

physical defects which are remedial; he may need a training course to fit him for a new vocation. For older workers who need rehabilitation an integrated programme of special placement training and remedial health services is needed. This is the approach adopted and widely acclaimed in the rehabilitation of handicapped veterans. It should be applied with equal vigour in the case of unemployed older workers who have productive potential but who cannot gain re-employment through normal placement channels.

With our ageing population, problems of the older worker will constantly grow and become more urgent and pressing. Both for the sake of the individual and of society it is imperative that effective action be taken to meet them. It will serve no purpose to gloss over and obscure any deficiencies that may come with age. The real danger is that they will be misrepresented and exaggerated. Further

research and educational programmes can help to overcome misunderstanding and prejudice. However, in spite of such efforts, much of a stubborn and difficult problem will remain to be dealt with through a rehabilitation process which provides selective placement, counselling, training and certain remedial health services, each of which must be translated into individual terms so that the worker receives personal attention for a personal problem.

Like persons in all other age groups, the older worker has his own special weaknesses and his own special qualifications. His experience and stability are required as much as the fresh approach and enthusiasm of youth. And he needs the opportunity to work, and the assurance of a useful place in society, as much as he needs the promise of security that is offered through retirement pension schemes.

Trends in Workers' Education in Canada

By A. ANDRAS

UP to quite recently, workers' education on this continent was by and large an uninvited (and pretty much ignored) guest of the educational world. Its origins were far from being respectable. Its methods were questionable. Its objectives were disturbing. It was far removed from the calm of the campus, and its student body—if such a term was permissible—was uncouth and illiterate.

In its earliest forms, which date back to the beginning of this century and before, workers' education frequently reflected the aspirations of the radical movements of Canada and the United States. Workers' schools developed pro-

grams which sought to win adherents to a particular political outlook as well as to provide enlightenment in a broader sense. Some of these still exist. The Rand School in New York is probably the best-known, with a record of activity going back to 1906.

Within the labor movement itself, there were always those to whom the "pure and simple" trade unionism of Samuel Gompers was never adequate. They believed that unions had much broader functions and social purposes. As a result there were always sporadic efforts to establish "labor colleges," organized and backed by unions, and drawing on sympathetic university professors and other intellectuals for their faculties. For the most part, these col-

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leges were short-lived. They succumbed all too easily to economic depressions, factional strife and indifference. Of the many such colleges which sprang into being during the early 1920's, few have survived. By far the most notable was Brookwood Labor College, a resident school in New York State, which during some 15 years of existence trained hundreds of students, many of whom occupy important positions in labor and social movements today.

The first world war and the early 1920's saw the beginnings of the workers' education movement as its functions today. In 1916 the International Ladies' Garment Workers Union established its own educational department, still one of the finest in North America, setting a pattern for other unions to follow. In 1921, the Workers' Education Bureau was set up and a year later was officially accepted by the American Federation of Labor. In 1920 Bryn Mawr and in 1925 the University of Wisconsin began to set the pattern for summer resident schools for trade unionists which has only recently been taken up by a growing number of universities. Subsequently, the American Labor Education Service came into being to co-ordinate the work of the various schools and to provide other services in the field of workers' education.

The Canadian Scene

In Canada, there have been the same sporadic and unco-ordinated attempts to set up workers' colleges or other such programs. As in the United States, some of these were political instruments, but whatever their background their mortality rate was high. The Workers' Educational Association has been the only agency to attempt to provide a program of workers' education on a national scale but with indifferent success. The relative weakness of the labor movement both here and in the United States undoubtedly accounted for the

failure of workers' education to sink deep and permanent roots.

It was not until the great upsurge of unionism in the United States after 1933 and in Canada after 1940, that workers' education enjoyed a renaissance. The phenomenal growth in membership, strength and prestige, together with the maturing experience of depression and war, caused the unions more than ever before to regard education not only as a justifiable union activity but as a practical tool in the every-day processes of collective bargaining. Workers' education entered a new phase: its use by unions as a means of maintaining their effectiveness and as a training ground for broader community action.

The Aims

Having come this far, it might be well to define workers' education before going any further. In his chapter on "Toward a Philosophy of Workers' Education" in the comprehensive review of *Workers, Education in the United States* which he edited, Theodore Brameld has put forward two complementary definitions:

"... To educate workers in their relations to each other and especially to the economy at large primarily through the medium of the trade union."

And

"... A means through which wage-earners in organized, collective relations may learn how best to utilize and dispose of the one commodity they themselves own in substantial if potential quantities: their skills, interests, energies; in short, their ability to work."

The emphasis may thus be seen to be on group action for group purposes. The union program of workers' education, unlike that of the labor colleges, does not aim at satisfying individual needs for "culture" (although this is not entirely overlooked); it rather works on the assumption well expressed by Mr. Solomon Barkin, research director of the Textile Workers' Union of America,

that "groups rather than individuals are the primary units of influence and action in changing dynamic society."

Broken down into its basic components, the workers' education program aims at accomplishing at least three things:

First, the assimilation of new members, extremely important during periods of rapid growth. Many workers enter the labor movement unacquainted with its traditions and ideals, sometimes with preconceived notions about it. They know little or nothing about the particular union they have joined except that "the union" is going to do something for them. Union structure, administration, and the pattern of its relations with management have to be outlined, and union discipline established.

Second, the acquisition of techniques through tool courses for local leadership. With the wide ramifications of union organization and industrial relations, it has been found that certain skills can be imparted which make for better and more efficient union officers and members.

Third, the integration of the union with the community. In a democratic society both the worker and his union have the rights and obligations of citizenship: the determination of social and economic policies, the election of governments, the inter-relation of groups within the community and so on. Having been transformed from industrial Ishmaelites into (more or less) recognized and accepted forces, the unions are determined that their members should play an enlightened and intelligent role in the life of their city, province and country, and even beyond that, of the world which impinges so much on their daily existence.

Programs

The content of union and university programs of workers' education illustrates these objectives:

I. Assimilation

Development of the trade union movement—Union structure and functions—Principles of unionism—Union administration.

II. Tool Courses

Parliamentary procedure—Public speaking—Grievance procedure—Collective bargaining—Labor journalism—Time study—Job evaluation—Publicity and Public relations—Shop steward training—Union bookkeeping—Labor legislation.

III. Citizenship

Economics and union policy—Consumer co-operation—Economic and social objectives of labor—Current national and international events—The industrial community—Consumer problems—Racial understanding—Labor-community relations—Political action by labor—Labor-farmer relations.

IV. General or Supplementary

Dramatics—Arts and crafts—Languages—Recreation.

There is no attempt within any particular program to create such artificial divisions as the foregoing table might suggest. A good program must obviously have unity, with its various divisions collectively reflecting the needs of the workers for whom it has been designed.

As students, union members differ sharply from the general student body. They are adults with adult responsibilities. They have already acquired a backlog of experience in the catch-as-catch-can of workaday living. They have a first-hand knowledge of industrial relations (not infrequently learned on the picket line). They are accustomed to thinking in terms of collective action rather than of individual effort to improve their economic and social status. They have left far behind schoolroom disci-

pline. For all of these reasons different teaching techniques have had to be developed for them.

Methods of Teaching

Teaching through fairly informal discussion groups and workshops has been found to be most effective since these methods are well adapted to the character of the student body. They fulfil one of the principal objectives in the teaching process, at any rate so far as workers' education is concerned, of relating education to the worker's own experience and of learning by dealing with concrete and immediate problems. Unions with their own educational departments—for example, the International Ladies' Garment Workers' Union already referred to, the United Automobile Workers, the Textile Workers' Union, the Amalgamated Clothing Workers—have this approach in building up their programs. The same is true of some of the universities, notably the University of Wisconsin and the University of Michigan. But in her investigation of *Labor Education in Universities*, Caroline Ware found that "In general, university programs have not advanced the educational techniques already well developed in workers' education. On the contrary, the university programs tend to be more narrowly academic than those under other auspices."

Audio-visual aids have begun to be used. Films, film-strips, posters, recordings, etc., will probably become more readily integrated into educational programs as such materials are prepared with trade union audiences in mind. The United Automobile Workers, for example, has done a considerable amount of experimenting in this field. On the other hand, text books have by and large yet to be developed.

Co-operation with Management

It is noteworthy that management, too, has been interested in educational programs dealing with industrial relations.

In this regard controversy has arisen still unresolved in workers' education circles. Should labor and management sit in the same classes? Will the effectiveness of workers' education be diminished if not impaired by the intrusion of management? There is a difference of opinion not only among universities but in the labor movement itself in this regard. Oddly enough, a union may in practice subscribe to both. The Ladies' Garment Workers Union, for example, sends some students to the Harvard Trade Union Fellowship where they take some classes at least with management representatives; it sends others to the University of Wisconsin School for Workers which will not accept any but union members as students.

Reviewing this question, but without taking a categorical position, Caroline Ware has summed up the views of both sides as follows:

"To those for whom the question appears as an either-or choice, opposition to joint labor-management programs rests upon the following propositions:

- "(1) That workers have special educational needs, because of their status and the functions they must learn to perform and because of the gap between their knowledge and experience and that of others with whom they must deal, in industry and in the community;
- "(2) That workers have interests which are different from, and often in conflict with, those of management; their education should serve these interests; the presence of management representatives is likely to block, or even distort, this purpose;
- "(3) That the actual learning situation is likely to be better if workers are not confronted with the superior educational background of management representatives or deflected by conflicts with them.

"Support for a joint labor-management program rests on the view:

- "(1) That workers must learn to deal with management, and the classroom is an excellent place for workers to learn the viewpoint of management and how to stand up to it;
- "(2) That the interests of labor and management are fundamentally the same—industrial peace, efficient production, good human relations, and community welfare—and labor education can strengthen the recognition and service of common interests and harmonious relations;
- "(3) That the presence of both groups in class creates a stimulating rather than a limiting educational situation.

"Differences of opinion on point (2) tend to reflect differences in basic philosophy and approach to the field of labor. Differences on points (1) and (3) are more largely matters of judgment as to effective educational procedures. With respect to the latter, there is some measure of agreement between both groups on the proposition that union officials, especially those with considerable responsibility for dealing with management, are more likely to profit from contact in the classroom, while rank and file groups are less likely to profit from a joint educational experience with representatives of management."

In the United States, the unions' almost complete acceptance of the private enterprise philosophy has made it possible for both schools of thought to exist peaceably side by side. Ideological differences have yet to create sharp issues. In Canada, however, where a growing segment of the labor movement is accepting a socialist philosophy and expanding its functions to include political action, there is little likelihood of labor and management occupying the

same classrooms. Insofar as the Canadian Congress of Labour has already developed its educational program, the participation of management has been neither sought nor anticipated.

Resident Schools

As the unions have set up their educational departments, built up staffs and obtained the co-operation of universities the traditional evening classes have been increasingly supplemented or even supplanted by short-term resident schools as the most effective means of implementing educational aims. One and two-week summer and winter schools, and even week-end institutes, have proved their superiority over the older method. There are distinct advantages in bringing students together, away from their normal environment. The resident schools are able to combine classroom routine with recreation activities to produce an atmosphere conducive to intellectual effort. The fact that the worker is free for a time from his regular daily responsibilities and is able to mingle with other workers from different localities is an important factor in making for a successful program. Concentration of the program into a single week or fortnight rather than stretching it over several months as in the case in evening classes, again is productive of better results.

With the growing development of resident schools has come greater discrimination in the selection of the student body. In the case of evening classes held in the local labor hall, the students are apt to be random individuals attracted to some particular lecturer or subject. But where the schools are concerned, the unions tend to provide scholarships for their more promising local leaders and rank-and-filers. From the union point of view the advantages of the resident schools are obvious. The educational program can be an integrated whole; union problems and policies can be woven into the curriculum; intensive short-term training can be provided for chosen

officers in special subjects, such as time study or job evaluation.

Experiments in workers' education are still proceeding. Unions, as well as universities, either separately or through joint action, are exploring new methods and materials. In the United States, the American Labor Education Service is making exchange of ideas and experiences possible through its regular regional conferences; this has yet to be done in Canada. In general, however, "the harvest truly is plenteous, but the labourers are few."

Canadian Universities

Few individual unions in Canada have full-time educational staffs. The number of universities on which unions can count with regard to educational programs is equally small. Dalhousie University has, under the direction of Dr. L. Richter, a Maritime Labour Institute which for some years now has rendered a useful service to unions in the Maritime provinces. At the other end of the country, the University of British Columbia is exploring the development of a workers' education program through its extension department. In Winnipeg, the University of Manitoba has for a number of years worked closely with labor groups through the local branch of the Workers' Educational Association. Most recently the University of Toronto sponsored jointly with the Canadian Congress of Labour a one-week winter school at its Ajax campus.

The C.C.L.

Following a decision adopted at its 1947 convention, the Canadian Congress of Labour has set up a Committee on Education. Its terms of reference are to study and to develop, subject to the approval of the Congress, an integrated educational programme suited to the needs of the unions and their members."

Prior to the convention a group of

Congress unions had already operated a successful two-week summer school under the direction of Mr. Howard Conquergood of the United Steelworkers at the Y.M.C.A. camp at Lake Geneva. With Mr. Conquergood again as director, the Committee organized the one-week winter school already referred to above. Both ventures have done much to stimulate interest among Congress unions and the Committee looks forward to such schools as a regular part of its work. One for the coming summer is in fact already being planned.

Apart from these resident schools, the Congress' Committee on Education is currently exploring other possibilities. Week-end institutes on specific topics in various communities will probably supplement the summer and winter schools. A network of local educational committees to make the Committee's program effective will undoubtedly have to be established and should in itself act as a spur to further elaboration of the program. In addition, the Committee envisages a training-for-education scheme which will train people from the union movement itself to act as faculty members. The extent to which universities and adult education associations can be brought into the picture is another matter which the Committee will investigate. So far its efforts have been largely confined to central Canada. Its scope will have to be broadened if it is to be fully effective.

Workers' education on this continent has still a long way to go before it can match the well-established and ramified programs of the labor movements in Great Britain and the Scandinavian countries or of the movements in Germany and Austria before they were destroyed by fascism. It is, however, gaining ground and gradually being accepted both as a practical union tool and as a legitimate function of the universities.