

The Place of Workers'
Education
in the
LABOR MOVEMENT

*Fifth Annual Conference
of Teachers in Workers' Education*

at BROOKWOOD
February 24-26, 1928

Edited by
A COMMITTEE of LOCAL No. 189
American Federation of Teachers

BROOKWOOD
KATONAH, N. Y.
1928

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A. L. Landon

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PREFACE

The theme of this year's conference was dictated by the critical situation of Workers' Education in relation to the official Labor Movement. How competent teachers are to grapple with such a problem may be judged from the following pages.

As in previous years, the conference was under sanction of the American Federation of Teachers and was composed primarily of teachers, with the inclusion of certain others whose expert knowledge was required. The booklet reproduces substantially the course of the discussion, except that one or two papers are included that were not read at the sessions, and that there has been some little extension of the remarks in one case.

The Editorial Committee,

Brookwood,

Katonah, N. Y.

April 5, 1928.

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FIRST SESSION

Friday, February 24, 8 P. M.

I. THE FUNCTION OF WORKERS' EDUCATION

M. H. Hedges

International Brotherhood of Electrical Workers

Those of us who have had experience with the conventional channels of education, have repeatedly heard the charge—and no doubt have made it ourselves—that education does not come to grips with life. This, it seems to me, unless we accept the philosophy of the absolute, reaches the dilemma in which the teacher finds himself. His function is to fit for life; he is to equip the student with tools to meet a given situation, while he himself is more or less remote from that situation. Unless we are willing to hold that there are “absolute truths” or “eternal principles” capable of verification and transmission, (I, of course, am not) then as teachers we must look for some other way to outwit this dilemma. I find the approach in what for want of a better name, I call the “functional”. The labor movement has certain functions to perform, and it is the function of workers’ education to develop, deepen and aid the performance of these functions.

Now, these functions, in the main, are two:

1. Egoistic, administrative, or business functions.
2. Social, or reformative, or, as some would have it, revolutionary, functions.

Sometimes these two functions are mutually exclusive. The General Strike, for instance, may, with good abstract argument, be urged as an acceptable tool of reform; but, in the present stage of our development, if used, would likely place American unions in a position where they could not carry on their first function, the administrative. Sometimes these two functions are mutually helpful; as for instance, when labor urges high wages as a necessity, prompted by egoistic motives, and forces industrial management to eliminate waste in

industry. Let me say at this point, that by the very exigency of the situation, labor is forced to consider the first set of functions as primary. Like Napoleon's battalions, labor moves on its stomach. If this be materialism, then we have to make the best of it. Here labor follows the primal law that in the sweat of his brow man must earn his bread. And I do not think anything can be gained by ignoring this set-up. However displeased we may be at our social complex, however urgent we may feel is the need for reform, we as worker teachers must recognize the fact that the ongoing life of the union must be the first goal of the educator as well as of the active unionist.

And when I see the scope of this field of workers' education I am astounded at its untitled extent.

Recognizing the time limit of this discussion, allow me quite arbitrarily to set down courses for which I believe there is an undeniable need, in the daily life of the union.

(1) Business management courses for business agents and union officials to fit them better to carry on their technical job as business representatives of the union.

(2) Courses in the history of the union, and of the general labor movement, to be thrown against the greater history of world humanistic movements.

(3) Courses in wage economics; in particular, the study of business trends as they inevitably affect the life of the union.

(4) And, corollary to this, training in statistical reading; a study of the statistics of wages, living costs and the standard of living.

(5) Courses in newspaper and magazine production.

(6) Psychology of organization.

(7) Courses in workers' health, bodily and mental; and here would I place the arts as well as the science, the literature of the labor movement.

Nor does the function of workers' education end here. The trained worker in the labor movement has another function, best defined as creation of technique. For instance, we all agree that organization of the unorganized is desirable. But it is not enough to fall back upon the contention that "the way to organize is to organize." We might

just as well say the way to eat one's dinner is to eat one's dinner. But the latter is not a civilized way of eating dinner. We no longer eat our meat raw. We no longer ignore hygienic laws. We no longer play snob to calories. We know that there is the science and the art of cooking. And we know that not even the savage merely *eats* his dinner. It is the function of the worker-teacher to discover and formulate practical ways of advancing other labor interests.

Take another example. Union cooperative management is a practical device to give labor a greater voice in the technical processes of the railroad industry. It may be true that it has not given the worker a greater economic stake, yet it can not be denied that it has allowed him to participate in the more creative processes of industry, and as such is valuable. We need more discoveries of new technique, new avenues through which labor can fulfill itself, and I take it that these avenues must be opened by the trained minds of the movement.

And it is my hope that if worker teachers do concentrate on these multitudinous practical problems, do deepen and strengthen the everyday functions of labor at every point, then a firm basis will be laid for greater and more conscious social service on the part of labor.

One of the things that dismays me is the illusion, chiefly on the part of those-not-in-the-know, that the labor movement is a great, majestic, powerful movement. It is powerful in its potentialities, and in its accomplishments, but in actual fact, it is only moderately strong. What it needs most, is not illusions of grandeur about its historic mission, but devoted, disinterested, technical service, on the part of thousands,—millions.

It is my hope that if worker teachers concentrate on these multitudinous practical problems, that a unifying principle will also be found and introduced into the movement.

I know what I have intimated as my conception of workers' education will strike some friends as heresy. It will sound like the voice of black reaction. I contend that it is neither reactionary, conservative nor radical. It is a discussion of a practice based on educational experience outside of and technical experience inside the movement. And if applied, it will not make so much difference whether it is applied by autonomous groups, or groups within the movement. I give ground to no one in my desire for sweeping social and political reforms in behalf of labor, but it seems our lot in the present hour is

to lay the ground for these reforms, by strengthening the movement all along the line. This is not so romantic a task but it is a necessary one.

Let's not make the mistake of the old schools: Let's see the job we have to do and do it.

II. CURRENT ISSUES IN WORKERS' EDUCATION

A. J. Muste
Brookwood.

The main purpose of these remarks is to raise questions rather than to answer them. The important and interesting issues in the field of workers' education at the present time may be listed as follows:

I. Spread of Workers' Education in the Recent Period.

A rapid survey of the development of workers' education enterprises in the United States during the past couple of years reveals the following situation:

In New York City the work of the Central Trades and Labor Council consisting of a couple of classes is carrying on about as usual. The work of the Women's Trade Union League is more extensive and is at least holding its own. Some new educational work has been started in the Millinery Workers branch of the Cap Makers Union. There is a decided interest in education in the big Local No. 3 of the Electrical Workers. The work of the I. L. G. W. U., the pioneer international union in this field, is at the lowest ebb in years owing to internal conditions in the union and depression in the trade.

The work in Newark, N. J. and vicinity which was organized as a labor college a couple of years ago seems to have disappeared entirely.

Under the direction of Paul Fuller, working for the Workers Education Bureau, a fairly successful educational work is under way in Passaic and Paterson. The total enrollment, however, in study classes is probably not much over two hundred.

The work of the Philadelphia Labor College continues to flourish and attract favorable attention. The work in Baltimore grows steadily and this year apparently has more vitality than at any time in the past.

The Labor College in Washington, D. C., so far as is known is not holding its own this year.

The very important work carried on in the past in District 2 of the United Mine Workers of America under the presidency of John Brophy and the direction of Paul Fuller has been entirely wiped out since Brophy's retirement from the presidency. Largely through the efforts of Leonard Craig, first operating in a volunteer way and then as Educational Director of the Pennsylvania State Federation of Labor, the Union Labor College of Pittsburgh has been revived and has several classes in operation. Classes have been started in Shenandoah, Pa., in the anthracite region, and educational work is about to be launched in Wilkes Barre.

The Boston Labor College, one of the first if not the first to be established under C. L. U. auspices is at the lowest point since its founding. The work in Salem, Mass., and vicinity under the direction of Charles L. Reed continues to hold its ground and to render important service.

Very little seems to be doing in Chicago, and the unique work carried on for several years by Tom Tippet in Sub-district 5 of the United Mine Workers in Illinois was completely dismantled as a result of the unemployment and strike in that region. It is good news that local former members of the classes in that sub-district are now taking steps to revive this work.

The Labor College in Denver, Colo., seems to be going along fairly well but the Wyoming and Colorado Federations no longer have a full time educational director in the field, although a number of local classes still are under way in these states. The Colorado Springs "labor" classes are now simply adult education extension courses of the local college.

In Minnesota there seems to be a considerable revival under the stimulus of an active committee of the State Federation and of certain members of the Teachers Union and other groups in the Twin Cities.

The Labor College of Seattle is undergoing a period of readjustment and it remains to be seen whether it can achieve substantial results under the reorganization.

The Labor College at Portland, Ore., which did some very interesting pieces of work for a number of years, is in a very poor condition at present.

Work in California under the joint direction of the labor movement and the State University appears to be about holding its own.

In the South, not much in the line of workers' education is being done and it would appear that the few classes under way are receiving their stimulus from the Industrial Department of the Y. W. C. A. and from young women workers who have attended Bryn Mawr or the Sweet Briar summer schools rather than from the local trade union movement.

In the main the schools having a resident or semi-resident character such as the Rand School and the Workers School of New York, and Brookwood seem to be firmly established and at the very least, holding their own.

In other words, looked at from the point of view of the number of enterprises under way, and attendance, the movement reveals definite gains in a few places, is holding its own in a considerable number, but in a fairly large number of instances is suffering definite setbacks. It can hardly be said to be experiencing rapid or steady growth.

II. Issues Concerning Type of Work and Educational Method.

When we turn to the question of the type of work being done, and the methods that are being found successful, or at least are being experimented with, we may note the following items that deserve some consideration.

In the first place, Dr. E. C. Lindeman's preliminary report to the Workers Education Bureau in the spring of 1927 seemed to indicate that there was a diminishing interest in classes in economics and labor problems and, on the other hand, an increase in classes in psychology and especially in English, public speaking, parliamentary law. I understand that the complete report which may be issued by the Bureau in the near future confirms these preliminary findings. Does this signify a diminishing interest in the content of economics and labor

problems courses, or does it mean a change of method and approach, economics and labor problems being taught through classes in English and public speaking? Does it or does it not indicate a tendency for workers' classes to turn to more purely "cultural" subjects instead of concentrating on work that deals directly with the problems which the worker confronts in his shop and in the union?

In the second place it may be of no special significance, but on the other hand may be a straw indicating which way the wind is blowing, that some difficulty seems to be experienced with the development of the pioneer class in shop economics in one of our eastern centers. It was the expectation some years ago when this type of class was launched that active members of unions, beginning with a study of conditions in their own shops and using the information thus obtained in negotiation for wages and conditions with their employers, would be naturally led on to broader interests. There is little indication now that such a development is taking place and I understand that the head of the Philadelphia Labor College is now inclined to question whether any workers' education that does not from the start and throughout, give students some general philosophy of the labor movement, some vision of wider goals, some ideology that carries over beyond the considerations in their own shop and craft and makes them feel themselves part of the world movement of workers, will have permanency and accomplish worthwhile results.

In the third place, in Philadelphia an interesting experiment is under way in giving apprentices in the electrical trade training in the aims, methods and structure of the labor movement along with their technical training, which may prove a lead to be followed in other labor educational enterprises.

Fourthly, there seems to be a fairly well defined tendency throughout the country to place somewhat less emphasis on class work and to do more with popular or semi-popular activities designed to reach large numbers with less intensive work. The experiments with giving educational talks before trade union meetings, and the series of week-end conferences on unemployment, organizing methods, etc., being held in various centers with considerable success, illustrate this tendency. Are we to assume that this is a temporary or a more or less permanent trend?

Fifthly, summer schools for workers are growing in numbers and seemingly in importance. Last summer, schools were in session at

Bryn Mawr, Barnard, University of Wisconsin, and at Sweet Briar College in the south, all of these for women workers, and summer schools or institutes were held both for men and women at Denver, Colorado Springs, Brookwood, etc.

Finally, as indicated above, the various resident or semi-resident schools such as the Rand School, the Workers School, and Brookwood seem to be the most firmly established of our workers' educational enterprises and give every evidence of being here to stay and likely to grow or hold their own in attendance, and of increasing their influence. Some consideration might profitably be given to the reasons for this seeming permanence and stability of residential work.

III. Issues in the Field of Philosophy and Control.

For one thing, there is a very definite tendency for workers' education (or adult education?) to be taken up by the conventional educational institutions. The summer schools to which we have referred are an illustration. Cooperative enterprises between labor groups and the state university continue in California, and there are indications that in other states the university authorities are becoming interested in the possibilities.

In the second place, the problem of whether workers' education is education pure and undefiled or is propaganda, what is meant by education and propaganda anyway, and if there is to be any "tendency" in the teaching and discussion in workers' classes, what that tendency is to be, continues to obtrude itself. For our present purpose, we may confine ourselves to citing an illustration from the proceedings of the latest A. F. of L. Convention. In addressing that convention, the Secretary of the Workers Education Bureau stated:

"The Workers Education Bureau has from the start of its alliance with the A. F. of L. six years ago sharply defined the field in which it sought to operate. It has confined its efforts strictly to the field of education and research. It has never sought nor sanctioned any interference with the broad general field of trade union policy. That field it regards as the field for the exclusive decision by the trade unionists operating through their own trade unions and the American Federation of Labor. We have refused to pass on labor legislation or in any wise intrude on the domain of trade union policy. Nor have we on the other hand advocated any goal or program as the special goal for labor. We have not championed any "ism".

We have not attempted to teach workers what to think, but how to think."

The plain implication of this statement is that education in workers classes is to be pure and undefiled, having no motives and "tendency" whatever.

A couple of pages earlier, however, the Secretary of the Workers Education Bureau is quoted as saying the following:

"A year ago the delegates to the Detroit convention heard an impassioned plea for the striking textile workers of Passaic. For eight months thousands of these workers under communistic leadership had been subjected to the indignities of police persecution on the one side and to the demoralizing counsel of irresponsible leaders on the other. They had faced starvation and continuing unemployment made less burdensome by the public response to their distress. And yet the thing which these workers sought was what their leaders were totally incapable of giving them—a responsible union capable of negotiating and carrying out an agreement with the employers. Their leaders had led them out in what they said would be a promised land; it proved to be a land of poverty and desolation. Having led them out the leaders could not lead them back. When the United Textile Workers went into Passaic they were called upon to liquidate the mistakes and blunders of the United Front Committee; they found demoralization and disintegration on all sides. It is a story so characteristic of communist endeavor. They lack both the program and the integrity to build an effective labor union. They preach solidarity, but they practice disruption. There was an organization, but no union; there was control, but no direction.

"When the United Textile Workers undertook the task of bringing into the union the 10,000 workers, many of them foreign born, some literate, but many illiterate even in their own language, they were confronted with a problem in organization that required skill, tact and resourcefulness to meet. They had heard the Macedonian cry but they found the Macedonians a varied group—a babel of many tongues.

"So when the United Textile Workers took hold of the task they realized that it was in a large measure an educational job that required educational methods. They turned to the Workers Education Bureau for assistance. A survey of the situation was suggested, made, and adopted by the United Textile Workers' Union.

"Through the cooperation of the bureau an educational director was sent into the city of Passaic as local director of workers' education. He began work quietly and laid his foundations on solid ground. At first his work was opposed by the old leadership who feared that their influence might effectively be undermined. They sensed what in fact did happen! But gradually the quiet effective work of our director began to bear fruit. Study classes were started to teach the purpose and function of organized labor, in English and in civics. At the union meetings an education hour was set aside to present the history and aims of the Textile Workers' Union and the A. F. of L. On Sunday a great public forum and mass meeting was held.

"Gradually the attitude of the community, of the employers, and of responsible citizens began to change. They recognized a new leadership by labor and a new educational policy. They perceived of the trade union as a constructive agency to stabilize industry."

It seems difficult to reconcile these two quotations, one emphasizing that workers' education is purely education, does not try to tell workers what to think, does not concern itself with trade union policy, and does not advocate any "ism", the other citing as a significant instance of the success of workers' education, how by use of it workers were won away from communism to trade unionism, from a "destructive" type of labor policy to a "constructive", from allegiance to one set of leaders to allegiance to another set. Regardless altogether of what our preferences may be in the way of philosophy, policy or leadership, the problem for workers' education here suggested is a real one. The issue of propaganda versus education is hard to down.

Thirdly, the Executive Committee of the American Federation of Labor made to the recent convention at Los Angeles the following suggestion with regard to the constitution of the Workers Education Bureau:

"The cooperative relations between the Workers Education Bureau and the American Federation of Labor convince us that workers' educational undertakings should increasingly become an integral part of union activity. We suggest, therefore, the advisability to provide a more definitely responsible Executive Committee for the Workers Education Bureau by amending its constitution to limit membership in the Executive Committee to representatives of support-

ing national and international organizations and the American Federation of Labor."

(The constitution of the Workers Education Bureau as it stands at present provides for three members appointed by the American Federation of Labor Executive Council; three elected by representatives of international unions at the Workers Education Bureau convention; one by the representatives of state and city federations and local unions; and two by representatives of labor colleges and classes; the president and secretary being elected by the convention as a whole).

Commenting upon this recommendation of the Executive Council, the Convention Committee on Education reported as follows: "The suggestion of the Executive Council that the Executive Committee of the Workers Education Bureau be so changed as to give more responsible direction to supporting national and international unions and the American Federation of Labor is a wise suggestion. . . . We recommend, therefore, to this convention, the adoption of this suggestion of the Executive Council."

The next convention of the Workers Education Bureau will therefore be called upon to consider this recommendation for a radical change in its constitution and structure, eliminating representatives of state and city federations, district councils, local unions, and of labor colleges and classes from the Executive Committee of the Workers Education Bureau.

The writer believes that the proposal is a move in the wrong direction and ventures to make a provisional statement of his reasons therefor, even though a more thorough discussion may need to be postponed until we have more light as to the reasons why this change is recommended.

1. In the first place, if one goes over the list of active Workers' Education enterprises in this country which are affiliated with the Workers Education Bureau it soon becomes apparent that the overwhelming majority are being conducted by state federations, city centrals, district councils, and local unions. There are a couple of internationals which as such carry on workers' education enterprises—that is, labor colleges and classes. Since in our trade union practice, international unions have assumed responsibility primarily for economic activity, or bargaining with the employer, whereas political and edu-

cational activities have been entrusted largely to the state and city federations, this development of workers' education primarily under the auspices of the latter would seem to be in line with our traditional way of doing things.

The proposal now made is to give all real authority in the Workers Education Bureau to those trade union bodies which have not carried on workers' education and which perhaps have their hands full of other important matters, and to deprive of representation on the Workers Education Bureau Executive precisely those trade union bodies which have developed workers' education and have acquired concrete experience in carrying it on. To deprive these bodies of any voice in a matter in which they are so deeply interested and for the actual carrying out of which they must continue to assume so much responsibility, and on the other hand, to deprive the Executive Committee of the Bureau of the benefit of their counsel seems to me a highly questionable move on the face of it.

2. The proposed change also deprives representatives of labor colleges and classes, that is the teachers and students most directly concerned in workers' education, of representation on the Executive Committee of the Bureau. While it may be assumed that the colleges and classes will retain a certain measure of autonomy in the administration of their local affairs, the national workers' education movement will be governed, if this change goes into effect, on the outsider-board-of-trustees plan which, as applied to our conventional colleges and universities, is so widely criticized at the present time. On the board which directs an educational movement, those who are supposed to be in greater or less degree expert in educational matters are to have no representation at all; the whole power is to rest in persons who, save in accidental exceptional cases, will have no special competence in educational matters.

In this same connection it may be noted that there is a strong tendency in the educational world toward some representation of student bodies on boards of control. The proposed change in the Workers Education Bureau constitution deprives students of any representation on the national body, direct or indirect. It appears to be in line with reactionary rather than progressive practice in the educational field.

3. When Labor and educators embark on a joint enterprise, as in the workers' education movement, difficulties may emerge from op-

posite directions. On the one hand, educators cannot be muzzled. There must be free discussion, a real clash of opinion, if intelligence is to be developed. Real teachers and students, therefore, will not submit to dictation. On the other hand, there is some danger that the latter may occupy themselves too much with abstractions and theories, forgetful of practical considerations. A union engaged in a desperate battle may not want to assume "official responsibility" for pronouncements of teachers not subject to "official control" and it is quite possible that free discussion of a controversial matter may tend to divide forces, to cool loyalties, at a time when unity (or uniformity?) is very much desired. What is to be done in face of such a dilemma?

It would seem that a cooperative arrangement, such as obtains in the workers' education movement in which Labor and educators (teachers and students) share on something like equal terms, might be almost an ideal way to meet the situation. Under this arrangement teachers are free, but they are in constant touch with leaders and active workers in the labor movement so that they may not be too abstract and theoretical, nor unnecessarily careless about the practical difficulties that a fighting organization such as a union may confront. Labor on its part has been able to make its influence felt in the educational work which it was sponsoring, without assuming to "control" the educator and the student, without dictating what people should think. And since it did not presume to "control", it was not obliged to assume "responsibility" for everything that might be said or done in connection with the educational work.

If now teachers and students are deprived of representation in the national body, the tendency will inevitably be, despite the best intentions in the world, seriously to limit freedom with respect to courses, text books, choice of teachers, class-room discussion and other vital matters. Be it emphasized that to say this is not to cast any aspersions whatever upon anyone's motive or intentions. It is simply to call attention to a phenomenon that has occurred so often in the history of human institutions that it may be called a law.

If freedom is seriously limited, the best teachers will no longer be attracted to workers' education. They will contend as some do now that there is more scope for the self-respecting seeker after truth in conventional educational institutions than in the labor movement. Also workers' education will cease to be the outlet and the expression of the idealism of some of the younger elements in the labor movement which at the present time it is.

Another at least equally serious result will be that the official labor movement, having assumed entire control of workers' education, will also be responsible for everything that happens in this field. Unless official propaganda only is to be put forth in workers' education classes and labor colleges, may this not lead to very undesirable complications? The discussion, for example, of an untried and unpopular proposal under semi-independent auspices where there is no thought of direct influence on policy is one thing, a similar discussion under conditions where every utterance would be regarded as having the stamp of official approval and might influence policy very directly, would be a very different matter.

4. Finally, to propose a vital change in the constitution of the Workers Education Bureau on the ground that it is desirable that it should have "a more definitely responsible executive" is to imply that the Executive Committee either in the past or at the present time or both, has been somewhat lacking in "responsibility". What does this mean? What are the shortcomings and the transgressions of the movement in the past and today? Until the answer to this question is known, it is impossible to decide whether the remedy proposed is calculated to cure the evil.

The foregoing and other considerations must have the attention of all those truly interested in the welfare of the workers' education movement in order that we may arrive at a sound, helpful, and practical solution of the problem before us.

DISCUSSION

Tom Tippet.—Workers' Education in the future will be determined pretty largely by the attitude of Brookwood students. Now the official group in Workers' Education says it has not selected a goal and professes to refrain from participation in trade union politics. But education on that basis is a needless duplication of work that can be carried on better by universities. The dubious experience in Philadelphia with shop economics lacking an ideology points the issue. It would be all right to have the subject taught in workers' classes, but something more is necessary. It is the business of Workers' Education to butt into trade union politics. Moreover we have to recognize that there is a goal. Workers' Education is a hard job and can't be done without an ideology, a faith, a goal. I think maybe such considerations explain the dismal failure in Workers' Education today.

Furthermore, the official movement gives its case away in what it says about its educational work in Passaic. I would not want to be an educational director that would go into a place like Passaic and undermine the work done by those that raised such wonderful enthusiasm in the strike. On the contrary, the people that will succeed will have the guts to go ahead even if it is necessary to antagonize leaders.

Ida Patigalia.—Even here we have students that come without belief in workers' control! But that must be our aim. The American Federation of Labor with its present leadership will not change; but we can go back to our home towns and change the leadership of Workers' Education projects. They are not taken so seriously that the opposition will be insurmountable.

Hyman Barufkin.—Stagnation in Worker's Education is partly due to the fact that most union leaders have not had much education themselves and are not very anxious that others should get any. It is natural that one should not educate others to take away what he has. Another factor is illustrated by the Passaic situation, where even the police are alleged to have become enthusiasts for Workers' Education! If the work is conducted along such lines, no wonder it goes no further than it does. In so far, however, as the complaint is merely that Economics classes fall down while Public Speaking courses are in demand, the solution is simple: Use the Public Speaking class to teach Economics or whatever other basic subject is necessary.

A. J. Muste.—Perhaps it would be misinterpreting the Passaic situation a bit to overstress the participation of police and responsible citizens in last summer's Chautauqua. The important thing is what is being done in the workers' classes.

Beckie Friedman.—The American Federation of Labor wants to control Workers' Education, but how competent is it even to unionize industry? I am inclined to think that the official desire to control Workers' Education is in order that the workers may understand a little less. The officialdom does not like the menace of Brookwood.

Joe English.—One of the first things should be to make the Labor Movement move. When it moves intelligently, we should not worry about the direction. We might be able to hold the goals in the back of our minds, but to parade them might arouse unnecessary opposition. In any case we need to show that the workers have a real interest in the problem of taking hold and of getting rid of the people that stand in the way.

William Seligman.—What would Brookwood be like if it corresponded to the A. F. L. formula? The A. F. L. did not do much to launch Workers' Education, and now it wants to kill it.

Jim Boyd.—The story is not all so one-sided as it sounds. The man that sent me here has not had Workers' Education, but he was not afraid to send me. I'm convinced we can convert the A. F. L. to our point of view.

Jasper Deeter.—If the Workers Education Bureau can teach anybody *how* to think *nothing*, I'll have to start there. As for the question about Shop Economics at the Philadelphia Labor College, a clarity of program and a more honest statement—leaning toward the idea of *Fire* might help the College.

Romania Ferguson.—Workers' Education opens a distant vision. It should fit into the job of organizing the unorganized. When they are organized, they will learn to go to political action. When the workers control the government, they can shape public education.

Donald Burke.—The Brookwood prospectus says that "Brookwood is not a propaganda institution." But it is! It is time for it to come out and say so.

A. Lefkowitz.—Is Labor Education growing or stationary abroad?

H. Sanderson Furniss.—In Belgium it is growing. In England the Adult Education movement is on the up-grade. The Workers' Education Association has grown enormously since the War. The trade unions are taking a greater interest in education than a few years ago.

Franz Longville.—There is no resident Labor College in France and there are not many statistics about classes; but generally speaking the political education and economic education of workers is more advanced than in the United States. In Germany and Belgium, Workers' Education is an integral part of the Labor Movement. In every country the Labor Movement has felt a reaction, but since 1926 there is a revival. The German movement is to devote to a Labor College five million marks that it received by way of indemnity for the Ruhr occupation.

A. Lefkowitz.—The A. F. L. has a definite philosophy grown out of American conditions that no longer exist. The philosophy of Workers' Education, on the other hand, is built on the class struggle,—hence

a conflict with the mass of American Labor. To a large degree the class-conscious are not intelligent enough to present their ideas effectively. The Workers' Education movement is without funds or official support. The Workers' Education Bureau was launched largely by people with a class-conscious philosophy. Naturally the A. F. L. tries to take the movement over. The issue has to be faced. I don't think the parties are irreconcilable. The force of economic circumstance will drive the A. F. L. to a new base or it will disappear. Where we've made a success of Workers' Education, it's where we've had it as a religion. People with a drive and an understanding of Labor will make the connection. The problem is how to work together toward a common goal in spite of differing points of view. We must face the problem in an analytical way.

Eva Shafan.—What is Brookwood going to do in the face of the new situation?

Wm. Absolon.—If you're going to use the approach of class-consciousness with groups that are not used to it, it won't take very well.

Feigel Kramer.—We must have a goal, but we must teach workers how to think before we can teach them what to think.

Leonard Craig.—There's a great deal of difference between talking and action. Let the theorists come with me and I'll give them a chance to put their theories into action.

C. E. Warne.—There are too many generals and too few privates. The generals are very clear. I feel like changing the economic order, but how about our classes? Their interest is in Tariff, Unemployment, Craft Unionism. We're up against the problem of clearing away dead wood. Perhaps the first thing is to create discontent. Don't give the whole thing away and scare people off. Implication is the best method of teaching. When you've created discontent with the system, then comes the question of the road out. Give every type of propaganda a hearing. To raise at this moment the banner of class-consciousness is to alienate the rank and file.

A. J. Muste.—Any education that tries to deal with life as a whole is in some sense propagandist; but it makes some difference whether the standard is rote or whether it is thought. There is also an educational atmosphere that needs to be preserved in an educational institution. Something of freedom of discussion is required. I don't believe it is harmful to Workers' Education. Admitted the ne-

cessity of a goal and a philosophy, there remains the problem of how to interpret it to people that haven't it. Moreover here remains a distinction between a goal and a definition of it. We can afford a little quarreling about the definition if we have the goal.

As to the proposed change in the W. E. B. constitution: The W. E. B. was an attempt to have control by unions, students, and teachers, with much local autonomy. It was perhaps an impossible attempt. It may be we can't hold the Workers' Education movement in the United States together. For the present we are well advised to insist that Workers' Education should be what its founders intended—integrally connected with the Labor Movement, but not dominated by it. It is still worth while to fight for that kind of a W. E. B. The important thing is not what the conservatives or reactionaries are going to think or say or do. I'd not be so much concerned on that if I felt the progressives or radicals could agree.

SECOND SESSION
Saturday, February 25, 10 A. M.

IS WORKERS' EDUCATION TO BE CLASSED WITH THE
PANACEAS?

I. WHAT LIGHT CAN WE GET FROM THE HISTORIC ROLE OF
PANACEAS IN GENERAL?

Arthur W. Calhoun
Brookwood

One of the observations most commonly made by historians of the American Labor Movement is that in "good times" it depends on trade union methods and in "bad times" resorts to "cure alls" such as independent political action, producers' co-operation, consumers' co-operation, etc., which gather enthusiasm for the moment and then evaporate. On this reading of history, the official family bases the conclusion that "pure and simple" trade unionism is the central substance of the Labor Movement and that some, at least, of the alternative methods are wills-o'-the-wisp, baneful and baleful to the cause of Labor.

Workers' Education has not, as yet, been black-balled as a delusive panacea, yet its rather mushroom growth during a period of sag in the union movement, together with its seeming eclipse in the recent past, ought to make us wonder whether Workers' Education comes in the general class of phantom hopes. It is to this subject that we now direct our attention.

II. WHAT LIGHT CAN WE GET FROM LABOR'S HISTORIC
RELATION TO THE PUBLIC SCHOOL SYSTEM?

A. Lefkowitz
New York Teachers' Union

From the dawn of history humanity has sought relief from its troubles in some panacea or cure all. From the dawn of history panaceas so eagerly pursued proved useful but new ills appeared

and then the panacea hunt was on again. American Labor like other groups, has had its career of panacea hunting only to find its panaceas become more like will-of-the-wisps.

The War of 1812 cut off British manufactures and gave American industry its first great impetus. Men and women began to abandon life in the country towns for the mill towns which multiplied rapidly. With the massing of people in the towns came evils new to American industrial life—excessive child labor, unprotected machinery, unsanitary housing, juvenile delinquency, etc. With mass production also came organization and agitation and the everlasting quest for a panacea for these ills.

In this expectant labor atmosphere Robert Dale Owen, son of the English Utopian socialist, appeared and fired labor with his new panacea. "I believe in a National System of Equal, Republican, Protective, Practical Education, the sole regenerator of a profligate age and the only redeemer of our suffering country from the equal curses of chilling poverty and corrupting riches, of gnawing want and destroying debauchery, of blind ignorance and of unprincipled intrigue. By this, my creed, I will live. By my consistency with this, my professed belief, I claim to be judged. *By it I will stand or fall.*" His cry for universal education as a basis for equality and sound citizenship and as a panacea became a battle-cry of the workers everywhere. Round this shibboleth rallied the organized workers and through their efforts universal public education in tax-supported schools was established. Well might Prof. Frank Tracy Carlton say: "The organized workers of 1828 to 1836 dreamed that the general establishment of free public schools would quickly and surely evolve a social Utopia."

Despite the tremendous growth and expansion of public education, despite the fact that education is most diversified and compulsory up to fourteen and in many states, in part, up to 18, organized Labor is as far from the solution of its economic, and political ills as ever. Its Utopia has solved no problems. Why?

First, because while a panacea may throw light on a complex phenomenon, no complex and vital economic and political phenomena can be solved by any Utopia. Educational panaceas, properly coordinated with other solutions, may help achieve the long sought-after goal.

Second, modern mass production is slowly coming under the domination not of those industrial lords interested in mass production per se—as Henry Ford—but essentially, under the control of financial manipulators like the Morgans, Van Sweringens, Dillons, etc., interested primarily in dividends and the control upon which they rest. These economic overlords are interested in the perpetuation of the present economic order, and the control of public thought through agencies of information—press, pulpit, radio, the schools—whether direct or indirect—means the perpetuation of their economic, political, religious and educational ideals and ideas. As a result, the conformist is advanced, the non-conformist forced out. The educational ideal is the go-getter; the chief virtues for the masses are honesty, thrift, implicit obedience. Labor problems are generally ignored and if discussed, are presented in a hostile manner or with little understanding or appreciation of their social significance. Those courageous and enlightened souls who love truth and dare teach it, pay the penalty for their devotion by martyrdom.

What light does Labor's quest for a panacea in universal education throw upon the subject of workers' education? First, while Labor education is an earnest and sincere effort to give the workers an honest background for intelligent thinking unhampered by the false teaching of educational satellites of the present economic overlords, it cannot become an effective panacea because Labor has neither the desire nor the financial ability to support a comprehensive scheme of Labor education to liberate the minds of the workers from the employer-psychology which dominates their thinking.

Secondly, workers' education can reach but few workers, who per se are powerless to make fundamental changes in the social order. Even if they could reach the majority of the workers, the solution of Labors' ills lies with the future; that is, with the younger generation. Hence the public schools furnish the key to the solution. Unfortunately, too often the members of the younger generation have their minds poisoned by the ignorance, bias, or open hostility of the teachers essentially conformist by nature. Hence Labor must get control of the public school and make public education labor education. How can this be done?

First, Labor must control the boards of education and that means labor must embark upon a career of independent political action. Having secured control of boards of education and placed upon them enlightened teachers and workers instead of political heelers, Labor

politicians, or upholders of the dominant economic groups, teachers will be free to unionize and get a clearer social viewpoint by direct contact with the masses and their daily problems and their social aspirations. Then and then only will teachers be in a position to reorganize the courses of study with emphasis upon the social sciences labor problems and their true teachings; then and then only will creative education come into its own; then and then only will teachers be free and competent enough to present in an impartial and scientific and understanding manner, with a more humane outlook, the social, economic and political problems upon which the solution of our ills depend.

This indispensable task of social reconstruction, Labor fails to recognize not only because it is itself the product of miseducation caused by the dominant economic control of our educational system but also because of its suspicion of and contempt for the intellectual—at times justified by their egoism, and Jehovah complex—also because of Labor leaders' inferiority complex, because of the general dislike of many older men for the older type of teacher who secured discipline by force. Unless labor appreciates the underlying significance of preventing the poisoning of the mind of the citizen of the future and seeks to prevent it by unionization the outlook for any effective panacea—educational or otherwise—is dark indeed. I am optimistic enough to believe American Labor will have an awakening—some leaders now have it,—and help vitalize the whole movement.

III. WHAT CAN WE LEARN FROM THE HISTORY OF WORKERS' EDUCATION SINCE THE WAR?

A. Epstein

American Association for Old Age Security

In any attempt to evaluate the present movement of workers' education, consideration of its historical aims and purposes is paramount. It is only through this earlier perspective that we may pass judgment upon the present tendencies and prognosticate the future possibilities. What then were the aims and purposes of the early pioneers of this movement? The late Arthur Gleason, who unquestionably was one of the best exponents of the early aspirations of the Workers' Education movement, clearly distinguished workers' educa-

tion as "its own kind of adult education, and not to be confused with university extension, evening high schools, night schools, public lectures and forums, Chautauquas, Americanization, education by employers, and Y. M. C. A. industrial courses. Labor education is inside the labor movement, and cannot be imposed from above or from without. It is a training in the science of reconstruction. It is a means to the liberation of the working class, individually and collectively. In pursuing that aim, it uses all aids that will enrich the life of the group and of the worker in the group, and that will win allegiance of the worker to the group."

These aims and purposes were not only the motivating force of the intellectuals outside the labor movement but were also true of the labor leaders most actively and most energetically identified with this movement from its very inception. As redefined by James H. Maurer at the last conference in Boston:

"Underlying the purpose of workers' education is the desire for a better social order. It is this desire on the part of the workingman for a richer and fuller life individually and collectively that gave the movement its birth and at all times must remain its treasured inheritance. Labor education aims at the ultimate liberation of the working masses.

"To Change the Social Order"

"The Workers Education Bureau was not organized for the purpose of duplicating the work done by the public schools, universities, correspondence schools, and so on. It is distinctly not to be confused with the numerous existing forms for adult education. They are designed for the most part, either to give a bit of culture to the student, or else to lift him out of his present job into a higher one. That is not the purpose of workers' education. It is education that will stimulate the student to serve the labor movement in particular and society in general, and not education to be used for selfish personal advancement."

Even Mr. E. C. Lindeman, who is perhaps somewhat detached from the actual working class, agreed that "if it is truly workers' education, it also seeks to change the social order. Workers' education may be conceived as the germ of a new people's movement. Its function is to inject a new principle, a new method, and a new spirit into the age-long struggle for justice."

The above definitions and enunciation of principles are clear and unmistakable. That workers' education has a special social function is recognized by all. And these aims were not only the hopes and aspirations of the earlier pioneers of the movement but are apparently still considered essential requirement for a true workers' education movement. In view of this it is, I think, entirely proper and propitious to stop for a moment and to examine the extent to which these principles are still applicable to the present official movement of workers' education.

Now, of course, I am fully aware that no movement as significant and as vitalizing as workers' education can be adequately appraised after a period of but 7 or 8 years. Its meaning and significance can hardly become crystalized in this short space of time. Its actual accomplishments may not mature for many years. Not unmindful of these criticisms, I still maintain that inasmuch as the official movement for workers' education in the United States has during the past seven years taken definite shape and followed identical processes which throughout have been consistent and constant, even this short period of its existence warrants at least a hasty examination or appraisal of its accomplishments and an evaluation of its tendencies and future possibilities. What are some of these fact?

A Rapid Development

In the Spring of 1921, when the first conference on workers' education was held, there was no organized national movement guiding and directing the scattered workers' educational experiments throughout the country. There were altogether less than one hundred educational classes of all sorts. Their methods and programs were as varied as the organizations which sponsored them. There was confusion both in content and policy. But underlying all of them there was a definite and concrete purpose which inspired and fused them all into one aspiration. Whether they were sponsored by trade unions, Socialist, Communist or independent intellectuals, each and every one had aimed at an educational process which would guide and inspire the labor movement to greater heights, profounder vision and ultimately toward the liberation of the working masses from their present social and economic positions. There was an unmistakable ideology pervading them. It was the cherished hope of expanding and consolidating these aims and ideals which made possible that remarkable gathering in the Spring of 1921. Within less than two

months from the issuing of the call and without any funds whatsoever, about 200 men and women journeyed to New York City from many states in order to help launch a more consolidated and invigorating movement of workers' education.

While I am not familiar with the present developments of the Workers Education Bureau, I note from the reports to the Boston Conference and to the last Convention of the A. F. of L. that under the guidance of the W. E. B. educational committees had been instituted in practically all of the states; that 270 local education committees had been appointed by as many central labor unions; that, thanks to the generosity of the Carnegie Corporation a W. E. B. press has been incorporated; that the budget of the Bureau amounts to approximately \$35,000 a year and that membership dues are paid by 52 national and international unions, 32 State Federations of Labor, 68 Central Labor Unions and 360 local unions. This, I submit, is quite a formidable list and a remarkable achievement.

This steady growth and development it seems to me, warrants us even at this early date to take stock of the meaning and significance of his expansion. While seven years may not be a sufficient period upon which to base definite conclusions, seven years of drifting and dangerous procedure without stock-taking is by far too long a time. Such an examination is imperative to the very examination of any movement even as it is to an ordinary corporation. In the final analysis the only way to tell of the efficacy of a certain method is to look in the profit and loss column. If the balance is in red the stock holders must know that regardless of the wonderful theories of the superintendent or management the methods simply did not work profitably. Let us then very briefly take a look at the balance sheet of this great corporation, the American Labor movement.

The Labor Movement Declines

In 1920-21 when the Workers Education Bureau was initiated, the American Labor movement was at its peak; its membership was the highest on record; it had a prestige hitherto never attained and its growing power made it the terror of the forces of darkness. The workers' education movement was to give it increased power and more intelligent guidance. But parallel with the growth of the W. E. B. and increasing population and industrialization, the membership of the A. F. of L. has declined to one of the lowest records in the past two decades. In 1927 it had a total membership of considerably less than

3,000,000 and many members were so only figuratively speaking. But what is even of greater significance than the decline in the membership is the vanishing leadership, the diminishing vitality and the almost total absence of any profound philosophy capable of meeting present day emergencies—the very contributions workers' education was to make.

Indeed, one of the most startling revelations in this hasty stock-taking is that side by side with the obvious spread and growth of labor education, both labor statesmanship and vision have been conspicuous by their total absence. Not only has labor lost its power and prestige; not only has its leadership dwindled to the lowest level, not only have company unions spread to an extent never dreamt of before, but the American labor movement has never before faced its fate with more equanimity, with less resistance and with such utter complacency as today. Even as sympathetic a student as Mr. Lindeman is forced to remark: "in fact, candor compels one to hesitate to speak of workers' education and a labor movement in this country since a movement is presumed to move."

During the past seven years American industrialism let hardly a month slip by without the proclamation of some new theory and some new discovery of the blessings and virtues of capitalism. During the same time American labor, when it did not go in reverse, has either stood still or has drifted from one untenable position to another. At its best it has merely tried to imitate American industrial leadership along certain lines of business and financial activities. In the maze of new theories enunciated by representatives of American industry, I am not conscious of a single contribution which came from American labor. Industry in the United States has expanded beyond all expectations in the past decade; production has increased so enormously that thousands of workers are being displaced from their jobs by the increasing productivity of machinery. Has any constructive suggestion of meeting this most important problem been proposed by American labor?

A Single Bright Spot

It took industrial captains, such as Brookings and Henry Ford, to discover the theory that increased purchasing power on the part of the workers makes for greater and more steady prosperity. And American labor leaders have been religiously advocating it ever since. It took Henry Ford and a reporter of the New York Times to en-

lighten American labor leadership upon the advisability of the five day week. And they have been happy to fall in line. There is a growing problem of unemployment in the United States. It took Governor Smith and the Democratic Party to stress this as a national issue. Let us hope American labor will also give consideration to this question now that it has become a public issue. There is the entire problem of social insurance and the insecurity of the American workmen against the hazards of modern industry. The nation is awakening to these problems, but the official American labor movement still takes its cue not from the workers' educational movement but from the National Civic Federation and from the Metropolitan Life Insurance Co. There is the problem of the mining industry. But American labor contents itself with appeals for relief. Oh yes, American labor has been busy fighting labor injunctions for the past quarter of a century and the number has grown by leaps and bounds.

Indeed, in the whole realm of recent theories and industrial philosophies not one new thought is discernible on the part of American labor. All it aspires to now is to the National Civic Federation's ideal of cooperation between the workers and employers. Instead of war or eternal vigilance, it seeks eternal harmony and profound peace and collaboration. All efforts are being exerted to convince the employer that it is to his benefit to recognize labor union because it will pay him to do so. Through this cooperation productivity will be increased, conflict eliminated and prosperity will prevail. In return the new labor leadership will see to it that the prosperity and happiness shall remain unmolested by the malcontents and the unmanageable Reds of whatever color they may be.

In the entire field of workers' education, I can detect only one bright star, only one speck in the desolate firmament which is generally pointed to with pride and satisfaction in the reports of the W. E. B.—the Philadelphia Labor College. Only this school has lived up to the true aims of workers' education, has sought a redefinition of values and a newer understanding of the more recent problems confronting American labor. It has sought guidance and understanding of the fundamental problems which have arisen in the past decade. Its conferences have been both original and fruitful and the very success of this experiment is a clear illustration of what real workers' education could have meant. For its accomplishments have been definitely a result of true workers' education. It may as well be admitted that the Philadelphia Labor College is but Jack Lever and Israel

Mufson and these two are but Brookwood transplanted on Philadelphia soil. By producing Lever and Mufson and a number of other active workers like them Brookwood has shown the real significance and purposes of workers' education.

What Accomplishments?

Judging by these results, what light can we get from the history of workers' education since the war? Simply that we still wait to see what workers' education can really accomplish. According to Mr. Lindeman, a study of the contents of workers education classes reveals that more students are interested in learning how to become public speakers and debaters than they are in understanding the economic and social order in which they live and labor. My own answer can only be that of my friend Benjamin Stollberg. "Five years ago Workers' Education meant the education for working class leadership. Today, where in hell is the movement which promised so well? By and large, when we are discussing workers' education, we are discussing cultural opportunities for wage earners, not workers' education."

DISCUSSION

Cara Cook.—The beginning of the Workers' Education movement in this country was permeated with an ideology and an idealism such as are associated with panaceas. Now aren't panaceas a response to economic situations? What were the factors behind the rise of the Workers' Education movement in 1920? Disillusionment? A recognition of the permanency of the working class?

A. Lefkowitz.—In 1919 a few of us got together and thought it was time for a political party. The result was the Farmer-Labor Party. Several delegates at the conference were progressive teachers. We held an educational session and decided we ought to launch a movement for a central bureau for Workers' Education. Thus Workers' Education was definitely launched as an aid to independent political action for a new social order. Where education was carried on on a large scale it was done with such an outlook. Attempts were made for a central bureau or council in New York City, but failed because of job holders. Even idealists hold on to jobs!

H. Sanderson Furniss.—There is no doubt that university education has two great defects: 1. It stands for the status quo; 2. It leaves

out much that is very important. In Workers' Education we must get away from these two shortcomings. In terms of our own project, that caution means that we must avoid making Workers' Education mere propaganda and must make our curriculum as broad as possible. Mere propaganda turns out people with one outlook, incapable of understanding the conservative point of view. Such persons are only half educated. They are not able to hold their own in an argument with an employer. Education must be carried on in an educational spirit; the method must be educational, not propagandist. It is not our business to teach the students what to think or even how to think, but to help them to think. The goal should be to turn out educated workers, able to think for themselves and support their case by reasoned arguments, and committed to active membership in the labor movement. We need to keep what is best in the old curriculum and to modernize it.

The outlook for Workers' Education is not too hopeful, but we have to take a long view. The Workers' Education Association last year brought educational opportunity to 70,000 students,—more than the total number of university students in Great Britain.

One significant thing is the way Workers' Education affects the students' attitude toward their children. They are determined on a better chance for the rising generation. In a generation or two the results will be marked.

We are also working to capture public education bodies and are gradually gaining ground. In several cases Labor has captured the councils. If only the workers would become more alive to such work, they could go a long way toward altering the whole educational system.

As for panaceas, society is too complex for a single cure, but education could go a long way. A sound educational system is an absolutely necessary basis for a live Labor movement.

D. J. Saposs.—The ideal in education should be to develop a thinking person rather than a machine; but I wonder whether that, in the practical situation, is not another panacea. For how long have you any one in classes? How long does it take to develop open-mindedness, independent thinking? Our job is to be a corrective against a huge propaganda machine. What can we do in two years to adults already pretty well fixed? Isn't the "broad-minded" emphasis premature? Isn't it perhaps one reason why Workers' Education in the

United States has fizzled. If we could get the children, we could proceed by the ideal methods (as in Russia); but as it is we have to develop a point of view and hope the students will spread it. Of course that does not mean that we are to fill them with a lot of one-sided facts or untenable notions.

The situation in this country simmers down to such anxiety of the trade unions to avoid panaceas that they confuse with the pursuit of panaceas the holding of ultimate ideals. Perhaps the important thing is to infuse idealism into the Labor movement. The lack of it throws light on the fact that the Labor movement has not been fighting shy of intellectuals as such but of a certain kind of intellectuals—those with ideals.

A. Lefkowitz.—Only such have tried to get in.

D. J. Saposs.—What about such persons as Chester Wright, Walling, Beyer?

A. Lefkowitz.—That is different. They are employees.

Josephine Colby.—Maybe we are reduced to a choice between two evils, so that it is better to choose propaganda in the interest of labor. Chesterton questions whether vital literature grows out of anything but propaganda. A survey of world literature rather confirms that hypothesis. Aren't we doing something fatal in trying to take out propaganda? We are blamed for trying to create a live situation such as they *have* in England. We don't make education vital by devitalizing it.

A. J. Muste.—In 1921-22 when the Workers' Education movement got under way in this country, it was a movement of the progressive group, then with a good deal of power in a number of places. All kinds of experiments were being made in the direction of political action. It was a period of strikes. The progressive group was chief mover in the development of the W. E. B. and Brookwood. But the progressive groups have gone out of existence as groups leaving the field to extreme rights and extreme lefts, between whom they are stranded.

The outlook for Workers' Education is all bound up with the question of what is going to happen to the Labor movement. Workers' Education not ashamed to be propaganda for Laborism has not a very rosy outlook. It is hard to tell whether the general economic situation will shift soon enough to give a new orientation.

But in the long-run outlook, there is no particular ground for discouragement. Where Workers' Education is functioning effectively, it is a movement with a Labor goal. There will have to be an aggressive Labor movement, industrial and political, and if we depend on it, it depends on Workers' Education. There is a certain amount of opportunity for such a Workers' Education movement. We have to face the question of reaching the great masses of the unorganized with such a movement. What happens to those in trade unions is becoming less important. The masses must be educated away from certain inhibitions, fears, illusions, and perhaps this is the most important task that Workers' Education has before it at the present time. There is surely enough of a challenge to offset discouragement from contemplation of our achievements.

Cedric Long.—There is need of new educational method as well as control. I sympathize in part with our English visitor's objection to propaganda. Children must be taught to think.

The discussion has now come to the point—Why hasn't Labor Education lived up to the hopes set for it? The answer is complex. (1) No movement ever does. In particular there was undue idealization of the rank and file as stimulated by a passing interest. (2) The Labor movement itself has not held up. (3) There is the inevitable cycle. The Labor movement advances one wing at a time.

A. J. Muste.—We may easily deceive ourselves by taking the pronouncements of a movement at their face value. Many of us a few years ago regarded the Labor movement as more revolutionary than it was, and now regard it as more defeatist than it really is.

Cedric Long.—Absorption in warfare in the labor movement itself enlists enormous idealism that might go into Labor education.

Mrs. Sanderson Furniss.—In Britain we've had a great wave for the education of married women. Every district of the W. E. A. has a women's committee. Women's sections of the Labor Party have regular classes. Women have carried the idea of Workers' Education into their homes and to the children. I wonder whether there is anything of the kind in this country.

A. J. Muste.—Several of our unions have women's auxiliaries, which in the past were confined to ritual and social activities and strike relief. Now there is a movement in some of them for other activities, and one recourse is to educational work. Last summer an in-

stitute was held at Brookwood under the auspices of the Women's Auxiliary of the Machinists and attended by members of several auxiliaries. The Machinists' Auxiliary is to hold two such institutes the coming summer. The Women's Trade Union League has also done something toward reaching the women.

A. Lefkowitz.—Workers' Education hasn't caught. How can it catch? Not by antagonism. The job is to reach the very men supposed to be devoid of ideals. We must convince them that we are not after their jobs, that we are not running a confidence game. We can go a long way toward getting at least a negative support, and on that basis the idealists can make their way. We must admit, however, that internal struggle has destroyed the power of the progressives.

Leonard Craig.—Lefkowitz has covered to a good extent what I've had in mind all the while. There are plenty of ways of "putting it over." The definition of Workers' Education can be postponed. The first problem is how to get the workers together. You can dodge both groups if you make up your mind to do it.

A. Epstein.—Lefkowitz's talk is not new, but what's the use of bunking ourselves? What have you, Lefkowitz, done in the C. L. U.? There is nothing to show. "Play with them." Submerge yourselves and then they'll play with you. The W. E. B. has alienated the men of vision.

A. Lefkowitz.—We have accomplished something. In the field of education, the Central Trades and the State Federation against the wishes of their own leaders had to go on record against censorship of teachers and brought about the repeal of the Lusk Laws.

A. Epstein.—How was the victory won? By compromise?

A. Lefkowitz.—We fought all the way through; but one is to fight only when necessary. Furthermore we got Labor to fight attempts at "patriotic" legislation and to adopt a definite program to maintain the merit system in the public schools against the Tammany machine. Moreover the State Federation adopted the most comprehensive educational program in this country. As to the lack of success on the political end, that is due to the stupidity and cowardice of the radicals. In the old Central Federated Trades we had a group of militant progressives. We got independent political action against the will of Gompers, but no support from the socialists and other radicals. The effort reached national proportions. With the assistance

of one hundred and fifteen gunmen the movement was broken up. We had ninety-three fighting men in the new body, but we were sold out by certain "radicals".

On the industrial field, indeed, nothing has been accomplished by the methods Epstein attacks. If the radicals with power hadn't sold us out, however, we'd have a different movement. The radicals have used their energy fighting each other and discrediting all radicalism. The task of the man with vision is to reorganize the Labor movement. All the troubles of the American Labor movement are due to the fact that the Socialist Party, failing to capture, went out and built a movement on the outside.

A. Epstein.—I make no defense for the Socialist and Communist groups; but I stress the fact that when Abe *fought* he won.

A. Lefkowitz.—We must fight,—when necessary.

THIRD SESSION

Saturday, February 25, 2:30 P. M.

I—TRADE UNION ACTIVITY IN WORKERS' EDUCATION

Spencer Miller, Jr.
Workers' Education Bureau
(Manuscript not furnished)

II—SOCIALIST ACTIVITY IN WORKERS' EDUCATION

Algernon Lee
Rand School of Social Science

The story of Socialist activity in the field of workers' education in this country is a large and integral part of the story of American Socialism itself. Long before there was any thought of trade-union colleges or of educational departments in any of the unions, the Socialist party and earlier still the Socialist Labor and Social Democratic parties had been blazing the way.

My personal knowledge of this work runs back a little more than thirty-two years, but what I observed when I joined the Socialist Labor party in Minneapolis in 1895 was then no new thing. Certainly I shall never forget my early experiences in the party, nor ever cease to be grateful for them. I had enjoyed much better opportunities in the way of formal schooling than any but two or three of the men with whom I now became associated. My reputation in college, if by no means a very high one judged by academic standards, was at any rate such as to give me a good opinion of my mental abilities and attainments. I considered myself quite a valuable acquisition to the Socialist movement. It did not take me long to discover that, if I had something to teach, I had a great deal more to learn. The experience was not humiliating, for the comrades gave me full credit for whatever useful qualities I really possessed and put me to such work as I could do, while urging and helping me to make up for what I lacked. It did, however, give me a needed lesson in intellectual modesty. How far the effect of that lesson may have worn off by this time, I do not presume to say.

You will pardon me, I hope, for talking thus much about myself. I do it only because my case was a fairly typical one. The Socialist movement, though composed mainly of unschooled workingmen, was able to command the respect of educated men who came into contact with it and often, if it really got hold of them, to save them from becoming dilettant adventurers. What is more important, it was able to give to its working-class members a breadth of view, a sense of intellectual achievement and also of social responsibility, which not only enriched their own lives, but gave them an influence in the industrial, political, and cultural life of the nation altogether out of proportion to their numbers. When I call to mind the hundreds of men and women whom I have personally known, who had but the most limited schooling, whose mental lives before they became Socialists were as narrow and empty as are those of most American workingmen, and whom participation in the movement awakened, developed, and equipped to the point where they could hold their own in discussion or in conflict with persons who had enjoyed every cultural advantage that bourgeois society provides, I have no doubt as to the latent ability of the working class to emancipate itself and to remake the world. I am not much impressed by the statistics which some laboratory psychologists give us about the number of morons—forty per cent, is it? I've seen the breath of life breathed into too many lumps of clay to believe that any large proportion of mankind is hopelessly stupid.

Our educational activities were twofold. In the first place, the appeal which we made to the public by the spoken and the printed word had, I think, as much of a genuinely educational character as the nature and circumstances of propaganda permit. There was a reason for this. We thought of our movement as a means to the most far-reaching and most beneficent social change in all history. We were confident of its success, but not in the fatalistic sense that is sometimes imputed to us. We did not think that Socialism would come, whether anyone worked for it or not; we did think it historically inevitable that the increasing numbers would desire it and work for it. We did not fancy that success was near at hand; the work to be done, we know, was too vast to be accomplished in a few years. We did not think of social conflict in terms of individual virtue or villainy, wisdom or folly; we were dealing with conditions, forces, and tendencies, not with personal denunciation or approval. Finally, we were of the opinion that the social order of the future, and consequently the movement which was its forerunner, must be essentially democratic;

no superman, and no "resolute minority", we held, could administer or even introduce the co-operative commonwealth; it must be established and maintained by the thoughtful, well informed, self-reliant, and self-disciplined effort of the masses. It followed that our chief task was to explain the workings of the capitalist system. The people, and most of all the working class, must be convinced, not merely persuaded.

In the second place, we carried on a more intensive educational activity within our own ranks. Every party branch was a little school of social science, much more than it was a political club. Wherever possible, we had our systematic courses of lectures, attended by party members and by other persons who had become seriously interested. We had our reading circles and discussion meetings. The office of literature agent was often considered the most important and honorable post in the organization. We judged our success as much by the number and quality of the books and pamphlets we sold as by the new members we took in or the votes we cast; and our members were proud to exhibit to visitors in their homes the books they owned and had read. All this educational work within the movement was actuated partly by the pleasure we derived from studying a subject so many-sided, so highly theoretical, and yet, as we thought, in the larger sense so very practical. But it was actuated in large part also by the desire to equip ourselves for the duties of propaganda and organization, to make ourselves fit to serve the movement as well as to understand it.

No doubt we often seemed comically self-important to those who were "outside looking in." We did take ourselves very seriously, and perhaps a somewhat keener sense of humor would have done us no harm. I suspect that we were more or less pedantic, and that is to be regretted. Yet it is better to take oneself too seriously than to take nothing seriously—better to be a pedant than to be a cynic.

The subject-matter of our studies, and even of our street-corner speeches, was pretty heavy. I will not say that we paid too much attention to philosophy, world history, and theoretical economics; but I do admit that we might well have given more thought to specific and concrete problems of contemporary life. It is not an either-or question; "this ought we to have done, and not left the other undone."

If, however, we must err in one direction or the other—if we must either deal thoroughly with big theoretical questions and more or less neglect every-day applications, or else let theory go by the board and

immerse ourselves in petty detail—if we were really presented with those alternatives, then I think the choice we Socialists made was the least mistaken one. There seems to be just now a strong tendency in the other direction in the workers education movement, at least in so far as this is directly linked up with the unions. If I understood Mr. Miller correctly, a little while ago, he thinks the curriculum for workers' classes should be confined to such topics as the technique of bargaining over wages and hours, the functioning of officers and committees under joint agreements, the solving of daily shop problems, with perhaps some attention to parliamentary law and union bookkeeping—and with athletic events and amateur theatricals thrown in to compensate the workers for the dullness of such a program of study.

I hope I am not doing him injustice. Or perhaps I ought rather to hope that I am stating his position incorrectly, and that I shall be set right. But if that really is his view, I must emphatically dissent. Judged solely by its usefulness to the unions, and with the narrowest conception of trade-union functions, such a program is not even practical. And surely it needs no Brookwood, no Workers Education Bureau, no trade-union colleges, to do so little as this. If this is what we are to come down to, we should shut up shop and quit talking about a workers' education movement.

"A man's reach should exceed his grasp", and so should a movement's. Ideals that are too far removed from daily interests may be relatively useless. But to narrow the gap by bringing the ideals down to the lowest level of empirical and hand-to-mouth routine is to destroy their value altogether, and without even bettering the routine. If it is only a question of how to make as good a wage bargain as circumstances permit, a year's experience as business agent will teach a man more than a year's study in a so-called trade-union college. But if it is a question how to change the circumstances, how to organize the unorganized, how to develop a spirit of solidarity and devotion and self-discipline in the rank and file, how to compel the respect of the employers and win the sympathy of the general public—if this is what we are aiming at, and even if we think of it only as a means to betterment of the workers' material condition within the capitalist system—then we need such teaching, or such study, as will tend to inspire them with respect for themselves and enthusiasm for their organizations. And if we think of the unions as being, at least potentially, something more than so many wage-bargaining

groups, then we need such educational activity as will lead the workers to think of themselves, not merely as bricklayers or cloak-makers or machinists, but also and above all as members of the working class.

It has been the glory of the Socialist movement, in its educational aspect, that it did these things. No union man was ever made less efficient or less diligent in relation to the daily routine of his union by listening to Socialist lectures and reading Socialist books. On the contrary, a better understanding of economics was likely to increase his practical efficiency, and his pride in "making good" as a Socialist was likely to incite him to more patient and painstaking effort. Routine efficiency and diligence, however, are not enough. The best pilot on the seas cannot steer a ship that has no headway. There must be steam in the boilers. And the mass-energy that makes a labor organization forge ahead is not supplied—at any rate, not steadily enough nor in large enough volume—by cold calculation on the members' part that if they do their duty as union men they may "get a raise". In addition to this at all times, and during bad times instead of this, there must be the driving force of moral enthusiasm and of intellectual conviction. Workingmen who think and feel as comrades in a class movement, a movement of whose ultimate triumph they are confident because they understand its nature and its genesis, a movement which holds before them an ideal bigger and finer than material gain for themselves, a movement which gives them the sense that they are playing a historic role—such workingmen know how to survive defeat and so to earn success. "The stars in their courses fought against Sisera", was the burden of Deborah's song. Those who know that they are co-operating with the forces of social evolution have within themselves a source of power that nothing else can supply. It is no wonder that at a time when such a conviction is most notably lacking in our American unions, these unions are steadily losing in numerical strength and in fighting efficiency. Let us not add our sanction to so suicidal a tendency.

Time does not permit me to say anything about the Rand School or other special institutions of an educational nature which have been created by the Socialist movement. Nor is it necessary, for they are fairly well known.

Only one more thing I must say before I close. In describing the educational activities of the Socialist party I have spoken in the past tense. I have not meant to imply that such activities are no longer

going on. That would be far from the truth. But it must be admitted that they have not been so much in evidence during the last ten or twelve years as in the period before the war. The causes of this change it would take too long to discuss with any thoroughness. They are to be found, I believe, in the abnormal conditions—abnormal in both the economic and the psychological sense—which have characterized the whole of American society since our entry into the war, and even since the beginning of the struggle in Europe. These conditions will pass. The process which Mr. Harding described as “getting back to normalcy” is a slow process. But it is under way.

The concentration of capitalist ownership and control, the extension of great-capitalist forms of production and appropriation into fields hitherto occupied by small-capitalist or precapitalist forms, the progressive elimination or subjugation of middle-class elements, are all going on apace. That exceptional type of war-prosperity, in which it was possible for all classes to share, if it is not altogether a thing of the past, is clearly on the wane. Capitalist accumulation is again becoming dependent upon the intensive exploitation of labor, by means of speeding, disemployment, and wage-reductions.

The social-psychological results naturally lag somewhat behind the economic causes. As the militancy of labor, generated by normal pre-war conditions, did not subside immediately on the advent of the war-prosperity, neither does it revive just as soon as that special condition disappears. But that the renewed sharpening of the antagonism between capitalist and proletarian interests will in due time bring about a renewal of conscious class-struggle, seems to me hardly open to doubt. Nor is it more doubtful that renewed class-struggle will again call forth an educational activity similar in its general features to that which the Socialists were conducting with such exultant vigor and such marked effect, and which, though on a diminished scale and in a somewhat less jubilant spirit, they have kept up during the war, during the years of persecution, and during the yet more difficult period of cynicism and jazz.

III. COMMUNIST ACTIVITY IN WORKERS' EDUCATION

Bertram Wolfe

Workers' School
(Manuscript not furnished)

DISCUSSION

Hilda Smith.—Have other groups than the Communists tried circuit teachers and correspondence courses, and if so, with what results?

A. Epstein.—When I was in charge of Workers' Education for Pennsylvania, we had a string of seven towns. We succeeded in getting those towns to support the project. The experiment was very successful, although we had no financial support from the outside.

A. J. Muste.—Tom Tippet's work in Illinois was of the same character.

Leonard Craig.—Wolfe said they are opposed to the use of university teachers. Shall we wait till enough are fired?

Bertram Wolfe.—Not exactly. There is not much firing. We have to develop our own teachers. In the main they rise to the occasion or are soon eliminated. We train people while using them. Sometimes they have had a collegiate training and then gone over to the Labor Movement; but save in English for foreigners we usually do not have professional teachers.

Leonard Craig.—I think we are finding some fit teachers in the universities. In Pittsburg, Warne is O. K. To be sure he is getting into hot water at the university.

A voice.—Perhaps we can do our bit to get some fired!

FOURTH SESSION.

Sunday, Feb. 26, 10:45 A. M.

VARIED APPROACHES TO WORKERS' EDUCATION.

I. EDUCATION IN THE CONSUMERS' COOPERATIVE MOVEMENT

Cedric Long

Co-operative League of the United States.

We roughly divide cooperative education into two classes. The first and most important is the intensive instruction for officials, employees or prospective employees, either by means of a full-time Training School or through the correspondence courses. Approximately 15 of these Training Schools have been held in various parts of the country during the past ten years. The session usually lasts from six to eight weeks and except for one course in the History and Theory of Consumers' Cooperation, the instruction is generally of a more or less technical nature. Bookkeeping is the heaviest course; and a course in Problems of Organization and Administration of Cooperative Business ranks second. There are occasional other courses covering such subjects as Commercial Arithmetic, Business English, Advertising Publicity and Education, etc., etc. So much for the work of our full-time resident Training Schools.

The Cooperative League Correspondence School was organized a year ago by a committee appointed at the Fifth Cooperative Congress. The business details are handled from the New York office of The League but the correcting of papers is done by Prof. Colston E. Warne of the University of Pittsburgh, who bore the largest share of the burden of organizing these first courses and in some instances actually writing all of the necessary material. At present there are only five courses in circulation.

The second and more general type of cooperative education is that planned for the rank and file of the membership and for the general purchasing public, which is the recruiting ground for new members. The question is occasionally put to us "How much education are you doing in the field of general culture and personal improvement?" We admit that we are doing exceedingly little. Such more advanced education must wait upon a strong cooperative movement to sustain it. Hence, our work today is designed first and foremost to the building of a strong economic organization which shall provide the foundation for the more advanced forms of education later. By this we mean that we are out to get membership and support for consumers' cooperative societies. We do not even get members until we first get purchasers. Thus our educational work in its most elementary form becomes a matter of winning trade for our stores, bakeries and restaurants. It means establishing the right contact with the man in the street and the woman in the home, regardless of who they may be. In nine cases out of ten, these people have absolutely no understanding of advanced trade union, political or cooperative terminology. The amount of thinking in terms of social welfare which they have done amounts to almost zero. We go after the wife of the trolley car conductor; the brakeman who is gloating over his new advance to the position of the conductor, the young fellows just out of Uncle Sam's army, newly married, with a flat and a set of Grand Rapids furniture, with a job as assistant driver on an inter-urban express line. These are the raw material for the cooperative as for the trade union movement. We must talk to them in terms of the price of sausage, short weight in Mr. A. & P.'s store, the quality of beans packed in the can which bears the label of the American Stores. To advanced educators or others who think in terms of radical philosophies, this line of talk looks pretty feeble stuff. It is petty bourgeois to the nth degree and yet the average American worker is also petty bourgeois to the nth degree, and we must talk in language which he understands before he can understand the language we want to talk. We have advanced our first step when we have enlisted his interest in a local cooperative store. We have carried him one step further when we have shown him that there are other cooperative stores in the city closely related to his own. We are promoting him into the advanced camp of activities when we present him with an understanding of the cooperative movement which he is building in America. He receives his cooperative doctor's degree after he has attended some of our classes and become acquainted with the relation between the cooperative and other radical or progressive movements.

Thus the broad base of our educational work is almost purely a concern with objective materials. We steer away from the discussion of abstract theories and doctrinal hair-splittings. It is unfortunate that the labor and the cooperative movements in America have so often become engulfed in this thick fog of abstruse discussion that the average robust and healthy minded American no sooner approaches these organizations than his spirits are dampened, the fog gets into his bones, and he is glad to escape into what looks to him like freedom of American individualism again.

Parenthetically, I might say that we are interested even in our conferences and conventions, to avoid the discussion of controversial subjects which in most cases serve to disrupt more than to advance the movement. Discussion and controversy when it has educational value—by all means. Discussion and controversy when it leads to disunity and factionalism—by no means. It is quite conceivable that political parties and trade union organizations can engage in the most spirited controversies and carry these on for a long period of time without any permanent injury resulting. A cooperative society is engaged in a neck and neck race with many private business firms and any stopping midway down the course for the purpose of arguing out some highly debatable question of political or economic theory, means that the cooperative may win the debate but be a loser in the race. Any consumers' cooperative business is a highly intricate piece of mechanism, built for the particular job of running the workers' business in competition with the most highly developed and efficient capitalist business machine that the world has ever known. To use that delicate mechanism for purposes other than the one for which it was built is to impair its usefulness. If the workers and farmers of America really want their cooperative technician to build an economic system which shall effectively compete with capitalism, they should turn over this one job to them and then see to it that these people are not continually harrassed and hindered by the endless difficulties over political and philosophic issues which have so often befuddled and bemired most of the other political and economic organizations of the workers. You must remember that in the cooperative movement, we not only face all of the complications of diverse racial, religious and nationality groups which you have in the trade union movement, but we also have to deal with the farmers' cooperatives and the cooperatives of the middle classes. To maintain genuine cooperative unity here is a highly difficult and delicate job.

I have tried to state briefly the philosophy actuating our educational work as well as to indicate the nature of that work itself. The elementary contact work and preliminary education of the consuming public must of necessity be carried on by the local cooperative society and carried on in the manner best suited to local conditions. It is our job in The Cooperative League or in the subordinate district organization of the League, merely to train the local leaders and the cooperative employees and to provide them with the books, pamphlets, periodicals and ideas which they in turn may pass on to the general membership and the public at large.

II. A FREE LANCE VENTURE IN WORKERS' EDUCATION

Hilda W. Smith

Bryn Mawr Summer School for Women Workers in Industry.

Seven years ago, Bryn Mawr College planned a two months' course for women workers in industry, one hundred students each year to be recruited from every section of the United States. First steps in organizing the School were taken by the College in cooperation with a group of women workers, leaders among women in the organized labor movement. After the first summer this preliminary committee was reorganized to include with the college representatives an equal number of women workers, elected each year by the students of the Summer School. This joint control established since the first year, has been a foundation stone in the development of the School.

What contacts has the School had with organized labor during the past seven years? What has been the value of such contacts for the School and its students? And in what way has such a free lance venture in education helped the Labor Movement?

A resolution passed at the National Convention of the Womens' Trade Union League in 1916, that the League was in favor of asking the womens' colleges to open schools for industrial workers, had never brought results until in 1921 the Summer School opened at Bryn Mawr. League representatives and other women active in the Labor Movement have ever since given great assistance to the School organization. Various State Federations and the American Federation of Labor have passed resolutions endorsing the School; and friendly letters have been received from Mr. Gompers and Mr. Green. The latter has visited the School, as the speaker at an opening meeting

Representatives of the Summer School have spoken in many union meetings, and each year fifty per cent of the students in the School are union members. Unions have often given contributions to travelling or incidental expenses for their own members to Bryn Mawr, or have helped with partial scholarships.

From the view-point of the union members in the Summer School, they have a unique opportunity to know the rank and file workers from unorganized trades and communities, and to get a true picture of the industrial situation in every part of the country. They realize in the School the difficulties ahead of the Labor Movement in this country in organizing the unorganized. Statistics of the School show often as many as fifteen nationalities and twenty-five trades represented in one summer among the one hundred students. The list for 1927 is typical.

TRADES	NATIONALITIES
Garment 39	American 55
Textile 18	Russian 26
Millinery 9	Polish 10
Electric and Telephone 7	Hungarian 3
Printing and Paper 7	Italian 2
Tobacco 4	Galician 1
Laundry 3	German 1
Shoe 2	Armenian 1
Waitress 2	Lettish 1
Lampshades 2	English 1
Broommaker 1	
Umbrellas 1	
Foodstuffs 1	
Hardware 1	
Watches 1	
Upholstery 1	
Handkerchiefs 1	
Flower and Feathers 1	
Total 19	Total 10

There are many opportunities, formal and informal, during the School term for the discussion of organization. At the "Trade Party" in the first week of the School the students in trade groups dramatize their own trades, showing processes, condition of work,

and something of the history of their organizations. Such dramatization give the whole school some idea of the dependence of each industry on many others, and the common problems of the workers in all trades. Week-end conferences, with speakers of all shades of opinion, have been devoted to such question as "The Bargaining Power of Labor," "Monotony in Industry," "Organization and Legislation," and "Unemployment." In every Economic course, required for all students in the School, the history of the Labor Movement is discussed, and the unorganized workers for the first time come to have an understanding of what organization has gained for the worker.

A few quotations from letters of former students in regard to what they have gained from these economic courses are of interest:

One student writes: "Economics taught me to see how the whole Economic system was complicated, while I had thought it was only the lives of people and that there was no relation between the two. My studies at the School gave me the courage to keep on and a stimulant that I never had before. They were a tonic that started me growing faster."

A union member, the wife of a coal miner, writes: "Formerly I had become a student of economics, but after the course last summer I am reading everything I can get on the subject and regard things as I believe an economist would. Education in clear thinking such as we received at the Summer School is the sort that will make us stop and think and then come to the realization that the world is what me make it."

From a southern worker, unorganized: "I learned in my Economics class the important part each worker played in the industrial world, and that in order to assert their rights they must have concentrated action. I appreciated the Public Speaking course, too. I began to learn to get up before my classmates and speak concisely without fear and trembling."

Other unorganized workers write: "My courses gave me confidence in talking things over with the boss and sometimes I was able to gain a point for the girls in my shop."

"Before I went to Bryn Mawr I was just an ordinary worker, a cog in the wheel. After studying Economics I understood more about the complex economic society of today, about the laws per-

taining to industrial legislation, and what the union has done for the industrial worker. Perhaps I appear to be the same worker but inside I am a different person with a broader vision."

"Now I have a desire to stay in industry. There are so many interesting angles to look out from."

"We are given a light at Bryn Mawr which we bring back into industry. We are often misunderstood when our ideas differ from those of our fellow workers but keeping the truth before us, we forge ahead."

"As experiences in industry are compared among the girls and a new interest in other races is established, one cannot help but feel the strings of industry tighten, and that which was only thought of with a great weariness now takes the form of something alive and important, making you glad you belong to this vast throng called 'industrial workers.'"

The Workers' Education Movement often asks the question: do workers want education? The Summer School Admissions Committee has found that usually two hundred or more applications come in every year for the one hundred places in the school. Talks to industrial groups in shops or evening classes show the greatest desire for education among the rank and file workers. From one neckwear shop in which a talk was given at noon the other day, six applications have come in from fifty women employed. The main difficulty of recruiting students at present is due to the serious unemployment. Former students of the Summer School are recruiting in every district, and raising money toward the scholarship fund. They are determined that the School shall go on.

The study made of former students of the Summer School last year by Helen Hill, one of the tutors, has shown that these workers have averaged five evening classes apiece since leaving the School. Reports send in by 209 students show that they have attended 1320 classes. There has been a decided increase in the number of Social Science classes attended, and 74 former students have been able to start educational work in new localities, where there were no existing classes for workers. There is no doubt that the School has stimulated the Workers' Education Movement through many of its 600 former students in all parts of the country.

Three other resident summer schools modelled somewhat on the plan of the Bryn Mawr have been started by other groups in the past four years; at the University of Wisconsin, in the South, and at Barnard College, New York City. This latter school is of a slightly different type, as it is non-resident, and draws students only from New York City. Twenty-six students attended last summer, mostly from the garment and millinery trades, and it is hoped that fifty may be enrolled this year. These workers went to the college for a day time program of classes, study hours, and recreation, returning home to sleep. The same sort of course in Economics, English and science were given as at Bryn Mawr, and a number of former Summer School instructors were on the staff. Students and faculty were enthusiastic about the School and thought that the non-resident feature made it especially well adapted to conditions in a large city, and for a group of workers who could not leave home for two months. Bryn Mawr and Barnard Summer School students are working in one district organization this winter in New York, going to classes, and planning their activities together.

In the field of educational method, the Summer School faculty have made a contribution to this whole movement. An analysis of curriculum and teaching methods is made every summer, as the basis for teaching during the following year. Constructive work has been done on an effective system of tutoring; on a method of grouping students with the aid of certain simple tests; and in providing text-book material for the use of elementary students. This year an experiment will be tried in a new plan of teaching. The School of one hundred students will be divided into units of about twenty, the grouping based largely on equal ability in reading. In each unit three instructors will offer coordinate courses, in Economics, English Composition and Literature, and a third subject, either history, science or psychology. Instructors will be asked to tutor their own students. By this plan it is hoped that less confusion of mind will result for the student, and further steps in necessary coordination of subject matter will be taken.

To sum up the results of any educational venture is difficult. The Summer School has undoubtedly been effective in bringing together women workers from all over the United States, organized and unorganized, for the discussion of their problems, and in promoting understanding between the two groups; it has also brought into contact women workers and college women, and pointed out

that they have much in common, and are working to attain the same ends. An experimental method of teaching is having its effect on college teaching and on college teachers. Above all, the School is giving to women workers a desire to go on with an educational program; a method of study which will enable them to do this; and is deepening a sense of social responsibility in these workers for the solution of industrial problems.

III. SOUTHERN SUMMER SCHOOL FOR WOMEN WORKERS IN INDUSTRY.

Louise Leonard
Executive Secretary

The Southern School for Women Workers in Industry is sponsored by a committee of Southern men and women workers and others interested in workers' education. There were eleven members on the original committee, seven of whom were workers and five of whom were members of trade unions.

The first session was held at Sweet Briar College in Virginia in the summer of 1927. The college, however, had nothing to do with the administration of the school.

One-half of the money necessary for running the school the first year, came from the American Fund for Public Service and the other half from Southern communities in the form of scholarships for local girls who attended the school. In cities where organized labor has any strength, local communities depended upon central trades bodies and local unions as well as international trade union members for contributions and received a very generous response in such cities as Atlanta, Ga., Norfolk, Va., Danville, Va., and Lynchburg. The Virginia State Federation of Labor gave one scholarship and the Georgia Federation made a generous gift.

Twenty-five students from six states attended the school and they came from textile mills, tobacco factories and other typical industries of the South. Seven of them belonged to trade unions and all but one of these were members of the United Garment Workers, most of the trades employing women, having, of course, no organizations in the Southern states.

The subjects studied included Economics, English Composition, Public Speaking and Health Education but as far as possible all were correlated around Economics as the central emphasis. Lectures and discussions on Industrial History stressed the development of the labor movement in England and in America and every possible opportunity was given to the students to realize the value of collective action and to understand the problems of trade unionism. The experience of seven trade unionists gave reality to class discussions of the problems of organized labor as did also the talks by visiting labor leaders from Virginia, North Carolina, and Georgia, who presented different aspects of the work of trade unions in the South.

These visitors expressed their approval of the policy of the school and agreed that it should have a good effect upon the development of the labor movement in the Southern States, although not officially connected with it.

In one Virginia city, students who attended the Southern Summer School were instrumental in starting a workers' class under the auspices of the C. L. U. made up of men and women who studied Mary Beard's "History of the American Labor Movement." So it is hoped that other students will stimulate local interest in workers' education.

As the policy of the school becomes better known it will undoubtedly have to depend more and more upon the interest and support of the trade unionists of the South.

IV. WORKERS' EDUCATION IN PENNSYLVANIA.

Leonard Craig

Director of Educational Department, Pennsylvania Federation
of Labor.

Worker's Education in Pennsylvania is slowly being recognized as an essential part of the Labor Movement. The workers, however, are slow to see the necessity of study classes and fail to grasp the opportunity offered by the Department of Workers' Education to better understand their own problems. Nevertheless, in the past four months a number of study classes have been organized, and at the

present time they are functioning very successfully and doing good work.

The outstanding accomplishments of this department in the past four months is the organizing of three Labor Colleges in three different cities in Pennsylvania. The first of these was organized in Pittsburgh on October 30th, 1927. On December 8th, 1927, two study classes were launched which are going along nicely and have fifty students enrolled.

The topics chosen by these two classes are Economics, Parliamentary Law and Public Speaking. The economics class is in charge of Prof. C. E. Warne, a teacher in the University of Pittsburgh. The Parliamentary Law and Public Speaking Class is in charge of Prof. Wm. L. Nunn, also a teacher in the University of Pittsburgh. These two classes meet every Tuesday and Wednesday evening and for two hours study their own problems.

The second of these Labor Colleges was organized in Shenandoah on January 29th, 1928. The first class was launched on February first with twenty students enrolled, which has now grown into two classes with an enrollment of sixty students. The topics chosen by these students are Parliamentary Law and Public Speaking. These classes are composed mostly of Anthracite miners, and the success or failure of this educational experiment in Shenandoah rests to a great extent in their hands. However, from the interest shown by the members of these classes it is obvious that these workers want to better understand their social and economic problems, and that they realize that the way to get the necessary information is to form their own study. These classes also meet every Tuesday and Wednesday and are in charge of Prof. Robert E. Sheads of the local High School.

The third of these Workers' Colleges was organized in Wilkes-Barre on March 4th. The first class was launched on March 14th with twenty students enrolled, which has now increased to forty, and at the present rate of increase another class will have to be launched very shortly. This class is taking up Parliamentary Law and Public Speaking and the College has signified its intention of launching an economics class just as soon as possible. There is a possibility of other classes being formed in the neighborhood of Wilkes-Barre soon, as Nanticoke has already expressed a desire for one, and

I am sure this is the forerunner of other classes that will develop in that vicinity.

The manifestations shown by the students of all of these study classes are quite convincing that the workers are very much in earnest about workers' education, and I am sure that these little study groups will grow and be a great asset to the labor movement of Pennsylvania.

Labor College of Philadelphia

The Labor College of Philadelphia is an institution that we are quite proud of and in a class all by itself. Here we have the expression of two Brookwood students, Jack Lever and Israel Mufson who have very successfully established workers' education in Philadelphia. The Labor College in Philadelphia has an enrollment of approximately 500 students, and I am sure you will agree with me when I say they will soon be the cream and power of the labor movement of that city. The Labor College of Philadelphia represents most of the local unions in that city, and has twelve study classes in operation, which are, Literature, Economics, Parliamentary Law, Public Speaking, Current Events, Labor Problems, Research, two classes of apprentices and two classes in Shop Economics. Two week-end conferences have been held this term and have received a great deal of praise from the American Federation of Labor and the Labor movement as a whole.

A Basic Need for Workers' Education

My experience in an effort to develop workers' education indicates that the movement is greatly handicapped by the lack of a sufficient number of teachers who are qualified to take charge of workers' study groups. Teachers as a rule have had little or no experience in teaching workers' study classes, therefore it is impossible for them to outline a course of lessons and a method of teaching, that will be an appeal sufficient to hold the workers' attention. The average public school teacher knows very little about the labor movement, and is often placed in the position of knowing a great deal less than his students, in regard to what workers' Education is all about. The average teacher has no conception of books or material that should be used and recommended for workers study classes. I sincerely hope that Brookwood will consider this very important question and develop some method of training teachers that will qualify to take charge of workers' Study classes.

Another great need in the development of Workers' Education is a standard set of books and pamphlets and material for class work. These pamphlets should be simple in structure, on popular topics, in good readable type, and especially written for beginners. The books and pamphlets should not contain over 50 pages and should include a syllabus of the contents for immediate use of the student. A pamphlet of this kind will greatly simplify the work of establishing Workers' Education, and will be the means of progress of the labor movement.

The question of teachers and materials for workers' study classes must be very earnestly considered by such institutions as Brookwood and the Workers Education Bureau if Workers' Education is to assume its proper place in the Labor Movement.

DISCUSSION

Helen Norton—I sympathize with Mr. Long's difficulty in respect to talking to farmers in technical language. There is difficulty in introducing any appreciation of class consciousness: (1) There is the viewpoint of the land owner; (2) There is the social problem of the poor whites vs. the negroes; (3) There is the feeling of the native born against the foreigners; (4) There is suspicion engendered by comparison of the farmer's total cash income with that of the wage-earner; (5) The Farm Bureaus maintained by the U. S. Department of Agriculture, the state Agricultural Colleges, and the farmers are an influence for the status quo. By their generous advice and practical assistance they gain a considerable hold. For a time just after the War, Farm Bureaus dabbled in co-operative marketing. Then the government drew back.

The Farmers' Union has for the most part considerable enmity for the Farm Bureau as a rival. The feeling of the Grange for the Farm Bureau is a little better. On the whole it is hard to get education for anything but the status quo.

Bertram Wolfe.—I disagree with Long's anti-red slant. To be sure, the co-operative movement should include all genuine co-operators and the emphasis should be on concrete problems, but his view is too particularist. Lack of theory implies a theory. The trouble with a large section of the American co-operative movement is that it lacks a soul. Co-operators can't live on beans alone. There is, indeed, danger of excessive controversy; but danger also of grave-yard peace. "Co-operators are in a neck-and-neck struggle"; but so are par-

ties. Controversy hampers, but in the end clarifies. Next steps can not be taken unless the whole journey is in view. I'm afraid that "just business" is doomed to defeat in the co-operatives. The chain stores are too strong. You've got to supplement with a certain understanding of what competition with the profit system involves. Some co-operators do this, and I don't think they are the less healthy?

I think Long has as much misapprehension of Marxism as the farmer has. There are farmers and farmers. I think the Northwestern farmers haven't much fear of a farmer-labor alliance against financial control. I see farm papers that seem to me as satisfactory as my own articles on the farmers' problems would be. I think the Northwestern farmer is readier to listen to a speech by me than, perhaps the Pittsburgh Central Labor Union.

Cedric Long.—Many of our own people champion controversy for its educational value; but the co-operative movement is an economic movement, not a discussion movement. Discussion is incidental. As for the danger of going ahead without a road or a program,—the elimination of profit and the establishment of democratic control are pretty radical principles. Better be satisfied to agree on these.

There is a difference in the movement between the class-conscious and the consumer-conscious. Whichever side wins by a resolution, the economic character of the movement is not changed. It is possible to go along together till the road parts. It hasn't parted yet. May be a split will be necessary some time; but it is doubtful whether the matter has to be settled now. Doctrinal correctness is less essential than economic organization.

Lucy Carner. — Did Mr. Craig see any method of relating unorganized workers to the local trade movement.

Leonard Craig.—Applicants not members, are referred to the union of their craft, or if there is none such, if we can get enough individuals we can make a beginning of organization.

A. J. Muste.—Brookwood has Jack Lever prospecting in New England at present, in unorganized territory, with just such considerations in view. In North Carolina, Alfred Hoffman has organized a council of representatives of unions in a number of towns, which devotes its time largely to discussion of organization problems. The result may be a more permanent venture in Workers' Education or an organizing council or both.

A. Lefkowitz.—Our classes admit non-union students if there is room. We know we can unionize them.

Nellie Seeds.—I want to ask whether an experimental school for the revaluation of elementary education is not important enough to be included along with parties, co-operatives, and free-lance ventures.

A. J. Muste.—We have been dealing with the education of grown-ups.

John Hader.—Craig raised an important point about materials. I taught a W. T. U. L. class this winter and felt the lack of adequate materials. There is need of small pamphlets,—a lesson for a session. Couldn't such a series be formulated in the classes at Brookwood and distributed?

Hilda Smith.—We've been experimenting. Miss Pollak has been putting together just such a pamphlet.

Bertram Wolfe.—How about the role of the W. E. B.?

A. Lefkowitz.—The old Socialist pamphlets were of service. The W. E. B. books are no good. They can't be understood by the workers.

A. W. Calhoun.—At some of the Brookwood summer institutes we have put out mimeographed summaries of some topics. Certain ones of these have been used with classes in the field. It is quite possible that we shall be able to offer additional specimens.

Bertram Wolfe.—In the matter of English for foreign-born workers, we got sick of Americanism and dolls; so the teachers of the Workers' School got out a book, published by the International Publishers, with material based on the students' experience and interests.

FIFTH SESSION

Sunday, February 26, 2:30 p. m.

WHAT RELATION SHOULD WORKERS' EDUCATION ENTERPRISES SUSTAIN TO THE LABOR MOVEMENT?

- (1) Subordination to strategy and tactics of union, party, co-operative?
 - (2) Autonomous rank in the movement, on a co-ordinate footing with union, party, co-operative?
 - (3) Free-lance independence as auxiliaries to the Labor movement?
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I. THE VIEWPOINT OF A TRADE UNION OFFICIAL.

John P. Frey

Metal Trades Department, A. F. of L.

I do not feel that workers' education should be "subordinated to labor organization strategy and tactics." I can see no connection between true education—that is education which is free from propaganda motive—and trade union strategy. Neither can I see how education can be subordinated to any movement, for the moment education is subordinated it ceases to be true education. It is equally clear to my mind that workers' education, to be truly successful must be carried on under the direction of trade union organizations, for it is the American Federation of Labor and its affiliated bodies which more than anyone else, should understand those subjects in connection with which it is most important that the worker should be adequately and accurately informed.

II. STUDY GROUPS IN SOCIAL SCIENCE UNDER UNION

DIRECTION

A. D. Sheffield

Boston Trade Union College

In debating the control of enterprises in Worker's Education, we must reckon with the crews, as well as with the captains, of our little education bands. Our students are adults and volunteers, and if we set up controls that become uncongenial to them, the American Federation of Labor will find itself with an educational fleet with nothing but admirals on board.

The course of any educational project in the labor movement seems dictated first by the motivations in the students which can be counted on for getting the course under way, and the distinctive emphasis in the work which warrants an overhead labor group in making the outlay of time and funds to carry it through. In an average city labor body the students may be grouped by their attitudes towards study projects into four classes. One might call them—

- (1) The "emancipated spirits."
- (2) The "self-improvers."
- (3) The "social good-timers."
- (4) The Union officers.

The first group is composed of alert-minded men and women, with developed reading habits and independent outlook on social issues. Study projects are easily started with a nucleus of such persons, and they are apt to be most sensitive to anything like dictation as to their work or allegiance as a study group. The second group—the "self-improvers"—can be enlisted in classes with the more conventional type of study program. From a labor point of view the problem with them is to help them find their satisfaction in a self-improvement which looks to something more than their personal culture as individuals. We are assuming, I suppose, that the special warrant for an outlay by organized labor on study-projects lies in labor's stake in an education that aims to realize for the student the fullest intellectual satisfactions and social worth of his role as a trade unionist.

The third group—the “social good-timers”—are the persons we usually have in mind when we talk of “mass education.” The fourth group—the Union officers—are usually the sponsors of our classes, but are apt to be too much absorbed in their own administrative jobs to give thought to the classes as resources for an educational re-direction of Union experience.

This perfectly natural state of affairs in our Trade Union personnel would seem to indicate that there is a place in the Workers’ Education movement for projects under a variety of auspices. The labor movement may be admirably served by educational groups of an auxiliary or free-lance character. Of course, we should be increasingly critical of our adult education projects—whatever their auspices—on the score of the soundness of their educational methods. Adult education has become a popular slogan, and many varieties of lecture- and reading-projects for grown-ups are calling themselves “Workers’ Education” on much the same warrant as that of Moliere’s hero, who discovered with delight that every time he talked, he was engaged in “prose composition.”

While I hope, therefore, that we shall not see organized labor developing an exclusive and offish attitude towards semi-independent study enterprises, I hope to see an increasing emphasis upon courses fully under the responsible control of Union executives. The immediate need in this field seems to me to be the developing of specific Union projects as ventures into social science. Such matters as methods of organizing, as the conduct of Union politics, as the conflict between rights and lefts, as negotiation procedures with employers, as business ventures with Union funds, all point to enterprises around which Union officers and active members can be enlisted in cooperative studies,—using the practical enterprise as a laboratory for a learning experience. The importance of Union control here lies in our need to establish the idea of an educational technique for the Union program.

An interesting project of this type is being tried out in Boston, where the Upholsterers’ Union has undertaken a social study of its own membership. This study seems likely to yield important suggestions, both for the programs of Union meetings and for the tactics of active members in an organizing campaign.

Of course, educational projects of this sort are likely to start study circles in which the members pursue further in reading and

discussion some of the lines of thought they have thus opened up. It is where informal study passes over into organized classes that the question of control begins to arise. Personally, I feel that there is much needless fear of "official" control. Any disposition towards censorship on the part of certain officials is sure to meet with opposition from other officials. In several years' experience on the Board of Control of the Boston Trade Union College, I have not known a single instance where educators were divided against labor leaders on an issue touching the freedom of a teacher or class. Of course, there always are certain officials with a parochial school point of view, who take the attitude that the labor classes are a flock whose tender intellects should not be exposed to anti-labor opinions unless these are promptly capped by the orthodox rejoinders from some A. F. of L. catechism. But the discussion of educational policy which is precipitated whenever such a point of control comes up is itself a liberalizing experience and should be welcomed as part of the Workers' Education movement. Questions of control run through every phase of the labor movement, and we should not press our concern for the freedom of learning to the point of making our classes savor of secessionism. To do this is to put students under the unnecessary onus of carrying on as progressives at some cost to their standing with their own official chiefs. And it is the effect of control upon the students, after all, which will determine the future growth of the Workers' Education movement.

III. THE RELATION OF WORKERS' EDUCATION TO THE LABOR MOVEMENT

E. C. Lindeman
Workers Education Bureau

For some peculiar reason, the problem of organizational relationships has risen to the level of acute importance in Labor circles. The reason for this unusual concern for inter-relationships is probably due to an inherent element of suspicion which is one of the heritages of labor organizations. For it is essential that we be reminded frequently of the fact that there never has been a single, unified labor movement. As an institutional and voluntary form, Labor has partaken of the same defects which characterize the Protestant Church: it has always consisted of numerous groups whose members

obviously all wanted to go to the same place but who never arrived because no single group could agree with any other group with respect to the road to be followed. Consequently, sects have always divided the general congregation of labor organizations—many dogmas all sprung from the fundamental generalization that those who do the useful work of the world should somehow decide how the world is to be managed. This is all very confusing to the outsider, almost as confusing as the multifarious craft organizations of labor which persist long after they have lost their reality in industry. It has also its humorous side, as for example, in international labor organization when we hear of a first, second, third, and even a two-and-one half International. But to view these discriminations with humor is a great mistake; for nothing is more serious to those who control labor unions; he who has listened to jurisdictional disputes within trade unions will come away with the firm conviction that relationships constitute the *alpha* and *omega* of organized labor technique and philosophy.

It seems obvious that no progressive solution for the problems of relationships will be discovered until trade unionism is regarded, not merely as an *ideo*-logical force, but also as a *functional*-logical one. Organized labor is, of course, representative of an idea but it also symbolizes an accomplished fact, something done because it needed to be done. It is, in other words, a functional reality and whatever philosophy emerges to justify it in the realm of means, ends and values will be one which derives from functions, not dogmas or ideas.

One of the latest functions of trade unions has arisen from recognition of the fact that force and coercion are not satisfactory long-time tools—that the soundest argument is the one which rests its case finally upon reasonableness; this recognition has given rise to what is now known as workers' or labor education. This audience does not need to be reminded of the historical sequence of this development, but one aspect calls for emphasis, namely, that in this move toward education, the trade unions were here and there so tardy that independent or private agencies proceeded to take the initiative. We thus have, not merely in this country but elsewhere, workers' or labor education which is only nominally under the control of the dominant labor organizations. There are, moreover, other forms of workers' education which seem to be organically related to the trade unions, but upon closer analysis, are found to be merely me-

chanical appendages. And just as there are varieties of labor belief and dogma, so varieties of educational enterprises have arisen, each based upon philosophical preconceptions regarding educational theory. In other words, the lines are blurred; there is no clear-cut conception of what workers' education is supposed to do, how it is to do it, and who is to guide its doing.

The promoters of this conference, realizing presumably how "quick bright things come to confusion" have asked us to do some thinking in this area of present and future friction, or comity. They propose a context of three choices, namely:

- a. Workers' education which is thoroughly subordinate to the executive and administrative forces of a trade union, a labor party, or a co-operative society; from this point of view, education is conceived to be a tool, a subsidiary means employed by executives to further their ends.
- b. Workers' education which sets up its own executive and administrative machinery parallel to trade union organization, a labor party, or a co-operative society and exists henceforth as an autonomous, self-determining part of the total labor movement; in this case, workers' education is conceived to be not merely a tool to be used by labor organizations, but rather a new and separate function. A labor college, under this scheme, would enjoy the same ranking in a national representative body as does a trade union, a local federation, or a district federation; it would, indeed, become coordinate with other forms of organized labor.
- c. Workers' education which is wholly independent of the executive, administrative, and representative control of organized labor; in this case, workers' education would be conceived as a supplementary or auxiliary agency, aiding the processes of labor but not in any sense subordinate or coordinate with any of its parts or with its whole.

We are thus asked to discuss whether workers' education is to be swallowed by the organism called Labor and thence become an assimilated part of its mass, whether it is to be regarded as a new organ or function to be correlated with older organs or functions, or whether it is to exist as a free and independent entity. Subordination, coordination, or independence—these are the terms which describe our choices.

A proper analysis of this situation would lead one to weigh advantages and disadvantages for each of the three terms of our equation, but this would consume time out of all proportion to the appropriate limits of an essay. We may, however, assume that a logical procedure of this sort would reveal certain plus and minus qualities for each choice; we should then need to weigh these qualities and finally strike a balance. This would, obviously, be an artificial and highly intellectualized method which, if followed judiciously, would probably leave us precisely where we were at the beginning. On the other hand, if we, the participants in the discussion, are to receive some education through confronting this situation, we shall need to follow a course which will reveal new meaning for older concepts, new insights into the nature of the issues involved, and new interpretations of functions.

We might, by way of illustration, begin our discussions by asking several questions of the Labor Movement itself: In what sense may it be designated a social movement? In what direction is it moving? Are we satisfied that this is the proper direction? Is education one of the appropriate means for arriving at this end? If so, what kind of education will constitute the most effective means? Conceived as a movement, organized labor utilizes certain tactics, strategies to achieve its goal; are these tactics reconcilable with education? In what sense are they denials of the reasonable, educational way?

If, for example, the labor movement were a folk fermentation, it would naturally bring forth new values and new cultural ends; these would, of themselves, give rise to the need for new knowledge and new educational experiments. The idea of free public education for all children arose out of the folk-movement of democracy which had its beginning in central Europe and in America during the first half of the Nineteenth Century. The movement itself called forth new cultural patterns and fresh intellectual stirrings. The proponents of democracy asked something of life which was denied by their opponents. Just what is it that Labor asks of life? And how do the values which Labor sponsors differ from those sanctioned by bourgeois society? If we could answer these queries positively, we should be in possession of the knowledge needful for our problem. If Labor wants only what the middle and upper classes want, then its educational problem is simple: it needs only to bring about quantitative extensions of existing educational facilities and methods. If, on the contrary, Labor postulates entirely new values and standards for life,

then its educational problem involves qualitative factors and at once becomes infinitely complex.

If one looks about calmly at the Labor world as represented by its dominant organizations in this country, several paradoxes apparently stand in the way of reason. Considered from educational points of view, organized labor seems at once too militant and not militant enough. It is too militant to allow for proper intellectual functions in the sense that it forever keeps its lines taut for an impending external conflict. When such a conflict is not in the offing, trade union interest and activity lags. The most important aspect of trade unionism as a form of social organization is what happens between strikes. The strike is a mode which occurs when reason and education have failed, and it will probably be always necessary even if retained merely as a potential weapon. But, the member who joins a union with this fight-symbol at his side will make poor material for education. He will get his exciting experience, not by learning through his new collective opportunities, but by exercising his heroic fighting impulses at certain intervals. On the other hand, organized labor is not sufficiently militant in the sense that it fails to put forth new standards and values which differ sufficiently from the old to generate new ideas and new learnings. Education which trains for efficiency is easily formulated, but education which is intended to change behavior fundamentally, to revamp cultural values, and to bring into being a new society is not readily found. We are consequently baffled about what kind of educational machinery appropriate to the needs of organized labor is to be initiated and fostered because we do not know clearly where labor wants to go and what it aims to do when it gets there. If Labor merely wants more of the same things which the privileged now have, it could obviously pattern its education after that of existing society. If it wants something different, something so qualitatively different that its achievement would change the whole of social process, it will reach out for new educational forms and methods suitable to its ends.

Viewed in the context of our present confusion, it seems to me that every form of labor education represented above, and perhaps some others in addition, should be fostered. We shall be sadly deluded if we attempt to set up an educational unity which has no counterpart in the labor movement itself. It seems to me thoroughly justifiable to maintain some form of workers' education which is wholly under the control of the administrative forces of dominant labor organiza-

tions. The learning which such organizations promote will undoubtedly be stereotyped, conservative, and distasteful to all who belong to minorities. But if those minorities should by some lucky accident become the majority, would they not make the same claims for control, and would they not in the end become equally stereotyped, conservative, and distasteful to the new minority? I should add but one proviso to this conclusion, namely, that if labor organizations are to control educational enterprises, they should also furnish the finances; they cannot at one and the same time exercise control and then force these enterprises to secure funds from other sources. Insofar as they shrink from financial responsibility they must be willing to accept the consequences of disaffection. No organization can permanently maintain its power and its integrity if its financial resources come from without. Workers' education which is subordinated to the executive elements in the labor movement becomes honest when it is fully supported intellectually and financially by those who exercise the power.

Coordination is, apparently, a problem of hierarchies. When workers' education reaches certain standards of effectiveness, such as full-time study over a definite period of time, teachers adequately prepared, et cetera, there will emerge certain institutionalized forms which must have a life of their own if they are to be truly educative. They must, that is, attain a kind of freedom and independence which is compatible with truth-seeking. If such institutions are subordinated to executive minds, they will be denied the opportunity of influencing the labor movement qualitatively. A labor college like Brookwood, for example, which sets its standards at a high level, cannot remain a lively center of intelligence and creative activity if its policies are dictated by those who hold the power in trade unions. An institution which reaches such levels should, obviously, become integral to the labor movement as a whole—should have such representative privileges as will enable it to affect the deliberations of labor conferences and policy-making bodies. But this is a problem which can be decided only when we have agreed upon the standards for various types of workers' education. At present, many labor colleges and classes with fascinating courses printed on attractive circulars are often heard of; they exist in people's minds and on paper but not in reality. Obviously, it would be impracticable to give coordinate representation to these mushroom educational enterprises which may have once existed but which now reside only in imagination. But it would not be difficult to arrive at certain criteria which

would enable the teachers and students to bring their contribution to labor policy without double representation and without dealing in unrealities. (Mr. Hader has, in fact, constructed a scale or hierarchy of workers' educational enterprises which points in this direction; to be published in a forthcoming research monograph of the W. E. B. The four types include: (a) residential, (b) summer courses, (c) courses which meet one evening a week, and (d) mass education, such as chautauquas, et cetera.)

The third type, or independent workers' education, is in some respects the most important of all from a long-time point of view. Workers' education which is subordinate to or coordinate with executive trade union functions can never achieve real freedom; its promoters will always be in the position of politicians who feel that they must remain within the party in order to be effective. Or they will be like the presidents of state universities who are obliged to keep their intellectual wool shorn to suit the passing winds of state politics. So, in labor circles, the educational enterprise which aims to serve organized trade unions and takes its funds from trade union sources will sooner or later be obliged to keep its teachings within the limits of accepted trade union doctrine. But this stifles education and sets boundaries to freedom, and nothing can save a large institutionalized movement from such intellectual bondage save a critical, challenging educational movement at work on its margins. Consequently, I believe ardently in those freelance, independent educational experiments which are auxiliary to the labor movement but which can never be wholly absorbed by the larger organism. On behalf of its own health, the labor movement could afford to encourage such enterprises, educational experiments which might serve as *advocati diaboli* to all of that other labor education which had already become subordinate to or coordinate with trade union organization. These independent movements would be alive, experimental, and challenging so long as they remained small; and when they became large enough to develop power-groups of their own, new and freer groups would need to arise to keep going some form of intellectual agitation.

And still another form of independent education on the margins of organized labor seems to me to be both possible and desirable, namely, education which foresees Labor's opportunities and responsibilities in the political life of the nation. I should be happy if there were now in existence a number of groups made up of people

who were members of trade unions, members of farm organizations, and intellectual workers, all examining the intellectual bases for political action. Our two dominant political parties no longer possess principles or methods for expressing the aims of labor, and it becomes increasingly evident that the European patterns of socialist and communist political organization are not likely to become a part of our politico-cultural structure. The time for a people's party is probably nearer than many now think, but that time will come and pass and its opportunities be lost if in the meantime no intellectual or educational preparation is made. I am not now thinking of a labor party or a farmer-labor party which could be brought into existence hurriedly and on the basis of some acute resentment but rather of the slow growth of a new political principle through educational procedures. Obviously groups of this kind would need to be free from the control of existing labor organizations.

My conclusion then is that there should be at least four types of workers' education, each with its peculiar relation to the organized and executive forces of trade unions, namely:

- a. Educational enterprises conducted under the auspices of organized labor, financed by trade union funds and used to carry out the programs of those who control and support the labor movement.
- b. Educational enterprises possessing a higher standard of excellence and a broader freedom organized within the labor movement but exercising equal control in its councils with other organized branches. This type would, presumably, consist almost solely of labor colleges.
- c. Educational enterprises which do not in any sense presume to represent existing labor principle and policy but which maintain an independent status for the main purpose of criticism, challenge, and experimentation.
- d. Educational enterprises which include representatives from organized labor, from organized agriculture, and from intellectual groups promoting a type of education designed to create and experiment with those values and principles which need to be realized if the workers are to influence and guide those economic processes which have their setting in government and the law; in other words, education for future political action.

If we could become sufficiently catholic to tolerate all of these varieties of educational enterprises and their relationships, we might find ourselves to be a part of a labor movement which actually moved, resolutely and intelligently toward a changing social order in which enlightened workers and learners could find new meanings and new motivations for their values. And if we could conceive of such a goal and work for it with all our various approaches, we might discover that the problems of inter-relationships would gradually be absorbed by our enthusiasms.

The meaning of adult education, it seems to me, is attenuated, dissipated, when its leaders become predominantly involved in discussions pertaining to its organization and control. Education is as varied as life itself, as pliable as the stuff of experience. Learning is an expanding, explorative enterprise. The spirit of the learner is one with the spirit of the adventurer, the discoverer, and has little in common with the ways of the executive. Education, once its light begins to shine, illuminates all of life's values; those who would reduce its ministrations to a single interest or value will in the end succeed only in reducing education to stereotyped training or propaganda. True education is forever the companion of freedom, not of confinement. Again and again we need to appreciate that "learning is ever in the freshness of its youth, even for the old."

DISCUSSION

A. Lefkowitz.—I don't think either paper meets the point we have to face. The W. E. B. is supposed to be a clearing house. Shall it impose its policy or expel heretics? At present the W. E. B. is a peculiar combination of a clearing-house supported by the unions and a set of locally autonomous classes. What is to become of the whole field of Labor education co-ordinated in this clearing-house?

Tom Tippet.—We'll probably have all the four kinds that Lindeman mentioned. If things go along as now, all right; but if the W. E. B. decides that it has the jurisdiction in Workers' Education and maintains that no one else may butt in, we'll run into a difficulty. I don't think the W. E. B. does serve as a clearing-house, tho it attempts a definite contribution by publishing and by taking credit for the Workers' Education that is being carried on.

Craig told us about a need for teachers. There is danger in starting the educational process unless you have surveyed the ground.

The thing won't work without teacher, text-book, money. You can go anywhere and organize a Labor College if there is nothing to it but a speech to make and a paper to sign; but on such a basis it will come to nothing when you leave. A class left to itself may develop into a political scrap or a mere talk fest. There must be a leader. Textbooks are also important and no suitable ones exist. Polly Colby's B L E S lessons did the business for us, whereas the W. E. B. service was of no use. If you have Workers' Education extended in the field there must be a center for material and a clearing house. I think Brookwood is a place from which the service can come. It ought to serve the people in the field that are able to carry on with such help.

Bertram Wolfe.—There is a real field for such an organization as the W. E. B. originally purported to be; but the W. E. B. has been developing in the wrong direction. As a clearing-house it doesn't clear. As a stimulator it doesn't stimulate. It is more of a damper than a draft. It has come directly under control of the A. F. L. at a time when the leadership is especially unfavorable to unorthodox movements.

As for the place of the Workers' Party, we are definitely propaganda but definitely educational. If one is going to give only the method of acquiring knowledge and transmit no definite content,—it can't be done. Every arousal of interest is "propaganda". The Workers' School, however, is not narrowly limited. By "propaganda" we mean what you call "education". What you call "propaganda" we call "agitation".

Who should be in such a federation as the W. E. B. should have been? All sorts, clear across the spectrum. There is value in an absolutely free clearing-house. Unfortunately the present situation of the A. F. L. bureaucracy makes such a thing impossible. When, however, the official bureaucracy gets beyond its present decay, the whole Labor Movement can have such a bureau. For the present we have to have two bureaus—one official, another inclusive, like what is growing out of these annual conferences.

John Hader.—We ought to define Workers' Education more closely than we have been doing. In the first type of Workers' Education (union controlled and dealing with technical union problems) there is no place for propaganda. On the other hand, in field work, mass

education, there is plenty of room for propaganda. In between, the gamut varies. The function is directly relative to the situation.

A. J. Muste.—Lindeman, as far as he went, said about everything there is to be said and his analysis is important. But within each field he outlined, the same problem is likely to break out again. However indirect the control, every organization is supported by some group with ends in view. There is danger that educational freedom won't be altogether in accord with the desires of the group that is inspiring the thing. This clash has to be faced. It may be resolved from time to time, but the time may come for a break. This is as true of free-lance enterprises as of officially controlled enterprises. A good deal will depend on the state of vitality of the controlling group. You can't answer in advance the problems we are facing.

So far as the W. E. B. is concerned, we had from the beginning the problem we are facing this afternoon. Probably the best makeshift was arrived at in the concept of a co-operative enterprise. The government of the Bureau expressed this idea. Given the present state of the trade union movement, that relation would be the most workable thing if it could be maintained. But the recommendation of the A. F. of L. for the elimination of representation of state federations, city centrals, labor colleges is an unfortunate move. The Bureau would become the educational department of the A. F. of L. We ought to struggle to maintain the present pragmatic solution.

John Hader.—Structurally the A. F. L. influence becomes too big to serve the others. There is need of a new unit to include the W. E. B.

A. J. Muste.—The W. E. B. would remain outside. If the arrangement were entirely informal, as an occasional conference such as this, it might be feasible; but the W. E. B. would not enter a formal arrangement.

Leonard Craig.—I asked Miller how far the W. E. B. would go with me in furnishing material. The question hasn't been answered. We're going to take the matter up tomorrow.

Cedric Long.—I have heard mutterings of discontent about W. E. B. control, and also the assertion that it exercises no control!

A. Lefkowitz.—It exercises no control or supervision. What will happen if A. F. L. control over the W. E. B. is established?

Josephine Colby.—These conferences arose in response to a desire that the American Federation of Teachers should be definitely interested in Workers' Education. The local asks you to promote the realization of the wish,—extend the teachers' union movement, and extend the interest of the teachers' union in Workers' Education. We hope this may continue to be a free conference.

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