

# The Tutors' Bulletin of Adult Education

NOVEMBER, 1946



---

---

*Published by the Association of Tutors in Adult Education,  
Economics House, the University, Leeds, 2.*

*No statement made in this journal should be regarded as an expression  
of the policy of the Association, unless an explicit announcement is  
made to that effect.*

*Intending contributors are advised to send a preliminary letter.  
Correspondence will be welcomed. All communications should be sent  
to W. E. Styler, Black Hill, High Lea Road, New Mills, nr. Stockport.  
Material for the next issue should be posted not later than February  
14th, 1947.*

---

---



## ADULT EDUCATION AND THE WORKING CLASS OUTLOOK.

KARL POLANYI.

The victory of the Labour Party at the polls occurred at a juncture when the general reconstruction of the country was the issue at stake and it is almost universally taken for granted that democratic socialism will remain one of the foundations of Britain's future. We rightly speak of a "silent revolution." For the first time in the history of this country, the working people have become a prime factor in the shaping of national life.

Education in the broadest sense is only another name for society. Though adult education forms merely a fraction of the education system as a whole, it is, in the nature of things, the fraction most responsive to the demands of change in a democratic society. A new social situation requires new ways of thinking, and these cannot be made to order, but depend in their turn on new developments in education.

Clearly, the ability of the working people of this country to cope with the tasks now facing them is of paramount national importance. The problem is very far from being restricted to politics. Socialism transcends politics. That is why a social democratic government means a sudden vast increase in the responsibilities of working class people. Not in the time-honoured and comparatively simple job of political government, but in dealing with the new and complex problems of industry will working people have to prove their competence to lead on to a new kind of society. Nationalisation of coal mining is a revealing instance. Industry, in this regard, stands in a different category from political government. The latter, in a democratic society, is the concern of the political parties; industrial democracy involves far more: an application of the intellectual, moral and physical capacities of working men and women. Compared with the responsible producer, the responsible citizen is but a vague and airy creature.

No wonder the question is frequently being asked whether adult education should, in the future, take account of what, admittedly rather vaguely, is described as working class outlook? Also, how such an outlook may be relevant to adult education? and how far, though perhaps unconsciously, are we already taking account of it in our work as tutors?

### I.

In the traditional view, of course, such a question could hardly arise. Adult education was regarded as a leisure-time occupation which should enable the working class student to make better use of the rest of his leisure-time. Undoubtedly, this contained an element of truth. Any education deserving of the name must aim at enhancing a man's desire for contact with nature and the arts. It stimulates him to transform his environment, so as to create within the limits of the possible some of that artificial nature which we call culture. Such was the leisure theory at its best, and it largely applied during the early decades of the movement. At its worst, it tended to degenerate into that new fangled manorial week-end party, the methods of which suggest "Kraft durch Freude," to be translated not as "Strength through Joy" but rather as "Weakness through Snobbery." Indeed, a working man's life that had no roots either in his work or craft, or in his relations to his fellows in trade union or shop, or even in the broader implications of his functions as a producer, but was merely as a parasite on his own leisure-time, would be a hopeless conception. Such a man would resemble a person who tried to find his way by following his own shadow.



In the more modern view, adult education should aim at making the student "socially effective," to use G. H. Thompson's phrase. Actually the W.E.A. is already supplying "education for people who want it for a non-personal and social purpose," as John Mack put it. By preparing the student not so much for his private as for his public and social tasks, it fulfils a function vital to the well being of a democratic society.

Education for leisure catered for the student's wish to study for personal ends, and there was but scant reason why tuition should take account too much of his social background and natural interests. On the contrary, the sooner he left them behind, the quicker he may have hoped to transcend, at least in imagination, the frontiers which separated him from the world of "culture" and, indeed, to be assimilated to that world. Emphatically, the opposite should apply, once adult education is to help the individual working man or woman to be more effective *as a worker*, especially if this is to include no less than active and responsible participation in a change in our industrial system. Then the basic experiences and interests which dominate working class existence must be permitted to exert a much greater influence on teaching methods than in the past.

Superficially, the worker's existence seems to offer but a poor educational background, and his interests appear simply as a mirroring of his close dependence upon economic circumstance. Actually, his experiences comprise elements of high educational value. And his spontaneous interests will appear at a closer view to lead on to an outlook on life and society equal, if not superior in validity and dignity to that on which academic disciplines traditionally rest.

The positive aspect of the manual worker's life is, that he is at the root of things. And his immediate concern is for matters which have universally come to be regarded as crucial issues of our civilization, such as security of tenure in man's job, certainty of useful employment, safeguards of liberty and status. He naturally seeks an education which will advance him in the attainment of these aims. In striving after this end, he will tend to approach the whole field of the social and historical studies from an angle of his own. Here lie the roots of his distinctive outlook.

Firstly his urgent need is not so much for political or industrial information, taken separately, as for an educational approach which would assist him in relating industrial and political experiences one to another. No question, for instance, is of more far reaching importance for him to-day than whether or not there should be governmental responsibility for the wage level. Clearly, this cannot be decided *separately*, either by the industrial or by the political section of the labour movement. They must decide it *jointly*. Accordingly, members of the working class should be enabled to conceive of state and industry, of government and business as one interdependent unit. But the authority of academic thinking, on the contrary, supports the separation of political and economic thinking. In this it mirrors the outstanding characteristic of liberal capitalism. In the average worker's day-to-day life, the need for the opposite approach is implicit. In order to become socially effective, he should be helped to appreciate the institutional *unity of society*.

There are other issues of no less importance and urgency to the worker such as the reconstruction of the national economy, mobility of labour, or the function of trade unions in an increasingly socialised industry and so on. In every case, the producer's security in his job, the prospects of employment, a man's status in industry are involved. Yet as in the case of the wage level, whether he is aware of it or not, he is being compelled to face up to even bigger issues, such as are inseparable from a period of social transition. Almost invariably they hinge on the fundamental question of motives and incentives



to work in a more or less planned economy. One need not be a philosopher, a theologian or a psychologist to recognise in this the age-old and almost forgotten problem of the *nature of man in society*, under a new guise.

Finally, his interest must of necessity turn towards the prospects of realization and, therefore, towards the nature of progress and evolution. In more general terms, towards the *prospects of change*.

We should not be dogmatic, nor try to be exhaustive. It suffices that viewed in this perspective, *the whole of the social and historical sciences must shift their emphasis*. Not as if the problem of the unity of society, of human nature in society, or of the prospects of social change were in any way unknown. Certainly not. But because it happens to be the case that for reasons too numerous to list and too complex to analyse here, the disciplines and sub-disciplines of the human sciences crystallised around other problems, more directly in the line of vision of the social classes whose orientation of life higher education was hitherto designed to serve.

## II.

What remains to be considered is how far our methods are to-day in the process of adjusting themselves to the needs of the working class student. The answer is, we suggest: More than is commonly realized but, for all that, not sufficiently.

Let us distinguish between (1) the *subject*, e.g., economics, psychology, and so on; (2) the *subject matter*, as pointed out, e.g., in an "outline syllabus," and (3) the *presentation* of the subject-matter in a detailed syllabus of the course. The subject (1) is the academic designation of the course; the subject-matter (2) lists the actual matter selected for instruction; the presentation (3) is the organization of that material.

It was at the practical level (3) that the need for adjustment to the outlook of the working class student first made itself felt. A vast amount of imaginative experimenting was done by tutors, who spared not time or effort to produce new solutions. Without their creative endeavours in the realm of presentation, dramatisation, and dialectical treatment, tutorial classes could never have attained their present success, while maintaining standards.

Yet in one decisive respect these experiments were fatally limited. The subjects themselves were set by academic tradition. Exceptions only confirmed the rule. The presentation, however new, was an attempt at presenting the old subject. The task still was to teach Economics or Politics however varied the method, the Economics or Politics to be taught were assumed to be unchanged. The syllabus thus suggested improved methods of presenting the traditional subjects. While the "syllabus" might have been highly original, the "outline syllabus" attempted to prove that it was not. Rather, it suggested, that the academic limitations of the subject had not been infringed.

True, there were exceptions. One of the earliest newcomers among subjects was the "Industrial Revolution." Later, a number of other subjects were tolerated which lacked a traditional standing. These "illegitimate" subjects included International Affairs, Contemporary Political and Economic Problems, Fascism and Communism, to which later Reconstruction, Social and Political Institutions, etc., were added. But while some upstart subjects came to the fore, the other subjects retained their traditional settings. Indeed, it may be doubted, whether the "new" subjects would ever have emerged had the academic framework of the "old" subjects been sufficiently elastic to include the new subject-matters. In some cases the bastard was subsequently legitimised, as when International Affairs was received by the Academy under the slightly more dignified name of International Relations.



Much of the problems of "Reconstruction" is more recently finding its academic home as Post-Keynesian Economics. In other instances the University launched a successful counter-attack. The "Industrial Revolution," firmly established as a subject with the W.E.A., was later on treated by the Universities as the "So-Called Industrial Revolution." However, it may be still regarded as doubtful whether the "So-Called Industrial Revolution" is legitimately so-called.

Thus the syllabus was the growing point of adult educational methods, for, in the nature of things, it reflected the outlook of the working class student. The experienced tutor revived the flagging interest of his audience by adjusting himself to their true needs. For, unwittingly, they would transcend the traditional limits of the subject and inject "extraneous" matters into the discussion. Actually, what appeared as "extraneous" was often merely a different but no less valid approach to the field of study. The students might insist on viewing human society as a unity (by mixing politics with economics, or vice versa); they might doubt the utilitarian assumptions on the nature of man, propounded by 19th century business-psychology (maybe by putting forth over-idealistic sentiments); they might show their yearning for social change (quite probably by launching out on dialectical class-war theory). But, while the tutor would naturally resist the students' attempts to pluck his subject asunder, he would also, if he had sense, realise the power, the dignity and the consistency of outlook informing their efforts to shift the angle of approach. Twenty-five years of experimenting in syllabus-making give proof of tutorial endeavours to meet the challenge.

The time has come to do consciously, what hitherto has been done more or less unconsciously. Development points towards a rearrangement of the subject-matter itself without too strict a regard for the traditional limits of the subject. The tendency is not new. Some syllabi, for instance, have been treating for years of "Politics and Economics," and consequently of neither, but treating in effect of society from a definite angle. "Government and Industry," also, is being generalized into a new subject, which treats of the place of the economic system in society. The subject-matter of such a course might range from primitive economics to general economic history, including the Industrial Revolution and market-economy, again, *from a definite angle.*

This is the manner in which new disciplines are born. Even within the self-imposed limits of our tutorial work, the tendency should not be discouraged but rather made conscious of itself and brought under pedagogic control.

### THREE VILLAGES.

G. R. C. KEEP.

These, grouped around a small market-town in the Lindsey Division of Lincolnshire, studied "Reconstruction in the Countryside" in Terminal Courses which I took during the Session 1944-45. Women outnumbered men by just 2 to 1 in the classes; this did not at all reflect the balance of sexes in the respective populations. In village C I visited the inn one evening after my meeting, and found men playing dominoes. They had heard about the class through the exertions of the local secretary, and I would no more have thought of pressing the matter then and there than of brawling in church. Perhaps I was wrong. One old party consuming his pint beside me *had* attended our first meeting, but he confided to me that he was so deaf that, although he could just catch what I said, he could not follow remarks from corners of the room, and I agreed with him that it is no fun if you cannot hear the discussion. This ancient is to my mind the problem of rural recon-



Ch K.P.  
ADULT EDUCATION AND THE WORKING CLASS STUDENT.

We will briefly inquire into the tasks of adult education from the angle of the manual worker. Then we propose to sketch some of the implications of his outlook <sup>in regard to the study of</sup> ~~in relation as they concern~~ the field of the social and ~~historical~~ <sup>historical</sup> sciences. Finally, we ~~are~~ <sup>wish</sup> to discuss how far ~~the~~ methods of presentation should be adjusted to the educational needs of the working class student.

I.

In the one view adult education was a leisure time occupation, which should ~~enable~~ <sup>enable</sup> the working class student to make better use of the rest of his leisure time. At its best, ~~this~~ <sup>it</sup> contained an element of truth. Any education deserving of the name must be a vehicle of a more abundant <sup>aim</sup> life. It ~~must aim at raising a man's human stature and~~ <sup>at</sup> enhancing his desire for contact with nature and the arts. ~~Indeed, it~~ <sup>It</sup> should stimulate him to transform his <sup>surroundings,</sup> ~~environment~~ <sup>environment</sup>, so as to create in his ~~surroundings,~~ <sup>surroundings,</sup> within the limits of the possible, some of that artificial nature which we call culture. Such was the leisure theory at its best, and it largely ~~applied~~ <sup>applied</sup> during the early decades of the movement. At its worst, it may degenerate into that new-fangled manorial week-end party, the methods of which suggest 'Kraft durch Freude' - which should be translated not so much as 'Strength through Joy' than rather as 'Weakness through Snobbery'. For a working man's ~~life~~ <sup>life</sup> that had no roots either in his work or craft, or <sup>in</sup> his relations to his fellows <sup>in</sup> in union and shop, or ~~in~~ <sup>in</sup> the broader implications of his existence as a producer, but was merely a parasite on his leisure time, would be a ~~hopeless~~ <sup>hopeless</sup> conception. Such a man ~~resembled~~ <sup>resembled</sup> a person, who tried to find his way by following his own shadow.

In the other view the prime task of adult education is to



satisfy a vital need of society. In this it recalls those other forms of education, which we have long ceased to regard primarily as a service to the individual, and have learnt to appreciate as providing for a public need. The tasks of adult education also are determined not so much by what it offers to the student in his private capacity, than by what it means to him as a social being. In John Mack's telling phrase it is increasingly supplying "education for people who want it for a non-personal and social purpose" ("Next step in workers' education", Leeds Weekly Citizen, 19th Jan, 1946).

True, "the issue of the individual v. community is always to some extent unreal", as Professor Carr recently wrote. This is emphatically so in the case of a voluntary movement such as ours, where the individual's <sup>own</sup> appreciation of his intellectual needs must always be the main driving force. Yet it is precisely this strategic rôle of the individual, which makes the shift from "personal" to "non-personal" purposes so highly significant. For, it is by this <sup>the</sup> freely chosen "non-personal" intent that adult education (to-day gains greatly enhanced social importance:- By making the working class student more effective not in his private, but in his public and social relationships, it fulfils a function vital to the well-being of society.

Such a change in the conception of our tasks <sup>cannot but affect our methods.</sup> ~~must needs affect our methods.~~ <sup>cannot help in the long run to</sup> ~~must needs affect~~ <sup>ing</sup> ~~our methods.~~ An Education for leisure ~~may have~~ catered well for the student's wish to study for personal ~~and private~~ ends, <sup>and</sup> There was but scant reason why the method of tuition should take too much account of the student's social background, and natural interests.



On the contrary, the sooner he left them behind, the quicker he may have <sup>hoped</sup> ~~been enabled~~ to transcend, <sup>at least</sup> in imagination, the frontiers which separated him from the world of traditional culture and, indeed, to assimilate his <sup>S</sup> outlook to that culture. ~~Obviously,~~ The opposite is true, if the task of adult education is seen in its function of helping the individual working man and woman to be effective in the public aspects of their existence. In ~~this~~ case, the basic experiences and interests which tend to dominate that existence, ~~must~~ must be allowed to ~~more~~ exert a much greater influence than before on the method of tuition, ~~and~~ both for pedagogic and for social reasons.

Let me explain,

Looking at it in one way, the worker's existence seems to offer but a <sup>poor</sup> ~~poor~~ educational background, and his interests appear simply as a mirroring of his close dependence upon economic circumstance. But looked at from another angle, his experiences in life will be seen to comprise elements of high educational value, and his spontaneous interests will appear to lead on to an outlook on life and society equal, if not superior, in validity and dignity to that on which academic disciplines are traditionally based.

The positive aspect of the manual worker's life is, that he is "at the root of things". And his primary concern is for matters which have universally come to be regarded as ~~the~~ crucial issues of our civilization such as security of tenure in a man's job, certainty of useful employment, safeguards of liberty and status, What he needs is an education which will advance him in the attainment of these aims. As <sup>I</sup> it is easy to see <sup>that</sup> in striving after this end, he <sup>necessarily</sup> approaches the



whole field of the social and historical studies from an angle of his own. ~~effect~~, <sup>opening up for</sup> it is to the outlook on life and society thus <sup>naturally</sup> revealed to him ~~that~~ ~~the~~ ~~natural~~ ~~bent~~ of his interests that we wish to draw attention.

Firstly, <sup>Indeed, the</sup> ~~the~~ average worker reaches a <sup>much</sup> ~~higher~~ level of knowledge and judgment as a trade unionist than as a voter. ~~When all is said,~~ the industrial movement can rely to a larger extent on an informed membership than the political party. Yet the most urgent need to-day is not so much for more education for political citizenship (as might be inferred), as for an educational approach which helps to relate industrial and political experience to one another. No question is, ~~for instance,~~ of more far-reaching importance to the working class to-day than whether or not there should be governmental responsibility for the wage level? <sup>Yes</sup> Clearly, ~~however,~~ this can not be decided separately, either by the industrial or by the political sections of the labour movement. They must decide it jointly. ~~Accordingly,~~ ~~every~~ members of the working class must be able to conceive of ~~State~~ and industry, ~~the~~ government and business as <sup>of</sup> ~~one~~ interdependent unit. ~~Yet~~ <sup>however</sup> The authority of academic tradition supports the separation of political and economic thinking. In this it mirrors the most outstanding characteristic of our nineteenth century society, namely the institutional separation of the political and the economic sphere. In the average worker's day-to-day life, <sup>as we saw, need for</sup> ~~as we have seen,~~ the ~~urgency~~ of the opposite outlook is implicit. In order to become ~~socially~~ socially effective, he <sup>must learn</sup> needs to appreciate the unity of society.

institutional



*Q. (next)*

*just*

Accordingly, consider the implications. We instanced ~~the question of~~  
 the wage level. <sup>As well we</sup> might have ~~mentioned~~ <sup>of</sup> ~~aduced~~ <sup>function</sup> other issues of similar  
 importance and urgency such as the reconstruction <sup>reconstruction</sup> of the country's economy,  
 mobility of labour, the function of trade unions in an increasingly social-  
 ized industry and so on. ~~and~~ <sup>every case</sup> In ~~most instances~~ the producer's interest  
 in his particular job, the prospects of employment, a man's ~~status~~ <sup>status</sup> ~~in industry~~ <sup>is</sup>  
~~are~~ <sup>are</sup> involved. Yet, again, whether he ~~is~~ <sup>is</sup> aware of it or not, he ~~is~~ <sup>is</sup>  
 being made to face up to a bigger issue. <sup>Chiefly they hinge on</sup> ~~It is~~ <sup>is</sup> the fundamental <sup>question</sup> ~~problem~~ of  
 the motives and incentives to work once the separation of ~~the~~ government  
 and business, politics and economics was ~~longer~~ <sup>no</sup> valid. One need not be a  
 philosopher, a theologian or a <sup>social</sup> psychologist to recognise in this ~~problem~~  
 the ~~human~~ age-old and almost forgotten problem of the nature of man.

<sup>Finally</sup> ~~his~~ <sup>his</sup> interest must of necessity <sup>tend to</sup> turn towards the possibilities  
<sup>and therefore towards</sup> of realisation, <sup>the</sup> nature of progress and evolution, In more general  
 terms, towards the <sup>prospects</sup> ~~of~~ change.

~~We~~ <sup>we</sup> ~~should not be dogmatic~~ <sup>should not be dogmatic</sup> ~~nor~~ <sup>nor</sup> try to be exhaustive. It suffices that  
<sup>viewed in this perspective</sup> ~~in these perspectives~~ <sup>of the projects of</sup> ~~the~~ whole of the social and  
 historical sciences must shift their emphasis. Not as if the problems of  
 the unity of society, of human nature or <sup>of the projects of</sup> ~~that of~~ change had been ~~so far~~ <sup>in any way</sup>  
 unknown. But ~~because~~ because it happens to be the case that for reasons  
 too numerous to list and too complex to analyse here, the traditional  
 disciplines and sub-disciplines of the human <sup>sciences</sup> ~~sciences~~ (crystallized around  
~~not~~ <sup>other problems</sup> ~~these points~~ <sup>points</sup> but <sup>more directly</sup> ~~around~~ <sup>in</sup> the line of vision  
 of the social classes whose orientation in life <sup>higher education was designed</sup> ~~they were~~ <sup>designed</sup> to serve.

~~Some~~ <sup>of</sup> ~~the~~ <sup>of</sup> ~~change~~ <sup>of</sup> ~~in~~ <sup>of</sup> ~~methods~~ <sup>of</sup> ~~which~~ <sup>of</sup> ~~we~~ <sup>of</sup> ~~are~~ <sup>of</sup> ~~convinced~~ <sup>of</sup> ~~is~~ <sup>of</sup> ~~an~~ <sup>of</sup> ~~educational~~ <sup>of</sup> ~~necessity~~ <sup>of</sup>.



What remains to be considered

how far are our methods in the process of adjusting themselves to the ~~the~~ needs of the working class students:

Let us distinguish between 1 the subject ~~taught~~ e.g., economics psychology and so on. 2 the subject-matter as laid down e.g., in an 'outline syllabus', and 3 the presentation of the subject-matter ~~as~~ mapped out in a ~~course~~ <sup>Detailed</sup> syllabus of the course. The subject (1) is the academic designation of the course; the subject-matter (2) is the ~~subject~~ <sup>actual</sup> matter selected for instruction; The presentation (3) is the organisation of that material.

It was <sup>(of course)</sup> at this practical level (3) that the need for adjustment to the interests and outlook of the working class student ~~materialism~~ first made itself felt. Accordingly, a vast amount of <sup>creative & imaginative</sup> experimenting went on on the part of the tutors who spared ~~not~~ <sup>or</sup> time and effort to produce new ~~many~~ solutions. ~~The versatility and imagination expended in these attempts was astounding.~~ Without ~~these~~ <sup>these</sup> creative endeavours in the realm of presentation, dramatisation and dialectical treatment, tutorial classes could never have ~~reached~~ <sup>attained</sup> their present development while at the same time maintaining their standards.

Yet in one respect these experiments were fatally limited. The subjects themselves were set by ~~the~~ <sup>academic</sup> tradition (exceptions ~~remained~~ <sup>only</sup> confirmed the rule). The presentation, however new, ~~was~~ <sup>remained</sup> an attempt to present the old subject. The task was to teach economics or politics; however varied the method, the economics ~~or~~ politics to be taught were assumed to be unchanged. The syllabus ~~was~~

<sup>thus</sup> ~~was~~ suggested improved methods of presenting the traditional subjects. While the 'syllabus' ~~was~~ <sup>might have been</sup> highly original, the 'outline syllabus' <sup>usually</sup> tried to show that the innovations <sup>R</sup> meely amounted to an ~~at~~



<sup>interesting</sup>  
~~other ( more )~~ presentation of the old subject.

True, there were ~~important~~ exceptions. <sup>Later</sup> One of the earliest newcomers among the subjects was the 'Industrial Revolution'. In the inter-war years a number of subjects were tolerated which had no <sup>traditional</sup> ~~academic~~ standing. These 'illegitimate' subjects included International Affairs, Contemporary political and economic problems, Fascism and Communism, to which later Reconstruction, Social and political Institutions etc were added. But while ~~these~~ upstart subjects came to the fore, the ~~old~~ established subjects retained their traditional settings. Indeed, it may be doubted whether the 'new' subjects <sup>ever</sup> would have emerged, had the 'old' subjects been sufficiently elastic to include the new subject-matters. In some cases the bastard was subsequently legitimized as when International Affairs was received by the Academy under the slightly more dignified name of International Relations. Much of the problems of 'Reconstruction' is more recently finding <sup>its theoretical academic</sup> ~~an academic~~ home as post-Keynsian economics. In other instances the University launched a successful counter-attack. The 'Industrial Revolution', firmly established as a 'subject' with the W.E.A., <sup>was</sup> ~~is~~ being more recently treated <sup>by the Universities</sup> as the 'So-called Industrial Revolution'. However, it <sup>may be regarded as</sup> ~~is~~ still doubtful whether the So-called 'So-called Industrial Revolution' is being legitimately so called.

In the light of the social function of adult education, <sup>this</sup> ~~the~~ situation bears out the following interpretation. The 'syllabus' was the growing point of adult education, for it inevitably reflected ~~to some degree~~ the natural direction of interest of the working class student. The experience <sup>d</sup> tutor knew when to expect the interest of his audience to flag, <sup>and</sup> how to revive <sup>it</sup> ~~it~~ by giving way up to a point <sup>to the demands of working class outlook.</sup> ~~to the~~ ~~underlying issues~~. For <sup>instinctively</sup> ~~instinctively~~ his audience would tend to <sup>unconsciously</sup> ~~unconsciously~~



The ' syllabus' was the ~~governing~~ <sup>growing</sup> point of adult educational methods, for it inevitably reflected the natural direction of interest of the working class student. The experienced tutor knew when to expect the interest of the audience to flag and how to revive it by adjusting itself to the demands of a working class outlook. For ~~unconsciously~~ <sup>unwittingly</sup> his audience would tend to transcend the limits as set by the academic subject, and inject ' extraneous' matters into the discussion. The ~~human~~ <sup>students</sup> audience would ~~insist~~ <sup>insist</sup> on viewing/society as a ~~human~~ <sup>human</sup> unity ( by mixing politics with economics and vice versa); ~~it would~~ <sup>they would</sup> doubt the utilitarian assumptions made by nineteenth century business -psychology on the nature of man <sup>†</sup> ( quite probably by launching out on some dialectical class war theory ). But while the tutor would naturally resist the students' attempts to pluck his subject assunder, he would , if he has sense, realise also the power, the dignity and the consistency ~~which~~ of outlook informing ~~thana~~ their reactions. Twenty-five years of experimenting in syllabus-making give proof of tutorial endeavours to meet the challenge.

The time has come to do consciously what hitherto has been done more or less/<sup>un</sup>consciously . ~~To quote John Mack again, It must be understood clearly that~~ a new social situation requires new ways of thinking , and that these cannot be made to order, but depend in their turn on new developments in education. <sup>‡</sup> These developments point towards a rearrangement of the subject-matter itself without too strict a regard for the traditional limits of the subject. <sup>Some</sup> ~~Annunhannn~~ syllabi have been been treating for years of Politics and Economics , and consequently of neither but of society from a definite angle. 'State and Industry' also has been generalised into a new and significant subject which treats of

† ( maybe by proposing separated idealistic postulates); they ~~are~~ <sup>might</sup> ~~would~~ <sup>emphasize</sup> their interest in social change



the economic system in society, (systematically and historically). The subject-matter of such a course might range from primitive economics to general economic history, including the Industrial Revolution and market -economy , treated , again, from a definite angle. This is the way manner in which new disciplines , or rather sub-disciplines are born. *But* ~~whether~~ <sup>is</sup> this ~~is~~ so or not, it is hardly possible that adult educational methods in the future ~~namam~~ should ~~namam~~ altogether ~~namam~~ by the outlook of the working class student.

.....



## ADULT EDUCATION AND THE WORKING CLASS STUDENT

We will briefly inquire into the tasks of adult education from the angle of the manual worker. Then we propose to sketch some implications of his outlook in regard to the study of the social and historical sciences. Finally, we wish to discuss how far methods of presentation should be adjusted to the educational needs of the working class student.

### I.

In the one view adult education was a leisure time occupation, which should enable the working class student to make better use of the rest of his leisure time. This contained an element of truth. Any education deserving of the name must aim at enhancing a man's desire for contact with nature and the arts. It should stimulate him to transform his surroundings, so as to create in his environment within the limits of the possible, some of that artificial nature which we call culture. Such was the leisure theory at its best, and it largely applied during the early decades of the movement. At its worst, it may degenerate into that new-fangled manorial week-end party, the methods of which suggest 'Kraft durch Freude' - which should be translated not so much as 'Strength through Joy' than rather as 'Weakness through Snobbery'. For a working man's life that had no roots either in his work or craft, or in his relations to his fellows in union or shop, or in the broader implications of his existence as a producer, but was merely a parasite on his leisure time, would be a hopeless conception. Such a man resembled a person, who tried to find his way by following his own shadow.

In the other view the prime task of adult education is to satisfy a vital need of society. In this it recalls those other forms of



education, which we have long ceased to regard primarily as a service to the individual, and have learnt to appreciate as providing for a public need. The tasks of adult education also are determined not so much by what it offers to the student in his private capacity, than by what it means to him as a social being. In John Mack's telling phrase it is increasingly supplying "education for people who want it for a non-personal and social purpose" ("Next step in workers' education", Leeds Weekly Citizen, 19th Jan. 1946).

True, "the issue of the individual v. community is always to some extent unreal", as Professor Carr recently wrote. This is emphatically so in the case of a voluntary movement such as ours, where the individual's own appreciation of his intellectual needs must always be the main driving force. Yet it is precisely this strategic role of the individual, which makes the shift from "personal" to "non-personal" purposes so highly significant. For, it is by this freely chosen "non-personal" intent that adult education gains to-day greatly enhanced social importance:- By making the working class student more effective not in his private, but in his public and social relationships, it fulfills a function vital to the well-being of society.

## II.

Such a change in the conception of our task can not but affect our methods. An education for leisure catered for the student's wish to study for personal ends, and there was but scant reason why the method of tuition should take too much account of the student's social background and natural interests. On the contrary, the sooner he left them behind, the quicker he may have hoped to transcend, at least in imagination, the frontiers which separated him from the world of traditional culture and,



indeed, to assimilate his outlook to that culture. The opposite is true, if the task of adult education is seen in its function of helping the individual working man and woman to be effective in the public aspects of ~~the~~ their existence. In this case, the basic experiences and interests which ~~the~~ tend to dominate that existence, must be allowed to exert a much greater influence than before on the method of tuition, both for pedagogic and for social reasons.

Let me explain.

Looking at it in one way, the worker's existence seems to offer but a poor educational background, and his interests appear simply as a mirroring of the close dependence upon economic circumstances. But looked at from another angle, his experiences in life will be seen to comprise elements of high educational value, and his spontaneous interests will appear to lead on to an outlook on life and society equal, if not superior in validity and dignity to that on which academic disciplines are traditionally based.

The positive aspect of the manual worker's life is, that he is "at the root of things". And his primary concern is for matters which have universally come to be regarded as crucial issues of our civilization such as security of tenure in a man's job, certainty of useful employment, safeguards of liberty and status, What he needs is an education which will advance him in the attainment of these aims. It is easy to see that if striving after this end, he necessarily approaches the whole field of the social and historical studies from an angle of his own. It is to the outlook on life and society thus opening up for him, that we wish to draw attention

Firstly, the industrial movement can rely to a larger extent on an in