoubtedly a number of agencies that would like to corral more people into their programs. There are some that would be willing to refurbish their educational wares in order to be of greater service. But the fact remains that all these agencies already know there is nothing doing by way of adult education across the tracks. Why haven't they done something about it already? Perhaps they cannot afford programs that will not carry their own costs. Perhaps the kinds of wares they have to offer have no market across the tracks. Perhaps they do not know how to adapt these wares to the tastes and demands of the new market. What good will a survey do, if it is planned only to indicate a lack of dots—representing schools, classes, museums, forums, lectures—in one area on a map of the city?

It will, say those who are most interested in it, awaken awareness to the situation. But will it? There seems to be considerable awareness already, since the chief reason promulgated for making a survey is the very fact which the survey is intended to prove. But even supposing that it quickens the conscience of educational agencies; they know about it, but they do not know about it in a way which stirs them. Will they and can they do anything genuinely effective about it after—highly dubious assumption—the survey has stimulated them to action? If there is no money, there will continue to be no money, unless the intention is to use the survey to wring the hearts of public taxpayers and private philanthropists; and for this, again, why an elaborate survey? If there is money, won't other hindrances continue to operate—either inertia, or lack of imagination as to what will constitute appealing and valuable programs in the depressed area?

All this is not intended to imply that a survey is without value, or that action should be taken without adequate facts upon which to make decisions. When a survey is undertaken to determine certain specific facts required for intelligent action, and when a sufficient number of persons are looking for guidance for their action, and are agreed that the facts about to be collected will help them gain clues as to how to act, then a survey of some sort may prove indispensable. Then the facts revealed find their place within a system of values and are meaningful as a basis for action.

Without at least a certain minimal system of values, a spot map showing a lack of educational facilities for adults in one whole section of the city is just a spot map and nothing more. Without the tacit assumption that all adults are entitled to opportunities of this kind it does not even indicate a lack, a requirement, something to be done. There is, of course, usually this much of a system of values present when such a spot map is prepared. But, beyond that, beyond pointing to a lack and a requirement, this map gives no clues as to what to do. Indeed, to some it may suggest proliferating programs, unrevised, from one side of the tracks to the other, and so lead to the anomaly of a regulation clubwomen's civic program proffered to illiterate mommas and a great deal of effort wasted on programs that don't "take" because they bear no relationship to the motivations of the persons to whom they are addressed.

Nor does it help very much to supplement the spot map with replies to questions asking the people of the area what they want. Such questions may result in many blanks on the forms, or in requests for cheaper whiskey, a good five-cent cigar, a place to dance and pet. Educational processes must indeed begin with

what people want, and even unpromising requests may serve as clues to points of departure in program planning. A substantial program of education is an experience which enters the lives of the participants; it remakes them to some degree; it does not and cannot leave them and their wants entirely unaffected. Most often, however, attention is paid only to academically acceptable wants, and nobody knows and nobody cares about the directions in which they are remade. It is just assumed that any experience called educational must be a good thing. If people can only be enticed to come and get it, it justifies itself; the remaking is in a desirable direction, the whole thing has been worth while.

Experience in Germany should give pause to these tacit assumptions, to the notion that anything called education is necessarily beneficial to the recipient and his society. There was much education in Germany—much higher education and much adult education. What now of the lot of the Germans, their national and world society, not to mention their special victims? Just finding out that there are no educational programs, or not as many as elsewhere, is not enough. Just asking people what they would like by way of educational programs is not enough. What people would like has to be seen in the light of what they should ideally learn out of the educational aspects of their experience before it is possible to speak of a well-rounded program, or filling gaps, or meeting educational needs. Only after the basic goals of the educational process have been agreed upon, at least in their general outlines and directions, is exploratory fact-finding as to places to begin and ways to proceed in order. Then, perhaps, the terms "appraisal" and "exploration" would be more appropriate than "survey," but changing names and jug-

gling with terms won't turn the trick. Something basically different has to happen when a council undertakes to gather facts.

Nor is it enough to make an elaborate survey using criteria developed elsewhere and never fully considered or accepted by council members themselves. Such attempts to "upgrade" current programs and practices usually end by being carefully hidden under as many bushels as can be hastily gathered together, without consideration, without discussion, even without full publication. Standards and desirable directions of effort taken from elsewhere are applied to the programs of agencies related to the council. Many, perhaps most, of these programs do not meet the proposed standards. Perhaps the programs are really poor; perhaps the standards are way behind the programs. The appraisals give offense, and the only likely results are a row and possible disruption of the council.

There is, in other words, no way out of forming a jointly held opinion as to what adult education is for, what values it is to maintain and achieve. Attempting to operate without such a jointly held opinion is fumbling and relatively futile; attempting to impose the opinions of others on the group is bad education, undemocratic, and for the most part unworkable. And this holds for any project upon which a council may engage, as well as for surveys.

OTHER TYPES OF PROJECTS

The types of projects discussed above do not represent every activity being carried on by all councils. There is wide diversification among the things councils do and are asked to do.

Initiation of projects to be carried on by independent groups has been mentioned in passing: several councils have been in-

strumental in stimulating other groups to run forum programs and at least one council has participated in the initiation of an independent counseling service. Some demonstration projects are also properly classified here.

Cooperation with other agencies in providing various types of program is a fairly common variation. A council now conducting classes for the underprivileged contemplates working closely with city neighborhood councils (largely social work) to provide classes requested through these latter groups. An institute on recreation calls on the resources of professional organizations of recreation workers. A state council lends its resources to a state library association in conducting round tables on the educational services of libraries. And so on. In all of these instances the validity of the undertaking depends in large measure upon the nature of the cooperation, the degree to which it facilitates genuinely creative work by using richer backgrounds of experience. Sometimes the joining of forces is purely formal and superficial, sometimes merely administrative (to get things accomplished, without much pause to consider and evaluate), and sometimes more truly collaborative, as in the instance mentioned of planning new English courses for refugees.

Cooperation of another sort is also sometimes asked of a council, namely, to lend its weight in supporting some movement or measure. Sometimes the request comes from a constituent with a special vested interest; to accede would open the way for the council to be exploited again and again. At other times, though, the issue is clearly related to the purposes of the council in maintaining support for adult education as a whole, and building public appreciation of its essential nature. Under these conditions it is difficult to see, on logical grounds, why the

council should not go on record, as any other group in a democracy is entitled to do; the public welfare is at stake in some aspect in which the council is professionally interested. In practice, however, ventures of this kind have led time and again to internecine strife and eventual disruption. There is a tendency, therefore, to evade the issue with rationalizations about pressure groups, the impossibility of becoming well enough informed, and so on. In the long run it might be better to admit that few councils are yet sufficiently cohesive, share a sufficiently deep interest in adult education as a whole, or see its great common values well enough to be ready to move together in this particular way.

In addition to cooperation with other agencies, some councils are committed to advisory services for their constituents—services difficult to define and delimit, to protect from abuse, and to operate satisfactorily. In one city, for example, a privately supported school for workers was going to the dogs. The council was called upon to survey, recommend, and do as it would with the school. As the case turned out, the failure of the school was attributed to poor management. The council, in the person of its executive secretary, recommended the organization of a new board and found the school a more competent director. But why should the council have acceded to the request of this school's angel in the first place? Why should it pull chestnuts out of the fire for him? It acted without full consideration of the total problem of workers' education in the community; it gave little advance thought to the kind of workers' education appropriate there; and it did not strive to determine whether it might not better lend its resources to labor unions in developing their own educational programs.

In brief, when a council has an executive secretary, there are bound to be all sorts of calls, phrased as requests that the council give service to one or another aspect of the total adult education program of the community, which are in fact no more than demands for the executive secretary to drop council business and come to the aid of an agency in distress. This holds true whether or not the council is committed to an advisory service; there are always plenty of people ready to exploit any possibility to have their own work and thinking done for them.

On the other hand, the line may sometimes be difficult to draw. Many agencies not primarily educational in character seek help in initiating one or two educational activities, and many groups need and sometimes seek help in getting the full measure of educational value out of undertakings designed primarily for other ends, like union meetings or cellar clubs. Here it would seem to be the function of the council to bring its resources into play, seeking this time not to pull agency chestnuts out of the fire, but to advance and improve the educational outcomes of adult activities everywhere.

Another problem with advisory services lies in the question, "Now, who should arbitrate?" Why is any one individual better equipped to think through an educational problem than another, unless he is altogether better equipped to think through any problem, or has had some particularly relevant experience? If he is able to think better, then several good thinkers thinking together would be better still; and if the individual experience of one has something special to contribute, the individual experience of several would have that many more points of view to throw into the pot. And whereas there is something presumptuous in the advice of one person to another in his own field, the

same does not hold when several are brought together to delve into a new problem. But though council meetings frequently concentrate on providing opportunity for parent education workers, or workers' education people, or evening school people to get together—sometimes even precluding sufficient attention to cross-cutting the interests of all—the same technique is almost never used in connection with advisory services to constituents. A nice balance has to be maintained if the council is to open the channels of communication among workers in the different aspects of adult education and to bring the free play of thought fruitfully to bear on the various problems confronting its membership.

So much for advisory activities. There are still other types. One council, already mentioned, which conceives of its task in terms of giving adult education social orientation and direction, has undertaken to disseminate to its membership the results of research about local social conditions—research conducted at various local institutions of higher learning. Another provides for discussion of relevant new books among its membership. Others, most frequently state councils, summarize legislation relating to state support and regulation of adult education. Here there is some question as to the degree to which a compendium of legislation elsewhere, in and of itself, can be of great help. For the most part these compendia include no analysis of the effects of legislation in other places, and they can of course give no pattern as to what desirably should be worked toward as an ideal program of adult education in the state. But clues as to the way out of local legal snarls are sometimes gleaned.

And so on. It would be possible to detail variations *ad infinitum* and even to enumerate instances which fall into no par-

ticular type. The basic impression, however, would probably not change: some few councils realize in one or two of their activities basic and acceptable council purposes; a vast majority engage in many activities which might well be so conducted as to achieve these purposes but somehow miss—for lack of confidence in discussion and educational method, or for lack of creativity, perspicacity, sensitivity; and some considerable number are still in search of something to do to keep the group together and alive.

UNDERLYING REASONS FOR DIFFICULTY

Underlying all council difficulty in implementing purposes with programs, then, there may be said to be a lack of free creative energy to make the council perform the functions for which it is uniquely adapted, to devise projects, methods, procedures on a pioneer job in social and educational planning, to pool resources of intelligence and experience across agency and professional lines. In dim recognition of this, perhaps, there are three long council sighs, oft-repeated and almost stereotyped:

"If we only had an executive secretary!"

"If we only had some money!"

"If only there weren't so much interagency jealousy!"

And in each of these longings there lies what might constitute a partial, but only partial, explanation of the situation.

In large and active councils there is much to be done, and if all of it is to be done there must indeed be at least one person to execute the plans initiated by the council, as well as to attend to its more routine business. But, as frequently as not, it is the council without plan or projects that sits pining, thinking of what glory it could achieve if only it had someone to tell it what

to do! This is scarcely even hyperbole. The question, "What would you want the executive secretary to do?" leads to confused embarrassment. The general assumption is that when an executive secretary comes things begin to happen of themselves; the executive secretary, *ipso facto* and *ex officio,* knows unerringly what to do.

This of course he does not know, because nobody knows. The best he can do is to work cooperatively with the group in making a plan to fulfill its purposes. This takes time, and during the time the council is sometimes impatient, wondering whether it hasn't made a mistake in its choice. On the other hand, it is not fair to say, as some council members opposed to the employment of an executive have said, "What's the use? You can't buy brains!" Of course "you can buy brains," and the brains can be very useful in the novel task that lies before the council of adult education. But it is important to be sure, first, that the person who is brought into the situation for pay has brains, brains trained in democratic and educational processes, and a conception of the function of adult education not too far from that of the group with whom he is to work. Just any bright and efficient person won't do. And, second, it takes some time for even such a person to evolve workable plans with the group; the council would cease to be a council and become an advisory board to an executive if he just walked in with a prefabricated plan and began to put things in motion.

You can buy brains, but do you have to buy brains? In a pioneering task a good deal of the work has to be done by the pioneers themselves. It is impossible to buy all the brains required, because the brains that have to cerebrate are those that make up the council. Yet accomplishing council purposes is no

mean job; it is worthy of the full time of a genuinely creative person well versed in his field.

This holds, even though in some instances councils do manage to work purposefully and successfully without paid staff. There is, however, always a considerable amount of work to do for the group; the time and energy required for routine and even clerical tasks is beyond the imagination of those who merely go to meetings. Where the council is entirely without staff, this onerous labor is contributed by constituent agencies, and the more creative aspects of a council's functioning, like planning meetings and thinking up "ways out," are carried by council members. It takes time to do this sort of thinking and planning, but one or two persons can so interpret their jobs as to give a significant sector of their working time to the "over-all" aspects of adult education in the community. One librarian says explicitly that it is expected of the members of her profession to further the movement for adult education; she can see no more fruitful way to fulfill this professional obligation than to lend her energies to the purposes and activities of the local council, devoting about one third of her time to it. By and large, however, it is only public servants—usually in the library or the public school—who are in a position to do this, and even public school people frequently find themselves under so much pressure to further their own programs that they have neither time nor spirit left for the more comprehensive task.

There are also certain pitfalls against which to guard in permitting one member to take on even the bulk of the council's mimeographing, mailing, routine fact-gathering, or whatever. The preponderance of experience seems to indicate that under these circumstances the person in whose office all this work is

accomplished grows confused as to whether a project is a council project or a project of the agency with which he is connected—the resources of which he originally put at the disposal of the council for getting its work done. A year or two later it becomes foggy in memory: was thus and such a report a council undertaking, or was it a report prepared by the Blank Association for its own purposes? Even when this does not happen, when the person and agency doing most of the work keep entirely clear about the facts, still some of the same unfortunate results are all too likely to follow: a general feeling develops that the Blank Association is eating up the council, usurping its prerogatives, using it to further its own ends. There may not be an iota of truth in this, but it makes no difference, the effects are just the same, the evil is done, and the suspicion operates as thoroughly and destructively as though it were a fact.

This leads, in due turn, to the whole question of interagency jealousy and strife. The prime cause of morbidity and death among councils has here been diagnosed as an inability to find satisfactory purposes or to define these purposes sufficiently to implement them with programs. But it is not to this that most workers in councils ascribe their greatest difficulty. Most frequently disruption, inertia, and ultimate debacle are attributed to interagency jealousy, a lack of "community-mindedness" on the part of agency members, an overwhelming preoccupation with what advantage I or my agency is going to get out of this by way of services, or students, or other tangible assets that will set me and my agency up in the world.

That the grain of truth in this diagnosis is sometimes as large as a mountain can scarcely be denied. A man or woman is employed by an agency to run its educational program. This

program must be a "success," that is, it must enroll many students in a short period of time. It must be of such nature as to attract financial support to itself or even sometimes to produce revenue for some other aspect of the agency's program. It must expand, and it must glitter. Higher-up executives and a host of board and committee members want ego satisfactions out of the venture: they want something big and grand going on to help them gain a sense of bigness and grandness themselves, or even just a sense of being instrumental in bringing about a program in which they have confidence. The bases of their confidence are, from the standpoint of good educational thinking, puerile and elementary: lots of classes, lots of students, lots going on means a flourishing undertaking, and a flourishing undertaking in a field so surrounded by the aura of goodness as education is definitely something to be connected with and to have a hand in.

Consequently, the person in charge of the educational program is under enormous pressure to succeed in terms of just these expectations. He has a job, and he wants to hold it. It is essential to his future that his work be a success from the point of view of those who employ him. He is edgy about anything that even remotely threatens that which he must accomplish in order to gain the approval of his superior officers, committees, and boards. They want him to have more and more of the same, whether or not it is even reasonable for this particular agency to be engaged in this particular type of activity (and, besides, elimination of a type of activity may mean the elimination of his job). Furthermore, they want all of his time and creative energy spent on doing just the things that the agency has to do; this business of running around getting and building ideas is all right, provided it does not interfere with getting the agency and its educational

program well on the map. And getting the program on the map is more often than not a man-sized job; there are no dribs and drabs of energy left over for the fancy business of evaluating what is going on in fundamental terms (which so seldom have anything to do with "selling" the program).

In brief, in a business and competitive society it is not surprising to find educational ventures infected with business and competitive psychology, on the part of boards and staff members alike. It is fine to be socially minded and considerate of the other fellow, to think in terms of large social usefulness and rich contribution to the lives of individuals, but only after one's own nest is feathered, one's own business is successful, one's own job is assured.

Moreover, one's own job, and family, and other life associations and activities may offer too few opportunities for feeling oneself substantially of worth. They are likely to be full of small strains and frustrations which add up to a prevailing sense of inadequacy. Every chance to be an officer or spokesman, to sit at the speaker's table, to have a title, to be listed on a letterhead as a Pooh-Bah, means something. It means something way out of proportion to any real significance that it has as a contribution either to the common good or to the particular enterprise under way. It means that a man somehow begins to count for something in his own eyes.

It happens, then, that councils are sometimes dominated by individuals and agencies, which, so far as can be determined, have nothing to gain from their domination. The charge is made that the council is dominated by the Blank Association. Sometimes it is; frequently the Blank Association actually has something to gain, if only by keeping the council relatively inactive.

But far more often the domination derives from the fact that Mr. So-and-So, of Blank, feels surer of his job and eventually of himself if he is a Big Boy somewhere. He doesn't have too many good chances; he is moved by some inner compulsion to take advantage of every one that presents itself. So he dominates the council in no uncertain way, sometimes without awareness of what he is doing, or even with a sense of virtue in sacrifice of self for a recalcitrant, suspicious, and unresponsive group.

All this does interfere with the smooth functioning of councils, and sometimes leads to their downfall. Furthermore, it is a predominant aspect of the culture, and makes itself everywhere felt. Yet it cannot be fairly said that for this reason it is almost impossible to work councilwise. In the first place, no matter how predominant certain attitudes and habits become with individuals, in some situations these same individuals reveal hitherto unsuspected alternative feelings and ways of behaving. Given council relationships and activities so contrived that they do not threaten tangible "success" on the job and do provide plenty of recognition for services genuinely in the common good, domineering personalities may be able to participate on a basis relatively new to themselves. With something obviously worth while to do, closely related to what they are already interested in, people sometimes play the game with a selfless devotion which surprises those who previously knew them only in other relationships. To call forth this kind of behavior, to develop such *esprit de corps* among its members, the council must of course know where it is going and have some relatively definite though possibly quite tentative notion as to how it is going to get there.

Nor can it be said that there is nothing to build on among most of the people who are so very busy with their agency jobs

and preoccupied beyond all belief with being "successful" in the accepted sense of the term. The very persons most driven to get things done, to accomplish, achieve, produce, are inclined on occasion to reveal their inner confusion and frustration. What is it all good for? More and more persons are increasingly conscious of the social matrix which so profoundly affects and threatens their own lives; more and more want their work to contribute toward reducing the hazards they themselves feel lurking in the current trend of social change. They want the things they do, the hours they work, the stresses and strains they bear on the job to play their part in relieving people of fears, doubts, anxieties too great to be borne without either individual breakdown or the mad barbarity of irrational social "philosophies." If the council can help them in this, they will work for and with it; they will find the time to give validity to their labors. And this widely manifested desire to find real social meaning and worth in everyday tasks stands everywhere to hand in lessening divisiveness in the council group, building its common purposefulness and the possibility of cooperative thought and work to common ends.

There are, of course, individuals who have learned nothing from the past ten years of social history, who feel as personally secure as they ever did, who are likely to think of economic and democratic crises as something a few nuts are raving about, or the problems of malcontents and ne'er-do-wells. These are the tough boys. Obviously, they do not have to play. They can go skulking along in their own sense of security and contentment without participating in the council at all, and so not disrupt the common endeavors of others. But it is too bad to leave the tough boys out. They may not be able to make so much trouble, but they can make some. Furthermore, they fail to contribute what they

might to the common pot of thought and practice. And, perhaps more important still, it is they who most require the common thinking and sharing at the council table, most need new sensitivities and new awarenesses, most need to be jogged out of their complacency to gain some spark of that divine discontent which leads to more astute revaluation and more dogged efforts at desirable reconstruction.

With these tough boys, then, it is sometimes wise to take advantage of the desire to be somebody, to pretend with pomp and to cover over with glitter the real vacuity of a life without ennobling purpose or profound satisfaction. It should not be difficult for a council to provide places of pomp without power in order to entice the complacent into the circle of those more sensitive to the possibilities of their tasks. And the virus can and does take. Gradually the real worth of cooperative exploration into the proper role and direction of education takes on its own lure. Highly acceptable reasons for being jogged out of a rut appear. The game is not so dangerous, after all, and it is a lot of fun when you get used to it. But all this is contingent upon the council's having some real purposes and some activities manifestly related to them—both purposes and activities somehow clarifying that great potential social service of adult education to which each interested person and agency gives lip service, and toward which no one knows just how to work.

The music goes round and round: by cooperation Americans have moved material mountains; they allow themselves to be stopped by irritating gnats when it comes to cooperative efforts at improving the quality of life, because actually they do not know how to work fruitfully together in this sphere and are looking about for excuses to call quits. Councils are supposed to

ameliorate group divisiveness, lags and faults that come from the isolation of separate fields, lack of opportunity for evaluative and creative thinking. Are they then to fold up and disperse the first time—or the second time—they encounter in their own activities some of the very difficulties they came into being to reduce?

Another continuing problem of all councils, the robust as well as the apparently moribund, is how to keep the whole membership attentive to council work. There are always a few wheelhorses, and that perhaps is to be expected. But in addition, for a great many persons membership seems to be nominal only, representing no active participation. Nobody has time to devote to the council. Everybody is too hurried and harried. Staffs are reduced as educational budgets shrink, and those who remain are obliged to carry heavier and heavier loads. Under these conditions, it is not likely that the man who can not sleep at night will chew the tough cud of the council's problems. The mean little demon of his own job gibbers at him to distraction. The council may provide opportunity to see immediate troubles in proper perspective. It may render unreasonable daily frustrations more tolerable. Talking with others in analogous difficulty may reduce tensions and strains. Nevertheless, it may still be difficult to get away to garner the benefits that the council has to offer. Many people go along with curable physical ailments because their jobs do not allow the time to attend to them; it is easy to see why it might be similarly impossible to leave the job for spiritual refreshment—or even the kind of help that would make the job itself take on new color, direction, and zest.

People have no time; they have to take time. If the council offers them opportunity to do something which it is worth taking time for, they are far more likely to take it. They feel the pull so

strongly that they are ready to jeopardize a little of something else in order to give close attention to this. For some there is small latitude for choice, but for many others in professional jobs there is far greater latitude than they think. Actually, they choose the things to which a significant sector of their time is devoted; and if in general they fail to choose in favor of the council, it may in part be the fault of the council, and in part a cultural atmosphere which is adverse to cooperation toward nonmaterial ends.

The first step toward a solution lies in gauging council activities and programs to the concerns of council members, so that participation will not be an esoteric undertaking for them but right up the alley of their immediate interests at the present stage of their thinking. This calls for techniques not so different from those used to keep a whole class group working along together fruitfully. On occasion special jobs must be contrived for individuals who are not yet ready or willing to go along with the group as a whole. Account must be taken of special interests and aptitudes, and ways in which the less creative and imaginative may contribute must be found. Teachers are coming to know a good deal about this kind of thing; it remains only for what is known to be put more fully to work in the council situation.

But lack of complete success in enlisting the sustained interest and active cooperation of all the membership, though always a problem to be worked at, should not perhaps prove so discouraging. All the factors which militate against the success of councils are operative here: the council way of going about things is new to most people, who are more accustomed to running their jobs businesswise than communitywise; many have been brought up to the mechanical rather than the evaluative approach to their

educational work; it is still difficult for some to translate the general talk of the council into terms relevant to their own more particular situations. It takes a while for a new and better way of going about things to grip the imagination and for new habits to be formed accordingly.

The Difficulties of Councils

Problems of Organization and Finance

To persons and groups contemplating the initiation of a council, questions of formal organization loom large and menacing; to persons and groups with successful council experience these same questions seem almost always trivial. Finance is yet again another matter, and tends to harass those who have something under way more direfully than it does those who are just thinking about starting a council. Both these problems are treated here in terms of issues that arise in the minds of those concerned. Unfortunately, or perhaps fortunately, they cannot be settled categorically. When a particular council is in a quandary as to whether or not it should have a constitution, include lay people, or whatever, the best that can be said is that "it depends"—it depends upon a number of local conditions, various beyond summarization, and it depends upon the purposes in mind. Beyond that it is possible only to tell the experience of other councils on similar issues, and to warn that experience elsewhere is never to be taken over "as is": local factors are different, and ends-in-view may be quite at variance.

WHO SHOULD INITIATE THE COUNCIL?

Councils have been initiated in many ways, and they have been the outgrowth of many sorts of previous organizations. When those carrying the weight of council activities are asked how the councils in which they are active happened to be formed in the first place, some of them say that a certain number were meeting together anyway, and with such recognized benefits that they decided to formalize their meetings and attempt to include all the workers in the field. Others say that one or two of them heard about an earlier council elsewhere, and thought pleasure and profit were undoubtedly to be found in following suit on the home grounds. And some adult education councils are expansions of councils on immigrant education, or of forum councils, or of committees on education and recreation of councils of social agencies.

When the council is an outgrowth of some previous group, the question "Who should initiate?" does not arise. There is already a more or less going concern; some substantial group within its membership thinks the time is ripe to widen the scope of its purview or to redirect its energies. Though some vigorous and useful adult education councils have come into being in just this way, the shift does not always work out as well as the words would seem to portend. Often it is really made in order to throw off the yoke of some dominating agency or agencies, or in the hope of somehow finding function, support, vitality. Neither result comes to pass of itself, nor can it be achieved by sleight of hand; merely changing the name of an organization does not transform it, and very frequently subsequent steps have to be taken.

When a council is to be organized for the first time someone must take the initiative in calling the first meeting and making tentative proposals as a foil for group thinking. The responsibility does not necessarily have to be assumed by a single person; preferably it is assumed by a small nuclear group with some previous association and practice in discussing and working together. But, by and large, those councils have been most successful in which the librarian has played some major role at the beginning.

It is a sad fact, none the less inescapable, that the librarian is the only professional worker in the local field whose motives are ordinarily above suspicion. This may be due in part to the traditions of the profession and its long devotion to public service—a genuine devotion, more concerned with the welfare of the public than with the size of the institution, the noise it makes, the figure it cuts. Moreover, the library has everything to gain from the development of adult education, and it gains no matter how the program develops, or through what agency. Books can serve all study on the part of adults, and it makes no difference whether the books are used by students in university extension or in the adult education program of the public schools. The librarian would find it difficult to dig up an axe to grind if he would. And so nobody is afraid of him or shies away with suspicion from his initiatory efforts.

On the other hand, there are some librarians who are not proper persons to take the first steps toward the formation of a council. Some of them, according to their own accounts, have no interest in adult education other than that which takes place through the library, and have so expressed themselves often and loudly; no one would take seriously a purported change of heart

should they suddenly issue a call to meeting. And others, despite all odds, do dig up a private axe; they want the adult education programs of the community to serve the library! The chief desideratum is getting a lot of books—preferably non-fiction books—into circulation. The most important thing is to have a good record when report time comes around, and if the council doesn't get busy right away and start to make books circulate more rapidly, it just isn't worth while. This kind of librarian can be identified with ordinary astuteness, and brought into the council on the same terms as any other member whose thinking and feeling are at the stage of "Gimme, gimme something tangible for myself or I won't play!"

Valuable contributions in the initiation or fundamental reconstruction of councils have been made by university extension directors, employees in personnel training divisions of public agencies, public health education workers, educational program workers in social agencies, etc. Obviously there can be no universal rule. The chief desiderata are the ability to think through the purposes of a council, a deft creativeness in relating programs to purposes, and the confidence of other workers in the field. And who shall say that such a halo of abilities and virtues always clings most closely around the head of the librarian, or of the evening adult school director, or of any other person to be identified by his job merely? There is more to a man than his job, and the whole man is involved in initiating a council.

It is also perhaps worth mention that councils begun under exclusively W.P.A. influence and auspices have not prospered as all-round councils of the sort discussed in this volume. This may be attributed in part to the irritation and suspicion, whether justified or not, with which W.P.A. programs are often regarded.

Any initiative workers in them display in organizing councils is looked upon as an attempt to rally public sentiment for the continuation of W.P.A. jobs solely—which, in most instances, it undoubtedly is. Only very rarely are other agencies and persons willing to work with and through a council originated by this group, reanimating and reconstructing it to wider purposes.

SHOULD THE COUNCIL HAVE A FORMAL CONSTITUTION?

Whether it is wise to have a formal constitution is a question which bothers those who are starting a council far more than it does those who have councils successfully under way. Successful councils on the whole operate with only very occasional reference to formal documents, though most councils do have constitutions which somebody can dig up after sufficient prodding. Some have considered it preferable to have only more easily amended by-laws, or even just "articles of agreement." All of these, in the long run, add up to the same thing: councils do not have different histories because they call their paper statements of purpose and principles by different names. And a few councils as a matter of policy have attempted to get along without any constitution or other formal papers at all, meeting together to think, plan, and occasionally carry on shared activities as friends might do, without binding agreements.

The theory of these last councils is that the achievement of one fundamental purpose—freeing persons engaged in common tasks, though in different agencies, to think and work together—is actually hindered by the formalism of constitutions, by-laws, and all the other paraphernalia of closely structured organization. Whether or not the presence or absence of a constitution

does actually have any marked effect upon the psychology of the members of a group is highly dubious, and impossible to gauge. In some cases the theory has worked; at least councils have survived without a constitution and carried on programs satisfying to their constituents. On the other hand, the absence of formal procedure has proved almost disastrous in at least one instance. A council does, after all, have an entity of some sort, symbolized by a name, stationery, officers, and the like. And this entity can be seized upon by an unscrupulous member to further his own ends. If no constitution exists and there are no minutes or other established controls, this may give rise to considerable confusion and consternation. There is no way to get rid of the noxious member because there is no regular membership policy. And there is no form of defense against whatever he may choose to do in the council's name since there is no official and accepted record of proceedings.

One horrible example does not make a case. It should not constitute sufficient cause for a stampede to concoct constitutions where there have been none, or lead to general concern with formalized procedures. It is cited for what it is worth to point some of the less evident values in having the rules of the game laid down to be appealed to when occasion demands. If it is unlikely that occasion should ever demand, there is no use in jeopardizing anything else for the sake of the problematical values in the rules, and under no conditions is there excuse for so tying up procedures in complicated knots that the vigorous progress of the council's activities are in any way impeded.

Attention has already been called to the fact that successful councils are scarcely aware of their constitutions. The constitution describes the way they run, and does not rise to the forefront

of consciousness because the running is smooth. When a council encounters trouble, however, playing around with changes in the constitution is not likely to overcome the difficulty. Though there is sense in stopping to examine the machinery, it is futile to attempt to fix what is wrong by merely making changes on a piece of writing. In more than one instance, a council, not having been able to come to any agreement or to find anything to do, has spent a series of meetings tampering with the constitution, arguing over it this way and that, proposing that one word or phrase be substituted for another, and on the whole creating a lot of sound and fury signifying nothing, since the problem lay elsewhere.

On occasion, changes in the constitution have followed changes in policy felt to be necessary after a period of council experience. New and more appropriate ways of working together are found, new and better rules become clear, and the constitution is amended accordingly. But playing at trial and error with the provisions of the constitution has accomplished no more than might be anticipated. A council is not a mechanical puzzle to be fumbled with until just the right combination is achieved. It is a pattern of relationships among human beings. Playing with the structure of the pattern indiscriminately merely disrupts whatever elements of cohesiveness may be left among the persons concerned.

As a matter of fact, in newly formed councils it is worth delaying the drawing up of a constitution until mutually satisfactory purposes and policies have been agreed upon. It is not sensible for all the machinery to be set up before anybody is sure just what the whole organization is for. Yet this has been the usual custom of new councils—to turn over the drawing of a constitu-

tion to a committee at an early stage, before any agreements have been reached. Then the committee at best studies the constitutions of other councils, takes them apart, much as a small boy takes apart a number of clocks, and then constructs a new constitution out of the pieces, sometimes very neatly fitted together indeed—but nobody has yet decided whether the group is interested in telling the time!

WHO SHOULD BELONG TO THE COUNCIL?

There is no council question more often discussed than that of membership—what types of persons and agencies should belong to the council, and exactly what the nature of the tie should be.

Arguments about the values of one type of membership and another can go on *ad infinitum,* since notions of what the membership is to attempt to accomplish together are at variance. For those about to form a new council it is especially difficult to find reasonable criteria for the limits of cooperation. It would be easier to decide who could work profitably together if it were known in advance just what they were going to work at, and how, by what methods and through what operations. But it is precisely characteristic of the council that no one can or should determine the program in advance, and consequently the problems clustering about the choice of an original membership are likely to be myriad.

The only practical solution would seem to be for the small initiating group to invite at first only a nucleus made up of those who will be indispensable no matter how the council develops. With this group it may be possible to foresee the general lines along which a council could and would work, and to sketch an appropriate membership policy accordingly. When the time for

formal organization comes, it is wise not to relegate the final designation of this policy to a committee which works out of touch with the group as a whole and so may concoct a scheme for membership all out of relation to other plans.

Since the local group must determine its own purposes and consequently its own type of membership, all that is possible here is to outline the various alternatives so far developed. On the basis of this past experience it may in the future prove easier to adapt membership more closely to other policies, and to make decisions on this score a more integral part of the general planning process.

Individuals or Agencies?

Should the council be made up of representatives of agencies, or of individuals irrespective of their agency affiliations? The membership of most councils includes both individuals and agencies; the person who sits on the council may be an individual member or he may represent a member organization. Generally speaking, he has just one vote on the council either way, though an agency sometimes has two representatives on the council, and so has two votes as over against the individual member's one. In these councils the issue is usually not acute. It doesn't seem to make much difference whether a given person, interested and active in council affairs, is officially an agency representative or an individual member. That is the way it was in the constitution upon which their constitution was modeled. Or, they started out with agency representation exclusively and later changed when they discovered that the old scheme led to the exclusion of certain very helpful individuals after these had severed their agency relationships. Anyhow, nobody gives the problem much attention.

In other cases there is great emphasis upon type of membership, and all persons active in the council want to talk about it. Those who like to be pedantic about such things point out that a council is, properly speaking, a council of agencies, and that individuals banded together should always be referred to as an association. Others are less bothered by problems of nomenclature, but take their position on one side or the other, for individual membership or for agency membership exclusively. The partisanship extends to actual shifts in policy: several councils which have had both agency and individual membership in the past are now in the process of change—but some of them are moving toward a membership made up entirely of individuals, and others toward a membership of agency representatives only.

Those who bespeak the cause of individual membership are for the most part concerned about interagency jealousy and the imposing façades which agency representatives feel they must maintain. The general theory is that if an individual comes into the council conscious always that each time he bats an eye he bats it for his dear old agency (and will be so understood both by other council members and by other staff members at home on the job), then he will find it difficult to participate freely in the give-and-take of group discussion. He will be obliged to bear his agency's interests always in mind and to behave always in accordance with them, no matter where reason and justice lie. In addition, he will feel his status sitting heavily upon him, and will not forget for a moment that he is the high mogul of this or that; he will strive to maintain his point of view against all comers because he would lose face if he were to revise it as a result of talk with some young whippersnappers from no-account organizations. Consequently it is better to have him join the council

as plain Jim Jones, without the array of titles and dignities which follow his name when he serves as the representative of an agency. He and others learn more when he comes in so; the conditions are more propitious for the group to move forward together on the basis of honest judgments objectively pooled.

The only trouble with the theory is that it does not hold water too well. Just because, according to council policy, the Executive Secretary of the Blank Association is supposed to join the council as himself, plain Jim Jones, interested in adult education, does not mean that as a thinking and feeling person he joins as plain Jim Jones. His interest in adult education derives perhaps in large measure from his job, and the urge to join the council may very well arise from the fact that he is the Executive Secretary. Very likely, individual member or no, he pays his council dues out of his official budget. It is part of his business to belong. Furthermore, if he is a certain kind of person, he never allows himself to forget his status and all that is due it: why, he is the Executive Secretary. The mere formality of joining the council under some other rubric, such as his own name, makes no difference. It doesn't deflate him very much. And, strangely enough, the very councils that insist upon individual membership still tend to seek as members the same persons of standing. Position and status continue to exert their influence. All this is recognized in councils that have tried individual membership, but the conviction remains that, in the long run, this scheme tends to cut down harmful divisiveness, exaggerated consciousness of the interests of agencies, and the inhibiting effects of place, pomp, and official standing.

There is yet another reason advanced for exclusively individual membership in councils, namely, the protection of mem-

bers against the charge of having spoken for their agencies out of turn. This is a more or less legalistic matter. Mr. X, who happens to be director of the local university extension, rises in meeting to speak in favor of the continued maintenance of federal forums, say. He may be in trouble if the newspapers should quote him, phrasing their quotation, "U of Y in Favor of Federal Forums!" The theory is that if he is clearly not a representative of the agency that employs him, he does not have to wait for the boards and committees that stand behind him to speak; he is a freer agent to speak on his own. There is probably some truth in this, but in how far can an extension director really cease to represent the university? The formality of "speaking for himself" is likely to prove quite empty when it comes to crucial educational and social issues. He does not speak officially for the university, that is true; but as a university employee he would perhaps better not speak too loudly in contravention of the university's basic policies and positions. Thus, though individual membership may contribute a little to freedom of expression in the council, the amount it contributes is probably too negligible to be taken seriously into consideration.

Those who take the opposite position, namely, that council membership should be made up of agency representatives only, do so largely because they believe that under these conditions the work of the council influences adult education in the community more rapidly. They reason that if educational opportunities for adults are to be improved, agencies must be involved; individual membership brings in a lot of people who may be interested, but who are relatively impotent to do anything about it.

This argument, too, has its obvious limitations. Just because an agency representative, having learned something new through

his participation in the council, wants to make some innovation in the program of his agency, doesn't mean that he can get right to work and make it. Nor would one have it so. Good educational changes usually result from a shift in point of view on the part of a number of persons immediately related to a given educational project or program; they are not put into force by fiat. They are the results of slow growth, which perhaps comes as readily and well when the first person to get the idea is not an agency representative, but a lowly somebody in the ranks. This is certainly true when the agency is democratically administered and there is opportunity for the interaction of all points of view represented on the staff. When it is not so administered, it is doubtful whether changes instituted by administrative authority are likely to be very effective, anyway. But it does help if the administrator gets the idea of democratic administration in the council; then good changes can be effected much faster than if some more humble staff member gets it. And there is no reason why the mighty and the humble should not both be representatives on the council. Both, however, would gain the same points of view just as well if they participated as individuals, and then a number of staff members could sit in the council more or less as equals.

Thus, on the whole, the balance seems to swing in favor of permitting considerable latitude for individual membership, whether or not it is thought important to have agency membership as well. (Sometimes an extraneous motivation enters into the encouragement of agency membership: agency dues are higher, and help to fill the council coffers. But there are ways out of this, too. In those councils which have only individual membership, agencies are sometimes permitted to "associate them-

selves" with the council for a fee, but without representation, and are entitled to certain special services from the council staff in return.) Individual membership permits a wider participation in the deliberations of the council, and facilitates rather than interferes with using council-born ideas in the reformulation of agency programs. Furthermore, many individuals who have a great deal to contribute are not immediately connected with agencies engaged in adult education, and so can not become agency representatives; unless there is some other way for them to relate themselves to the council, the value of their participation may be lost because of a technicality.

Laymen as Well as Professionals?

In addition to the debate over individual versus agency membership, there is also considerable controversy over the advisability of admitting "lay" persons to membership in the council —controversy obfuscated by confusion of terms and by a number of interweaving rationalizations.

To begin with, who is a layman in this field? Many a council points with pride to the great contribution made by some layman, and on investigation the "layman" turns out to be a woman with long professional training and experience who has married and left her job. To all intents and purposes, she is a professional person; her "layness" can mean only that she has no job axe to grind at the council and may have more free time and energy to devote to it. Unless she is domineering in high degree—trying to take out on the council everything that she once took out on job and subordinates—or in some other way not personally suited to make a contribution to the group, there is every reason to take full advantage of the assets she has to offer.

But physicians, lawyers, and businessmen—particularly businessmen thought to have some free money—are also counted among the lay people of value in the council. Frequently a number of lines of defense are built up for, around, and behind these more truly nonprofessional council members. Sometimes it is said that they have more practical minds than professionals, that in all fields it is lay people who get things done. Sometimes it is said that they represent the community, and sometimes that they are so influential in forming community opinion that they must be drawn in. And sometimes they are defended because it is said that they alone are free of the bonds of agency affiliation; they are objective.

In small measure the fact of the contention regarding freedom from agency ties must be granted. If there is an interagency battle going on, lay members of the council may in most instances remain above it. But not always. A layman may be a member of the board of one of the agencies, or an alumnus of another. Hiding behind the cloak of his disinterest, he is in excellent position to throw one monkey wrench after another into the council machinery, and all unsuspected, because, forsooth, he is a layman and a pillar of the community. He can be quite free about a concealed partisanship, as the job-holder can not, because his bias is as hidden from himself as it is from others. This does not often happen, but it can and has. If the factor of disinterest is to weigh largely in favor of lay participation in council affairs, the disinterest must be certain, sure, tried, rather than merely taken for granted.

The objectivity of the lay person is yet another matter. To be objective implies the ability to weigh factors according to some commonly accepted criteria of experience, rather than according

to a purely private and subjective scale of values; it does not imply insensitivity to the factors to be weighed. In the sciences it is assumed that only the well trained are capable of exercising those precautions which assure the objectivity of their conclusions. The layman accepts any reasonable case laid before him; frequently he does not detect its deficiencies because he is not aware of alternative considerations, possibilities, values, tried and tested truths. For this reason he is easy to manage and often very convenient, but to ascribe superior objectivity to him is to stretch the term out of all reasonable definition.

The validity of the assumption that lay people and not experts "get things done" depends upon the nature of the thing to be done. It is true that scientists discover and invent, while lay people manufacture and use the results of their invention, and likewise true that architects plan while laborers construct the buildings that they plan. But the layman does not do the expert's job: he does not discover and invent, nor does he draw the architect's designs. Now, if it is the function of the council to bring intelligible integration into the efforts of adult education workers—efforts related on the one hand to the motivations and aspirations of individuals and on the other to the demands of a changing society rife with possibilities for both good and evil—this would seem to be the job of these workers themselves. They may require the help of those who are more expert in the behavior of individual human beings, or in social dynamics, or in the relation between the individual and the culture. But it is difficult to see just how those who are less expert than they can be of such great service to them.

There are some who say that lay members in the council represent the community. In what sense do they represent the com-

munity? In the sense in which the kind of population sample taken for Gallup's poll represents the community? Obviously, no, because these lay people are usually all well-heeled urbanites. Do they then represent the community as the city councilmen represent the community? Obviously, no, again. Neither do they represent those who are taking courses in the community's night schools or visiting its museums; no effort is made to get the participation of these groups, though lay people are sometimes said to represent the public that uses the community's adult education facilities.

No, that is not the real point, and none of the other defenses built up around the layman are the real point: the real point is that councils are always short of money, and from laymen they seek to gain the financial support necessary for the things they would like to do. Sometimes no one knows just what should be done, but everybody is pretty sure that something worth while would be done if only there were money with which to do it. Not many professional educators are in a position to be angels. Consequently, it is tacitly assumed, lay people must be brought in. When it is said that they represent the community, what is meant is that they are leaders in a certain sector of community opinion. As they believe, so are those who sit on the boards and committees of other agencies also likely to believe; they represent that part of the public which has position and money to lend to efforts which they think are safe and good things to support. But it would never do to say they were brought in because they might in due time be sufficiently convinced of the worth of the council's projects to help support them financially. That is not after the fashion of the culture. The fashion of the culture is to enlarge upon certain nonexistent or highly dubious values in lay par-

ticipation, and then to expect it all to work out according to foreseen plan, since everybody has really known what it was all about from the beginning, anyway, only there were certain conventionalities to be gone through as a matter of good form in the meantime.

Sometimes it happens that laymen have money to give for just those projects in which they are—for some reason unrelated to the further development of adult education—interested; and it is a tough council indeed that can turn down money right next to the hand because the project blazes no new trails. Sometimes the motives which move the layman are on behalf of the underdog, to be sure that he has the same kind and amount of educational ration that the overdog has, without regard to really balanced diets for either. And sometimes their motives are more sinister—to prevent the council from encouraging the free discussion of certain topics in open forum, or otherwise to emasculate the movement of all social relevance, meantime mouthing social interest with all the envenomed honey of paternalism. But far be it from the council to press the point of forums when, by letting just that little thing go, it can get the money for its precious information service, say. And, when money is given to provide classes for the poor, why stop to ask whether this is a proper channel for the extra-job creative energies of people responsible for the adult education movement during the present troubled period of history?

Sometimes it is difficult to draw the line between the professional and the lay. If the Y.M.C.A. and Y.M.H.A. are represented in the council, what about the Council of Jewish Women, which is a distinctly lay organization conducting classes in English for foreigners? Then, what about the Junior Chamber of

Commerce, which has what it calls an educational committee? And the American Legion, and the Elks, and whatnot and whatnot? There are hundreds of them. From the point of view outlined here, it would seem that the distinction must be made at the place where interest in the educational development of adult experience ceases as a primary consideration and other interests take precedence over this. This might include the Council of Jewish Women and it might rule it out, depending upon the nature of its classes. It would definitely rule out all organizations more concerned to put across certain specified conceptions and beliefs than to educate on the basis of fundamental democratic values.

But it is frequently argued that public opinion is formed by exactly those groups which are trying to put something across. How can an adult education council leave them out of consideration? The most likely answer is that the council can not leave them out of consideration, but it can exclude them from participation in its own deliberations and planning, at least for the time being. Educators themselves are somewhat at a loss to know their own minds on what constitutes the crux of their own endeavors. After they have worked together on this problem they will be in better position to decide who else is making contributions germane to their own ultimate objectives, and who is in fact working counter to them.

The making of the American mind, the values to which it gives allegiance, the kinds of discriminations it makes, the use to which it puts its information, and all the factors influencing it are part of the business of the adult education worker. If he is concerned with the competence of people to make their experience always better, he must be concerned with the newspaper,

the advertiser, the movies, the radio, the deliberate and the unconscious agencies of propaganda, and the effects they all are having upon the way people think, feel, act, interpret their experience, reconstruct their allegiances and aspirations. But this does not mean that the council should deliberately put itself directly under the influence of these forces just while it is attempting to think through their effects. Like all other adults, council members are subject to these same forces and are affected by them. But they have a very special professional interest, not shared by the lay public, in the educational outcomes of experience. After they have a firmer hold on exactly what these outcomes are and on the influence of various kinds of experience upon them, they may have much better approaches to the problem of public opinion than, say, any newspaper man could help them achieve. The newspaper man's business is to get out the paper, increase the circulation, secure advertising, make money out of the news. Meantime he builds public opinion, but he may be entirely cynical about the kind of public opinion that he builds and still be generally known as a "successful" newspaper man.

To take a particular example, it is clear that the freedom of the press, important as it is, still does not provide the kind of exchange of opinion once provided by the town meeting. Educators do not need a newspaper man to help them define this problem; they can define it for themselves. It is more than likely that the newspaper man, for reasons of his own, would seek to minimize it. But, no matter how willing he might be to see it for what it is worth, he would be no better able to offer a solution than anyone else, and he might be less able than anyone else in the council to press the need for public discussion of the point.

Nor would the problem seem to be solved by dragging him through a lot of argument and giving him a point of view which could in no way affect his actual practice as a newspaper man. Other means than the newspaper have to be discovered and instituted, and in this task the representatives of the press have no special resources to offer.

Thus, if the council is genuinely minded to extend its purview to include the wider social medium and its effects upon the thinking of adults, it will not be content merely to say, "Why, we have to have lay people with us; they represent the community!" or, "They're the ones who really have an effect upon public opinion!" It will instead begin by attempting to define the individual and collective responsibility of professional workers in the field toward the problem in hand, and then proceed from there.

None of this is intended to say that a sign should be erected before the portals of the council, "No Laymen Allowed!" There are always individuals whose insights and capacities are valuable in an enterprise of this sort, or, more likely, in certain aspects of it—individuals whose personalities, abilities, and talents are worth enlisting, either "for the duration" or for certain projects and special aspects of the council's work. But, for the basic business of formulating council policy and fulfilling its fundamental purposes, there is serious question as to whether participation should not be confined, at least for the time being, to those who now share a special concern for educational values in the lives of adults. This is the job of adult education workers; let them shoulder it in full, bringing in others as they themselves are ready and as they see clearly the role of these others in relation to their own primary responsibilities.

Profit-making as Well as Non-profit Agencies?

Should profit-making as well as non-profit institutions be included in council membership? Most councils have been adamant on one score: no admission for profit-making agencies or individuals connected with them. Elaborate machinery for the admission of members is ordinarily allowed to rust, but is brought into decisive action when some case of suspected profit-making comes up. In some councils the machinery is used routinely in all cases, and it has been used once or twice to serve the prejudices of persons in control of the council. But not frequently. Most of the time it operates to keep profit-making agencies out, and for that purpose only.

On the other hand, one or two councils, notably those which have emphasized the values of individual membership, have gone the whole way: since membership is based on the interest of the individual, no questions are asked as to whether he works in or runs a profit-making agency. The supporting argument runs to the effect that almost all professional adult education workers make their living out of their work. Nor are the garment hems of all "non-profit" agencies so lily-white. More than one educational program, ostensibly above suspicion of profit motive, is under great pressure to ease the budget of its parent organization. And as for impeding moves on the part of the council which might possibly interfere with attracting students, that certainly does not characterize the so-called profit-making agencies alone.

Yet it is clear that when concentration upon profits in an agency takes precedence over a sincere attempt to achieve educational values, the agency has no place on the council. The actual emphasis of the agency and the foremost concern of those who

run it would seem to provide more genuine criteria than whether the program has to support itself, or whether, in addition, some proprietor has to make his living out of it. Such bases of judgment would rule out all programs run primarily for profit, but admit those primarily devoted to valuable educational efforts, even though they may have to make a little profit to keep going.

WHO SHOULD BE THE AGENCY REPRESENTATIVE AND HOW SHOULD HE BE SELECTED?

Where agency membership is the rule, or part of the rule, a problem sometimes arises as to who is to represent the agency and how this agency representative should be chosen—whether by the agency itself, the council, or the two in collaboration. Should the representative be the head of the agency (say the general secretary of the Y.M.C.A., for example), or the person more closely related to its educational program (like the educational secretary, if there happens to be one, or the program secretary)? And is it ever proper to have an agency represented on the council by one of its board or committee members?

The propriety of board and committee members serving as agency representatives depends so largely upon the policy of both council and agency in regard to the functions of committee personnel, their theory about the place and role of laymen in council and agency work, that no possible suggestions, even of the broadest character, can be indicated.

The case in favor of the biggest staff boy available as representative—the executive secretary if possible—is usually buttressed by the good old "administrative" arguments. What can a minor staff member do to remake a program? There must be administrative action, someone has to convince the board, there must be

someone in authority to put the thing over. Why waste time with small fry? When a proposed change entails the elimination or addition of a whole program or some substantial part of it, it is true that board action is required, but this happens far less often than might be thought from the way the administratively-minded talk about the importance of having the big boy on the council. The reasons why educational programs cannot ordinarily be revamped to good educational effect by administrative fiat have already been touched upon, as has the desirability of having as many staff members as possible participate in the deliberations of the council. The more persons professionally interested in adult education and its bearings, both social and individual, the better. If this makes the council too large, provision can be made for the mediation of ideas back and forth between discussion groups in constituent agencies and the council group as a whole. Under these conditions the administrator may be the best liaison officer, and he may be the worst, depending upon the kind of person and administrator he happens to be. Some member of his own staff may be able to do the job better than he, and have more time to give to it.

This leads to the point that it seems unreasonable to keep insisting that it must be the big boy who sits on the council, and then to bemoan the fact that he is always so busy that he seldom comes, and when he does come is so taken up with his own worries that he doesn't contribute much. The adult education movement can't be made up of administrators solely. There must be teachers and leaders, staff without number who are engaged in the education of adults and genuinely concerned with it as a professional responsibility. These do not have the burdens of administration on their shoulders. Though they may be over-

worked, they are not harried by the number and variety of demands to which the administrator must respond. And they are not on the spot about the agency or institution to the degree that he is. They are for the most part humble people, humbly looking for the significance of their work. And they are a resource that has to date been left largely untouched by all councils in their search for suitable membership.

Yet there seems to be every reason for the inclusion of as many of these humbler workers in the field as possible. They must in the long run constitute the backbone of the movement, because it is they who have the actual contact with adult learners. Furthermore, it is from their ranks that future leaders must in all likelihood come, since they will constitute a first generation risen in the ranks of adult education as a recognized movement with an entity of its own. For the sake of the future of the movement, then, as well as for the sake of these workers themselves and the probably great contribution they have to make to the council, some provision should be made for including them among the active council membership, whether as individuals or as agency representatives.

How should agency representatives be chosen? There are those who say, "We who are already of the council must choose them, because we know what the council has to get done," and there are those who say, "Of course the agency must choose them, because that is the only democratic way: the agency knows what it wants represented, how it wants the representation effected, and by whom. The agency has to choose its own representatives or it won't work with the council at all." And there are those who choose representatives jointly, with both council and agency collaborating in the selection. In the long run this last seems the

best solution. It is a specious democracy which permits representatives who will not be effective in the council to be selected by an agency which knows little about council work; and agency representation does not amount to more than a phrase if the agency is represented by persons chosen by the council alone.

HOW SHALL THE COUNCIL BE SUPPORTED?

Councils have "no visible means of support," no regularized place to look for money with which to carry on their activities. Some get along on the dribbling cash that comes in as membership dues—and that about pays for mailing costs, if constituent agencies chip in the labor. Others are supported by private contributions, or even for a while by foundation grants. One carries on profit-making activities—a concert series and a speakers' bureau—to raise its budget. And one is supported by contributions from community agencies.

The prime difficulty in the attempt of the council to earn its own way is that the energies required for this earning are diverted from the main concerns of the council. For the council staff to make its own payroll and rent takes almost all of its time. Such remainders as there are can be given to conducting the council's fundamental program, but the remainders are few and consequently the council's program is either conducted at a routine level or left dormant. There is no time for the development of creative enterprises. Promising ideas drag along for years until they lose their bright and shining quality. It takes too long before the overworked staff can get around to do anything about them, to put wheels under them. Even council meetings are neglected and attendance drops because of lack of time for careful planning.

The dangers of support by private contributions have already been touched upon. The program of the council may be distorted by the effort to gain and keep the interest of donors. Large contributors very readily become predominant in council sessions and, since they are usually laymen, they are not likely to be sensitive either to all of the bearings of any given proposal or to the possibilities in various alternatives. This does not of course always hold. There are donors who understand the necessity for a hands-off policy and a truly democratic process in the council, just as there are those who are in the council for reasons of their own—to see that what they want done gets done, or else. But even under the best circumstances, there are always other uncertainties. Private support is dependent upon the vagaries of private life and fortune. Changing interests and obligations, death, and financial reverses—conditions which have nothing to do with the substance of the council's work—may make it impossible for it to continue. It is a risky business from the purely practical point of view, as well as from that of the council's freedom to develop according to its own best lights.

Ideally, if councils give meaning, direction, vitality, integration to the community adult education program, they should be community supported. And the most reasonable channel of this support would seem to be those already-established educational agencies which stand to benefit most directly from the council—in the sense that it will help them to serve their educational ends more adequately. Though this type of support is actual practice in one city, the example scarcely constitutes a practicable suggestion for other councils. To begin with, the precedent was established at a time when the city was particularly rich in key persons who understood the potential values of council activities, were to

a high degree socially minded about educational efforts, and able to move their boards with some of their own vision. Furthermore, even in this city the council trembles in its boots each year as budgets for educational activities in general are reduced. The council item is too new to be accepted as an unquestioned part of agency expenditure, and is all too likely to be dropped first, because of having been taken on last. Nor is the city longer blessed with as many key persons of a kind to support the worth of the council's work before agency boards. There is considerable conjecture as to whether it would not have been wiser to establish this kind of support for the council far earlier and far more gradually.

The more general conclusion to be drawn is that there is no precedent at all for this kind of support in other cities. Furthermore, some cities in which councils are at work are actually closing the doors of many of their educational agencies for lack of funds. To recommend local agency support for a council under these conditions is to whistle in the dark. Yet there remains a persistent notion that it may be exactly a part of the council's business to prevent this kind of thing from happening —to discover ways and means by which appreciation of the essential place of educational opportunity in a democracy will come to be so understood by people at large that they will refuse to permit the cutting of educational budgets. In brief, it may be exactly where education is valued least and threatened most by depleted budgets that the activities of the council are most crucial.

Councils are worthy of financial support and for the most part they do much better when they have money and a staff. Yet it must be emphasized that where money and staff are for the time

being impossible of attainment, the council can still function with inestimable value to its members and to the community at large. Many other sorts of committees and groups come together to think through and propose solutions to problems, without benefit of large funds or employed personnel. Why not the persons concerned with adult education? And, as indicated earlier, some councils manage to do a good job with only the money that their trifling membership dues bring them—supplemented by the concerted and cooperative efforts of their members.

Returning now to a consideration of the problem in localities where the financial situation is less desperate, certain distinctions may profitably be made among the various types of council activity. It seems entirely reasonable to expect information services, directories, and calendars to be paid for by local agencies. These are community services; they are so devised as to be of utmost aid to the public, and the public has free use of them. Somehow, then, the community should find a way to pay for them, whether this way is through the public schools, or the public library, or, more probably, all the agencies that thus present their wares to the public more intelligently and consistently than they otherwise could. Council enterprises of this kind are not likely to attract money from any other source; unlike services to the underprivileged, there is little about them to stimulate large personal contributions and, since they plough no new ground, they do not warrant the aid of foundations. Yet, with the possible exception of operating educational programs, they are perhaps the most expensive activities of councils—at least in cities where files are large and inquirers after information are many.

The more creative activities of councils may, on the other

hand, require very little money for their support, or they may be worthy of support from those sources which are supposed to lend financial aid and abetment to pioneering in the educational field. There is every reason, however, to encourage regular community appreciation of and regular support for creative and experimental tasks as well as for routine services.

This leaves only the salary of the executive secretary to be accounted for, and this must for the time being remain a problem. When councils have established their place and their worth, regularized means of financing staff may be found, through public support or otherwise. In the meantime there seems no other choice than for councils, like other pioneering agencies, to prove their worth under more trying conditions in the hope of continuing what they have begun under conditions more propitious.

WHAT IS THE PROPER GEOGRAPHIC AREA FOR A COUNCIL?

Councils may be classified according to the size of the area to which they pertain: there are city councils; councils designed to include the whole of a metropolitan area; city-and-county (the county in which the city lies) councils; county councils; councils including districts within state; state councils; and regional associations.

City and City-County Councils

Most of this text has been given over to a discussion of the city adult education council because that is the most prevalent and flourishing type developed to date. In the city council, the municipal boundaries constitute the limits for scope of membership and immediate concern. The city is not, as a matter of fact,

entirely comprehensible as a community in any very profound and useful sense of the term, but it usually represents a negotiable transportation area, and its public educational agencies are uniformly administered. There is also a certain amount of local pride—individuals do identify themselves with their city. So that the city does constitute something of an entity from the standpoint of determining the limits of council cooperation.

These factors are evidently influential, for there has been very little success in forming a single council across the boundaries of two immediately adjacent municipalities. Cheap and easy transportation is frequently lacking between one city and another lying right next to it; both those who attend adult education activities and those who might participate in council meetings tend to be almost as far separated, from the council point of view, as though they lived at opposite ends of the state. Different school boards and systems of taxation sometimes make the educational picture quite different, and people somehow feel that they belong to one city and not the other.

The city-county council involves still another question. When the city and the county are practically coterminous—the outlying districts of the city and its suburbs constituting the whole of the county, and the suburbs being closely related to the city in transportation, economic life, marketing, amusements, and the like—the city-county council does frequently enlist persons and agencies throughout the area. When the county exists half rural and half urban, however, this does not so frequently happen. The problems and attitudes, the social and educational organization, of the two types of community are likely to be so different that the city-county council most often forgets its country cousins altogether. It functions as though it were a city council, and that

part of the county which lies outside the city is represented only in name. Sometimes the city provides meetings of interest to certain groups in the surrounding rural areas, and these are usually well received. But the persons and agencies interested or engaged in adult education in the rural parts—if indeed there are any such persons or agencies—are ordinarily not inclined to join in the council because its problems and projects are remote from the problems they encounter in the rural field.

The organization of adult education in rural areas is a distinct topic, discussed in the following chapter. The city adult education council can be properly compared only with its state counterpart, with the kind of inter-community organization developing in one closely populated state, and with the regional association covering several states.

State Councils

It is more difficult to give form, meaning and direction to the state council than to the local group. No matter how great the disparity of intentions and points of view among the persons and agencies working on different aspects of adult education in a given city or town, this disparity is increased when the group is widened to include the whole state. And whereas adult education workers in a city or town are frequently not all acquainted with one another, there is still more acquaintance and more basis for building group feeling among them than there is when the group includes everybody in the state who is interested or engaged in adult education. These disadvantages of a state council may be in part offset by the greater competition among agencies in a city, all drawing from the same group for students, but the same kind of competition operates to some degree over the state

as well. And the state council works at a steady disadvantage in the inability of its members to get together readily and often. Furthermore, it is far more difficult to gain support for a state group than for a city group, and individuals interested in the movement are far less likely to give their time and resources to it.

Consequently most state councils have not been singularly successful. Some are really just organizations through which the state department of education maintains its relationships and builds its influence. Others make surveys and draw up directories, which may give information as to resources for local agencies but more often merely list all the educational work for adults going on in the state—as a sort of testimonial to the size and breadth of the movement. The majority do not manage to accomplish much more than a relatively formal conference once a year, and the conference, by and large, has nothing to characterize it specially as pertaining to the state, or to distinguish it from a local, regional, or national meeting on adult education. Most frequently it does not even represent a statewide effort, but only the effort of some individuals in the locality in which it is held. In other words, it is statewide only in name and in the area to which publicity is addressed, and it is a council activity only by a stretch of the imagination.

This is not, however, universally true. One or two state councils have defined their problems with comparative clarity and are working on them with some considerable success. Recognizing that the legal and tax structure affects the provision of educational opportunities within the state as a whole, they keep agencies apprised of pertinent legal developments and make comparative studies of legislation in other states. Some encourage the formation of local councils and the exchange of experi-

ence among them, through state conferences and a state bulletin. One or two, recognizing the special nature of the problem of adult education in rural areas, are concentrating their efforts upon experimentation and demonstration in selected counties or school districts. In this, as in the matters of legislation and taxation, they frequently collaborate with the state library association and other state groups and agencies.

In state councils, as in the local council, there is often a question of the proper type of constituency, of whether the council should be made up of individuals and local agencies, or of local councils and statewide agencies, or whatever. The question is not, however, so hotly debated; the whole organizational structure is a great deal more casual than is that of the local council, and there is little opportunity for the kind of controversy about it that often characterizes the more compact local group. Nonetheless some believe that there is need for such close collaboration among publicly supported state agencies that these should form a group of their own, whether or not there is another and more inclusive state group with which they may also work.

Moves in this direction have in some instances caused considerable consternation to already-established state councils, and much conjecture as to just what they may all be about. Yet, whatever the local conditioning factors in each instance, on its basic theory this kind of move is no more portentous than would be the institution of machinery for collaboration among five or six different bureaus working in the same department of the government. This theory runs somewhat as follows: Whether or not it is advisable for all the agencies and organizations interested in adult education in a state to have coordinate philosophies and ideals is open to question. There should at least be

plenty of latitude among them for variation and experimentation along a number of different lines, and even their basic principles and ideals may run in oblique directions and still remain within the wider framework of a democratic society. Not so with a number of different agencies supported by the state. These must somehow have a common understanding and an integrated approach to their problems, and can perhaps reach this goal more readily and rapidly than can the more heterogeneous and diverse state groupings of professional workers related to many different kinds of agencies, both public and private.

Whether or not this integration of services is more feasible and desirable among publicly supported agencies of the state alone, and whether, even so, it is better for them to gather themselves into a group apart is an issue on which there is insufficient evidence. Nonetheless, occasional moves in this direction should not occasion any great amount of speculation about possible intentions and threats. No one worries when the librarians from the different branches of the state service go off into a huddle by themselves. Why be taken aback, then, when the different branches of the state service related to the education of adults work together in their own group to improve and integrate their efforts? How can this interfere with the wider collaboration of state- and non-state-supported agencies in their similar but more diversified and diffuse efforts at the same sort of thing?

In initiating and planning for state councils, then, as in planning local councils of adult education, the first questions to ask are, "What do we want a council for? What are its purposes to be? What can its prospective members do better together than

they can do as individuals? And can the state organization actually get concrete activities under way to further its common purposes?" These questions are, by and large, even harder to answer for the state than for the local group. And it is ever so much more difficult to put the answers into effect unless there are one or two individuals (persons widely respected for their integrity and unselfishness in relation to other agencies) in the state department of education, state university, or elsewhere, who can contribute considerable time and attention to the project.

Regional Associations

On recognizing the obstacles in the way of effective organization and cooperative effort on a statewide basis, it is clear that similar problems of diffuseness, difficulty of association, and lack of opportunity for cooperative effort must beset the regional association. Here, not even legislative enactments and tax support are the same for all.

But on the other hand regional conditions of a social, economic, and educational nature do pose problems on which adult education workers might want to work together. The illiteracy, generally low social standards, and economic depression of the South pose certain problems different from those posed in New England, for example. The Pacific Southwest is different in social conditions and general educational status from the Rocky Mountain area, and this again is different from Texas, or the Middle West. There might, then, be great profit to be reaped by providing for mutual thinking and discussion, planning and action along these lines, gearing adult education to the socio-economic and educational status of a region—were regional associations feasible from the practical point of view.

And this is precisely where the rub comes. All the difficulties which beset the state association are aggravated for the regional association. It is necessary to gather participants from farther apart, and there can be very little continuity about the program. Annual meetings bring their usual flash-in-the-pan results, and annual meetings are about all that any regional association has been able to manage. Nor do these meetings really require regional organization. By and large, one local council or even one local agency plans the program, carries all of the responsibility, and sends out publicity to regional lists. Those in the region come and attend—in accordance with the interest of the program, the drawing power of the publicity, and the stretch of personal or budgetary pocketbooks.

Most often the discussions do not focus upon regional problems; in fact, every effort is usually made to have national leaders present and to discuss problems in the large, since attendance at these meetings is conceived for the most part as an expedient substitute for attendance at the annual meetings of the American Association for Adult Education. Consequently, regional problems scarcely ever even come up for consideration. And there is strong question as to whether they would be discussed, in any case, even if efforts were not largely bent toward providing the best possible substitute for a national convention. Very few programs of adult education are geared to the peculiar problems of a locality. Most of them represent the more or less mechanical repetition of conventional programs worked out elsewhere—in adult immigrant or illiteracy education, university extension, the national offices of the big social organizations, or wherever. The social relevance and responsibility of adult education receives lip service, but has not yet seeped down far enough into

the consciousness and conscience of adult education workers to lead to any great desire for reconstructing programs in accordance with social conditions. This fact need not be labored here; it is fairly obvious, and is touched upon at one or two other points in this volume. But it is worthy of consideration in relation to the current failure of the regional association to amount to very much, despite the very real potentialities which would seem to lie in the regional grouping.

These potentialities would of course have to be realized in different ways for different localities. In some, discussion might suffice; in others, demonstrations might be in order; and in still others, provision might have to be made for "circuit riders" and the routing of experts through a central office to the places where their services were most needed. It is impossible to outline the various possibilities in advance of the fact, or to foresee all the difficulties and problems which might arise. It is safe to hazard, however, that the regional association could not function helpfully without some fairly substantial budget, and that this budget would be difficult to find. It is also more difficult to find persons who can contribute their time to regional work than to state work; jobs are not ordinarily phrased in such ways as to refer to regions, and time spent on such work has to be "leisure time" at best. Consequently, without appropriations from outside, the regional grouping cannot be expected to do much more than provide the "lift" to be derived from an annual meeting—and even for this it requires subsidy.

Intra-state Councils

There is yet another type of grouping through which adult education workers attempt to cooperate. In at least one state

(densely populated, with many small towns and suburban areas), the state association has been attempting to encourage local cooperation, and at one time its proposals were phrased in terms of county-wide associations or councils. Somewhat unexpectedly, response to this suggestion was relatively negative and highly variegated. Counter-proposals were made to the effect that councils covering two or three adjacent school districts, or sometimes two or three adjacent counties, were more practicable. For one set of reasons or another, it seemed wiser to those actually at work in the field to attempt collaboration sometimes over a wider and sometimes over a narrower area. Distances, personalities, local conditions and problems, motives of prestige and control, all play their part in decisions of this sort. Nonetheless, it is clear that since a council is primarily an instrument of cooperation, the area of cooperation within a given state cannot be decided arbitrarily, nor yet on the basis of pure logic, or according to minor political boundary lines. Effective cooperation depends upon so many factors related to the living quality of human association that the scope of cooperation can be planned nowhere except right on the ground, in the light of all the pertinent local factors and the purposes of cooperation in view.

And this last might indeed constitute the catchword for all problems of council organization and support: "in the light of all pertinent local factors and the purposes of cooperation in view." It is impossible to make a tool without knowing both the purposes for which it is to be used and the conditions which will affect its construction and use. And the council is, after all, a tool to facilitate cooperative endeavor on the part of those who are concerned with the common problems of adult education in

some comprehensible area. No prescriptions can be written, no fixed patterns can even be suggested. The group which does not have the initiative and foresight to make its own machinery for its own purposes is not likely in any case to amount to very much as a council. Without this much it is defeated before it begins.

Councils of Adult Education and Community Organization

STRICTLY speaking, the confines of this discussion limit it to the organization of adult education forces of a community; the organization of the whole community for numerous purposes —a process through which many educational values may undoubtedly be obtained—falls outside its intended scope. Yet, for a number of reasons it is impossible to pass by community organization and its relation to adult education in treating of adult education councils. First among these reasons is the fact that there are no councils of adult education as such in rural areas; the closest analogy to be found is the organized community, with perhaps a committee devoted to the problems of adult education as such. Second, councils of adult education themselves tend to shade off into community councils, in some instances including representatives of agencies that have no educational programs, but only a real or presumptive interest in community welfare. Third, there is a sometimes knotty problem of relationships between the council of adult education in the urban setting and various "neighborhood councils" or "coordinating councils," organized for the purpose of taking the neighborhood population in on correlated social service and

community welfare activities. And a fourth reason lies in the hypothesis held by some that community organization in the broader sense must somehow be effected if adult education of wide social significance is to eventuate, and that this may therefore be one of the crucial problems confronting councils of adult education more narrowly conceived.

The short span of time allotted for the study of councils has not provided for more than a superficial glimpse of two or three types of effort to organize the rural community with educational outcomes primarily in mind. To become as conversant with the possibilities and problems of community organization as with those of councils would require a separate study. All that can be undertaken here, therefore, is a cursory statement of what has been attempted, in order to form a background for comparison, contrast, and suggested possible relationship to the council of adult education.

The Agricultural Extension Service has been longest at work in organizing the rural community. Some county agents and rural sociologists attached to state staffs have been inspired to help the rural population work out their own problems co-operatively through organization, study, and action—instead of merely hand-feeding them with specific answers on the specific practical problems with which rural people are confronted. The community's leading citizens and representatives of all its organizations come together to identify its common problems and to plan community attack, after the fashion which seems most appropriate to them with the advice of the available experts. In a number of instances the resultant activity has been wide, fruitful, and continuous over a period of many years. The experience of one hamlet, seemingly made up of a school, two

churches, and a crossroads filling station, may stand for the experience of many. This village is the center of a population of some thousand or fifteen hundred on outlying farms. Together they have instituted a number of evening courses for adults, initiated a local library, produced and enjoyed a series of local festivals, provided a week-end recreation program for young people (to keep them from visiting the saloons and dance halls of a neighboring city), made vast improvements in the appearance of the town square and adjacent areas, conducted a "talent survey" to discover resources for different kinds of communal work and recreational activity, and engaged in a number of similar undertakings which suggest what a rural neighborhood can do when it girds itself up for communal action.

A somewhat analogous effort is being made by one state university, with a staff and funds specially provided for the purpose, separate from either the extension division or the state agricultural extension setup. Here there is a definite and self-conscious intention to derive basic educational outcomes from participation in community affairs, to make the *curriculum vitae* something more than a word. Attention centers largely on the small town of about two to six thousand. Though there is considerable variation, from town to town, in the way the program develops and in the projects on which communal efforts first focus, in general a council made up of representatives of all organizations (and there may be over two hundred in a town of two thousand) meets to identify community problems and decide what to do about them. By and large, they decide to work on employment and recreation opportunities for out-of-school youth, a community evening school for adults, a health program. In one town, which has been supplied with a director of com-

munity organization, about twenty-four different projects have been undertaken, ranging from hot lunches for school children to the coordination of welfare activities.

Another example is afforded by a southern agricultural, mill, and moonshine county where a group of experts employed by a foundation, in cooperation with the faculty of a local university, are attempting to help the people discover what they would like to do together to improve the conditions of their living. Here the council as such is made up of leading citizens who come together from time to time to discuss various social problems, to be apprised of a number of local projects which the staff has stimulated over the county, and to give advice in regard to the conduct of these projects. It was early discovered that the county-wide approach would have very little meaning, since transportation is difficult and one of the aims in view was to discover whether people would give their own time to improve their own local conditions. To do effective work in community organization it was therefore necessary to subdivide the county into much smaller areas of fairly homogeneous population. And from one area to another there has been considerable variation in the development of the program—whether it was initiated directly by the staff or by people like district school superintendents, whether cooperation took place on an individual basis or through agency representation, and the like. In some areas the point of departure has been a survey planned and made by the people themselves, and in others representative groups have proceeded without survey to decide just which problems they would like to work on together. By and large, projects have centered around recreational facilities, health provisions, economic self-sufficiency, and town and home beautification. Concrete

achievement has been large in several instances and, in parts of the county where gifted staff members have been intensively at work, notable progress seems to have been made, not only in sheer ability to work together, but also in widespread confidence in cooperation as a means of attaining mutual benefits. It is important to note in passing, however, that there has been no comparable development in the urban center of the county. One faculty member in the social sciences has succeeded in organizing and up-grading the work conducted by the local welfare agencies; a community evening school has been provided through collaboration of local educational agencies; and considerable neighborhood work in home beautification has been conducted by the staff. But there has been no community organization, including all of the people, of the sort which has been accomplished in the rural areas.

Now it seems an ineluctable principle of democracy that the people themselves must study and know the conditions affecting their lives, and make their own provision for improvement accordingly. And it seems a likewise inescapable educational fact that the best way for people to study and know about such factors as these is to study and know them as they operate in their own lives. It is for this reason that one looks to community organization as one of the best means for adult education basically related to the maintenance of democratic processes and the intelligent conduct of adult life. And it is for this reason that experience along these lines, under the comparatively favorable conditions of small town and countryside, is worthy of analysis for its meaning in relation to councils.

It is interesting to see that whether the project is conducted by a county agent or rural sociologist, a foundation-supported

project staff, or a university, the actual program undertaken by folk under the stimulation of expert leaders from the outside remains about the same. The reasons for this are obscure. But the point to be emphasized here is that variations are revealed nonetheless from project to project, and from one type of community to the next, and that these variations have their important implications.

One variation lies in the amount of attention focused on the process of cooperation and its values, as compared with the values of running certain community services, achieving certain relatively tangible intentions. When the whole end in view is to have a community school, or to provide a more adequate recreation program, or to beautify the town's public square or its front yards, cooperative efforts may be bent toward these ends, and the ends themselves in some large degree accomplished, and still not very much be learned about what can be achieved by cooperative effort, or about the values of coming to common agreements, based upon study, in improving all the conditions of life. The ends-in-view are achieved, and considerable local pride is felt on that account. Some of the neighbors, who previously did not recognize much in common and may not even have been on speaking terms, are now able to plan and work together. This is a good beginning. But it is just a beginning for the development of that common understanding which should come to permeate the national life, until both national problems and their local counterparts are solved through the intelligent participation of all the people affected by them.

For this to happen, small beginnings at democratic undertakings in the local community have to be identified for what they are. The people themselves must become conscious of what

democratic process is as they study their local problems and learn what to do about them, venture some solutions and, if these prove unsatisfactory, study more and try again. They must come to recognize that through intelligent cooperative action they can make their lives what they want them to be; and they must come to value the respect for persons, the mutual responsibility between persons and groups, and the free play of intelligence which characterize this process and democracy itself. Unless they learn this about what they have done, it may all be so much feverish activity, without further growth toward bridging deeper schisms in the social structure and toward the wider cooperations necessary for the actual solution of local problems—which are for the most part always but manifestations of wider problems embracing the country as a whole.

A second variation is to be noted in the degree to which everybody concerned gets in on cooperative communal efforts. In the open country there has been some fair success in bringing in almost every family. As the town grows larger, resort has to be had to representation, usually of already organized groups. In the towns of two to six thousand, only about one-third of the total population even belongs to any organization whatsoever.[1] Though the fact is seldom recognized, the community council, made up of representatives of all the community's organizations, does not enlist the energies of all who, as members of the community, are presumptively interested in improving community conditions; it does not even represent two-thirds of them. People do not learn when they do not experience, and the proportion of the people who experience the democratic process in community

[1] See H. Y. McClusky, "Mobilizing the Community for Adult Education," *Michigan Alumnus*, 45:26, April 29, 1939.

organization grows smaller as attention shifts from open country to metropolis. By the representative community council technique alone it is impossible to capitalize educationally on all the major activities and concerns of all community members.

Another variation crosscuts three widespread social phenomena: specialization of labor and institutionalization of social services, class divisiveness, and wide social interdependence. For example, in those agricultural areas where there still remains at least a version of individual economic enterprise and each farmer tills his own land, community organization can be at least active in relation to economic conditions. A live-at-home program (variegated crops to provide a well-balanced diet without resort to markets or need for money) can be instituted. Credit unions are formed. Farmers join in the discussion of land use, and work out local adaptations accordingly. The Department of Agriculture employs every means at its command to provide for widespread local discussion of a national agricultural program, and the like. So, in some measure, no matter how insufficient (the economic plight of the farm remains pitiful, nonetheless), it is at least possible to attempt to foster understanding of what is involved in the economic situation, and to build widespread enlightenment concerning it. And, except where there are mechanized farms or where sharecropping is the custom, there is relatively little class divisiveness.

As soon as there is a clash between landowners and tenants, mill owners and operatives, factory owners and employees, however, it is always found that such gaps in community life cannot be immediately bridged through community organization, and economic questions lie dormant, even as matters of discussion, while other and simpler problems are attacked with whatever

resources are available. Furthermore, in rural areas resources for certain kinds of community improvement are to be found in the skill and brawn of the people themselves. As soon as urbanization and specialization enter the picture, resources are frequently wanting for the projects in hand; the economic factor makes itself felt. And it does also, of course, in the rural area, where some improvements can be made by the laying together of heads and the pulling together of hands, but where life continues to lack the services which only costly experts can provide (like adequate medical care, or adequate libraries and schools, for example). It may be in part for this reason that the countryside seems in no large way remade by these efforts at community organization. It may well be that until people find some solution for the economic factor which looms so large in their lives—and this they must do in collaboration with many others not on the scene and remote in place and station from themselves—they will have insufficient latitude for development of other aspects of life. And if this be true, it is indeed disheartening to find that, wherever there is some degree of industrialization, even the study of local economic problems on a cooperative basis must be put off indefinitely.

But what is the bearing of all this on the relationship of community organization to the structure and function of the local council of adult education? In the strictly rural area, to begin with, it is clear that, by and large, there is no place for an adult education council. All its deliberations would amount to would be perhaps a three-cornered conversation, perhaps one person communing with himself. But it is likewise clear that the educational outcomes of community cooperation do not arise spontaneously without the thoughtful direction of those who know

how to extract educational values out of the on-going experience of the group. There must be some educational direction of a high order if these undertakings are to result in more than a few farms better run and a few cleaned-up back yards, however desirable these things may be for themselves. There is room, then, for developing the educational leadership which will ensure these educational outcomes, and this may well be the function of the state or inter-community adult education council. No one has the answer to this problem; no one can say for certain how to make undertakings of this kind achieve their fullest educational effects. The pooled thinking of all available experts can not be too much to bring to bear.

But what about the city area? In the urban environment the fragmentation of modern society has its most striking effects; the educational problem of community organization is not only how to derive the educational values of face-to-face cooperation for communal ends. The very experience itself is almost impossible to attain. In some localities a beginning has been made through neighborhood groups of various kinds. A number of so-called coordinating councils have been developed in city neighborhoods, largely for the purpose of integrating local efforts on behalf of child welfare or the prevention of juvenile delinquency: representatives of neighborhood branches of the city family welfare agency, school system, library, Y.M. and Y.W.C.A., settlements, juvenile courts, and various religious organizations gather together, sometimes with parents and other purely local leaders, to bring their combined efforts to bear more effectively within the given area. Occasionally they are concerned with the problems of certain particular children, and sometimes with the welfare of all the children in the neighborhood. Those

who have been working with these groups see in them a promising nucleus for the outspreading of efforts at community organization with various other ends in view—until the whole community works as one in a network of interrelated endeavor.

This would seem, on the whole, an assumption not likely to bear the test of trial. Its probable weakness lies only in part in the fact that a concern with child welfare and juvenile delinquency is not the best point of departure in attempting to rally all other adult interests and to stimulate the cooperative study of all other adult responsibilities; people primarily interested in vocational education, or in taxation, or in international affairs do not want to begin with parent education, and few of them look forward to exchange of related ideas with the captain of the police precinct. More important, the local neighborhood has very little social meaning in the urban setting except in so far as it may constitute a common environment for the neighborhood children. Those interested and successful in community organization in the rural and small-town field are likely to forget this essential fact, and to assume that techniques worked out in the village will meet with similar success in the urban neighborhood. People in cities live their lives in close contiguity the one to the other, but the felt relationships among them are nebulous and tenuous. Except for the environment in which their children play, they have little more in common with their neighbors than with people who live ten miles away at the other end of the city.

It is for reasons like these, too, that the effort to build community organization around the school is more likely to succeed in the rural area and small town than in the city. Here the impetus to organization comes from the school, sometimes more particularly the high school. In the effort to bring the school

closer to life for the adolescent and to relate him after some fashion to his social environment, some secondary schools are reaching out to make contacts with community agencies and services. At first the intention is limited to providing some responsible relationship through which young people may become acquainted with the organized community and work with their elders toward the ends of wider social groups. But in some instances it has turned out that when young people were helped to derive educational benefits from this kind of participation, the adults of the community or neighborhood have also been included within the educational purview. Through communal activities they, as well as their adolescent children, are helped to understand more fully the bearings and import of their activities, the nature and structure of the society in which they work, the ways and means of democratic process.

But does community organization, no matter what its shortcomings and no matter how difficult it may prove in the city, stand as a substitute for the adult education council? The question is frequently raised, as though there were an alternative involved. There is in fact no need for an either-or position. The two types of organization are closely related, but do not substitute the one for the other. Community organization is, in effect, among other things, a program of adult education; the council is an instrument for encouraging the free play of intelligence among adult educators in devising and implementing all the programs of adult education in the community.

The interlocking nature of the two kinds of groups can be illustrated by experience to date, in both the country and the city. In the open country and small town, the community organization ordinarily includes a committee on adult education. This

is for the most part concerned with providing relatively formal classroom opportunities for adults—a community evening school, or something tantamount to it. The membership of this committee is usually made up almost entirely of lay people, with a scattering of such educators as may be available to help along. Its chief concern is to provide the classes which they and others think are lacking in the community, more or less as they might plan to see that the space between the church and the school is cleaned up and beautified. Few educational subtleties can be or are included in the considerations of these groups, because the groups themselves are not expert in such matters. Nor do they learn all that they might about education, its principles and values, through this rough-and-ready type of getting together and getting things done. For this reason the intercommunity or state adult education council might well lend its help to these more local groups in planning adult schooling opportunities, as well as in giving educational direction, intent, and outcome to all the cooperative activities of the organized community, as suggested above. But the point to be made here is that the organized rural town, by and large, includes a group working on those aspects of community life which are more conventionally identified as educational; there is an educational committee within the total organization. Furthermore, there is plenty of room for a related group of experts to give guidance and educational direction to all the activities of all the committees of the organized whole.

So much for the rural town and open country. What of urban areas? In some instances community organization on a neighborhood basis goes along side by side with a council of adult education as though there were in fact no relationship between the

efforts of the two. This is sometimes because the adult educators mistrust the efforts of the social workers and secondary-school people involved, wary lest extraneous considerations swallow up their own efforts to define their own job and attack it with appropriate means. And young councils, still trying to find their way, may be quite justified in this; it is part of the strategy of their own development as groups with a common point of view and set of values. For councils which have made some progress, however, it would seem illogical and very likely impoverishing to exclude mutually enriching contact with community and neighborhood organizations.

In some cities a contact has been established by having a representative of the community organization movement sit in the council from the beginning, on the assumption that some educational activities (like parent education groups, at a minimum) are included in the purview of the neighborhood groups. And in at least one city, already mentioned, the council (which has as one of its major activities the sponsoring of otherwise unavailable classes for adults) is collaborating with the central organization of local neighborhood groups in supplying what they want by way of classroom activities for adults.

It is to be noted, however, that very little effort is being made toward the integration of the points of view of neighborhood organization workers with those of workers in adult education, and that neighborhood organization itself is very seldom if ever regarded by the council as a promising approach to the education of adults. Yet what good in the long run neighborhood organization unless the people of the neighborhood learn better how to manage their own affairs, democratically and responsibly? And what other ends adult education than that adults

should become more competent at running their affairs and finding more relish in what they do and undertake? There is considerable paradox in the attempt to confine the attention of adult education to classroom activities at the very moment when elementary and secondary schools are bending every effort toward breaking down the walls of the classroom—in order to help children and young people come to learn from and manage their social participations more fully and more wisely. The adult education council can and undoubtedly should help to provide the classroom opportunities required in connection with organized community activities; but it is nonetheless a waste of educational thought and resources for the council to stop at that point. Presumably it has considerable to contribute in deriving the educational outcomes implicit in the other activities of these groups of adults, and should by all means pool its insights with those of others interested in community organization to this end.

Nor should this pooling be one-sided. Those who have to date been primarily concerned with community organization have much in their way of thought to enrich the thinking of those who have been academically trained in the more conventional types of education, whether for children or for adults. The former have perhaps a somewhat keener sensitivity to the social relevance of their efforts and to the results of social impacts upon the lives of persons. The social workers among them are likely to have fuller understanding of the modes of behavior of a human being, his motivations, the way he responds to new situations, and how he may be helped to respond in more desirable ways.

To these perhaps basic aspects of their task all educational workers have been singularly obtuse. They have been concerned only with the intellectualistic responses which individuals are

able to make to certain more or less academic aspects of their environment. Since the beginning of time they have assumed that the ability to make these verbalistic and intellectualistic responses would improve the quality of the man as human being and as citizen, and of more recent years they have been particularly concerned to improve the quality of both his individual and personal life and his civic and social participation. Yet they have continued to assume that intellectual responses in and of themselves could remake the man, without further consideration of his motivations in acquiring these responses, or of his status as a person in making use of his knowledges and skills, his sensitivity to the welfare of others, his ability to interact happily and fruitfully with others in a number of relationships. They have tended to ignore all the evidence pouring in (both from the field of mental hygiene and from events in highly intellectualistic countries) to the effect that what men are able to say and even understand intellectually does not in many cases suffice. Consequently there would seem to be great need for educators to gain—perhaps through joint efforts with community organization workers—at least a fuller understanding of the persons to be educated and their responses to the situations of their lives.

But further than this, there remains always the presumptive fact that neighborhood groups are not in any sense counterparts of the town meeting or even of the organized rural community. The lines of relationship among the persons involved are not strong and rich; they are possibly not nearly so strong and rich as the relationships among persons who live remote from one another, but share common leisure-time interests, professional interests, vocational interests, union affiliations, or whatever. Yet, if the education of adults is to fulfill its purposes at a period

like the present, it must somehow get into the lives of the people and help them run their common affairs more intelligently. Some modern substitute must be found for the town meeting, where opinion was formed and action taken after the full sharing of the opinion and interest of all concerned. This is no longer possible. The neighborhood offers no adequate substitute. The "town hall" forum goes by the same name, but is the same thing in so partial a sense as to be not the same thing at all. What are the groupings of persons in which they conduct their affairs seriously and fully in the city? How many of them participate? What possibility is there for helping them to get educational values in return for their activities? How may those not now responsibly related to others of similar interests be brought into a town-hall relationship with them? In how far are the great common stakes people have in a changing socio-economic and cultural order felt as shared interests at all?

These are not questions to be answered here and now. There is no one now who can answer them, nor can they be solved for the moment even by the pooling of all available resources. And yet it would seem that until they are answered in some measure, the whole of adult education will remain peripheral to its possibly basic contribution in a fragmented but interdependent society. This is one of the problems upon which all councils of adult education—themselves partly a result of social disparateness—might concentrate some large part of their energy. And one good beginning place would appear to lie in collaboration with those who are looking to the improvement of adult life through the efforts of the organized neighborhood group. How cohesive does it turn out to be? If neighbors in the cities have little common ground for study and action, can such ground be

built? If it cannot, what other kinds of association among persons suggest themselves as opportunities for this type of adult education? Does study of the relationships among persons within a neighborhood offer any suggestions? Do the answers in some neighborhoods vary greatly from those in others—do some neighborhoods exhibit a high degree of common interest and a sense of social cohesion while others do not? What are the factors, and how do they affect plans for the organization of adult education on the basis of the present interests, activities, relationships, common concerns of adults?

Thus, all in all, it would appear that councils of adult education no more supplant efforts at community organization than do the latter supplant the former. The gap cannot be bridged by including laymen presumably concerned with community welfare and civic virtue on the council of adult education.[2] This latter procedure beclouds the issue. It interferes with the council's functioning as a group of educational experts, with their expertness to pool on behalf of the educational life of the community and the educational outcomes of community activities. Nor is it by any means tantamount to community organization, for it does not include all the people who share common interests. Rather it treats certain leaders in enterprises, which may be anything but educational in intent, as though they bore the expert's responsibility for the educational aspects of the lives of others. It is true enough that by the time the council is well along in its deliberations it must take account of the outcomes of all kinds of community organization, those groups which are not primarily intended for education as well as those which are. And

[2] This topic is discussed in the preceding chapter under the question "Who should belong to the council?"

in the long run it may very profitably include in at least some of its deliberations and activities representatives of agencies concerned with other aspects of community life.

Within the broader outlines of community organization, then, there is real place and ample room for the adult education council. If on no other grounds, this is justified because community organization provides for the sharing of common interests among individuals and such interests adult educators undoubtedly have. At its best it provides for and encourages the enrichment of the whole through the sharing of experience across special group lines, and in this the council has much to contribute and to gain. Here, as everywhere, the exact forms of collaboration must depend upon local conditions, resources, personalities. There can be no one single rule to follow. But with basic common ends held always in view, the council's relationships with other types of groups similarly concerned (though possibly with other immediate purposes) should become easier to contrive and manage. The pace of cooperation in some communities may be faster, and in others slower, and the common focus of attention in possible cooperative ventures will vary widely. But the values to be achieved will remain relatively stable, and must under all circumstances be borne constantly in mind, lest they be shuffled out of sight in the midst of a lot of worthy hyperactivity which gets many things done, but progresses nowhere in the direction of fuller understanding of what the groups, taken all together, are seeking to effect, or of how they might improve their methods of working toward their relatively common ends-in-view.

Councils of Adult Education and Democracy

DON'T you sometimes wonder whether all the work we're putting into councils won't just make it easier some day for all adult education to be *gleichgeschaltet* in a totalitarian society?" This question was put by an ardent worker in a council of distinctly democratic intent. Totalitarian states always use the organized life of the community for their own purposes. It would be easy enough to purge the council of all its democratic elements; the subservient few who remained could make sure that adult learning activities permitted the penetration of no ray of democratic ideology and held the people in line—letting them hear nothing and know nothing but what the régime thought would be good for them to know.

The possibility must be granted. It might under some circumstances be easier to make the adult education movement conform if it were well organized around nuclear points, easy to identify and ready to approach. If it were a rambling and inchoate thing, it would take longer to get hold of it root and branch, to extirpate all of those parts which persisted in adhering to their democratic ways and values. Yet the totalitarian states have not taken too long to gain control over far less easily identifiable activities

than the adult education movement as it is even now, or even without any local organization whatsoever. Abstaining from the formation of councils would not make it impossible to prevent this movement from operating under its own best lights, should "it happen here" and worse come to worst.

Far more important, consideration of present plans solely in terms of what would happen if worse came to worst is a counsel of defeat. For the time being it is far healthier and more realistic to operate in terms of preventing worse from coming to worst, in terms of a still wide latitude of reasonable hope that the resources for preserving democratic values and enhancing them in all aspects of life are firmly to be depended upon if used with intelligence and vigor. In other words, the appropriate question would seem to be whether the council is and can become a bulwark of democracy. And the only forthright answer to this question is that it can if it will.

The mere existence of a council as such need have nothing to do with democracy, in education or elsewhere. It may be purely innocuous, or it may actually, now, under present circumstances, do more to bring the worst to pass than to prevent its coming. If it is to be merely innocuous or actually inimical in relation to the maintenance of the values of democracy, then it had perhaps better not come into existence at all. But if it is to direct its energies to the identification and appreciation of these values, both on the part of its own membership and on that of the adult public, then it can not be called into existence and set to work too soon.

There are three types of requisites if a council is to be effective in this connection. These are not separate, but closely related the one with the others. The first and most fundamental is that

the persons who participate in council affairs give unconditional allegiance to the values of education and democracy, with no mental reservations and no "exceptional instances." Authoritarianism has no place in education or democracy. Respect for persons and their potentialities, regardless of creed, race, or birth are inherent in democracy and in any valid conception of education. He who puts any value before this cannot contribute on the council to the development of democracy through education, or for that matter to the valuing of education in a democratic society. This much is clear. When the persons on the council are clearly identified with democratic principles, and use them consciously and consistently in making their judgments, then the upshot of the council's activities will tend in the direction of democracy.

The fact is attested by council experience. In one city the moving spirits in the council are dedicated to democratic principles before all others; democracy is the great thing to be cherished in all social enterprise. Yet these people say they have never thought of their local council in relation to democracy; they have thought of it only as a means for helping the public gain more intelligent control over community living! In other words, these people are so imbued with democracy that they move always in directions which serve to entrench it beyond threat, by making it a widely treasured and successful way of life. That this is not always the case—that the time has come when it is necessary to be more self-conscious about democracy and about helping others to identify its values and cherish them—is discussed later. The point for the moment is that it is difficult to lead astray those who are basically dedicated to democratic principles, in the council or elsewhere. As they determine council policies and

activities, the council is at least more likely to contribute to awareness of the values of democracy on the part of all adults touched by it in any way, either directly or indirectly.

Unfortunately, the case can also be made in the obverse. Councils can be, and in some cases are, dominated by persons with purposes other than democratic or educational. Council programs reflect their prevailing influence: the council can have nothing to do with any forum movement because forums mean that sometimes speakers with "radical" points of view will be heard in the land; or the council's forum program can include no discussion of hours and wages legislation because that might lead to some understanding by the workers in nearby industrial plants of their rights under law; or the council itself operates half cocked because a few prominent members do not want to work cooperatively with Jews, or representatives of the labor movement interested in workers' education, or with some other group which does not suit their fancy. These are not mere possibilities. They have happened in occasional councils over the country. The contributions which councils such as these can make to the maintenance of democracy are nil or negative. They may multiply educational opportunity of certain sorts *ad infinitum,* but the kinds of educational opportunity they provide and encourage will have nothing to do with widespread understanding and appreciation of democracy. They will be either of a kind which breeds adherence to antidemocratic types of thought, or, like sheer skills, will have little relationship to a way of life at all, and will merely be for sale to the highest bidder, no matter what the ultimate outcome or the conditions of the sale. There is nothing inherently democratic about the council; even the king has a council and the dictator a cabinet. If the persons

on the council are not at one with basic democratic values and do not hold them as parts of their own lives and beings, there is no reason why the council movement should not become an instrument of antidemocracy before the time of dictators—as indeed it will if councils of this sort multiply rapidly.

A second condition of the council's contribution to democracy is a counterpart of the first; it has to do with the way the council itself goes about its business. Divisiveness among council members based on race and group prejudice can scarcely lead to cooperative thinking and planning on behalf of education in relation to democracy. Neither can a kind of council politics in which one faction attempts to outwit the other, or where the fair interchange of opinion is thwarted and the evidence of facts is shelved because it might hinder private prestige or profits. Whereas very few persons see democracy involved, very many refer to just this sort of jackanapery as basically responsible for council failure. The group cannot get on with its legitimate business; it cannot plan intelligently on the basis of the resources available; its cooperative projects on behalf of more intelligent deploying of educational opportunity come to naught because they are sabotaged for the sake of private or institutional preeminence. This is a clear obstruction of the democratic process. It puts the winnings of the individual above the welfare of the group and renders impossible a kind of interaction between the two through which both may gain.

Councils preoccupied with this kind of struggle are not likely to make any very great contribution in any direction. Their members are too busy with checkmating one another to be interested in or to have energy left over for educational advance. They have little to contribute to the experience of those who are

not so wedded to democratic values as they might be, because these find good fishing in the troubled waters. Such councils wind up in nothing but one more failure of the democratic process to work, even among those who are presumably best fitted to exemplify it and to bring it into fuller being.

Third, and finally, in order for the council to make its greatest possible contribution to democracy through the educative process, it must carefully identify what it means by education and by democracy. The values of democracy, the notion that they will continue to be achieved without scrupulous attention and eternal vigilance, the relation between them and education have been too much taken for granted. The council cannot contribute to the maintenance of democracy by sticking to the same faith blindly. More analysis and more careful identification of what democracy is, how appreciation of it can be fostered, what types of educational experience for adults are appropriate for this fostering will be required if democracy is to be in any way buttressed through the existence of councils.

The words "education" and "democracy" have obviously been used with a certain interpretation and meaning in these pages. Others have other interpretations of them. This is as it should be. It is of the very essence of democracy that various opinions and beliefs must be pooled to make a richer working whole. And the various opinions and beliefs of the adult education workers of the locality—and eventually of the country as a whole—must be pooled to make an effective basis for common work toward essentially common ends. But unless conscious attention is focused on what democracy means, the workings of the group and its combined efforts may actually lead in directions contrary to those in which it intends to move. Or it may have nothing at all

to do with, no atom of influence upon, the march of history—except, perhaps, as one more illustration of the resources of democracy squandered.

In conclusion, then, it is necessary to reiterate only that the council is a powerful potential means for exemplifying the democratic process and focusing the adult education movement upon its major social relevance in furthering widespread realization of democratic values. Of this there can be no doubt. The task is too great for individuals alone. The body of thought and type of leadership required can arise only in the midst of an on-going process of search and inquiry among those already concerned with the job. Whether or not councils in general will take up this challenge and fulfill this potentiality remains to be seen.

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