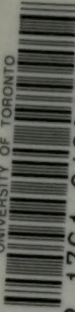



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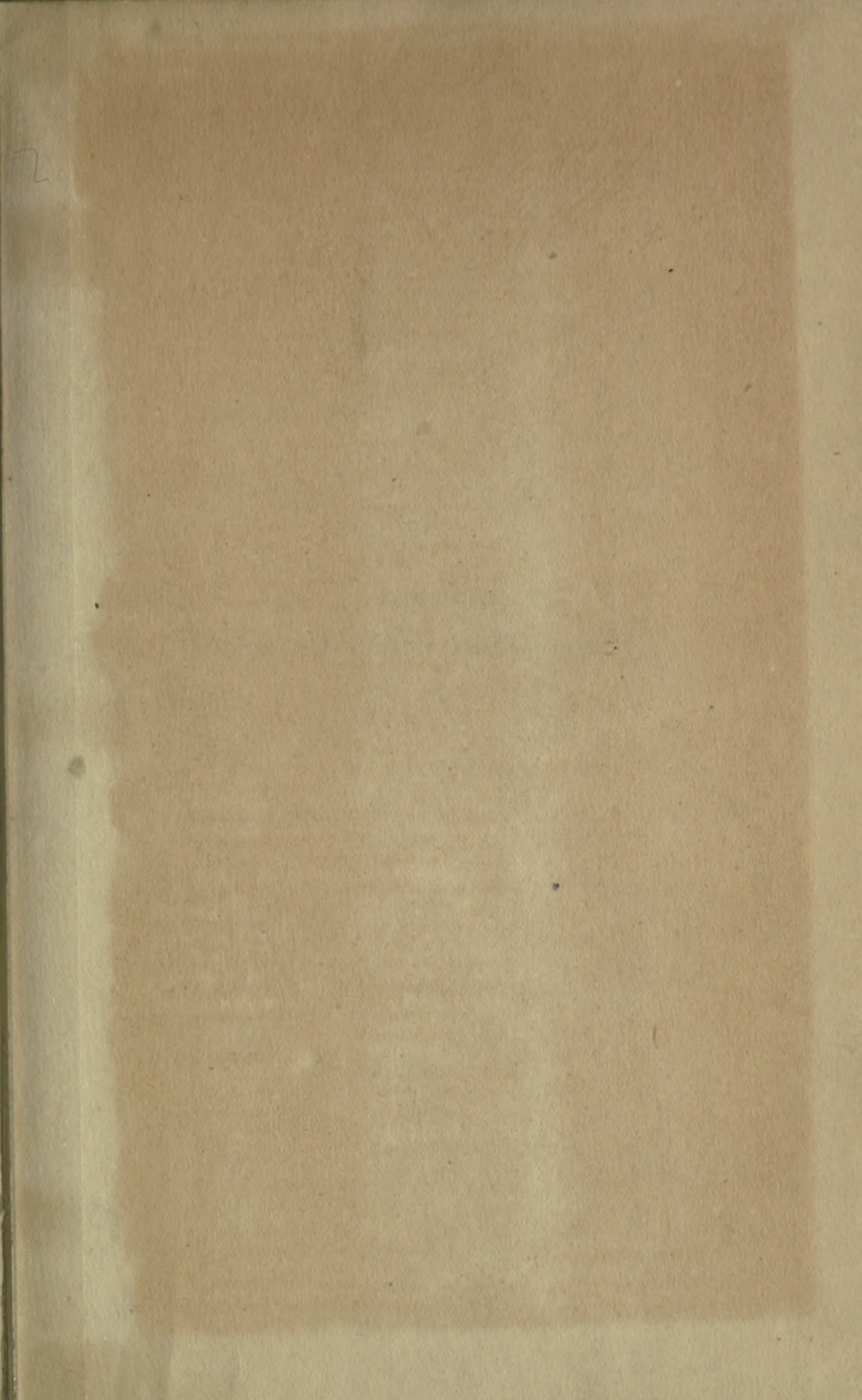


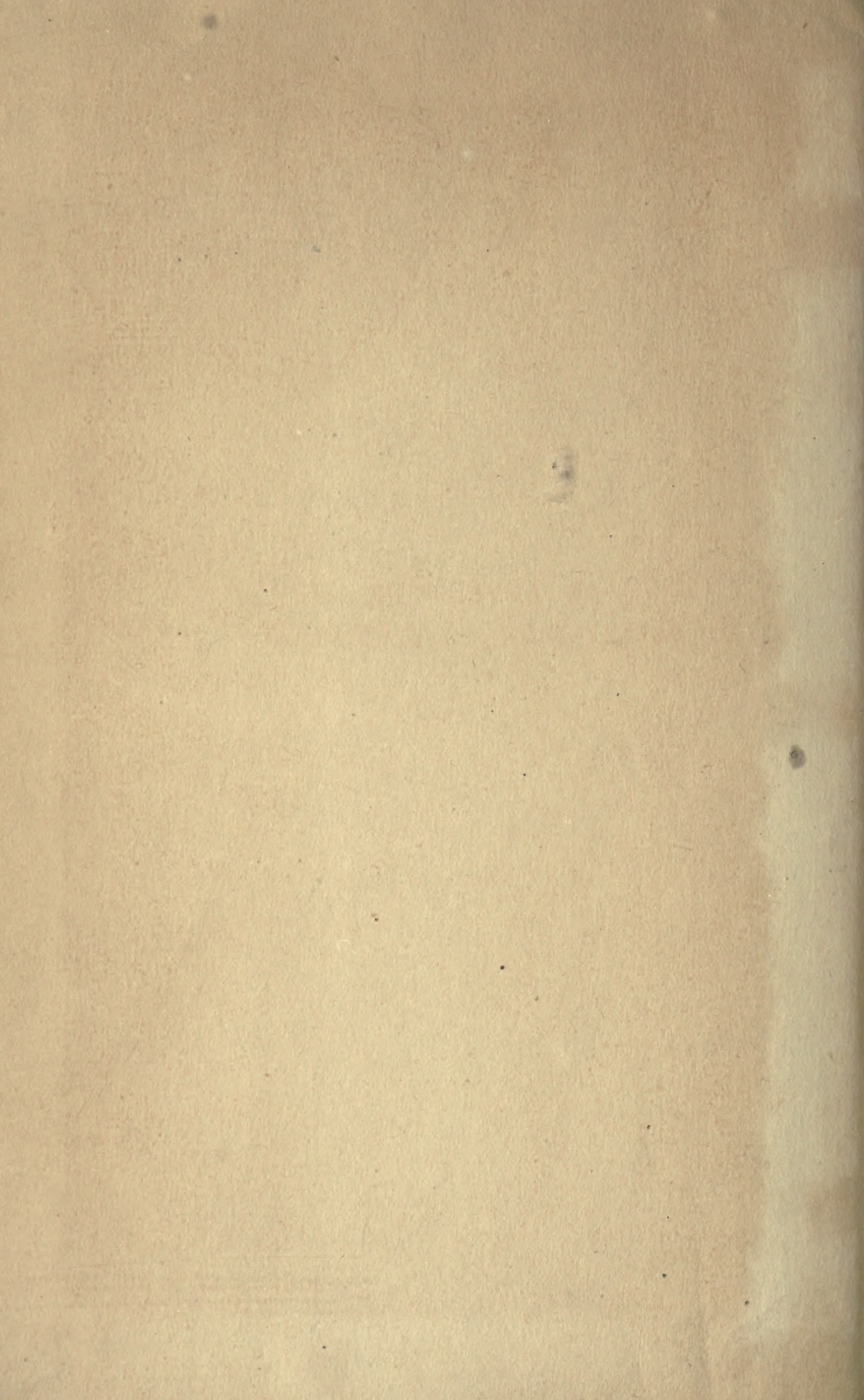
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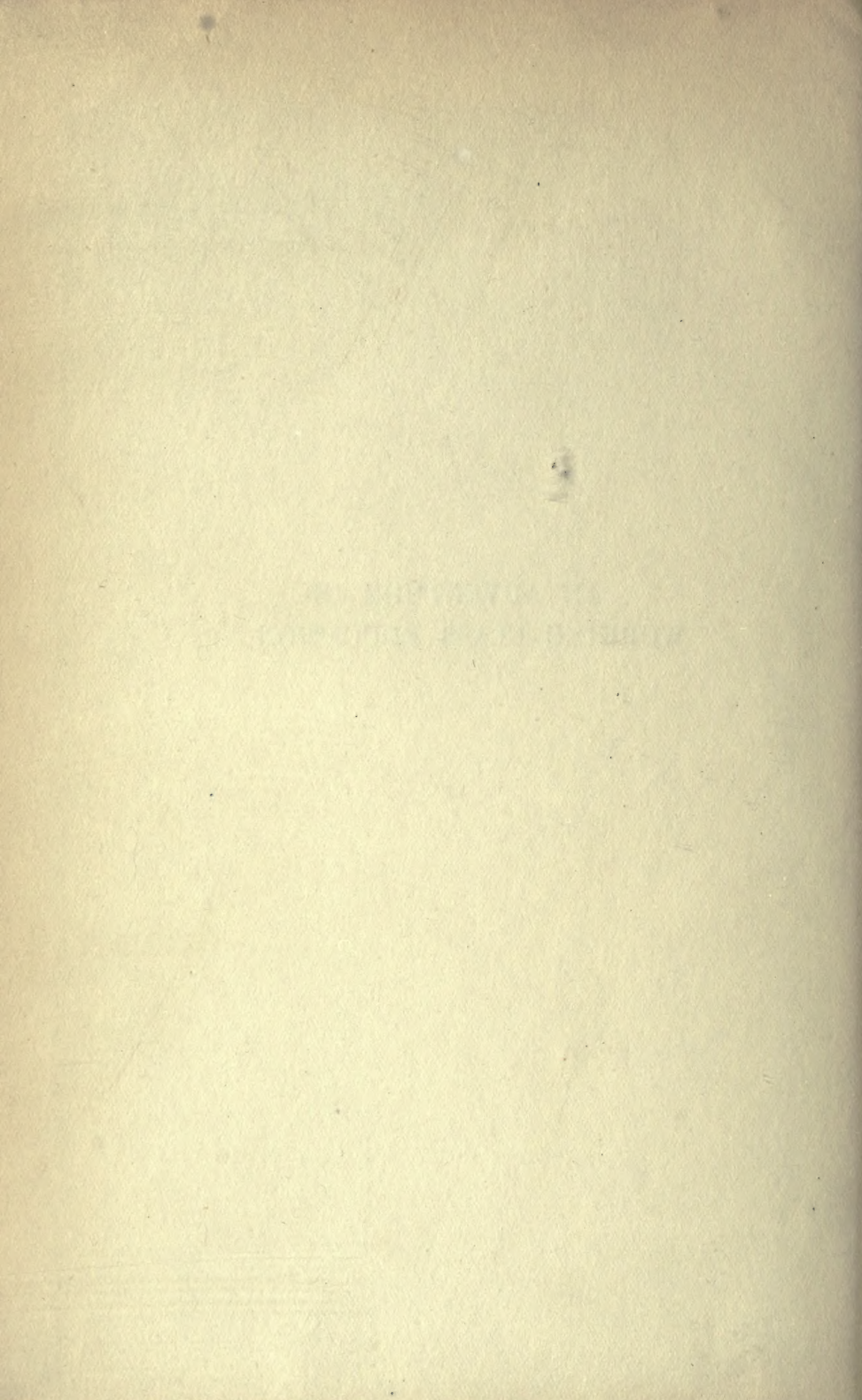






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AN ADVENTURE IN  
WORKING-CLASS EDUCATION.









THE AUTHOR.

*After a Drawing by WILLIAM ROTHENSTEIN, December 1918.*



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# AN ADVENTURE IN WORKING-CLASS EDUCATION

BEING THE STORY OF THE  
WORKERS' EDUCATIONAL ASSOCIATION

1903-1915

BY

ALBERT MANSBRIDGE, HON. M.A. (OXON.)

FOUNDER AND GENERAL SECRETARY, 1903-1915

*With 13 Illustrations*

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1920



TO THE MEMORY  
OF THOSE GALLANT SOULS  
WHO SHARED THE ADVENTURE OF  
THE W.E.A.  
AND DIED FIGHTING FOR  
THEIR COUNTRY IN THE  
GREAT WAR, 1914-1918.



## PREFACE

At a moment when the education of adults is attracting renewed attention as a direct result of increasing determination on the part of men and women to realise a larger ideal of citizenship, it is fitting that the adventurous story of the W.E.A. should be told. The telling of the story may help to develop, as well as to secure the preservation of, the characteristic spirit of a movement which has come to be regarded as one of the most forceful of our time.

It is probable that this could be done by a sympathetic and close observer of the movement, better than by one who was, for twelve years, immersed in the details of its daily work. The encouragement, however, of many friends, and particularly of one who is at this moment endeavouring to strengthen the material resources of the movement, has emboldened me to undertake the difficult task. I can only hope that the advantages I possess of a unique and peculiar knowledge of its early days, an anxious solicitude for its welfare, and a boundless enthusiasm for the cause which it serves, will enable me to convey to my readers some idea of the spirit of self-sacrifice and fellowship which has characterised the movement from the beginning.

At the outset I had to determine whether my story should be personal or detached. My inclination being towards the latter method I have adopted it on the whole, but there are times when personal reminiscence, of necessity, prevails and breaks the even line of the story.

It only remains for me to express my gratitude to those numerous fellow workers in the cause who made the story possible, and especially to Mr. T. W. Price (Assistant Secretary of the W.E.A.), Mr Huws Davies, and Miss D. L. Adler, who more than anyone else have helped me to tell it ; also to Miss Leila Thomas, a Tutor in the W.E.A. of New South Wales, who helped me to prepare the book for publication.

ALBERT MANSBRIDGE.

*April* 1920.



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*The two streams of labour and scholarship unite to make a great and powerful river of education, which must by an unerring law draw to itself most, if not all, the runnels and rivulets of thought making their way to the open sea of a free people.*

*That is, at once, the condition and meaning of the Workers' Educational Association.*

*It conforms to the very ideal of democracy, which preconditions the gathering up of the true influence of every man, woman, and child for translation into terms of the common life.*

*The Workers' Educational Association has developed because it has drawn together men and women, not infrequently passionate in their divergencies of experience and belief, and has constructed for them a University, intangible and widely diffused indeed, wherein they may, unhindered and in fellowship, advance knowledge, increase wisdom, and reveal truth.*

*As an organisation for education it stands unique, because it has united for the purposes of their mutual development Labour and Scholarship in and through their respective associations of Trade Unions and Universities, and because of this unity, so secured, the power of the spirit of wisdom has been increased in the affairs of men, and the building of 'Jerusalem in England's green and pleasant land' has become at least a nearer prospect.*





# PROLOGUE

## THE SPIRIT OF ADVENTURE IN EDUCATION

IF the story of any movement which is in itself true be rightly told, the spirit which 'by reason of its pureness' goes through the whole range of its activities will be perceived with increasing certainty, as the days of its life pass under review.

For this reason certain of my critics have urged that this portion of the book is unnecessary, whilst others have asserted that it is at one and the same time both prologue and epilogue, and obviously not one of them has felt that it is an adequate expression of the forceful, deliberate, untiring spirit which gave life to the Workers' Educational Association, and point to its adventure.

After much thought, however, I have decided to leave it where it is, recommending my readers to pass over it and return to it at will, or to commence at Chapter I and not to turn in their steps, for the adventure is still in the making and there is no time to lose.

---

At a time when there is no adventure in education the years are indeed lean, for it is as essential to strive to open up new fields for educational activity as it is to seek undiscovered lands or to search out the secrets of ancient peoples.

Some day the story of educational adventures will be written; they are numerous and full of romance. By their means all the activities of humanity have been penetrated, the mysteries of the child mind explored, and those influences

searched out on which man depends for his development. The names of the adventurers are numerous; from Tubal Cain to Plato they illumine the records of all times; all nations claim their own; every great period of a nation's life reveals their influence. At worst they are never entirely without followers; at best multitudes flock with them to the regions which they have opened out, or sail with them over the seas which they have charted. Yet they must be 'the first that ever burst into that silent sea,' the first to press forward to the fertile valleys dreamed of beyond the forbidding hills. They must go out of the comfortable courts of the educational system of their time and, regardless of the contemptuous smiles of their fellows, seek out, unaccompanied and alone, with no possibility of return, the method by which to serve, and the spirit with which to inspire, the new time. They cross their rubicon, their boats are burned, and there are no bridges to help them.

Of the many who have lost themselves in the lands or seas of their endeavour there are no records, but their adventures were the condition of their lives. Had they stayed, hesitating, ensconced behind the boundaries of their own knowledge, they would have died in life. 'And some there be which have no memorial. But these were merciful men.' In the affairs of life no man has really lived until he has for a reasonable purpose risked the loss of all that he desires.

It is, however, not always necessary that an educational adventure should be made into an unexplored region, or beyond the bounds of ascertained or recorded truth. It may be sufficient simply to clear a passage through the accumulation of the years; in other words, such an adventure may be an attempt to rediscover and reveal vital knowledge and principles which have been obscured either during the preoccupation of other days, or because a forgetful people has turned in other directions. Once truth is uncovered it is magnetic and does its own work. If a fundamental process of education is revealed, men will flock to take advantage of it, provided that they are not hindered by economic or physical barriers, and, even then, the stronger souls among them will win through.

I have as yet attempted no definition of terms, nor do I intend to do so, for the results of any such attempt would be



to defeat my purpose. To define education would be to define life. To define truth would be to reveal the origin and source of life. Nevertheless, all through the adventure of which the story is to be told, education has been regarded as the process of development of body, mind, and spirit, something more than leading out and infinitely more than putting in—a combination of the two by which the educated being becomes daily purer in body, mind, and spirit, able to reach out to the work which God intended that he should do. The most educated man is he who most completely fulfils his allotted task in spirit and in act, whether it be the digging of a trench or the writing of a poem. In that nation which would most fully correspond to its destiny, every unit would be sought out through the wisdom of the whole, and developed for the tasks necessary for the life of the whole.

Education has never been confused, in this particular adventure at least, with the acquisition of the means of getting on in life. Indeed, to have introduced that idea would have been to have obscured truth, and to have repelled generous souls whose thought of themselves was ever—and ever will be—less insistent than their thought of the community in which they live. On the other hand, the idea held has never been exclusive. The application of the powers of a man to the processes embodied in technical achievement is essentially a part of the whole course of development, and, unless misused, can serve in not a few types of persons the highest purpose of their lives.

Education and knowledge must not be confused. Knowledge is the instrument in the hands of a man, and if he be educated, and therefore reaching out to the higher things, his knowledge will be used for purposes ministering to the common good. If he be not educated, merely drifting down the streams of opportunity, or aiming at lesser or unhealthy things, then his knowledge will be used for false purposes. The educated man can do no harm to the community. The band of the educated work their way to 'Zion with their faces thitherwards.' The field of education is a common upon which all men can meet and exercise rights, no matter what their differences may be in the ordinary activities of life. They may differ in politics, even in religion, but, if

they be one in their determination to reach out to the things which are eternal, then they may unite to promote the great democratic adventure which needs the best thought and action of every individual.

The equipment of those who would adventure is a belief in the power of everyone to perform his or her true service. The community is like a living mosaic. It has a pattern, and the impulse and motion of men is towards their rightful place in it. Ignorance, disease, and sin, the trinity of anti-social forces, have distorted the pattern, but there is no rest for the hindered man. All men and women, except when under the influence of a dominating force, such as gambling, drink or the like, are willing and ready to respond to an educational message; they all want to think of, to look at, to experience the things which are worth while. This conscious or unconscious pursuit of the best is the condition of ordinary human nature. Obscured by lesser affairs, hindered by lesser men, people may forget the objective for a time, but if it be only revealed to them they will rise and pursue it.

Every living person is potentially a student, although not necessarily in the technical sense of the word. There are few men and women, tired though they may be in the industrial work of the world, whose faces will not light up at the sight of a beautiful picture if only there be someone to help them see its message; not all are intended to force their way up the heights of knowledge, but everyone has the capacity for wonder and pure enjoyment, and it is one of the tragedies of our present way of life that this capacity gets worn away. It is the task of the educational adventurer to reawaken or even to recreate this sense of beauty without which life is always drab. Humanity is like a great army, its component parts allotted to different tasks, some to learn, some to encourage those who learn, but all to wonder at and enjoy the beauties of the world. If it be not the purpose or business of every man to study in the literal sense of the word, yet it is certain that, out of every average group of people, there will be a proportion of students who must study if the society in which they live is to do its perfect work.

This universality of desire may be revealed under any



condition of society at any time, but its effective expression, so far as the individual is concerned, is largely though not completely dependent upon economic and social conditions. The spirit is a continual victor over the flesh, and somehow or other enforces its will. Even overworked men will turn to close study if they have the desire within them, and find rest and peace in doing so, unless their powers have been unduly strained. There is no greater sin than to cause a man to be overstrained so that his mind and spirit hang limp; it is better to torture his body, for then, as with the martyrs, his mind and spirit might still remain free. A society in which all or even a large proportion of the people were so maltreated would be a veritable hell on earth. It would destroy itself. Fortunately in the England of our time the conditions of Labour are steadily improving, and the number of those who are overstrained is diminishing every year.

Appeals to reach out to education for the purpose of getting on in life have little power except when addressed to people who are obviously in the mood for them, such as young men and women planning their economic lives and therefore pre-conditioned to hear them. But the general appeal to which men and women of all ages respond in their degree must be a spiritual one—for education is ultimately of the spirit and is perceived by the spirit only.

A universal appeal must be made in terms familiar to the listeners. It must harmonise with their experience, and the action foreshadowed must be in line with their habits. The most wonderful and most complete system of education, perfect in method and content, were it not understood by the individuals whom it was meant to serve, would evoke no response. That indeed has been the tragedy of much of English organised education in later years. It is only here and there that humanistic studies, contemplation of the mind, spirit, and actions of man, awakened a response, because these studies were dealt with in terms which were remote from the vocabulary of the people. Thus the only education in England which has attracted any section of people deliberately and persistently to institutions has been technical education. That was why there grew up in England

many schemes, nearly all based upon 'bread and butter' studies, and all the while those who had conceived higher ideas either individually or in association reached out this way, that way, often unaided, for the education they desired. Those educationalists who desired to help them seldom knew how to do it. They offered their own unfamiliar methods and used their own misunderstood language.

It became a commonplace in Victorian England to assert that working men and women did not care for education. The educational schemes which were devised on their behalf but not in co-operation with them tended to be utilised by others. As we shall see, Mechanics' Institutes rose and fell. University Extension, to its lasting concern, only here and there reached those who laboured with their hands. Evening Schools promoted by the School Boards of the time never attracted more than a few of the older men and women. Everything pointed to the fact that educational supply, even if devised by excellent and devoted people, was almost entirely useless unless there was co-operation with those who were to be attracted to use it. In the development of working-class education the scholar and administrator must sit side by side with the adult student, at the same table, in perfect freedom. The initiative must lie with the students. They must say how, why, what, or when they wish to study. It is the business of their colleagues the scholars and administrators to help them to obtain the satisfaction of their desires. This means that scholar, administrator, and working man must act together, and fortunately there are, and have always been in England, many organisations of labour and scholarship in a mood to do so in their corporate capacity.

The idea of a gospel of education to working men is an old one, and happily ever since 1840 it has been preached by themselves. The ideas of the Co-operative Movement have been shot through and through with educational desire. The great trade unions have been preoccupied with questions of wages and hours, but they have never turned a completely deaf ear to the educational appeal, neither have they failed to initiate educational effort. As for the educational bodies, the Universities have one and all associated themselves with the Extension Movement which originated at Cambridge



in 1872, with the desire of taking to the people the finest results of scholarship, and of inviting them to share in its dissemination and its progress. The University Bodies responsible for this work were in a position to ally themselves with the organisations of Labour, and in a temper to do so gladly. Therefore it seemed that to create an organisation would be easy. Obviously, there would be no great difficulty either in finding working men or women keen to study, or in finding very many more who would be willing to be keen. That indeed followed from the great principle of universality of desire which has been already put forward. The forbidding ideas connected with the words school and education would have to be removed, and the shyness of people who have little knowledge, or who think themselves not clever, overcome.

The educational system of this country has always tended to set a premium upon cleverness. That premium must be removed and set rather upon devotion than upon achievement. There can be indeed no perfect group for the study of anything unless it includes different types of men, some slow, some quick, some superficial, some deep, because each man gains in the attempt to explain himself to the others, and shows himself in a new light. A class consisting entirely of clever men would fail to achieve its object, just as much as would a class consisting entirely of stupid men.

In spite of all these considerations the adventurers did not seek to mark out wholly fresh fields for themselves. They determined to use existing facilities to the full, and to do no work which they could induce anyone else to undertake. No successful effort was to be duplicated; rather should working people be urged to take advantage of the facilities which were offered by the Universities, the Education Authorities, and by voluntary bodies.

These were some of the ideas dominating the founders of the W.E.A. movement. Since they were not educationists in the scholastic sense of the word, their ideas were untested and unconfirmed by experience; how they were worked out and realised, discarded in part or as a whole, will be seen as the story is told. The adventure was launched with high hopes, and with the determination that labour



and scholarship should no longer be divorced, for labour was in no mood to be blind, and scholarship yearned to be in contact with the fundamental facts of life, and to draw for its inspiration and glory on all the worthy activities of men.

# AN ADVENTURE IN WORKING-CLASS EDUCATION

## CHAPTER I

### ADULT EDUCATIONAL EFFORT IN THE NINETEENTH CENTURY

ECONOMIC conditions in England during the nineteenth century, much as they militated against the full development of the people, were still not strong enough to repress entirely the desire for knowledge. Throughout the century this spirit continually reasserted itself and found expression in the creation of educational opportunities which had no connection at all with a desire for success in life or for technical achievement.

All the educational experiments of the century at the height of their success made it quite clear that the mere acquisition of knowledge was not their goal. Knowledge was only an instrument towards the development of a larger and fuller life. This was expressed, although in different ways, by Adult Schools, Mechanics' Institutes, People's Colleges, Mutual Improvement Societies, Co-operative Societies, and Trade Unions, as, each in their time and place, they strove to develop the education of the people. It is impossible, for our purpose, to examine in any detail the stories of these various movements, but it seems advisable, and even necessary, to trace the main line of work which led directly to the formation of the Workers' Educational Association in 1903.

The popular educational movement of the early nineteenth century resulted in the formation of Mechanics' Institutes and Societies for Mutual Improvement or Instruction in a large

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number of English towns and villages. In the early years this was accompanied by all the characteristics of a revival. So far as can be traced there has never since been such a general movement on the part of the people towards education. A writer in the *Edinburgh Review*, October 1824, alludes to the great disposition among the working classes to learn, and the absolute certainty a lecturer might feel of an attendance.

Macvey Napier, writing in 1824 from London to J. R. MacCulloch, the Edinburgh economist, said—

The populace are seeking excitement in the formation of Mechanics' Institutions and in the purchase of cheap periodical publications. The number of these in circulation here is quite incalculable. *The Mechanics' Magazine* sells about 16,000 copies a week, *The Chemists'* 6,000, and so on. I was the other night at the Mechanics' Institute there with Brougham. There were about 800 persons present, and I never saw a more orderly and attentive audience. There are about 1,500 workmen subscribers at the rate of a guinea a year each. The applications for admittance are necessarily numerous, and it is estimated that in two or three years there will be six institutions—four in London and two in the Borough—all as large as the present one.

The course of the movement, as is so often the case, followed the line of a curve, and by 1852 it had degenerated from an intellectual point of view. Some of the institutes, however, paved the way for great foundations, such as the Municipal School of Technology at Manchester and the Midland Institute at Birmingham. A few of these, as at Bradford, Crewe, and Swindon, have been kept alive by the persistence of some strong and permanent economic factor, such as direct connection with a railway centre as at Swindon, or the possession of well-situated land as at Bradford; but the majority passed away, their buildings and libraries remaining as a bequest to other, sometimes non-educational, bodies. No reliable estimate has ever been made of the influence of these institutes upon popular thought; but it may be noted that events of epoch-making importance took place during the years of their power—the passing of the Reform Bill, the rise of the Chartists, the founding of the modern co-operative movement, and the beginning of the development of the trade unions.

The strange and rapid passing of the movement was probably



due in part to the overwhelmingly philanthropic nature of the inspiring and creative force which made it possible. The extravagant emphasis laid upon this by Mr. Hudson,<sup>1</sup> the historian of the movement, sounds unfamiliar and repellent to the sensitive ears of a democratic age.

The unexampled efforts now making in every part of the kingdom for the intellectual and physical improvement of the lower classes of the community distinguish the present as the age of philanthropy and good-will to all men. The middle classes vie with the rich in promoting the great and good work of education. The brightest minds in literature and science direct their talents to its development; preparing the ignorant by addresses, by lectures, and by their writings, to receive and understand the great and interesting truths which the Creator unfolds before them. The beloved Sovereign of these realms lends her fair and royal name in behalf of Bazaars, to increase the stores of Institution Libraries. The lawned Divine and the ermined Duke feel a pleasure in presiding over the festivals of the artizan and the day labourer. The press is prolific with carefully collated proofs of the connection between offences and ignorance, as they appear in the calendar of crime; civic magistrates begin to hold it a duty to take part in all meetings which have for their object the dissemination of useful knowledge amongst the multitude; the agriculturist is alive to the importance of the allotment system, and institutes Farmers' Clubs; while the manufacturer finds it profitable to form schools and factory libraries, to rear amateur bands of musicians amongst his workmen, to encourage frugality by savings banks, benefit societies, sick clubs, clothes clubs, burial associations, and by occasional tea meetings, at which he and his family partake, to destroy that barrier between men which pride and wealth sometimes ungraciously erects.

This note of patronage cannot be discerned in the movement which originated in the middle of the century. The People's College, founded at Sheffield in 1842, the precursor of Working-Men's Colleges, was a fine instance of self-help. This remarkable institution, founded by a nonconformist minister of Sheffield, was carried on by the students for a period of thirty years, during which time they refused to receive financial help from anyone not connected with the College. They felt that economic independence, accompanied by self-government, would result

<sup>1</sup> *The History of Adult Education*, J. W. Hudson, Ph.D., 1851. Longmans.

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in a keener appreciation of education than, as they expressed it, dependence 'on eleemosynary funds, and on a government in which they had neither interest nor control. . . . The education to be valued must cost some reasonable acknowledgment.' This attitude necessitated somewhat Spartan methods of study. A picture of the early class-room is happily preserved for us.

The class-room of the People's College at Sheffield was a ghostly, whitewashed, unplastered garret, not fitted up with the necessities, much less the conveniences, of study. In this place the morning classes in winter were especially uninviting, and it required considerable devotion to study to travel through snow at 6.30 in the morning before breakfast to find a room probably without a fire, or one but newly lighted by the monitor student to whose lot it had fallen to perform that and kindred duties.<sup>1</sup>

The curriculum was broad and liberal ; Latin, Greek, Logic, and Civil Knowledge were studied in classes at 6.30 in the morning. The level of educational achievement was high. 'It was a remarkable thing to hear young working men reading and translating with facility the modern languages, or demonstrating difficult problems in Euclid.'<sup>2</sup> The influence of this College upon local government was described by Mr. James Wilson, an early student, afterwards proprietor of *The Indian Daily News*, in the following words :

Locally, the College has furnished members of the Town Council, invaded the Aldermanic Chairs and the Magisterial Benches, and given to the City not the least able of its Mayors.'<sup>3</sup>

The College closed in 1879, the year of the founding of Firth College, afterwards the nucleus of the University of Sheffield.

The gospel of the early co-operators was entirely one of self-help. They set out to redeem Society, financed by the scanty pence of a group of ill-paid workers in Rochdale. They determined to support education by devoting to it a percentage of the surplus they gained by supplying one another with goods. This action was the source of a stream of co-operative

<sup>1</sup> Mr. Thomas Rowbotham, *Sheffield Telegraph*, September 30, 1859.

<sup>2</sup> *The Story of the People's College, Sheffield*. G. C. Moore Smith, 1912. Printed by J. W. Northend, 8 Norfolk Road, Sheffield.

<sup>3</sup> *Sheffield Telegraph*, December 1, 1898.



educational effort which broadened as the century advanced, and which gave inspiration and example to other educational movements, notably, as we shall see later, to that of University Extension.

It was in connection with the problem of the Co-operative Movement that Frederick Denison Maurice, one of the Christian Socialists who later took part in it, devised the scheme of the Working-Men's College in direct imitation of the People's College at Sheffield. He discovered in the latter a principle which experience has since proved to be fundamental. The education of working people can never develop unless there is frank and free intercourse on a basis of equality between teachers and taught. 'The working men themselves found it out,' he said. 'We heard in 1853 that the people at Sheffield had founded a People's College. The news seemed to us to mark a new era in education.'

The London College was started in Red Lion Square, where the Workers' Educational Association had its offices for so many years. There great teachers—Tom Hughes, Lowes Dickinson, Ruskin, and Kingsley—'united with their pupils for higher things. For this College did not aim at lifting the working man into the middle classes. To those who founded the College, every man, rich or poor, ignorant or educated, was a spiritual being.' Fellowship was the keynote of it all. 'A College means a fellowship' was the continual insistence of the founder. 'The barrier of class was entirely broken down.' The College passed from Red Lion Square to Great Ormond Street, and thence to a spacious building in Crowndale Road, where it is still at work, and where what is called 'the College Spirit' reveals itself in all the common life of the place.

Maurice was obviously not content with founding one Institution when he had discovered a principle, and for many years he passed up and down England urging others to follow the example of himself and his colleagues. He succeeded in a number of places, but only the College at Leicester remains in its original form; and that has come more closely into connection with the ordinary educational machinery of Leicester than its founders contemplated.

Some of the Colleges were absorbed by greater institutions. The classes of the Manchester Working-Men's College 'were



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merged into the evening classes of Owen's College, and, indeed, it was this fact which was the cause of the early success of those classes.' Owen's College later became the University of Manchester. In this way, at least one College has had a part—if only a small part—in the development of a modern University.

Throughout the period of the operation of People's Colleges, the Co-operative Movement had been steadily developing its work, and became, in the seventies, a platform for the operation of University Extension, which had been called into being by the energy of Professor Stuart, in connection with the University of Cambridge. It was at Rochdale, where the co-operators had asked him to lecture, that the plan originated of having a class in connection with University Extension lectures. Professor Stuart has told the story in his own words :

One day I was in a hurry to get away as soon as the lecture was over, and I asked the hall-keeper to allow my diagrams to remain hanging until my return next week. When I came back he said to me, 'It was one of the best things you ever did leaving up these diagrams. We had a meeting of our members last week, and a number of them who were attending your lectures were discussing these diagrams, and they have a number of questions they want to ask you, and they are coming to-night a little before the lecture begins.' About twenty or thirty intelligent artizans met me about half an hour before the lecture began, and I found it so useful a half-hour that during the remainder of the course I always had such a meeting.

It has been commonly supposed that the justification of University Extension work is to be found in its success in attracting working men and women; this is far from being the case. It was established by the University of Cambridge partly on the initiative of the North of England Council for Promoting the Higher Education of Women, and it is essentially a movement for extending the knowledge and culture to be found in the Universities to the whole of the people. On the other hand, it is certain that if it had not been for the sense of a mission to working people, who were for the greater part cut off from opportunities of acquiring knowledge, many of its greatest enthusiasts might never have taken part in the work. The attractive nature of the lecture courses drew, in

many cases, large numbers of working people; but on the whole, their participation tended to decline even in those places where the movement was at the outset most active. This was largely because they took little or no part in the management, which, centrally, was carried out exclusively by the Universities, and locally, by committees on which working people exercised little or no influence. There can, however, be no question that the effect of the University Extension Movement upon popular thought has been considerable. It is impossible to read without being deeply stirred of the revival in education brought about in the eighties by the Cambridge University Extension Movement among the miners of North Durham; and although the great Coal Strike cut short its actual career, yet its spirit lives on, and is traceable in the homes and in the institutions of the district to this day.

In addition to the University Extension and the Co-operative Movements, there existed at the end of the century the Adult School Movement, which originated as far back as the eighteenth century in the desire of the members of the Society of Friends to open up knowledge, particularly of the Scriptures, to working men and women. After a long period of comparative quiescence, this movement developed through the establishment of numerous schools, particularly in the Midland districts of England. These schools have a definitely religious basis, dealing primarily with the life and teaching of Jesus, but they also deal in various ways, by lecture and discussion, with the subjects of ordinary humane education.

Any observer of English life would have discovered in addition numerous societies, particularly in connection with places of worship, directly concerned with the cause of education, although there was a considerable decline in the number of Mutual Improvement Societies, which were common in the eighties and early nineties.

The first residential College for working men was founded in 1899, through the initiative of an American, Mr. Walter Vrooman.

We shall take men [he said] at Ruskin College, who have been merely condemning our social institutions, and will teach them instead to transform them, so that in place of talking against the world, they will begin methodically and scientifically to possess

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the world, to refashion it and to co-operate with the power behind evolution in making it the joyous abode of, if not a perfected humanity, at least a humanity earnestly striving towards perfection.

There was thus an abundance of force and organisation upon which a new movement, which would embody the lessons taught by experiments in the nineteenth century, could be successfully created. Wherever work had been carried out in a right way people flocked to it, despite the hindrances of economic difficulties which we noted at the outset, just because the desire on the part of the individual for wisdom and knowledge is so uniform as to constitute a law of life.

England, all through the nineteenth century, was making step after step in the direction of political and social democracy, and anyone who considered the future with any degree of care must have been forced to the conclusion that the supreme need of the country was that the education of the people should at least keep abreast of the opportunities which they were acquiring for participation in government.



## CHAPTER II

### THE BEGINNING OF THE ADVENTURE

THE friendship which existed between University men and Co-operators was always most marked. During the closing years of the nineteenth century numerous attempts were made to bring about joint action for the development of education in citizenship. These attempts were largely due to the influence of Arnold Toynbee expressing itself through such men as Dr. Sadler (then Director of Special Enquiries and Reports, at the Board of Education) on the one hand, and Robert Halstead (Secretary of the Co-operative Productive Federation, an erst-while weaver of Hebden Bridge) on the other. Mr. Hudson Shaw, the most prominent of University Extension lecturers, so far as working men and women were concerned, deemed it almost a *sine qua non* to have the assistance of the local Co-operative Societies in industrial centres, if his work was to succeed. There was a properly organised group of Co-operative students, generally in charge of Robert Halstead, at all Oxford University Extension Summer Meetings.

This was the state of affairs when I began to devote myself to the educational affairs of the Co-operative Movement, after being concerned with University Extension as a student in the early nineties and having been brought up from a child in a Co-operative and Trade Union atmosphere. The events which led directly to the formation of the W.E.A. and those which immediately followed it are so largely personal that I must throw myself upon the reader's indulgence in recording these as well as some later happenings as my own recollections. The use of the personal pronoun can only be justified by its indication of a particular human personality which is enabled to express itself by the labour and affection of a number of

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men and women. Some of these may have thought more, and indeed achieved more, than the one who is privileged to speak so that others may hear, or to organise so that an adventure may succeed.

In 1897 I entered the service of the Co-operative Wholesale Society, after a varied career in which commerce and education were strangely mixed. My experience in both these directions proved to be of use. After a short time I was appointed to teach the History and Principles of Co-operation to such of my fellow employees as would listen after an arduous and long day's work. In the meantime, both by occasional contributions to the *Co-operative News* and by speeches in numerous conferences, I sought to bring about an actual working alliance between the Universities and the people.

It seemed to me in those days that the teaching of Economics and Industrial History and Citizenship could be carried on so much better in co-operation with the University Extension Movement as to justify my claim that Co-operators should cease trying to do it in isolation, and should rather concentrate on the teaching of Co-operative Principles and Technique, in itself an enormous task, necessitating a college for the purpose. I advocated this so whole-heartedly at the Conference held with Co-operators during the Oxford University Extension Summer Meeting of 1899 as almost to wreck, for the time being, the cause I had at heart. As the result of a speech made at the Peterboro' Co-operative Congress in 1898, I was invited to read a paper at the Conference on 'Co-operation and Education in Citizenship.' The comments of the Co-operative Press of the time were caustic in the extreme. 'The writer of the paper had aimed at the moon and hit a haystack.' It hardly seemed as if I had managed to do even that. In spite, however, of the opposition I had raised, a scheme was approved on the same day whereby, under certain conditions, Co-operative teachers would be recognised by the Oxford University Extension Delegation. It proved to be largely ineffective, but it is evidence of the drawing together of the two movements.

My later experience has led me to believe that the Co-operative and other movements will succeed best in educational work if they make themselves responsible for the satisfaction of any demand which they stimulate among their



own members. They may not be so well fitted to assume this responsibility as Universities or Local Education Authorities would be, but their students will with them do their work under familiar conditions in an atmosphere congenial to them, and in the spirit of their own fellowship. Thus I would now urge Co-operators to develop among themselves any and every line of study which appeals to them, but I would also urge them to encourage their students to attend, at least for a time, those Classes, Summer Meetings, or Colleges which are provided for the people generally, and to take their part in supporting popular educational movements for the good of all. By this method the knowledge possessed by the students will be increased and their views broadened, whilst at the same time knowledge of Co-operation and an appreciation of its spirit will become more widely diffused.

It was not until Christmas 1902 that I again began to plan an educational alliance. In the meantime I had been teaching in the Higher Commercial Schools of the London Board, on five evenings a week during the winter. This in addition to a full working day at the Co-operative Wholesale Society left me little or no leisure. But I had never forgotten the invitation given to me to write an article for the *University Extension Journal* on the lines of my Conference paper. At the first opportunity 'Democracy and Education' was prepared and published in the January 1903 number of the Journal. At the time of writing I had little or no idea of organising a movement, but it soon became clear that I should either have to do it myself, or induce someone else to do so. The Editor of the Journal, Dr. Holland Rose, was instant in his encouragement and printed two further articles, also one in commendation by Robert Halstead. In the course of these articles the plan of action revealed itself as a working alliance between Co-operation, Trade Unionism, and University Extension. A triple cord is not easily broken.

A small group of working men gathered round me, including some who had formed a 'Christian Economic Society,' which met at my house. With this help at hand, together with the encouragement of Dr. Holland Rose, my wife and I decided to take action by becoming the first two members of 'An Association to Promote the Higher Education of Working Men,'



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and at that symbolical meeting by democratic vote I was appointed Hon. Secretary (*pro tem.*).

The first organising pamphlet of the Association was a reprint of the articles from the *University Extension Journal*, to which the following was a preface written by Dr. Holland Rose :

‘ Co-operation creates a new person, a new character, and a new policy ; and the new knowledge required is as extensive and various as that which has perfected the science of antagonism which we call “ civilisation.” ’ Such are the words written in 1891 by that veteran Co-operator, George Jacob Holyoake. They are as true to-day as they were twelve years ago ; and, perhaps, the need for calling them to mind is as great now as then. The fathers of Co-operation valued the movement as affording a training for character ; and the Trade Union leaders in many cases have taken up a similar standpoint.

Mr. Mansbridge, in writing these articles for the *University Extension Journal*, has been actuated by the same spirit, namely, to quicken the educational zeal of those who are associated with these two great working-class movements. Having himself benefited by courses of study in connection with University Extension lectures, he believes that such lectures may be made far more widely helpful to Trade Unionists and Co-operators than they have been in the past. As one who is connected with the *University Extension Journal*, I know that his articles have aroused great interest ; and, on behalf of the Editorial Committee and of my brother lecturers, I would assure those to whom Mr. Mansbridge especially appeals that we are most anxious to make our movement as helpful as possible to them. The spirit that animated Charles Kingsley and Arnold Toynbee has never been more active at our ancient Universities than it is to-day ; and the time seems ripe for an educational advance on the lines here suggested.

On July 14, 1908, the Provisional Committee, consisting entirely of Co-operators and Trade Unionists, met in Toynbee Hall for the first time. There were present, Mr. A. H. Thomas (Brushmaker) in the chair, Mr. George Alcock (Trustee National Union of Railwaymen), Mr. W. R. Salter (Engineer), Mr. L. Idle (Co-operative Employee), Mr. J. W. Cole (Co-operative Employee), and myself as Hon. Secretary. The first organisation to enter into affiliation with the provisional body was the Co-operative Society at Annfield Plain, Co. Durham. On Saturday, 25th

August, in the Examination Schools at Oxford, the Association received public recognition from the representatives of nearly all the Universities and a large number of labour organisations. Dr. Percival, then Bishop of Hereford, was in the chair, and his place was taken afterwards by Dean Kitchin, of Durham, both of whom possessed the confidence of the working people in a remarkable degree. Robert Halstead read a paper, in the course of which he said—

No one really interested in the subject will be satisfied with what has been done, or with the present pace of progress of higher education among working men. It seems to some of us that the prospects are not so promising now as they were some years ago. Doubtless there were many reasons for this. University Extension itself has become so successful in relation to other classes of society, that its working-class aspect has now receded into the background. Then, working-class organisations framed for other purposes are now so large, and their officials so pre-occupied, that such a special subject as the higher education of their members inevitably finds a secondary place in their attention. Any individual efforts that may be made to promote the cause, though they should be encouraged to the end of time, are obviously fragmentary, and in addition to being exacting as to time, energy, and means, are too much at the mercy of personal contingencies to be adequate to what is required.

The promoters of this Conference, in the light of these considerations, believe that if the higher education of working men has to make desired progress, it will have to consolidate itself into a special movement, adopt a special organisation, frame special objects of propaganda, and appoint a properly equipped staff to carry out its purpose.

It was left to me to introduce the proposed constitution of the Association, and I commenced by emphasising 'the absolute necessity for the successful working of a strong and powerfully organised Association, so constructed as to be in distinct and immediate relationship, equally with the Universities as with Working Class Movements.'

The discussion was well maintained, and both labour leaders and University teachers participated in it. Many critical things were said, yet there was complete unanimity as to procedure, and the note struck throughout was one of eager desire for education.



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A strong committee was appointed to develop the work, the members of which were : George Alcock (Trustee National Union of Railwaymen), Professor S. J. Chapman (University of Manchester), Alderman George Dew, L.C.C. (Amalgamated Society of Carpenters and Joiners), Robert Halstead (Secretary to the Co-operative Productive Federation, Ltd.), the Rev. T. J. Lawrence, LL.D. (late Fellow of Downing College), Albert Mansbridge (Battersea and Wandsworth Co-operative Society, Ltd.), the Rev. W. Hudson Shaw, M.A. (late Fellow of Balliol College), whilst two representatives each were authorised from the Co-operative Union, Ltd., and the Trade Union Congress, and one representative each from every University Extension Authority and the Association of Directors of Education.

Mr. and Mrs. Sidney Ball were the hosts on that occasion. They welcomed the delegates to St. John's College and provided hospitality for them there. Thus the foundation of Sir Thomas White at Oxford takes precedence as the first college to give shelter to the new Democratic Movement. It is fitting that the name of Sidney Ball should be so intimately associated with the beginnings of the W.E.A. in Oxford, for he never failed throughout a long University career to welcome and to assist those who had progressive causes at heart. He held out both hands to help young enthusiasts on their perilous ways. He added his ripe wisdom to their energy, and so things happened as they should, and adventures were sped on to their goal.

There were many difficulties and disappointments in the days which followed the Conference, but the dominant fact stood out clearly : Labour had made a definite move on her own account to reach out for the best education the country could offer or develop, and she had made the move deliberately in alliance with Scholarship. Nothing could alter that. It mattered little, therefore, that some of those who might have been expected to help viewed the new movement with suspicion, condemning it for overlapping and consequently for being not merely unnecessary, but actually a cumberer of the ground ; or that others said that it could not exist effectively unless it secured a great deal of financial aid. It is true that the income of the Association during the first three years of its life did not amount to £500, but that was not an unmixed evil. As a matter of fact, a little more opposition in those days would







PAST AND PRESENT MEMBERS (AUGUST 1907) OF THE EXECUTIVE COMMITTEE OF THE PIONEER BRANCH OF THE ASSOCIATION FOUNDED AT READING IN 1904.

have been helpful. There was practically none of that kind of active criticism which strengthens and nerves a young movement, and keeps an old one healthy and vigorous.

In October 1904 the first Branch was formed at Reading, and largely through its operation the Association discovered both its possibilities and limitations; although it was left to the branch at Rochdale, formed a few months later, to reveal the work in its many-sided richness.



## CHAPTER III

### EARLY DAYS

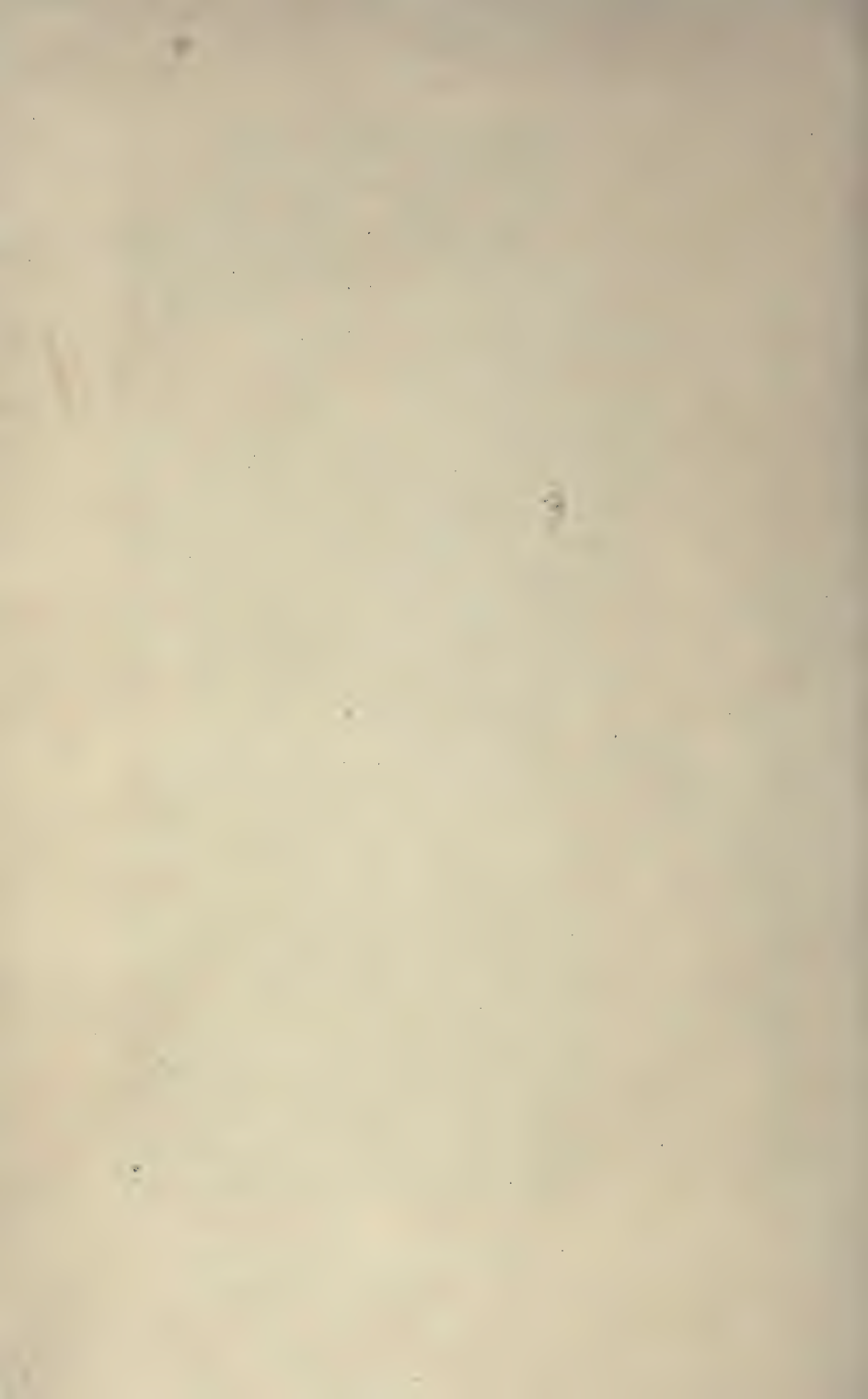
THE work which followed the Conference was exciting and interesting as it has seldom been since, in spite of the expansion of the Association and the multitude of its adherents. It was a great privilege to see the rapid working of the magnetic power of the new idea. Representative workers, such as D. J. Shackleton, then President of the Trades Union Congress, and representative University lecturers such as Hudson Shaw, declared their unqualified adherence to its principles. Financial support was accorded by working-class societies of all kinds and degrees. The Co-operative Union, the Working Men's Club and Institute Union, and the Parliamentary Committee of the Trades Union Congress entered into an association, which has never been broken, but, on the contrary, has increased in power every year. They did not merely express a sentiment, nor did they content themselves with an annual grant; they sent their best men to co-operate in the work of the Association, and these have been—and still are—amongst the most ardent advocates of the movement.

By the beginning of 1906, branches had been formed in eight towns, four in the South of England, one in the Midlands, and three in the North. District Committees were at work covering the North-Western and South-Western areas. Great meetings had been held, including that which formed the first branch at Reading and that which formed the first district at Manchester.

The first great National Conference of the Association, on a specifically educational problem, was held at Oxford on August 12, 1905. The Dean of Christ Church presided over



WILLIAM TEMPLE,  
*President of the Association.*





an assembly of nearly a thousand persons, comprising delegates from all parts. After a long discussion it was resolved to ask the Board of Education to ascertain from the 'local Education Authorities how far and under what conditions employer and employed, in their respective areas, would welcome legislation having for its ultimate object compulsory attendance at Evening Schools.' The consequent deputation, led by Mr. Will Crooks, was received by Sir Wm. Anson and Sir Robert Morant on November 22, 1905. It is believed to be the first deputation composed entirely of working-class representatives which has formally visited the Board of Education. Although no immediate action resulted, the Board referred the whole question to its Consultative Committee, which published a Report in 1909,<sup>1</sup> and so the foundation was laid for the consideration of the subject which led to the Day Continuation Schools of Mr. Fisher's 1918 Bill.<sup>2</sup>

It was to this Conference on Evening Schools that Mr. William Temple came quite by chance. As a result he became a member, and a few years later was elected to be the first President. In himself he has gathered up and expressed in a marvellous manner the mind and spirit of the movement.

The first four branches—Reading, founded October 1904, Derby, January 1905, Rochdale, March 1905, and Ilford, March 1905—are all steadily at work still, testifying to the permanence of the branch method. The North-Western Committee, appointed on October 8, 1904, has developed into the North-Western and the Yorkshire Districts of the Association. The South-Western Committee, appointed August 6, 1904, has merged into the Western and South-Western Districts. The Midland District was formed on October 14, 1905. It was at that meeting that the intense fervour and zeal for true education as a means of development reached that high plane which has been constantly observed, or rather experienced, at so many Association meetings since. The

<sup>1</sup> *Report of the Consultative Committee of the Board of Education on the Attendance, compulsory or otherwise, at Continuation Schools.* 2 vols. 1909. Cd. 4757, 4758. 3s.

<sup>2</sup> See Chapter IX for other forces affecting the 1918 Bill of the Board of Education.

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meeting was arranged in co-operation with the Birmingham District of the Co-operative Union, the Midland Co-operative Educational Committees Association, and the Birmingham Trades Council, whose chairman at that time, W. J. Morgan, J.P., proved a most efficient secretary to the whole Conference. It was addressed by Sir Oliver Lodge, Dr. Charles Gore, and Richard Bell, then M.P. for Derby; six hundred delegates and four hundred visitors were present. At the small but representative Annual Meeting held on the morning before, the cumbersome name of the Association was changed.<sup>1</sup>

Working women objected to the exclusive term 'working men.' It was always effective to explain that the term 'working men' was equivalent to the 'brethren' of the preacher, but unfortunately it was not always possible to do so. Others felt also that there was an exclusiveness about the term 'working men,' although no satisfactory definition of that term has ever been given. However, the Annual Meeting, by happy inspiration, developed the term Workers' Educational Association, and the Association has ever since been known by the fortunate combination of the initial letters, W.E.A. In connection with this meeting two branches were formed, one on the previous evening at Handsworth, and the Birmingham Branch. At Handsworth two antagonists in connection with local education, divided by the religious difficulty in the schools, joined hands and went out to convert to educational enthusiasm the local branch of the Amalgamated Society of Carpenters and Joiners.

The tale of conferences and meetings at that time is so long that I will forbear lest I weary the reader before the list is complete. It is necessary, however, to record the formation of the first branch, at Reading. At the end of the first six months of its work it had risen to a membership of 238 and had 16 affiliated societies. So rapidly did the idea bear fruit there that although the inaugural conference was only held on October 1, the weekly programme of the branch, which

<sup>1</sup> Some of the delegates to the above meeting are shown in the photograph facing page 25; in order to appreciate the further growth of the movement readers should compare the photograph facing page 29, which contains some of the delegates to the Annual Meeting of 1908 held at Birmingham three years later.



has never since ceased during the winter months, was opened on November 30 with an address on the aims of the Association by the Principal of University College, Reading. The most notable feature concerning the formation of this branch was the development of the constitution and rules, embodying the principles and many of the details which have been present in all branch constitutions since, whether established in England or in the Overseas Dominions. The essential feature is the right of representation, upon the governing body of the Association, of every society affiliated to it. The inaugural conference itself was notable, and the report of it was adopted as a pamphlet of the Association. It was addressed by Richard Honter (now Director of Education in Sierra Leone), Principal Childs, and the present Lord Chief Justice, and it resolved itself into animated discussion, participated in for the most part by local Labour leaders.

It will be obvious from what has been said that goodwill and desire for the success of the new movement animated most of those persons who came into contact with its influence. Indeed, it is almost safe to say that it had become a replica in miniature of English life. The Second Annual Report analyses the individual members as—authors, churchmen, co-operators, educationalists, headmasters, journalists, lawyers, nonconformists, scholars, statesmen, trade unionists, and adds, 'The last two members to join were a shop assistant and a labourer.' All the public utterances of the time make it clear that the first condition of the power and life of the Association was that at least three-quarters of its members should be actual labouring men and women. Had it been otherwise, the scholars of the time would have regarded it as an unnecessary body; but they realised that the W.E.A. did itself naturally represent the fundamental life of working people, who made it abundantly clear in conferences and elsewhere that, in the words of a leading article in the *Manchester Guardian*, they desired 'a liberal as against a merely bread-and-butter education.'

There is neither need nor space to call to mind the varied forms of educational activity undertaken by the rising movement. Then, as now, almost every form of reasonable educational activity found its place, but the Association was



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still waiting for the time when it could satisfy the test of keen educationalists like Canon Barnett and Dr. R. D. Roberts, by securing from the vast mass of working men and women real students prepared to study thoroughly and continuously, in such time as they could secure from daily work, the subjects in which they were interested. Many working men were indeed already doing so. The head of an Oxford College tells how he had found in Durham a working man who had been studying the philosophy of the Schoolmen for twenty years, and had never met anyone else who had studied it, until by chance he himself had happened to pass that way. Anyone who knows working-class life knows what persistency is put by many isolated scholars into subject after subject, as it passes from the stage of a hobby into the very condition of life. The Association hoped to discover these scholars and bring them into contact with one another, in order that isolation might be replaced by companionship in study.

It must not be understood that the Association was in a hurry to produce visible results. On the contrary, it knew that its work would have to grow steadily, and, if it did devise anything which would add to the educational experience of the country, it would reveal itself in its own place and in its own time. There were occasions during the first two years when some of us thought that we were perhaps too general in our aspirations, and that the same accusation of vagueness could be brought against us which might be brought against any 'association for making people good.' Certainly many who thought that we could not develop did praise us unstintedly. The most penetrating critic of the early days was Canon Barnett, who was of opinion that if we constructed the Association it would be as a locomotive engine without rails to run on. His metaphor of metals was indeed an appropriate one when finance is considered, but our enthusiasm was great in those days, and our answer was that if we could contribute human energy we could go on a long way without any money at all. It is clear that Canon Barnett, if he had not convinced himself that our enthusiasm was sufficiently strong and sane, at least hoped that it would prove to be so. He decided to use all his influence and weight to further the development of the work, and although the kindly critic

remained a critic still, he was to the end of his life the ready helper, the wise counsellor, the firm friend, and not least among those who sought to direct financial aid to the undertaking.

As I look back over the record of those years, I cannot help feeling how generous and how unceasing were the activities of the members of the committee, of the local secretaries, of scholars and public men, for all the mass of work had to be carried on without a regular central office, without any permanent official, and with funds strikingly inadequate. During the second year, the income of the Association from subscriptions and donations did not amount to £100, and a principle was therefore abundantly justified, which it is well to recognise in the starting of all new voluntary educational efforts. Such efforts are not worth undertaking unless they can be maintained for the first year on a pound or two. In other words, the most powerful influence should be exercised by those who are willing to labour without reward through unpromising days for the sake of an idea which they believe to be sound. Moreover, all movements ought to be small and poor at the commencement; they should grow from the seed upwards. There is no more difficult thing than to keep a right spirit within a well-endowed or rich movement. This is particularly the case where there is a great deal of money in the early years.

The very mention of finance calls up one of the most inspiring incidents of the whole period. I was working in the office of my employers when there burst into it (for 'burst' is the only word) a tall, venerable person, who proved to be Dr. J. B. Paton of Nottingham. 'Can you tell me how to find Mr. Mansbridge?' he asked. 'I am told he has to do with the Woolwich Co-operative Society.' When I told him that my name was Mansbridge, he at once expressed delight at the recent formation of the W.E.A. It seemed to him to embody many of his own ideals, for which he had been labouring as ten men through long years. He prophesied its power, he blessed it with double blessings. Just at the time it was struggling on—it had no money,—but the Doctor on that very day said he had money placed in his hands to use, and he would put £50 at our disposal. I remember we purchased a typewriter and a copying machine—badly needed—and were



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thus enabled to employ in the evenings our first typist. Dr. Paton encouraged and helped us from that time onward until his death in January 1911.

There was, also, evidence of opposition which was restricted to a few persons who declared that the Association was a device to side-track the attention of working men and women from their legitimate movement. It never rose to any great proportions and, generally, those who, from misinformation, had adopted this attitude gave it up when they came into contact with the Association. There are notable instances of this. Such opposition has never wholly ceased, but it has always proved to the advantage of the Association to have critics, even when those critics meant to do it harm. It may easily have been that without critics the Association would have slipped unconsciously into undemocratic or careless methods. Looking back over the newspaper correspondence of the time, which was frequently a severe tax on me, I can now say that I am glad that we had this opposition, because it always kept us on the alert. Moreover, it directly brought into our service and friendship one who started out as a determined enemy. He had been sadly misinformed. A few years later he qualified as a doctor, and, humanly speaking, was the means of restoring me to health and strength after the severe attack of cerebro-spinal meningitis in 1914 which caused my resignation from active service in the W.E.A., and rendered me useless, in many respects, throughout the years of the war.







SOME DELEGATES PRESENT AT THE THIRD ANNUAL MEETING HELD AT BIRMINGHAM, OCTOBER 1905.

## CHAPTER IV

### WORK IN TOWN AND COUNTRY

THE burden of every address or lecture given by the W.E.A. missionary was this: 'Discover your own needs, organise in your own way, study as you wish to study. There are no two towns or villages alike.' If the work was to be started in a town the first thing arranged was a town meeting. Usually the Mayor was asked to preside, and the Town Hall was generally the venue. After a definition of the W.E.A., a resolution authorising a provisional committee, to consist of one representative from every organisation agreeing to take part, would be moved by a workman and seconded by an educationalist; this was usually carried by a large majority.

Only on occasions when the few though active opponents of the Association could arrange an opposition based on class conscious grounds was there any cause for anxiety. The only time when the resolution was defeated was at Poplar in 1910; before the conference the local Labour bodies had been canvassed; their delegates came instructed to vote against the resolution. There was a hammer-and-tongs discussion; a clear moral victory was won, but the vote did not harmonise. Much useful work has been done in Poplar since, and the leading opponents have in various places paid tribute to our work. On another occasion at Watford, although the resolution was carried, the opposition was such as to wear down enthusiasm, and the effort proved abortive.

These setbacks were useful, for, as has been noted, a movement which does not have to fight its way tends to lose its vigour. Moreover, opponents who become friends as the result of conviction are the most reliable of supporters. Strangely enough, the policy of beginning work with large and successful



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town meetings often proved dangerous, because people expected the consequent work immediately to be on the same scale. The best branches so often grew out of small apparently unsuccessful beginnings, that in later years meetings of a few keen representative men and women were preferred to the larger ones.

Almost every kind of educational method was adopted. A Midland town organised an Annual Art Exhibition, chiefly to satisfy the desires of a group of members who spent their Saturday afternoons in sketching. The Saturday rambles of a Wiltshire branch have become famous in the land. A western town, acting in co-operation with Adult Schools, arranged over a thousand lectures, mostly in courses of from three to six, for Trade Unions, Adult Schools, Co-operative Guilds, etc., in the district. A northern town developed to an amazing extent the formation of classes through its affiliated bodies. On one occasion its representatives went to a Carters' and Lorrymen's Trade Union, urging them to say what they wanted to study. Perplexity reigned until one said, 'We're always behind the horse. We don't know much about him. Let us have a class on the horse.' As a result a hundred and twenty carters attended a class for two successive winters. It is said that the horses in that town had a much better time ever after. Yet another branch determined to increase the attendance at evening schools, and did so by a hundred per cent. in one year. As an example of the way in which local work may be carried out, a report of the first year's work at Rochdale, which was responsible for the carters' class, is printed as an appendix. The town of Rochdale deserves well of any movement with which it has been connected.

Sometimes a class would be formed apart from a branch, and it is my firm conviction that a class can be made out of any audience; this is the result of experience. On an October evening I was in Canning Town addressing a Temperance Society made up for the most part of casual labourers, who were at the docks in winter and on the road in summer. At the conclusion of my remarks a man rose and said, 'Can't we have a class, Guv'ner?' 'Yes, if you really want it,' was the reply. The result was that a class in Industrial History ran successfully through the winter. One of the men, full of enthusiasm, said, 'Can't our wives have a chance?' That

request also was met, and many women attended an afternoon class on 'How to Read Books.'

The keenness among women is if anything greater than that among men. I was once at a meeting in the East End of London, and as I spoke of the splendour of education to the very poor women there, mostly charwomen of advanced years, I saw some of the faces glow. It appeared afterwards that they had been members of a class, recognised for grant purposes by the Board of Education, and had studied history for four years. The teacher, who had distinguished herself in the Modern History Tripos, came from a Cambridge Women's College. Some of the women when they joined knew no history at all, but that was an excellent reason for becoming class members. On one occasion at Jarrow a conference of women met to hear about and to consider education. Before the end of the afternoon more than twenty of them, including a teacher, had enrolled themselves in a class which was to meet on the following Monday; no one had any idea that a class would be arranged when they entered the room. Every W.E.A. organiser could multiply such instances. They were possible because of the ready desire for knowledge and the generous attitude of those men and women, especially of the latter, who had been fortunate enough to receive an advanced education.

The work in London was greatly stimulated by the Westminster lectures. These attracted on June Saturday afternoons in three consecutive years many thousands of working men and women. The lecturer on each occasion was Professor Masterman. The first course was given in Westminster Abbey on 'The Story of the Abbey in Relationship to the History of the English People'; the second and third were given in the Royal Gallery of the House of Lords on 'Parliament and the People' and 'The House of Commons.' There were three times as many applications for tickets as could be satisfied; each ticket-holder had to pledge himself or herself to attend on every occasion. The ticket-holders were so eager that they formed a long queue waiting for the doors to be opened. The lectures were followed by discussion.<sup>1</sup> On one occasion there

<sup>1</sup> Amongst those who took the chair were Mr. Balfour, Mr. J. W. Lowther, the Speaker of the House of Commons, Sir William Anson, Mr. G. N. Barnes, Mr. Will Crooks, Mr. Ramsay Macdonald, Viscount Harcourt, and Lord Haldane.



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was a suffragette demonstration, and sixteen protesters were removed ; the only reason why I have ventured to record the fact here is because they came back to subscribe to the collection which was being made for the purpose of providing scholarships at the Cambridge Summer School of that year.

The extension of the W.E.A. in rural districts would have proved to be a much more difficult matter if University education had not spread to women in the last century. There were many highly educated women who were not professionally engaged, but who longed to do some useful work, and consequently the educational movement came to them as a benediction. These women threw themselves heart and soul into the rural movement ; in some instances they did their work so well that hardly an eligible person stood aloof. Classes were organised, lectures arranged, and plays produced. Village classes were always astonishing, both as regards the numbers who attended them and the persistence of the students. In most of the villages the average attendance was about thirty.

The most notable village branches before the war were those round about Swindon, with Woodboro' as centre. These were inspired by students from the Swindon classes and assisted by some of the staff at Marlborough College. Whilst the war was in progress the Kent villages round about Ashford did notable work, largely due to the influence of an old member of Balliol College, and to the devotion of a local schoolmaster. The Buxton Memorial lectures were most successful in Mid-Sussex, whilst the classes in the mining villages of North Staffordshire under the North Staffordshire Miners' Movement are in many ways unique in educational experience. An anonymous writer in the *Round Table* (1914) imagines Erasmus coming to England to meet his fellow scholars and going, not to Oxford or to Cambridge, but to North Staffordshire.

In the later afternoon, when the factories close down, Erasmus is fetched by a workman student, and carried out first by train and then in an antediluvian carriage (specially provided for this occasion) to an inaccessible village on the top of a hill. There in the school-room he finds an eager audience gathered together from this and the neighbouring villages. They have come to hear about the French Revolution, to be thrilled with the story of a great national drama. Erasmus, inured to lucubrations about scientific





SOME DELEGATES PRESENT AT THE FIFTH ANNUAL MEETING HELD AT BIRMINGHAM, OCTOBER 1907.



methods and documentary authorities, had almost forgotten that history is first and foremost a story. This evening reminded him. He saw the Bastille fall under his eyes, and felt the news of its capture reverberating through France. He lived for an hour in 1789, as the story rolled out from the lips of a trained public speaker. The miners and the field labourers and the village shopkeepers and the old village schoolmaster in the chair were in France too; question after question poured in till the primitive conveyance stood once more at the door. And so back to the wayside station and in the slow train to Stoke, with high converse on the way, of which Erasmus will bear an undying memory back to Holland.

Among the many and varied experiences which fall to the town-bred W.E.A. organiser, village meetings are the most stimulating, perhaps because everything is novel and fresh. He must, of course, let the meeting choose its own way. I shall never forget a group of agricultural labourers and their wives, crowded into a small schoolroom, heated by an ancient stove, and seated in desks made for infants. They listened to an address on education for the better part of an hour; then they were asked what they wished to study. After a long period of intense silence and inaction, punctuated by the earnest appeals of the lecturer, who adopted all the arts he could think of, four hands were held up. They were obviously magnificent hands for heavy manual work. The lecturer paused triumphantly, and said encouragingly, 'Well?' The answer was 'Shorthand.' Such an answer as that might well have brought the proceedings to an untimely close, but somehow or other, perhaps owing to a hint from an understanding person, perhaps through a knowledge of the workings of the rural mind, which is not given to revealing its secrets or desires in public, I divined that they wished to study history. Ever since they have been studying history and kindred subjects in that village in classes for men and women. There are few in the village who have kept aloof.

There have been one or two attempts at village settlements, but so far none have proved to be permanent. The war, which destroyed so much, will, it is hoped, have inspired such constructive and devoted work as will recreate village life, and enable it to minister to the fundamental needs of our country.<sup>1</sup>

<sup>1</sup> The work of Women's Institutes and of the Y.M.C.A. promise much in this connection.



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The experience of the W.E.A. has proved conclusively that persistent study appeals to the rural labourer. At the same time no facilities will tempt him, if they are imposed by others, or suggested in a philanthropic spirit. He lives in a world of his own which has its own effective methods and ways of thinking. It is only by the extension of the same methods and ways that he will enter the fields of knowledge. Wisdom is the accompaniment of simple lives rightly lived. The force which is often generated in villages is the force which creates scholars and men of genius, and England dare not fail to foster and strengthen this force.

## CHAPTER V

### RESPONSIBILITY AND GOVERNMENT

THE responsibility for the detailed work of the movement originally rested for the greater part upon the workers at the centre ; but the gradual increase of power in the district offices made it possible in 1915 to take this over to such an extent as to remove the burden almost entirely from the Central Office, and to realise the intention of the pioneers of the movement, which was to allow each part of the country to develop on its own lines, and in its own way, within the natural limits of the work of the whole Association. It will be noted that branches were allowed autonomy from the beginning. In this absence of centralisation lies one of the reasons for the success of the Association as an organisation.

For the first three years my private residence first at Battersea, then at Ilford, served as the office of the Association, and the hours of work were early in the morning or late in the evening. There are many who remember with wonder and amusement the strenuous efforts of an enthusiastic and growing staff to do their work in two small rooms at 24 Buckingham Street from 1906-9, in two slightly larger rooms at 18 Adam Street from 1909-11, and ultimately in two rooms and an apology for one at 14 Red Lion Square from 1911-15. It has often been said that movements with good intentions are shameless in the manner in which they overwork their employees. The W.E.A. in the first twelve years of its life was the worst of offenders ; but everyone in the office caught the spirit of the movement ; every success achieved was regarded in the light of a personal victory. If an unexpected cheque came, enabling new work to be carried out, the typewriting machines hummed with triumph, whereas before such an arrival they contented

themselves with tapping out confidence. Any and every visitor was a new promise of power, and not a few have told us how cheered they were to find themselves greeted with both welcome and hospitality by an obviously busy staff. It would, of course, never have been possible for an Association with no funds and no financial backing to meet its liabilities, unless every member of the staff had worked and economised to the utmost.

The District Offices have had even greater difficulties than the Central Office. The secretaries have been expected to combine all rôles in their own persons—speakers, teachers, organisers, and financiers, and withal to keep fresh and cheerful so as to be ever ready to inspire others, and all on an income hopelessly inadequate. The story of the rise of the Association in late years is largely that of their own successful efforts. It is their work which made necessary the reconstruction of the Constitution in 1915, and the responsibility for the future development of the Association, as we have seen, now rests largely upon their shoulders.

It is obvious that a Constitution devised by and for the W.E.A. at any particular time would hinder rather than promote the work, unless it were regarded as a basis of action, or, in other words, as a starting-point for future progress. This does not at all weaken the effect of the Constitution, because whatever progressive action is taken must be taken in harmony with it. Roughly speaking, this is the view which has been taken of its Constitution by W.E.A. members. There have been, during the first twelve years of its life, very few, if any, appeals to constitutional authority, but, on the other hand, it has been found necessary on two occasions to reconstruct the Constitution in order to bring it into harmony with the growth of the Association ; but there have never been alterations in the principles by which it is governed. These principles have always ensured that the action taken and the opinions expressed shall be entirely unsectarian, and without party bias in politics. Moreover, the clear principle of democratic government has always been expressed in the sense that every member, no matter how far removed from the centre, shall have the right to express, through the channels provided, his considered opinion upon any matter of education.



The only condition of membership is a desire to promote the education of the people.

The first Constitution, which was authorised at the Oxford Conference, was quite simple, and expressed the objects of the W.E.A. as follows :

To promote the Higher Education of Working Men primarily by the Extension of University Teaching, also (a) by the assistance of all working-class efforts of a specifically educational character, (b) by the development of an efficient School Continuation System.

This made it clear that the immediate objective of the Association was the adult, it being held that, if he were interested in education, he would then take the necessary steps to secure reforms in the educational system of the country, particularly with regard to his own children. The general attitude of the Association became symbolised in the term 'Highway.' The old idea of the ladder of education was too restricted and ineffective. The term 'Highway' was first used at the North of England Educational Conference held at Sheffield in 1907. At least, I am unable to discover the use of the word in this connection before that. It was developed in a paper read by me from which I venture to quote :

It has been customary in England to visualise the method of approach to the University constructed for the children of the poor as an 'Educational Ladder,' but the citizen condemns such narrow possibilities. He does not altogether approve the 'Educational Corridor' suggested by the President of the National Union of Teachers, but he is working to construct a free and open highway upon which the only tolls are to be mental equipment and high character. He desires to clear away the remnants of the barriers of creed and sex which at one time entirely obstructed the way to the Universities.

He knows that the invitation to the Modern University is addressed to the whole world of students, therefore his great highway is to be in its earlier stages as broad as the area of the Primary Schools, narrowing naturally at that point where the Secondary School overlaps the Primary School, and narrowing yet again at that later point where the Universities begin to draw students from the Secondary Schools. Education to him, as to Mr. Haldane, will never be right in England until Primary, Secondary, and University

Education are united by the stream of students upon such a highway. His imagination is stimulated by the recognition of the fact that the Universities are the only educational institutions in England which make it possible for students from all sections of society to pursue their studies, side by side, unconscious of irrelevant distinctions. He believes that in the light of a unified educational interest the diverse sections of society will cease to construct or to maintain Primary and Secondary Schools in accordance with 'class conscious principles.'

The term 'Highway' was hailed at the time as new in its application to the educational system of the country. Since that date it has passed into general use, and has been adopted by successive Ministers of Education. The magazine of the Association, which was published shortly afterwards, received the same appropriate name.

Provision was made in the first Constitution for an Executive Committee and for local Committees, but the local Committee clause was merely adopted in principle. An Advisory Council was also allowed for and consisted, as laid down, of representative educational experts. In the rush and stress of work, however, it became largely inoperative and was never actually convened.

The rise of the branches and districts made it necessary to revise the Constitution at the Annual Meeting of October 1906. The Objects and Methods were defined more clearly as follows :

*Object.*—Its object shall be to promote the Higher Education of Working Men and Women.

*Methods.*—It shall, in its capacity as a co-ordinating Federation of Working-Class and Educational Interests, endeavour to fulfil its object in the following principal ways :

- (a) By *arousing* the interest of the workers in Higher Education, and by directing their attention to the facilities already existing.
- (b) By *inquiring* into the needs and feelings of the workers in regard to Education, and by representing them to the Board of Education, Universities, Local Education Authorities, and Educational Institutions.
- (c) By *providing*, either in conjunction with the aforementioned bodies or otherwise, facilities for studies of interest to the workers which may have hitherto been overlooked.







THE OFFICIALS OF THE ASSOCIATION AT TOYNBEE HALL, JANUARY, 1909.

L. V. GILL,  
*North-Western Secretary.*  
ALBERT MANSBRIDGE,  
*General Secretary.*

T. EDMUND HARVEY,  
*Hon. Treasurer.*  
WILLIAM TEMPLE,  
*President.*

T. W. PRICE,  
*Midland Secretary.*  
F. W. CUTHBERTSON,  
*Editor of the 'Highway.'*

- (d) By *publishing*, or arranging for the publication, of such reports, pamphlets, books and magazines as it deems necessary.

Full provision was made for the operation of the various authorities of the Association, i.e. central, district, and local branches. The powers of voting and of representation at the Annual General Meeting were defined in detail, and it was indicated that an official organ of the Association should be published at the first opportunity. The principle of government in the Association may be described briefly as local and district autonomy, with, however, the reservations necessary to preserve the unity of the whole movement. There were minor alterations at subsequent Annual Meetings until, in 1915, it seemed that the firm planting of the Association in several of the districts, and the consequent growth of active life, had given rise to a situation which demanded an Executive Committee largely based on district representation.

The Central Executive Committee was, as a matter of fact, composed largely of the representatives of affiliated bodies, and of those who had guided the centre in its difficult work of planting and developing districts and branches, often at great sacrifice to the peculiar work of the central body. Be that as it may, there was a reasonable and right demand for larger and more effective representation from the districts on the governing body of the Association, i.e., the Council to which all affiliated bodies had the right to send one, and the districts to send two, representatives. This Council appointed the Executive Committee which was responsible to it. The final decisions of the Association could only be taken at the Annual General Meeting, at which all members, societies, branches, and districts had rights of representation. The Constitution approved in 1915 was designed to remove these difficulties; it provided for a Central Council which represented in little the whole Association.

The Annual Meeting was hopelessly congested, and at any meeting proceedings might be rendered impossible by the amount of business to be dealt with. It had clearly passed beyond its first usefulness, and its functions were transferred to the meetings of the Council, which were to be held at least

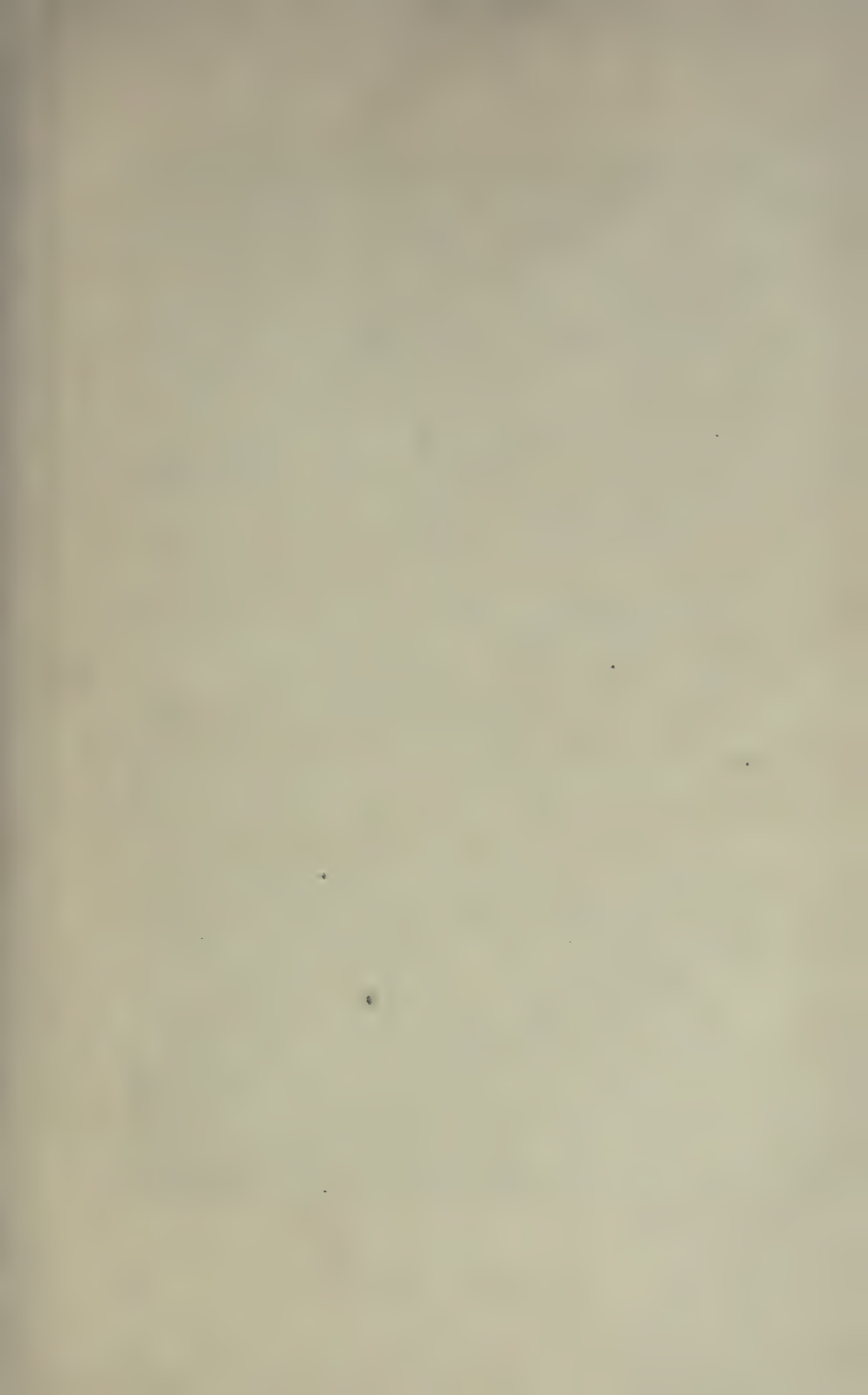


twice in the year. Thus the Council superseded the Annual Meeting in the ultimate government of the Association.

Although individual members could join the central body it was always intended that ultimately they would only be able to join branches. This intention was not realised in 1915, but the principle was set in motion by restricting individual membership to branches and districts. The national body thus became a federation of affiliated bodies and the representatives of the districts. Every branch, of course, has the right of representation on the District Council. Simple as these arrangements may appear to be, they yet have tended to save a good deal of confusion in the Association, for it was recorded that one person had actually received invitations to subscribe to a branch, district, and to the Central Association, and, moreover, had received invitations to attend three Annual Meetings in the year. This, at least, could only now happen twice over, i.e., in the case of the district and the branch. Doubtless this anomaly will also be remedied at a later stage in the history of the Association.

The event to which most enthusiasts in the work of the Association looked forward was the foregathering at Annual Meetings, henceforward to be Conventions with no direct governing power; in some respects, they were held in higher estimation than the more lengthy educational gatherings at the Summer Schools. An Annual Meeting was a time of real inspiration, of the meeting of old friends, of the development of fresh resources in the locality, and of bringing the movement generally into the public eye throughout the country. There were associated with these Annual Meetings demonstrations which, on every occasion, were astonishing in their power. The greatest of the series was held at Sheffield in 1909. The Sheffield people felt anxious concerning the attendance, and were inclined to take a moderate-sized hall in the city; we told them to take the biggest hall, and, moreover, to provide for an overflow meeting. The Wesleyan Central Hall was therefore taken, and on the platform were representatives of eighty societies of Sheffield, and the great hall, holding three thousand persons, was crammed half an hour before the meeting. The overflow hall was filled and many people were turned away. If a meeting on the education of the people be







JOINT COMMITTEE ON OXFORD AND WORKING-CLASS EDUCATION, DECEMBER, 1907.

*Standing (Left to Right)*—Councillor A. Wilkinson, W. H. Berry, Prof. H. H. Turner, Sidney Ball, M.A., J. M. Mactavish, J. A. R. Marriott, M.A., H. B. Lees Smith, M.A., Richardson Campbell, F.S.S.  
*Seated (Left to Right)*—C. W. Bowerman, M.P., A. E. Zimmer, M.A., D. J. Shackleton, M.P., The Vice-Chancellor, The Dean of Christ Church (*Chairman*), A. Mansbridge, A. L. Smith, M.A.

properly organised, there will never be any lack of attendance. There was a striking platform : the Archbishop of York, Mr. Arthur Henderson, M.P., and Miss Margaret McMillan all spoke. The atmosphere was electric. Ferrer had just been shot at Barcelona, and the fact that he had been an educationalist inspired the vast audience with the greatest sympathy. Such was the beauty of the educational message, and the high level at which it was delivered at this and subsequent meetings, that they were regarded by many as gatherings of spiritual significance.

Perhaps, however, the most striking event of any of the Annual Meetings was the occasion upon which Dr. Gore, then Bishop of Birmingham, after waiting a whole evening through a drawn-out programme at Reading, found himself standing up to speak just ten minutes before ten o'clock, when the meeting was to be closed. He had had no intention of speaking for more than ten minutes, but he delivered his message in such powerful terms that when he had ended the vast audience rose to its feet and clamoured for him to go on.

All this passion for justice will accomplish nothing, believe me, [said the Bishop], unless you get knowledge. You may become strong and clamorous, you may win a victory, you may effect a revolution, but you will be trodden down again under the feet of knowledge unless you get it for yourselves ; even if you win that victory, you will be trodden down again under the feet of knowledge if you leave knowledge in the hands of privilege, because knowledge will always win over ignorance.



## CHAPTER VI

### UNIVERSITY TUTORIAL CLASSES

MANY people regard the W.E.A. and the University Tutorial Class Movement as one and the same thing. They treat the terms as interchangeable, probably because the system of University Tutorial Classes has been the most prominent constructive work of the Association; and that is the feature which has earned the commendation of educational experts wherever they are found. The rest of its work, even though it may have been more important, has been intangible and elusive. It may be of great moment to the nation to set people's minds in the direction of things that are pure and true, but such work cannot be estimated, statisticised, visited, seen.

There were not wanting those who, in the early years of the W.E.A., said that its success would depend upon its ability to create serious students. Among those especially experienced in the problems of adult education, the names of Canon Barnett and Dr. Roberts stand out prominently. The former, ever since the foundation of Toynbee Hall, had striven with all his might to bring the University to the workers. The latter, as secretary to the Syndicate for Local Lectures at Cambridge, and latterly as Registrar of the University of London Extension Board, had perhaps given more attention than anyone else to the question of the recognition by Universities of extra-mural studies. It was the united stimulus of these two men that caused the formation of a class in Battersea, of which Professor Patrick Geddes was appointed tutor; but, serious though the intention of this class was, it was not a University Tutorial Class, and did not become one for some two or three years.

The formation of the first class in 1906 was due to a very

wise use of University Extension at Rochdale, where the W.E.A. branch, under the name of the Rochdale Education Guild, had become powerful owing to the truly wonderful work of L. V. Gill, F. Greenwood, and A. Carter, the three secretaries of the branch. Working men and women began to attend lectures in large numbers, and because they reached out for something more, a new problem arose. After long reflection I came to the conclusion that the best thing to do would be to ask Rochdale to get thirty students to pledge themselves to make every attendance for two years and to write regular essays. If they would do this we could get the best tutor in England. Our part of the bargain was certainly a large one, but we meant it, and it represented our enthusiasm at the time. As the result of a letter I addressed to them the Rochdale students pledged themselves for two years, and R. H. Tawney, a Balliol scholar, agreed to teach the class for the time being under the auspices of the Oxford University Extension Delegacy. Mr. Tawney was at that time Lecturer in Economics at Glasgow; he was quite prepared to undertake arduous work for the W.E.A. at any cost. In this way a pioneer experiment was initiated, of far-reaching consequence for the education of the workers.

Fortunately, at the Oxford Summer Meeting of that year, the members of a keen University Extension centre at Longton, prominent among them being Mr. E. S. Cartwright, decided to attempt to duplicate the Rochdale experiment in Longton. They secured the requisite number of students under the same conditions, and Mr. Tawney found it possible to undertake that class also. The Rochdale members had chosen Saturday afternoon; Longton chose Friday evening. Thus it came about that the first University Tutorial Class ever held in England was held at Longton, although Rochdale was properly the pioneer class.

It should be stated that the University Extension Delegacy were enabled to undertake this experiment owing to a grant made by New College, Oxford. When the question of making the grant was under consideration the College invited our Midland Secretary, Mr. Sharkey, a working brushmaker, and myself to dine with the Warden and Fellows informally, in order to discuss the matter. From that evening New College



has never looked back in its support of University Tutorial Classes. It has been generous, even in difficult years. It was on that evening also that Professor Zimmern, sometime Honorary Treasurer of the W.E.A., first came into contact with the work.

The public expression of the scheme for establishing classes was effectively made by a conference held during the Summer Meeting in August. The subject suggested for discussion was, 'What Oxford can do for Working People.' A resolution was carefully prepared beforehand, asking the Vice-Chancellor to appoint seven members of the University to meet seven representatives of Labour nominated by the W.E.A. to inquire into, and report upon, the whole matter. Some four hundred delegates attended from all over England and Wales, the Board of Education being represented by Sir Robert Morant and Dr. H. F. Heath. Dr. Gore, late Bishop of Oxford, presided, and the subject was introduced by Mr. Walter Nield, of the North-Western Co-operative Educational Committees' Association, and by Mr. Sidney Ball, Fellow of St. John's College. Among the invited speakers was Mr. J. M. Mactavish, the present General Secretary of the W.E.A., at that time a shipwright in Portsmouth Dockyard. The Conference was full of excitement, and there was a small but compact body of persons who had evidently come to delay progress; they were prepared with strong arguments, but it seemed that Mr. Mactavish's speech was stronger. There were no mild and pleasant things said about either Oxford or working people; both, it was agreed, had fallen short. Here was the opportunity to unite for the future in the development of learning which should be broadly based upon the facts of experience, as well as upon the theories developed by scholars. After various outbursts of excitement the Conference closed. The resolution was carried with only four votes against it.

The movement for uniting Universities with the people had taken a distinct step forward. The press was full of it on the Monday, and very shortly afterwards the Committee appointed settled down to the work of producing its report. Composed as it was of such vastly different elements, the simple fact that the Committee had a common objective unified their considerations more than is usual with Committees drawn from



dissimilar types of persons, and the Report,<sup>1</sup> 'Oxford and Working-class Education,' stands as a monument to their labours. That Report not only laid down clearly the lines upon which the new movement must be developed, but induced, throughout the whole of the English-speaking world, at least a new attitude towards Universities. Its popularity was proved by its circulation, a second edition being rapidly demanded. In the United States the press comments ran somewhat in this way: 'We started by accusing Oxford; we finish by excusing ourselves.'

Before the Report was finished arrangements had been made for six other classes. The Oxford Colleges rallied to the work, and useful contributions were made by several of them, notably by All Souls, New College, and Magdalen. The publication of the Report drew in all the other Universities and University Colleges, and, before long, there was not a University nor a University College in England and Wales which had not established classes. More than that, they actually met in a Central Committee which still exists under the name Central Joint Advisory Committee for Tutorial Classes,<sup>2</sup> and is unique in that it is the first Committee upon which there were representatives of every University and University College in England and Wales. It was an historic

<sup>1</sup> *Oxford and Working-class Education. A Report of a Joint Committee of University and Working-class Representatives on the Relation of the University to the Higher Education of Workpeople.* Clarendon Press, 1909. 1s. (Out of print.)

<sup>2</sup> This Committee, over which Sir Henry Miers, Vice-Chancellor of the University of Manchester, has presided from the outset, defines its work in the following way:

As a matter of ordinary procedure it soon became evident that the common problems of University Tutorial Classes could best be solved by a Committee upon which each University and University College had representatives together with the Workers' Educational Association. Such a Committee was accordingly constructed by general consent, and in order to emphasise its advisory nature it was called the Central Joint Advisory Committee on Tutorial Classes. Its functions clearly revealed themselves as a method of approach to the Board of Education, the Gilchrist Educational Trust, the Carnegie United Kingdom Trustees, and other possible sources of revenue. In future it will continue the work of combining the experience of Universities in regard to Tutorial Classes, and will continue to approach, when authorised to do so, bodies which affect more than one University. At the same time it does not, and cannot in any sense, limit the right of any University to take whatever steps it pleases in its own interests, nor can its decisions bind the action of any Joint Committee. It will maintain its power

occasion when they all met under one roof for the first time, and symbolical of their unity of purpose in regard to this matter.

The remarkable progress of the classes up to the time of the war, and throughout its course, can best be realised by a consideration of the statistics (*see* Appendix I). Let it be said at once that students as a rule keep their pledges, that the first Rochdale Class continued for four, and the Longton class for eight years : indeed, the latter is in effect still at work, although the personnel has changed. The quality of the work done revealed itself rapidly as good. The judgment of Mr. A. L. Smith, the Master of Balliol, was much quoted at the time. He declared that 25 per cent. of the essays written were as good as the work done by men who obtain First-Class Honours in the Final Schools of Modern History at Oxford. He was astonished, not so much at the ' quality of the work as at the quantity of the quality.' This high standard was the direct result of keenness in unifying the practical experience of the students' lives with the knowledge gained in the class.

Obviously, the men and women who would undertake such a course were thoughtful people to begin with. Many of them had read a good deal, if discursively.<sup>1</sup> Their technical equipment was not great at the outset, but that rapidly righted itself ; such minor matters as spelling and punctuation soon ceased to trouble them unduly. The principles upon which the classes were founded, in themselves secured good results. No one was encouraged to join a class who did not really wish

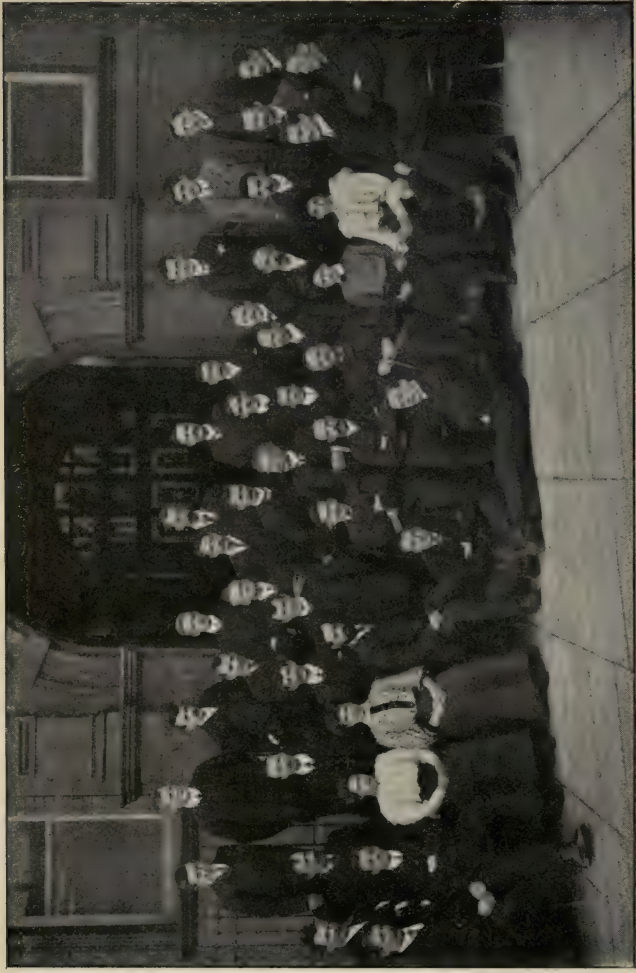
by its efficiency in helping to maintain all the details of the work at the highest possible level, and in the making of representations on behalf of the movement in any way which would lead to its strengthening. It can, of course, and must be, purely a body dealing with the *supply* of Tutorial Classes. The *demand* for Tutorial Classes is best met by the organisation of the Workers' Educational Association.

<sup>1</sup> The problem of securing a reasonable supply of the more expensive books of reference for the use of students has been largely solved by the establishment of the Central Library for Students, 20 Tavistock Square, London, W.C. During the year ending February 28, 1920, this Library made 15,000 issues for periods varying up to six months each. The Library is supported by voluntary contributions, and has been generously aided by the Carnegie United Kingdom Trustees, also later by the Cassel Trustees. The Adult Education Committee of the Ministry of Reconstruction recommend that it be financed in part by the State in order that it may the more adequately fulfil its purpose. This recommendation was unanimously endorsed by Librarians in conference at Southport, September 1919, who further called upon existing Libraries to support it also.





Tom Bailey  
 Joseph Birms  
 Harold Briggs  
 Albert Entworth  
 John Clegg  
 Arthur Collinge  
 Joseph Croyer  
 Stanley Dawson  
 John Downs.  
 Percy Dumbrell  
 Amy Toyard  
 Frederick Greenwood  
 George E Greenwood  
 Lawrence V Gill  
 Fred Hall  
 James Keneghan  
 -Chas de Millen  
 Richard Heyes.  
 Charles Hewitt  
 James C. Hutton  
 Leslie Keeler



A. Tawney.

THE PIONEER UNIVERSITY TUTORIAL CLASS AT ROCHDALE, 1907.

Tutor: R. H. Tawney, Balliol College, Oxford.  
 Subject: Industrial History.

Harold Kierulff  
 Eugene Korman  
 John K. Lee.  
 Lewis Hill  
 Roy Lead  
 Thomas & Price  
 Thos. W. Ormrod.  
 Charles H. Pearce  
 Leonard Plant  
 Thomas McLean  
 Eleanor Macobrow  
 Arthur Shore  
 Walter L. Stafford  
 Alfred Sutcliffe  
 Harry Taylor  
 Frederick Tarr  
 Alfred P. Wadsworth  
 James Warburton  
 Alf. Wolfson  
 Albert & Wilson  
 Joseph Wormale

to study the proposed subject ; the class was also allowed to select its tutor and to formulate its syllabus. The adoption of these two methods caused some to be scornful who had underestimated the psychological importance of this concession to the initiative of students of mature years.

The tutor must of course in the first place have been approved by the University Joint Committee established in connection with each University, but a really good tutor would never stand in danger of not being accepted by a class. Moreover, the syllabus would also have to be approved. There is a vital impulse in a class which starts the study of a subject at the point which it desires, although, naturally, this must be a suitable point. It is always best in dealing with the education of people of any type to start from the known in the investigation of the unknown. There is much artificiality in teaching which deals with remote matters. Perhaps, however, the principle which gave most life and vigour to the classes was that each student was held to be a teacher and each teacher held to be a student. A tutorial class, it was said, consisted of thirty-one teachers and thirty-one students. 'The lecture is one but the discussion is one thousand' runs the old Persian proverb. The power of the operation of this principle and the rapid development of the subject as a result must be seen to be appreciated. The joy in work which it produces makes tired men fresh. Otherwise, how could men working seventy hours a week come to the classes and write their essays regularly, as so many have done ?

This freshness and joy in work was one of the main notes in the Report on the Classes published by the Board of Education, and drawn up by Mr. J. W. Headlam and Professor L. T. Hobhouse. They record there the case of a student who, hampered by conditions at home, rose in the night, wrote his essay for two hours, and then turned to sleep again. The recognised period of a class meeting is two hours, on twenty-four occasions during each of three consecutive years. No really good class ever keeps to the two hours. They break up, as a rule, only when compelled by necessity. There are limits to the time during which buildings with caretakers may be left open, but there always remains the street. A class in Philosophy at Birmingham habitually continued its sessions



on the sidewalk, until an energetic policeman threatened to charge the tutor with causing an obstruction. On one occasion an Economics class, after a pavement session, accompanied the tutor to the railway station; and the argument not being finished, some of the students entered the train with him and went as far as they dared. The early tutors became the friends of the students, visited them in their houses, joined them on all possible occasions, and, in fact, acted towards them in much the same way as a tutor at Oxford towards his pupils, subject, of course, to the limitations imposed by working hours, and allowing for the more intimate friendship which is possible between tutor and W.E.A. students of the same age.

As a rule the subjects studied are economic; and a large number of classes take industrial history. After a little while students become keenly interested in literature and philosophy. The preponderance of Economics studied has been deplored by those who only know the Economics of the Universities. In any case the actual subject of study is not of so much concern as the spirit in which it is studied. In a tutorial class there is little or no danger of narrow treatment. In any case the range of subjects is limited to those which do not demand a long period of school education; for instance, mathematics and languages are beyond this range, and the same may be said generally of pure and applied science, although some of the most successful classes have been held in biology. The Prime Minister's Committee on the Teaching of Science reports on a class at Halifax, and in doing so quotes the testimony of the tutor: <sup>1</sup>

The success of Science classes for adult students depends in a special degree on the character of the teaching and the personality of the teacher. It is more difficult to secure the right sort of teaching for adult students in Science than in such a subject as Economics. The teaching of Science to adults may fail either because it is too elementary and does not deal with scientific matters of general interest—it is unreasonable to expect grown-up people to be profoundly interested in the text-book accounts of the properties of oxygen and hydrogen—or because it is too technical and specialised.

<sup>1</sup> *Natural Science in Education. The Report of the Committee on the Position of Natural Science in the Educational System of Great Britain.* 1918. His Majesty's Stationery Office. 1s. 6d.



It is not easy to get a teacher who will be successful in avoiding both these pitfalls. On the other hand, it is a profound mistake to suppose that working men are naturally lacking in interest in scientific matters. They are fully alive to really good teaching of Science by a teacher who knows how to bring out their powers of reflection and judgment. If they cannot get this kind of intellectual stimulus in Science, they can as a rule get it in such a subject as Economics, simply because they are themselves more or less acquainted with the facts upon which the problems of Economics are based.

It is difficult and perhaps unprofitable to try to trace an effect such as the good and thoughtful work of the classes would undoubtedly produce. It is a matter for speculation whether or not the public mind would have been very different during the great war if there had been no tutorial classes. Certain it is that some 5,000 active working men and women had received systematic and careful education in History and Economics over a period of no less than three years. Many trade union officials have as a result found that their work was more powerful, and that they themselves were better informed and equipped to deal with the problems which have arisen in their meetings with the representatives of the employers. There is abundant detailed evidence to this effect.

A new attitude was developed towards the Universities, and towards learning in general, which rapidly took the place of past misunderstandings, suspicion or indifference. Not that there was necessarily approval of the actions of Universities, or acquiescence in the fact that Oxford and Cambridge had conformed to an aristocratic system, but there was a belief in their possibilities and a trust in their integrity of purpose. The absence from them of the mind and spirit of Labour was held to be a hampering condition that was now gradually being rectified. As for the University professors themselves, they found a new joy in studying with these keen students, especially when they came up to the Universities for Summer Schools. The following is an instance of the new spirit: On an August morning in 1909, the Professor of English Law at Oxford had lectured on the Workmen's Compensation Act to a group of railwaymen, weavers, and miners gathered together in Balliol College; after he had finished it fell to his share, in accordance

#### 44 AN ADVENTURE IN WORKING-CLASS EDUCATION

with the invariable custom in these classes, to listen to the discussion and to answer questions for a space of time at least equal to that which he himself had occupied. Almost at once a railwayman, who had suffered the loss of a limb, rose and discussed from the point of view of the injured workman the effect of the Act, so far as he in his own person was concerned. In this way it is possible by co-operation between teacher and taught to envisage a subject both from the theoretical and the practical point of view.

When the great war came, it was thought that the tutorial classes might pass out of existence, but the enthusiasm which developed them had spread to so large a circle that, even in the winter of 1916-1917, when the work was at its lowest ebb, nearly a hundred classes were meeting.

Apart from the Universities themselves, the greatest force in securing their permanence was the Board of Education, which consistently supported the classes, having assured itself by all known tests that the work was sound and good. When the Rochdale Class was started, it was only possible to earn five shillings per student for each twenty-hours' attendance. By an alteration of the Regulations secured in the second year this sum was increased to eight and sixpence. A few years later a block grant of £30 per class for each of the three years was given under Regulations which were developed by the classes rather than imposed upon them; in 1918 this was increased to £45. Sympathetic, skilled inspectors were appointed in the persons of Mr. A. E. Zimmern and Mr. J. Dover Wilson. On the resignation of the former, Mr. Joseph Owen was appointed, notable as the only working-man student who had proceeded to Oxford in connection with the University Extension Movement. The influence of each of these inspectors is strongly felt in the W.E.A., for they have understood its meaning from the first, and have spared no pains in developing it.

The problem of the classes is still largely financial. It is clear that every considerable town in England not only could start a class but needs one. Moreover, the supply of tutors cut off by the war will be augmented by women graduates who have already proved their power in dealing with this type of class. Accordingly, where hundreds of pounds have been

spent in the past, the developments of the future will need thousands. The Government, as has been implied, has always been impressed by the value of the classes, and it is expected that in the reconstruction proposals, provision for their finance will be included in such a manner as not merely to increase the supply of tutors but also to enable them to be paid better.<sup>1</sup>

Of course, there is great danger in the fact that the experiment of the early years may be overlaid as different people come into it, but if each tutor really seeks to understand the spirit of the movement of the W.E.A. he cannot go far wrong, especially remembering that adult working men and women are forceful people and, whilst working splendidly with a class which enables them to develop, will naturally turn from one which does not meet their needs.

<sup>1</sup> Proposals to this end are contained in *The Final Report of the Ministry of Reconstruction Committee on Adult Education*. Cd. 321. 1s. 9d. net.



## CHAPTER VII

### IN THE OVERSEAS DOMINIONS

It was an adventure within an adventure which established the movement in the Overseas Dominions, and particularly in Australia and New Zealand.

The idea of adult education as the development of the being and powers of man, in and through the fusion of labour and scholarship, came as a recreating force to these powerful though young communities. They indeed generated it themselves. Their experience had convinced them that education, if not an end in itself, is a permanent factor in all healthy individual and social life, and is a deeper thing than training for livelihood or even for direct social and political purpose.

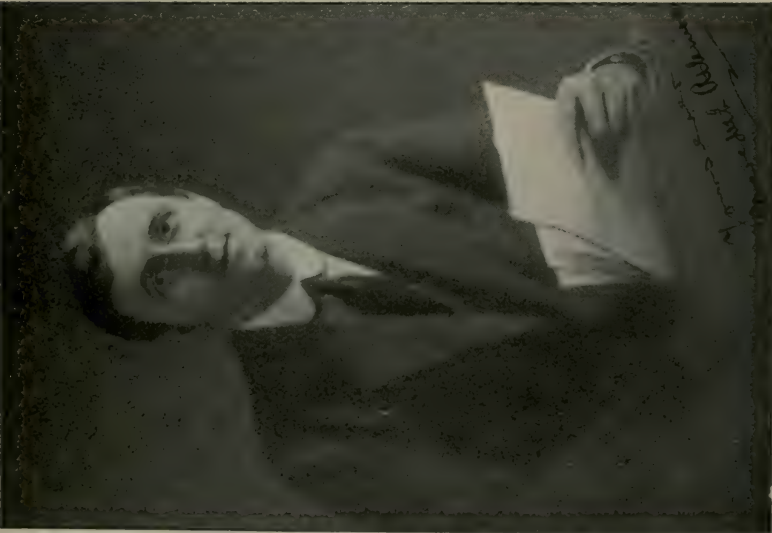
Accordingly their attitude to those who came to tell them of the alliance which existed between the organisations of labour and of scholarship in England was one of confident welcome.

This attitude was after all merely another instance of the readiness with which in educational matters both Universities and Departments of Public Instruction habitually receive with open mind the ideas stirring not only in the New World but in the Old. It is strikingly exemplified for our purpose in the proceedings which culminated in the passing of the University Amendment Act, New South Wales, 1913. That Act contained a clause making provision for the establishment of 'Evening Tutorial Classes' for working people. The speech of the Minister (Mr. Carmichael) clearly reveals the origin of the idea :

It is made incumbent on the University that it should carry out Evening Tutorial Classes in certain subjects for the benefit of labouring men. I know that in regard to the University of London such classes have been taken advantage of by different members of



DAVID STEWART,  
*Pioneer Secretary in Australia.*



PROFESSOR MEREDITH ATKINSON,  
*Pioneer Tutor in Australia.*





society, such as men on the lower rung of commerce, and more especially by leaders of Trade Unions, and Trade Organisations. I can see no better answer to those who constantly say that the leaders of Trade Unions and Trade Organisations are uneducated and unable to grapple with the big problems in which they have shown themselves interested, than to say we will give these men the opportunity to attend University Tutorial Classes so as to get into touch with those higher studies which cannot but be of advantage to them.

At the same time, owing to the enthusiastic advocacy of David Stewart, a delegate of the Amalgamated Carpenters' and Joiners' Society, the Sydney Trades and Labour Council unanimously passed a resolution authorising steps to be taken to form a Workers' Educational Association.

Whilst this was happening in Sydney, a Congress of Universities of the Empire was arranged in London, and both the Universities of Sydney and Melbourne requested that University Tutorial Classes should be one of the questions considered. One of the representatives of the University of Melbourne, Dr. J. W. Barrett, was so inspired by all that was said and done there, that he made it possible for the University of Melbourne to ask me to go to Australia in order to explain, propagate, and establish the movement. There were three things in English life which Dr. Barrett said impressed him more than all else—the 'Round Table,' the Garden City Movement, and the Workers' Educational Association. The invitation was afterwards participated in by the other Universities of the Commonwealth at Sydney, Adelaide, Hobart, Brisbane, and Perth.

I was enabled to accept the invitation without difficulty, because the long strain of ten years' work had rendered a change necessary, and, by the kind offices of some influential friends and workers in the movement, a donation was made to the Association to cover the extra expenditure which my absence would involve. Thus it was that, sped on our way by the enthusiastic good wishes of many W.E.A. friends, my wife and I set sail for Australia on June 6, 1913, to carry out what now seems to us one of the most effective pieces of work in our lives.

It was a great adventure ; not well prepared for, as it seems now, but we had been able to meet some representative

Australians in London who had carefully explained to us the prevalent conditions there. So far as introductions were concerned we lacked nothing, whether of an official or private nature, but, with the exception of arrangements which had been made in Sydney and in Melbourne, it was left to us to make our own way after our arrival. We had been warned that Australia would not listen to an educational message couched in spiritual terms, that all she was concerned with was 'getting on' and making more money. This, however, only made the prospect of our work more pleasing to us, for we were full of the W.E.A. belief that every human soul, under normal circumstances, will listen to the larger educational message. In the result it became quite clear, as we have already said, that Australia did want to hear all that we could tell her about education for the development of life, and was eager to translate it into practice.

I can only call to mind one exception to this general eagerness, an exception due to my own excess of enthusiasm. Our boat had hardly docked at Fremantle when I was addressing the Triennial Labour Conference of Western Australia, as the bearer of fraternal greetings from a large number of the most important Trade Unions in England. The Conference was glad to receive the greetings, but I discovered afterwards that I was regarded as another globe-trotter with a 'gold brick for sale.' Not much harm was done, however, because there were at the Conference old Tutorial Class students from England, notably Mr. and Mrs. Foxcroft from Blackburn. They set to work steadily with Professor Shann, who had known the W.E.A. in England, and on our return, both at the Trades Hall and at the University, we were accorded a real welcome. At the same time it seemed obvious that the Goldfields were not anxious for us to visit them, and, on our arrival at Kalgoorlie, we found that no meeting had been arranged for us. However, in the two days at our disposal we held a number of informal meetings, and my wife aroused so much enthusiasm amongst the women that they came in great groups to see her off, almost covering her with flowers.

In every Australian city which we visited we received cordial welcome from all sorts of people. We met the Premier and the Leader of the Opposition of every State, and were



shown all that we could possibly find time to see, not only of institutions but of scenery. But of course our two particular resorts were the Trades Hall and the University, each of which was lavish in welcome and hospitality. Perhaps our greatest pleasure lay in visiting the schools and colleges, and in talking to the children and undergraduates. They always welcomed us very heartily and, when our visit was held to be the occasion of a half-holiday, the cheers exceeded any other cheers that have ever been accorded to remarks of mine. In almost every place we met old W.E.A. people from England, and the joy of that was inexpressible. There were enough of them in Melbourne to join in making a presentation of books, and of an Australian token to my wife and myself. There is no space, nor indeed is my purpose here, to speak of the many interesting aspects and problems of Australian life. That must find a place elsewhere.

At Melbourne, Dr. Leach and Dr. Barrett had arranged a full programme for us. It was there that it became clear to us that our mission was bound to be successful, so lively was the interest evinced, and so strongly expressed was the determination to organise and to develop the extra-mural work of the University; it is the second oldest University in Australia, founded in 1854 by the enthusiasm of Hugh Childers at the age of twenty-three.

I was privileged to take some part in making suggestions for the reorganisation of the University in regard to its extra-mural work. The W.E.A. of Victoria was established and Tutorial Classes were formed. One class of particular interest consisted almost entirely of secretaries of State Trade Unions.

But it was at Sydney, in connection with the oldest Australian University, that we were able to carry out our most complete piece of work, since before we left for Canada we were authorised to cable to Professor Zimmern asking him to approach Mr. Meredith Atkinson,<sup>1</sup> at that time teaching under the Tutorial Classes Joint Committee of the University

<sup>1</sup> In 1918 Mr. Atkinson, after four years' untiring work in Sydney, was appointed Professor of Economics in the University of Melbourne and Director of University Tutorial Classes in Victoria. Mr. G. V. Portus, M.A., the first Rhodes Scholar from Sydney, was appointed his successor, with Mr. F. A. Bland, M.A., as Assistant Director.



of Durham, with the definite offer of the post of Director of Tutorial Classes in New South Wales.

Early in 1914 this pioneer tutor landed in Sydney and assumed the chief responsibility for the development of the W.E.A., not only in New South Wales but in all Australia.

This could not have happened had it not been for the enthusiasm of the Government, especially of the Minister for Education (Mr. Carmichael), and the Permanent Secretary (Mr. Peter Board), resulting in an initial grant to the University of £1,000, since increased to £5,000 per annum. We organised an enthusiastic Tutorial Class in Sydney which determined to meet throughout the summer months under the temporary guidance of R. F. Irvine, Professor of Economics in the University.

Before we left Sydney for the last time the New South Wales W.E.A. drafted a Constitution embodying the essential characteristics of the English movement, which was approved at a representative gathering in the Trades Hall, over which I was asked to preside. The event is memorable for me, since it was, strangely enough, the first occasion upon which I had taken the chair at a W.E.A. meeting of any kind or degree.

We had only ten days in Brisbane, but again our mission won complete approval. It was there that the first Tutorial Class student to sign the pledge of attendance for three years was Mrs. Emma Miller, aged 73, well known throughout Australia for her energetic advocacy of progressive measures; she has since passed away. The W.E.A. as we organised it declined somewhat, but not before its power and value were demonstrated, leading to the foundation by the Government of the first W.E.A. Institute or College in Australia. It is near the industrial part of the city and comprises rooms for classes as well as an adequate library; it was opened on October 14, 1916, by the Minister for Education (Mr. Hardacre). The Government grant to the University of £1,300 a year has enabled it to appoint two tutors, one in Economics and one in Industrial History.

In Adelaide we were delighted to find that, owing to the Oxford Report on Working-Class Education, introduced there by Mr. Temple a few years before, such keenness had been generated amongst the Labour people of the State who were





MRS. ALBERT MANSBRIDGE.

*After a Drawing by WILLIAM ROTHENSTEIN, December 1917.*



then in power, and who had already appointed a Royal Commission on Education, that they looked at the University with entirely new and sympathetic eyes, and as a direct result the Government made a grant of £100,000. Although in Adelaide the reception of our message was in many ways more cordial than elsewhere, events have moved more slowly there, but happily a Director of Tutorial Classes has now been appointed in the person of Herbert Heaton, an old W.E.A. member, whom we first met at a Summer School Meeting for which he held a Co-operative scholarship. He was inspired by the Summer School to strive for University education; he distinguished himself at Leeds, and was appointed to teach Tutorial Classes under Birmingham University before he went out to Hobart for the same purpose.

When we reached Hobart it was clear to us that a new University movement was in being, as the result of the enthusiasm of graduates who, at that time, were holding influential positions in the State. We spent only four days there, but our efforts were so well seconded by the Trades Council, the aforesaid graduates, and the Premier, Mr. Solomon, who recommended Parliament to grant £500 for a tutor, that we completed our task.

The record of this adventure could easily degenerate into a mere catalogue—so many things happened, so many things were done. During our five months' stay in Australia we had only two days of complete rest. They were happily spent in the Blue Mountains with the relatives of Captain A. E. Bland, one of the most devoted of W.E.A. tutors, who gave his life for his country on the Somme in the advance of July 1, 1916.

There was no time to go into the back blocks, much less to the borders of the 'Land of the Never Never.' We saw no great sheep runs and had no chance of meeting the shearers, although, as far as possible, we tried to ascertain something of the condition of their lives and work, by discussion with their representatives in the cities. We did, however, visit, in addition to the capital cities, the towns of Wollongong, Broken Hill, and Newcastle in New South Wales; Ballarat, Bendigo, Castlemaine, and Geelong in Victoria; and Kalgoorlie, Albany, and Boulder City in Western Australia. In each

place we addressed meetings, and in several of them we were accorded a mayoral reception. In most of these towns Tutorial Classes are now at work.

My wife spoke on thirty separate occasions, and I gave in all a hundred and eight lectures and addresses. In this way we were able to present the W.E.A. ideals and method to all types of Australian people. The great difficulty was in turning from one type of mind to another, even though we had a fundamental message. For example, it was not easy to leave the railway arches after talking to the Labour extremists and to visit directly the Sydney Club afterwards; nor was it easy to turn from a meeting of the Employers' Federation, as in Melbourne, and proceed as rapidly as possible to a meeting in the Trades Hall. The real difficulty, however, lay in the fact that we not only had to talk but to organise, and that, as it turned out, was too heavy a tax upon our strength. Still, we did our best, and can look back happily to the beginning of what is now an all-Australian movement.

There are University Tutorial Classes in every State.<sup>1</sup> The various Governments contribute over £10,000 per annum between them, and a recent estimate places the student members of the W.E.A. at three thousand. A Federal Council has been formed which publishes an Australian 'Highway,' arranges for the publication of books, and intends to make plans for bringing tutors and lecturers out from England. Already England has profited greatly by the visits of men and women tutors from both Australia and New Zealand.

The lengthening out of the work in Australia made it impossible for us to attempt serious work in New Zealand, but we visited Auckland and had talks with some W.E.A. enthusiasts there. Thus a little was done towards preparing the way for the mission of Meredith Atkinson and David Stewart in the following year. This visit was so successful that the four University cities of New Zealand are each the

<sup>1</sup> In New South Wales alone there were thirty-seven full Tutorial Classes in existence during the year ending December 31, 1919. Eleven of these were held in Sydney and twenty-six were scattered throughout the State. Eighty organisations were affiliated to the W.E.A., including thirty-eight Trade Unions, the University (which subscribed £150), and the Department of Public Instruction. Four State Conferences had been held on problems of Education, Trade Unionism, and Co-operation.







UNIVERSITY TUTORIAL CLASS AT TORONTO, 1919.

*Tutor:* W. L. Grant, Principal of Upper Canada College.

*Subject:* Political History.

centre of independent associations,<sup>1</sup> which out of their own resources are bringing forth new proof that the fundamental ideas of the Association are true in all places and for all time. For it does not seem an exaggeration to say that in the short space of six years, of which five were disturbed by war, both Australia and New Zealand have developed a force which is of vital and immediate importance.

The Universities, which in spite of their excellent work were tending to become remote from the common life, are now better understood by the people. In some parts of Australia and New Zealand they have, as a result, gained new power and struck their roots deeper. Not only working men and women but the rising race of scholars, encouraged by those who have borne the burden and heat of the day, are finding in the University Tutorial Class system a means whereby they may learn things new and old, and as a result may help to build life under the Southern Cross on the large and splendid lines which are expected of them by the whole world.<sup>2</sup>

<sup>1</sup> On December 31, 1918, there were four independent W.E.A.'s in New Zealand with a Dominion Council for them all; 138 bodies were affiliated, of which 106 were Trade Unions. The University contributes £100 in respect of each of the four colleges. The number of full Tutorial Classes was twenty-seven. The University allocated £775 to Joint Committees for their work. A direct State grant of £500 per annum to each college has since been promised. Canterbury W.E.A. reports the formation of a Lucerne-growing Association, due to a W.E.A. Conference, which takes pride in having practically founded a new industry in Canterbury.

<sup>2</sup> On our journey through Canada we established classes at Montreal and Toronto, but merely to serve as object lessons. Both war and illness prevented our acceptance of the proposals made to us to return and establish the movement, but it is now developing well, and it is a pleasure to be able to include the photograph of a flourishing class at Toronto.

In South Africa there are W.E.A.'s at Durban (carrying on work also in six outlying villages) and Johannesburg. Proposals were also made to us to visit the Dominion, but no opportunity has yet arisen. The work in Durban was stimulated by the report of Mr. Narbeth (Principal of the Technical College) on the W.E.A. at home ('Some Notes on Technical Education,' a report presented to the Council of the Durban Technical Institute, 1915), and in Johannesburg by Mr. R. J. Hall on his arrival from New Zealand.

## CHAPTER VIII

### THE W.E.A. SPIRIT

THE power of the movement lay in the fact that it inspired its members, and those with whom it came into contact, to give of their highest and best, because to do so was the way of life. As we have seen over and over again, the objects to which knowledge and training were to be applied were never thought about. Education was recognised as a force enabling man to develop to the furthest limits of his powers. All the time the Association was confident that every true cause, particularly that of justice for the labourer, would benefit in proportion to the increase in the number of those who had made themselves into finer and purer men.

It was because of this conception that men, who were flatly opposed to one another in the affairs of life, found a unity altogether delightful in the W.E.A. gathering, class or ramble. There was no test, implicit or otherwise, for admission, all that was asked being a willingness on the part of all to hear and to consider, with real respect, the arguments and facts brought forth to commend a case, even though it might appear to them to be wrong or defective. Tolerance only comes into existence when a man knows he is right and is determined to hold his ground, and is of a mind to rejoice in the fellowship of those who would like to see him move on or off.

In actual practice there is little clashing in a group of students, for the class is not intended for the passing of resolutions, but is rather a means whereby all relevant facts and arguments may be looked at and turned over. The opportunity, indeed the necessity, for action comes in some other place, when the class is over. Co-workers in a class may be furious antagonists in the forum, but the association



makes possible enduring friendship arising out of mutual respect, and a perception that all sorts of ideas and types are necessary to make a world. The vital principle on which the movement depends is the full and free expression of the minds of working men and women, based on their own experience.

The genesis of the Association was due to the lamentable situation which had arisen in English life owing to the neglect of education for the people. In this matter the ordinary working man was disinherited; but because there are so many working men and women it was easy to secure their full representation without making a class appeal. There never was a single occasion upon which the ideals expressed were not in harmony with the spirit of labour. The scholars and others who joined the movement were as men watching all the time how they could assist and forward the wishes of the majority. Not that they for one moment abrogated their rights in a democratic body, but always there was the manifest desire to perceive and understand the spirit and needs of those engaged in manual toil. Yet because scholarship is a vital force the fusion of it with the experience of life and labour produced a greater wisdom than could have been the case if scholars had been absent or quiescent. That is indeed the whole case for the Association.

It is impossible to express in words the spirit of a movement, it is almost always undesirable to try, but there are times when the risk must be run, because it is wise to recall the fundamental principles of its existence. In any case some definition is inevitable if others, especially friends in distant countries, are to be given any aid in their attempt to understand the reason and method of it all. The glow, and even glory, that hung over the early meetings has vanished and cannot be recaptured, but their memories abide in the minds of many now scattered afar, and a brief record of some of them may happily recall them, and at the same time give at least an idea to those who come later.

After the Tutorial Classes Conference in Oxford a crowd of members packed themselves into the large room of a Boarding House. They covered the floor and sat on the window ledges. Their discussion ceased long after midnight. It was the complete expression of a Democratic Association; England

was there in miniature. It just happened so: there was no arrangement. Working men and women occupied the chairs and most of the floor, but a

‘ chiel amang them takin’ notes ’

observed also a Banker, a Permanent Secretary of a Government Department, Fellows of both Oxford and Cambridge Colleges, a future Peer, a Bishop, a Training College Tutor, and Schoolmasters and Mistresses from Secondary and Elementary Schools.

That was the kind of gathering which the Association promoted in greater or less degree wherever it worked. No one who took part in them will ever forget the joyous times at Park Hall, the Co-operative Holiday Association Centre at Hayfield, where business was done and fun almost ran riot, in gatherings made up of those who never met on ordinary days in conventional English life. But on no occasion was the magnetic power of the idea of education, as expressed by the W.E.A., more clearly revealed than at the gathering which was held in April 1913 in the Maurice Hall of the Working Men’s College. There, speaker after speaker paid eloquent testimony, based on their own peculiar experiences, to the spiritual unity of the movement.<sup>1</sup>

Here, my Lord Chancellor [quoted Sir Charles Lucas], we do ‘ As adversaries do in law—strive mightily but eat and drink as friends.’

While Mr. J. R. Clynes, full of anxiety concerning the whole problem of popular education, said—

We are faced with this fact: that some six million working-class children are in our primary schools: that about half a million of those children leave the primary schools every year, and that only a comparatively small number of the half-million can find their way to secondary schools or to evening schools. . . . The hundreds of thousands of working-class children who go from the school to

<sup>1</sup> List of those who spoke:—

Sir Robert Morant, sometime Secretary of the Board of Education; Mrs. Eleanor Barton, President of the Women’s Co-operative Guild; Viscount Haldane, Lord High Chancellor; Mr. George Goodenough, miner; the Master of Balliol; Bishop Gore; Mr. George Alcock, Trustee of the N.U.R.; Mr. W. A. Appleton, Trade Union Official; Mr. J. R. Clynes, Labour politician; and Sir Charles Lucas, Principal of the Working Men’s College.



the mill and the factory and the workshop must be catered for if we are to furnish to ourselves a self-respecting, educated nation. A nation is not educated because we have places like Oxford and Cambridge, for only a small minority of the more fortunate of the men and women of the country can find their way there. Imagine what it would be if we could so instil the spirit of education into the masses of our people as to cause a good portion of 120,000 men to take a journey from Sunderland to the Crystal Palace in the interests and in the name of the great cause of education! How can we take the tiniest step towards that great hope and ideal? I can only think of one way, and it is that our Ministers of State who have the handling, not only of the subject-matter but of the money that matters . . . should import into this educational work when speaking to the people upon the platform of the country, if not all, then some part of that magnificent spirit and soul of education manifested . . . by the founder of the movement. That I am certain would go a long way. Meanwhile, the Workers' Educational Association provides facilities for thousands of workers, men and women alike, who would lack any fitting educational opportunity in the absence of an organisation like this.

The spirit of the movement caused men from overseas to marvel. For themselves they found welcome, and they never ceased to wonder at an inclusiveness they had never witnessed elsewhere. They came from France, Denmark, Germany, Japan, the United States, Chili, and Belgium. It is interesting to remember that some of those who came from Germany longed with a passionate intensity to translate its spirit into their own land, but their efforts were fruitless. A class was actually formed at Cologne, but both University and Social Democratic Party condemned it. Anton Sandhagen, a scholar of Jena, wrote on the fly-leaf of a treatise on the Education of Working People in England:—

To the inspirator of the W.E.A., which spirit to translate to the German people is part of the object of this book. November 9, 1911.

Following in his steps, Dr. Wernher Picht came and accompanied with the members of the W.E.A. for some time on every possible occasion. He wrote of it:

With the members of the Association one gains a striking experience: the Movement has become such an ingredient of their life, that one cannot meet with them without the W.E.A. passing



before one's eyes. They look upon themselves as members of a brotherhood which is fighting the most important fight that has to be waged to-day; the fight for the spiritual life of the masses. All are friends for the sake of the common cause.

The W.E.A. [he exclaimed] is to be understood as a spiritual Movement, since only a spiritual Movement can solve the problem of the education of the working man, which means bringing the working man to education just as much as bringing education to the working man.

He took as an example of this spiritual power the Annual Meeting at Manchester in 1911, when three thousand men and women gathered together, and in the presence of the representatives of a hundred and twenty organisations of Labour, and of leaders in all departments of the life of the city and the towns around, evinced such enthusiasm for education as to give the meeting all the qualities of a spiritual revival.

In the first years of the Movement, Camille Riboud investigated it as a subject for his doctorate thesis at Paris, and he has remained a convinced friend and supporter of the movement ever since. He wrote of it in restrained and judicial language :

The ideas of the W.E.A. on the education of the workers resemble those of the Christian Socialists. It maintains that they, like others, have a right to something more than 'bread and butter' technical education. They should be prepared not only for a trade but for life—life, not livelihood merely. What they need first of all is that education in citizenship, without which the political and economic power which they wield is only a danger, both for society and for themselves. But it is quite clear that this education cannot be imposed upon them,—before giving them the means of education, you must give them the desire for it. An educational propaganda must be carried on that will reach the whole of the working classes, and it is for this work that the W.E.A. recruits and bands together men and women of good will of every rank of society, of every party and of every creed.

The W.E.A. consists, as we have said, of individual members and of affiliated societies. Through these societies it is a vast federation of working-class bodies and can therefore claim truly to represent working-class opinion, for its democratic character cannot be disputed. On the other hand, its individual members are largely highly educated men and women of University training.

Each of these elements has part in the direction of the Association and sends delegates to the Council and the Executive Committee, and through these representatives is achieved the meeting and co-operation of those who are to teach with those who are to be taught.

It is perhaps too soon (1910) to form an opinion as to the influence of the tutorial classes, but the Rochdale class, which was the earliest, may perhaps give some indications. Most of the students are 'advanced': almost all hold Radical views and many are Socialists—it would be surprising if it were otherwise. There has been no change in their political convictions: one would have expected none, and conversions, had there been any, would have been of little interest. But those who were Socialists seemed to know better why they were so, and similarly with those who were not. All those with whom I was able to talk expressed regret for the too cut-and-dried opinions and the too little informed talk which they had formerly permitted themselves. They have gained some exact knowledge, have learnt the importance of some great facts, have been accustomed to discuss theoretic questions and to realise, as one of them said, 'that there are two sides to every question—even Tariff Reform.'

Visitors from the Dominions were frequent during the summer months when the students foregathered at Oxford and Cambridge, and one of them, Professor Kylie, who has since laid down his life in the war, wrote in the *University Magazine*, published at Montreal, that—

One of the most inspiring things in the modern educational world is a summer session such as the Association holds at Oxford. The whole proceeding, like so much that is best in England, is marked by a simplicity and good feeling, and a complete absence of anything resembling condescension or servility. To anyone who has seen groups of working men and women reading in a college garden or has heard their songs across the quadrangle, it is obvious that the Association has found the deep harmonies in the national life, and that by housing and assisting them the colleges, founded for national objects out of the nation's wealth, are discharging a real obligation.

Indeed, during these summer gatherings many people come in to swell the number of workers in the movement. The 'W.E.A. Spirit,' as it was called, manifested itself there and proved extraordinarily magnetic. It was during a summer



meeting that Sir William Anson, then Warden of All Souls, became a supporter of the movement. Throughout the remainder of his life he gave generous support to the work in both word and deed, and was a source of great strength in all the negotiations with the University of Oxford. Those who knew him only as the dignified constitutional lawyer, or as Parliamentary Secretary to the Board of Education, would have been interested to see the emphatic way in which, after an enthusiastic meeting, he kept time in singing 'Auld Lang Syne' in a circle of energetic working men and women, joined hand to hand.

On another occasion the concourse of students attended at the Sheldonian and cheered a tutor friend, acting as Dean of his College so mightily, that from sheer surprise he stumbled over his Latin introduction of students to the Vice-Chancellor; and no cheers of undergraduates could possibly have been more spontaneous and sudden than those to which over a hundred working men gave vent when Canon Barnett received the degree of D.C.L. He valued those cheers, and he had earned them thoroughly.

It was at times embarrassing when, as was their custom, the students attended Church in a body; for some, unable to restrain their manifest approval, expressed it in sounds unfamiliar in St. Mary's; on the other hand, disapproval, when they felt it, reduced them to silence if only for the time being. There have, perhaps, never been keener discussions than those on deep and grave subjects which followed the preaching of sermons in the University Church. Immediately on the conclusion of the service, a great part of the congregation moved to the hall of Balliol College, which was always at the disposal of the students, and there discussed with fixity of purpose and unity of spirit, even if with a marked divergence of opinion, on more than one occasion until the hour of midnight. There are many, however, who would look back to the quieter occasions at Cambridge as more in harmony with their mood than the more forceful and passionate gatherings at the sister University. The lecture-room in the great court of Trinity, which it is customary for the College to allot to the W.E.A. each summer, is almost a Mecca in the life of many working men and women to-day.





A DISCUSSION WITH THE LATE CANON SCOTT HOLLAND IN THE FELLOWS' GARDEN AT BALLIOL COLLEGE, OXFORD.



## CHAPTER IX

### THE WAR AND AFTER

IN August 1914 the Association was in flood-tide. The previous winter session had closed with 3,234 students in Tutorial Classes. The confidence of Labour was expressed by the affiliation of Trade Union bodies, while no University or University College in England and Wales stood apart from its work.

At the very moment when the fatal news of the outbreak of war became public property, the Summer Schools at Oxford, Cambridge, and Bangor were in full session. The Government took immediate toll of tutors, calling them to London for the purpose of reporting on, and devising schemes to meet the economic necessities of the crisis. Both tutors and students were called to the colours, but many continued to the end of the brief sessions, esteeming this their immediate duty.

Over 200 Tutorial Classes were planned for the winter of 1914-15, but in the event only 152 met, and these were in many cases able to complete their courses without financial disaster by reason of the generous attitude which persisted throughout the period of the war of the Board of Education.

In common with many other National bodies the Association suspended the Annual Meetings which had been arranged to take place during October in Birmingham.

The movement suffered from the shock in its very foundations, but no sooner had tutors, students, and organisers left their work to share in the compelling task than their places were filled by those whose occupation, age, or sex kept them in the familiar though troubled ways. Thus the structure was maintained intact, giving both opportunity and shelter to those who were in a position to deal with the new problems as they arose.



The material resources of the movement were, as they had always been, just sufficient to meet the daily needs. Thus it was unable to make large and direct contributions of effort to the development of educational work, whether of an instructional or recreative kind, in the army itself; moreover, as is well known, the Y.M.C.A., which possessed a vast equipment and a traditional facility for raising money, readily seized the educational opportunity which was opened out. But the home task largely fell to the Association (not forgetting other well-established bodies), and it provided independently or in combination with Universities innumerable opportunities in all parts of England and Wales for the study of European History and the problems suggested by the war. Several of its prominent workers united to produce a volume of essays on 'The War and Democracy,'<sup>1</sup> which achieved a large circulation and wielded a widespread influence both at home and in the Dominions.

In this and other ways the Association bore its part in satisfying the hunger for knowledge which was stimulated, to so remarkable a degree, by the strange and terrible happenings of the time. Before many months of 1915 had passed it had adapted itself to the new conditions, and, as we have already seen, in the October of that year it revised its Constitution and entered upon a new period.

The official 'Roll of Honour' drew out steadily in those days. Now a tutor, then a student, but always it was one who, humanly speaking, could ill be spared from the greater war with ignorance and disease.

Long before the war my wife had established a Comradeship fund. This now became a War Time institution, and was administered by Mrs. Furniss, who in common with devoted colleagues made herself responsible for keeping in touch with the men at the Front. My own last act as secretary was to plan and compose a Christmas message, which proved in the event to have strengthened the bonds between the movement at home and the members abroad.

Gradually stories began to filter home of students striving to carry on their work by organising classes behind the lines. The weariness of long waiting in the trenches was, so we heard,

<sup>1</sup> *The War and Democracy*. Macmillan. 2s. 6d.

alleviated at times by debate and discussion on the old lines, and steadily the demand for books such as scholars love began to make itself felt.

Then later the Y.M.C.A. and the Army Education services commenced their extensive work, and it was generally admitted that the method and principles of the W.E.A. largely influenced the details of their schemes and made success possible. The British, Australian, and New Zealand armies early called into consultation those who had gained experience in the W.E.A. For my part I count my experience in helping to train Education Officers for the Australian Army at Cambridge, and for the British Army at Oxford, in 1918 and 1919, as among the most fortunate and interesting of my life. At the least it gave me opportunity to put into practice my theories concerning the education of adults, instead of merely urging others to do so. In such work I found some compensation for the gap in my life occasioned by the loss of my office.

As the struggle wore on public opinion on educational matters increased in force. The plight of the child worker called forth not merely sympathy but indignation. Early in 1915 the Association, after having published a striking pamphlet on the Employment of School Children, was gradually forced to translate the ideal of the 'Highway' into terms of possible legislation. With the advent of Mr. H. A. L. Fisher to the Board came the prospect of a new Act. In common with other bodies the W.E.A. prepared a programme dealing with education from the Primary School to the University. This, coupled with the determined propaganda which had always been a characteristic of the movement, helped not merely to clear the way for the passage of the Bill, but brought it much nearer than any previous Bill to the working class ideal.

At the moment England has gone as far as it is likely to go in general educational reform, but even so the Fisher Act is still largely inoperative, and public opinion, leading to public sacrifice, must be persistently and clearly expressed, if the system of Day Continuation Schools, for which provision was made, is to become effective. The W.E.A. can render incalculable service to the community if it concentrates upon this work without impairing the clear expression of its forward ideas.



At the present time problems relative to Oxford and Cambridge as well as to Free Places and Scholarships in Secondary Schools are under the consideration, the former of a Royal Commission and the latter of a Departmental Committee. The W.E.A. must prepare deliberate and well-considered evidence to present to both bodies, for the construction of the 'Highway' will either be speeded or retarded as the result of their reports.

In the early days of its work the Association deliberately undertook the more difficult task of creating a desire for education in the certainty, that once people were interested they would strive to bring about reform in the national system through the various bodies to which they belonged. It is always difficult for a purely educational body to voice reform as well as to create students. Yet the logic of events has forced both tasks upon the Association. The original task is, however, fundamental, for the inherent power of the 'Programme' existed solely in the fact that it had been drafted for the greater part by men and women who had subjected themselves to the severe discipline of Tutorial Class study. Directly the W.E.A. fails to arouse an enthusiastic desire for study amongst working men and women of varying capacity, as well as to construct facilities for such study, its influence will fall to the level of the numerical total of its adherents.

The tone and temper of the movement should be of such a nature as to repel any approaches which are made by those who would ask of it aid for any other purpose than education in the most fundamental sense of the term.

In an Association constructed as this has been, there is an ever-present need for that loyalty which is in itself the essential condition of unity. It is indeed all the more insistent because the Association is open to all, and each component part is allowed to express its own will and to act in its own way so far as purely educational matters are concerned.

There may be at any time an influx of those who wish to see the W.E.A. used for immediate economic, social or even political purposes, or who believe in it as a 'Class' instead of as a democratic institution. Such may display no intentional disloyalty, but their inclinations may cause a drift in a branch or a district or in the National Body towards the rocks, or at least towards perilous and unhappy seas. The Association,



if it would avoid these dangers, must be powerful and confident in its insistence on its own inclusive gospel of education, against which no man, unless unduly prejudiced, can hold out for long. There is no other way to maintain its integrity. The words of Constitutions, of Standing Orders, of Resolutions, of Manifestoes can be altered in value even when not capable of varying interpretations by unduly emphasising any one of the things they allow or indeed encourage. The future of the W.E.A. depends upon its devotion to the idea of education as a force set in motion by all for the good of all, in which all may participate. Its own peculiar task is to see that the translation of the ideal into the common life is made by working men and women, who compose by far the greater part of the nation, not indeed acting alone, but rather in co-operation with all those others, especially scholars, who are engaged in occupations necessary to the welfare of man.

On no account, no matter how great the temptation, even though life itself seems to be at stake, should it bow the knee in the house of those who promise support and power, undreamed of, if it will chant their songs and utter their dogmas.

The texture of life is shot with gain and loss, with joy and sorrow. It is beyond human powers to estimate the proportions, but in the stormy times ahead the life of the W.E.A. will gain immeasurably if, whether in seeming defeat or overwhelming victory, it keeps to the course leading straight to the highest ideal of an educated people; the course perceived and followed unswervingly in the old days when it was yet sustained by those to whom this book is dedicated, who lie

In some corner of a foreign field  
That is for ever England.

After sixteen years the future still promises adventure throughout the whole world. Because man desires education and lives by it, the adventure must be pursued, sustained by the strong bodies, enlightened minds, and pure spirits of men. Adult education is a secular gospel. In itself it does not transcend human limitations, but by its insistence on the development of the legitimate faculties of man, a development secured by concentration on things that are in themselves pure and true, it draws men to the boundaries of human power,

until they face the Unknown. The insistence upon this gospel in human life was never more necessary than now. After much endurance and patience on the part of labour a shorter working day is about to be secured ; therein lies new opportunity. It may well be that the right use of sufficient leisure will enable men and women to realise once again their personalities by the exercise of their inborn gifts. Hitherto economic need and bad organisation have forced men away from the work they are fitted to do. In the future it may not be so. In the hours not spent in the mine or in the factory the workman will follow his own bent, read his books or even write them, exercise himself in music and song, and discover the secrets of life.

# APPENDICES

## APPENDIX I

### STATISTICS OF W.E.A. DEVELOPMENT IN THE BRITISH ISLES

Year.	Branches.	Affiliated Bodies.	Individual Members.
1904	..	12	135
1905	8	100	1,000
1906	13	283	2,612
1907	47	622	4,343
1908	50	925	5,257
1909	54	1,124	5,484
1910	71	1,389	5,801
1911	86	1,541	5,345
1912	110	1,879	7,011
1913 <sup>1</sup>	158	2,164	8,723
1914 <sup>2</sup>	179	2,555	11,430
1915 <sup>3</sup>	173	2,409	11,083
1916	170	2,150	10,667
1917	191	2,336	10,750
1918	209	2,709	14,697
1919	219	2,526	17,136

<sup>1</sup> In 1913 the W.E.A. was established in the six States of the Australian Commonwealth.

<sup>2</sup> In 1914 the W.E.A. was established in New Zealand and work was commenced in Canada.

<sup>3</sup> In 1915 the W.E.A. was established in South Africa.



# 68 AN ADVENTURE IN WORKING-CLASS EDUCATION

## ANALYSIS OF THE AFFILIATED BODIES IN 1914 AND 1919

Year.	Trade Unions, Councils, and Branches.	Co-operative Committees.	University Bodies.	Adult Schools and Classes.	Local Education Authorities.	Working Men's Clubs.	General.
1915	953	388	15	341	16	175	667
1919	1,075	384	8	199	35	100	677

## UNIVERSITY TUTORIAL CLASS STATISTICS IN ENGLAND AND WALES

Year.	Classes.	Students.
1908-9	8	237
1909-10	39	1,117
1910-11	72	1,829
1911-12	102	2,485
1912-13	117	3,176
1913-14	145	3,234
1914-15	152	3,110
1915-16	121	2,414
1916-17	99	1,996
1917-18	121	2,860
1918-19	152	3,799
1919-20	230	—

## APPENDIX II

A CHAPTER IN THE HISTORY OF VOLUNTARY EDUCATIONAL EFFORT :  
BEING A RECORD OF THE FIRST YEAR'S WORK OF THE ROCH-  
DALE EDUCATIONAL GUILD, A BRANCH OF THE WORKERS'  
EDUCATIONAL ASSOCIATION.

ORIGINATED by the University Extension Committee, the Guild naturally felt that the first plank in its platform must be the continuance and furthering of Extension Work. But the scope of the Guild's activities rapidly developed to a degree scarcely even contemplated by its promoters.

*University Extension Lectures.*—The University Extension work itself fully realised the hopes with which the Guild was set on foot. Of the 500 or so in average attendance throughout the session, *a very large proportion were working people.* Quite 200 stayed behind after each formal lecture to ask questions of the lecturer, and to join in discussing points raised during the evening. The lectures were fortnightly and consisted of two courses of six each; one on 'Six Selected Plays of Shakespeare,' by Mr. J. C. Powys, M.A., and one on 'The Life and Teaching of John Ruskin,' by the Rev. W. Hudson Shaw, M.A.

A working man, in proposing a vote of thanks to Mr. Powys at the close of the last lecture, declared 'The world is bigger for us than it was before.' Mr. Hudson Shaw considers the gathering together of such an audience 'nothing less than a miracle,' and says he has been waiting for that kind of audience for twenty years. It is hoped that the University Extension Lectures will maintain their position in the town as the chief voluntary effort towards the education of workpeople, and that an increasing number of literary and discussion classes will arrange their syllabuses to harmonise with the Extension subjects. The importance of this is manifest.

*Shakespeare and Ruskin Classes.*—For the closer study of Shakespeare and Ruskin classes were held fortnightly, alternately with the lectures, and were attended by between twenty and thirty earnest students. The Chairman of the Education Committee has publicly described this as 'a high form of educational work.'

These classes were arranged by the Education Committee as Evening Classes earning grant from the Board of Education, the attendance at the lectures also counting as attendances at the

class. This was the third session in which this arrangement was made, in imitation of the plan first adopted at Littleborough, near Rochdale, some years ago at the instance of Mr. E. E. Carter, a brother of the Hon. Treasurer of the Guild.

*Other Classes.*—On the Guild's suggestion the Education Committee also conducted other classes, viz., in Elementary and Advanced English, and two classes each in Citizenship and Economics, all attended by satisfactory numbers of students.

A new departure for Rochdale was the organising, again on the Guild's recommendation, of special classes in Elementary Subjects (Composition, Arithmetic, etc.) for adults only, in which men, meeting in different rooms and at different times from the mere juvenile students, might endeavour to acquire the rudiments of knowledge. One of these adult classes, held on two afternoons per week, was for policemen and postmen, and had an average attendance of nearly thirty.

Six lectures on 'The Care of the Horse' were provided, on the suggestion of the Carters' and Lorrymen's Union (conveyed through the Guild), by the Education Committee. They were attended by audiences averaging considerably over a hundred, and almost entirely made up of working carters.

Members of all these classes have enthusiastically testified to the benefit they have received from them, and expressed their hope that the work will be resumed next session.

*Reading Circles.*—Under the influence of the Guild, Reading Circles have been held in various parts of the town on 'Ruskin,' 'Shakespeare,' and 'The Elements of Politics.'

*Pioneer Lectures on English History.*—Members of the Guild have voluntarily drawn up and delivered, in three outlying districts, a course of Six Lectures on English History. These were in response to a desire expressed by some who felt themselves unable to appreciate thoroughly, without a grounding in English History, the Extension Lectures. A similar course will pave the way for next winter's lectures.

*Saturday Evening Lectures.*—Five Saturday Evening Lantern Lectures on Natural History Subjects have been voluntarily given by local gentlemen. The success achieved in this series encourages the Guild to continue this effort to provide cheap popular Saturday evening fixtures at once entertaining and instructive.

*Art Gallery and Museum Work.*—This, the first public work of the Guild, was commenced early last summer. Members of the Field Naturalists' Society collected all through the summer specimens of the flora of the district, which were carefully labelled, classified, and displayed in the Public Museum. Four 'Botanical Talks'



based on these specimens were given on Saturday evenings. Later on four 'Geological Talks' were given on Tuesday evenings to explain the fine collection in the museum. The Head Master of the School of Art has also delivered three 'Talks' on the pictures in the Art Gallery.

All these 'Talks' were attended by large and appreciative audiences, mainly composed of working men.

Similar work is already in hand for the coming summer, when the following programme will be carried out :

May 26.	'Ferns and their Allies' . . . . .	Mr. A. Brierley.
June 16.	'Extinct Plants and their Modern Allies' . . . . .	Mr. W. A. Parker, F.G.S.
June 23.	'Moorland Plants' . . . . .	Mr. H. Rae.
July 14.	'Old-fashioned Garden Flowers' . . . . .	Mr. F. Sharp.
July 28.	'The Hades Hill Barrow' . . . . .	Mr. W. H. Sutcliffe, F.G.S.
Aug. 2.	'Weeds and their Ways' . . . . .	Mr. E. Stenhouse, B.Sc.
Sept. 1.	'Fruits and Seed Dispersion' . . . . .	Mr. H. Boothman.

*A Town's Educational Calendar.*—During last summer a Manuscript Diary was kept at the Free Library, where secretaries and organisers entered their winter fixtures as they were arranged. From this a Town's Educational Calendar was compiled and printed, and circulated among Guild members and others. This will be repeated on a larger scale for next winter.

*Educational Excursions.*—Two parties—numbering respectively 55 and 137—visited matinee performances of Shakespeare's 'Tempest' and 'Cymbeline' in Manchester. A party of 24 visited the Art Museum and University Settlement in Ancoats, Manchester.

*Scholarships.*—The Workers' Educational Association and Cambridge University having offered a Scholarship tenable at the Cambridge Summer Meeting in August 1906, the Guild has added a sum sufficient to cover all expenses and loss of wages. Mr. Gordon Harvey, M.P., has provided a second Scholarship on similar terms, so that at least two students will be enabled to attend the Summer Meeting without incurring any monetary loss whatever.

*Summer Reading Circles.*—Reading and Discussion Classes are meeting this summer in preparation for next winter's Extension Lectures on 'Shakespeare's Historical Plays' and 'Political and Social Problems.' Over fifty students have joined each of these classes. They are free of cost and open to all.

*Free Lectures to Women.*—A course of three Afternoon Lectures to Women on 'The Care of the Home and of Children' will be given this summer in two districts of the town, by ladies competent to deal with the subject.

*Other Work.*—Locally and further afield the Guild has been

able to do other useful work. It was a conference arranged by the Guild which led to the formation of a branch of the Workers' Educational Association at Littleborough. Other branches have acknowledged the example and encouragement afforded by the work done at Rochdale. In the town itself it has supplied speakers and essayists for various societies. It is coming to be recognised as a sort of educational 'Clearing House' for the district.

### APPENDIX III

*The World Association for Adult Education*, founded in 1918 as the direct result of representations made by dwellers overseas, aims at bringing into co-operation, for mutual strengthening and the interchange of information, all the diverse movements and institutions for Adult Education throughout the world. It also places itself unreservedly at the service of countries which are desirous of developing such work. It publishes Quarterly Bulletins which are sent to members, who pay a minimum annual subscription of 6s. or the equivalent, and to supporting bodies which pay a minimum of £2 2s. or the equivalent. On December 21, 1919, its membership was scattered throughout twenty-six countries. *Chairman*: ALBERT MANSBRIDGE. *Hon. Treasurer*: Colonel Lord GORELL, C.B.E., M.C., Director of Education in the British Army. The Central Bureau of Information is at present at 13 John Street, Adelphi, W.C. 2, to which all communications should be addressed.

### APPENDIX IV

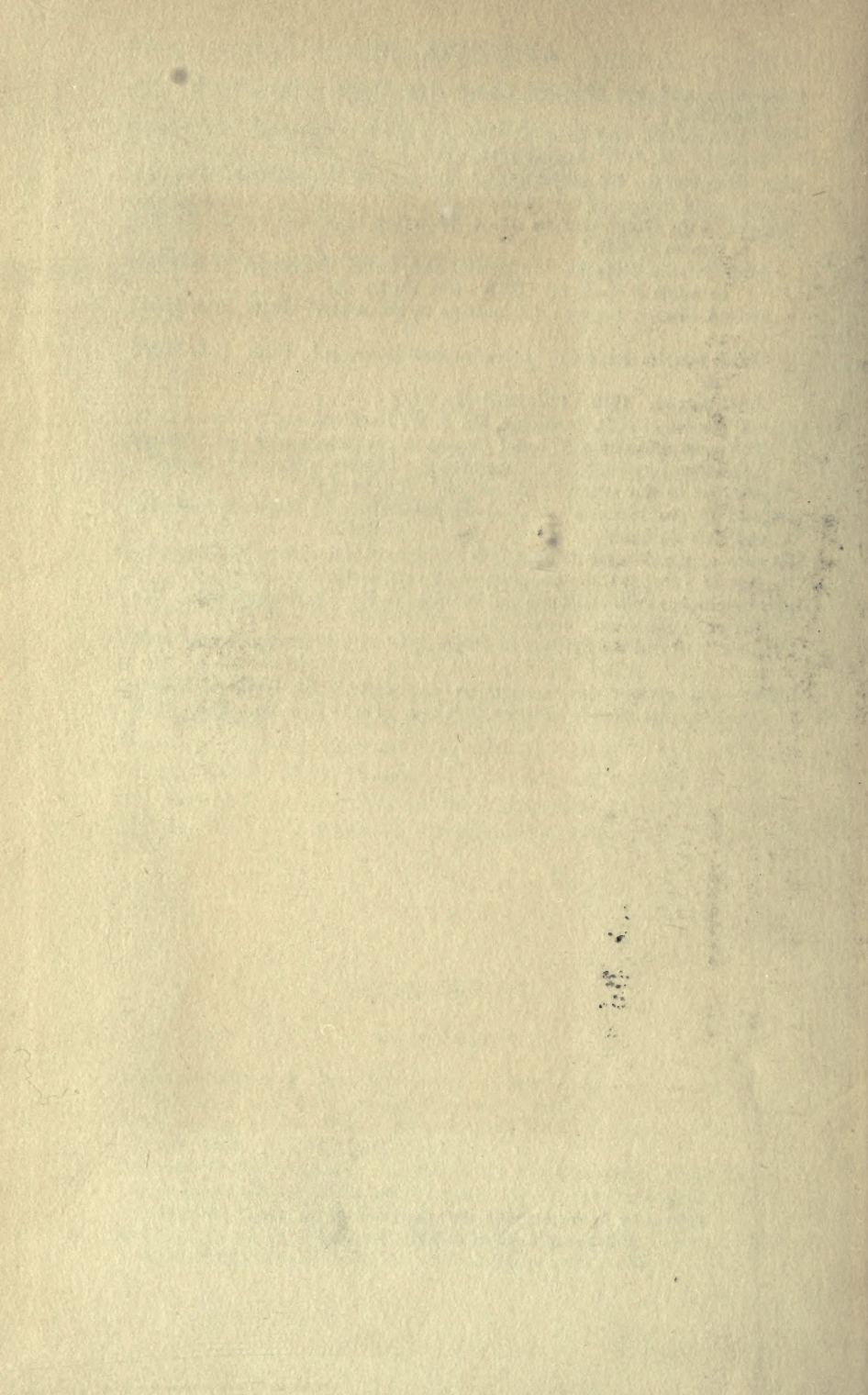
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Educat.H.  
M.

Author Mansbridge, Albert

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