



ADULT EDUCATION AND THE WORKING CLASS
IN SOUTH AUSTRALIA, 1913 - 1975

by

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SUMMARY

Formal manual worker education has been a central consideration in a variety of South Australian educational innovations during the current century. This study was an investigation into such provision since 1913. Emphasis was placed on the work of major agencies namely, the School of Mines, Education Department, the Workers' Educational Association, the Department of Further Education and sections of the labour movement. The discussion was contextualised through brief reference to the British foundations of Australian adult education, its developments in other Australian States, and changes in the labour movement in South Australia since 1913.

Possibly the most important and interesting body established in Britain and then conceptually transferred to Australia was the Workers' Educational Association (WEA). It was originally created to provide a link between labour (the workers) and learning (the university), and was to promote the higher liberal education of working men and women. From the outset, the Association worked within a model advancing consensus views of social relations. Vigorously it pursued the promotion of social harmony, and individual and wider social and national development.

Such efforts often led to conflict between the Association and sections of the labour movement. Consequently, difficulties were created for Associations in various States, with the result that by the 1950's, only the WEA's of New South Wales and South Australia remained. However, by this time,

and particularly in South Australia, the nature of the WEA's courses and student body had changed. The local WEA then appealed largely to middle class adults through its growing recreational adult education programme.

From the late 1950's, the South Australian WEA began to parallel its developing interests in recreational adult education by making major efforts in workers' education. For these adults a utilitarian education was provided. It, like earlier working class oriented efforts, was offered within an ideological framework of individual and wider social and national improvement.

The courses appealed to a number of manual workers. These adults seemed to view the new offerings as comprising more useful knowledge compared with the earlier more academic tutorial class provisions. This view was consistent with many workers' attitudes to the pragmatic offerings of the School of Mines and the Education Department.

Both these bodies provided a variety of adult educational activities from the outbreak of World War I. Workers were attracted to basic trade and middle level technical education programmes. Such attractiveness contrasted with the appeal of the Education Department's adult recreational, informational and non-vocational education provisions.

In South Australia, workers have shown a readiness to involve themselves in utilitarian courses largely irrespective of the motivation of the course providers. In contrast, they have shown little response to high level liberal studies and more propagandistic courses.

The experience of labour movement provided education for workers has verified this conclusion.

STATEMENT OF ORIGINALITY

I certify that this thesis contains no material which has been accepted for the award of any other degree or diploma in any university. Furthermore, to the best of this candidate's knowledge and belief, the thesis contains no material previously published or written by another person, except when due reference is made in the text of the thesis.

Robert J. SUMNER

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ABBREVIATIONS USED

AAAE	-	Australian Association of Adult Education
ACER	-	Australian Council for Educational Research
ACOTAFE	-	Australian Committee on Technical and Further Education
ACTU	-	Australian Council of Trade Unions
ALP	-	Australian Labor Party
CAO	-	Commonwealth Archives Office
CPD	-	<u>Commonwealth Parliamentary Debates</u>
DFE	-	<u>Department of Further Education (South Australia)</u>
N.S.W.	-	New South Wales
OECD	-	Organisation for Economic Co-operation and Development
S.A.	-	South Australia
SAA	-	South Australian Archives
SAPD	-	<u>South Australian Parliamentary Debates</u>
SAPP	-	<u>South Australian Parliamentary Papers</u>
TAFE	-	Technical and Further Education
UNESCO	-	United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organisation
UTLC	-	United Trades and Labor Council (South Australia)
WEA	-	Workers' Educational Association

INTRODUCTION

The illiterate are ever children. (Bulwer¹)

The whole field of trade union education has hardly yet been touched in South Australia or even Australia. (E. Williams²)

Until recently, trade union education has been seriously neglected by Australian unions. (P. Matthews³)

The working class of the 1970's was vastly different from that of 1939 ... It was better educated. (I. Turner⁴)

Introduction

From the onset of World War I to the late 1960's, a variety of bodies endeavoured to provide an education for manual working class adults. Some, such as the Workers' Educational Association (WEA) have attempted to provide a more liberal and then utilitarian education. Others, for example, radical political parties have aimed at a propagandistic education, while bodies such as State education departments

¹ Bulwer quoted in Hudson, J.W., The History of Adult Education, (Reprint of original 1851 edition), London, Woburn, 1969, p.1.

² Williams, E., The WEA in 1959 ... and the Future, (Mimeograph, 11p.), Adelaide, October 1959, p.6. Williams has been the Senior Executive Officer of the WEA in South Australia since 1958.

³ Matthews, P., "Trade Union Education" in Australian Association of Adult Education, Adult Education and Community Advancement, (Report of Tenth Annual Australian Association of Adult Education Conference, Sydney, 1970), Canberra, Australian Association of Adult Education, 1970, pp.184-189, p.184. Matthews is currently Director of the Clyde Cameron College for Trade Union Education at Wodonga, and was an Australian Council of Trade Union Education Officer.

⁴ Turner, I., In Union is Strength. A History of Trade Unions in Australia, 1788-1974, Melbourne, Nelson, 1976, p.116.

and Schools of Mines have made efforts to offer a pragmatic education, particularly a technical education.

Several of the adult educational initiatives, for example, the more pragmatic offerings of the State Education Departments and the Schools of Mines, have revealed continuous and relatively strong attractiveness to manual workers. However, those of the various States' WEA's, and those of sections of the States' labour movements have resulted in quite varied appeal.

In 1972, social and political conditions in Australia were such that there was great potential for the expansion of these adult educational provisions for workers. For the first time in almost a quarter of a century the traditionally working class based Australian Labor Party (ALP) held federal office.

The new government quickly established the Australian Committee on Technical and Further Education (ACOTAFE) to enquire into post-formal secondary, pre-formal tertiary education. The Committee's Report was significant for it resulted in increased Federal Government support for this area of education. In particular, vocational adult education, an area that has traditionally proved attractive to working class adults, received considerable financial support.

In addition to its appointment of the Australian Committee on Technical and Further Education, in 1975 the Government passed legislation that provided for the education and training of trade union leaders and rank and file unionists. This was achieved through creation of a Trade Union Training College as part of a wider statutory Trade Union Training Authority (TUTA). The legislation was another important step in the development of working class adult education, and indicative of its increased status.

The actions of the Labor Government added new dimensions to the expanding field of adult education. They gave an impetus for growth in working class, and wider, adult educational provision, through a range of agencies.⁵ In South Australia, the largest and most important of those with some interest in working class education, were the WEA, the State Department of Further Education (DFE), the Trade Union Training Authority and various individual trade unions.

Aims of the Research

The development of adult education in Australia has depended heavily on the British tradition. As Dr. D. Whitelock

⁵ For a discussion of agencies involved in wider adult education provision, see for example: Finnegan, D.M., Outreach: Awareness of and Access to Adult Education, Adelaide, Department of Further Education, 1977, p.14; Andrew, N., The Agricultural Bureau of South Australia: Its Role as an Agricultural Educator, (Background Paper for Conference on Agricultural Education in South Australia, Roseworthy Agricultural College, 8-9 February, 1979), (Mimeograph, 2p.), Adelaide, 1979; Saunders, I.B., Adult Education in South Australia, (Occasional Paper No. 8), Adelaide, Committee of Enquiry into Post-Secondary Education in South Australia, 1978, passim.

has suggested:-

... Australian adult education was markedly derivative of British precedent up to 1950 at least.⁶

Mechanics' institutes, university extension and the WEA were examples of ventures developed in Britain and later adopted in Australia.

The WEA was originally created in Australian States in 1913 to provide a link between labour (the workers) and learning (the university). Like its British counterpart, the Association was to promote the higher education of working men and women. The WEA was to create a demand for courses. The university, through a Department of Tutorial Classes, would then provide tutors.⁷

The WEA has been significant in terms of quantity of education provision for the working class. A variety of trade unions and some political parties within the labour movement⁸ have also sponsored educational programmes for workers. However, these efforts were of an intermittent nature until the early 1970's.

The State Education Department, and since 1972, the State Department of Further Education is also important. Additionally, the Adelaide-based School of Mines, now the South Australian Institute of Technology, provided workers' education.

⁶ Whitelock, D., Some Thoughts on the History and Philosophy of Adult Education, (Paper presented to Seminar on Continuing Education, University of Adelaide, October 1976), (Mimeograph, 7p.), Adelaide, 1976, p.4.

⁷ In South Australia, the University Department of Tutorial Classes was renamed the Department of Adult Education and thence the Department of Continuing Education.

⁸ Though the term "labour movement" has been used in this thesis, the writer is aware that although labour was not highly organised in the nineteenth century, it was more so later in the twentieth century.

In this thesis, attention is concentrated on that group of workers traditionally regarded as working class: unskilled, semi-skilled and skilled workers, who sell their labour for wages, and are usually manual workers.⁹ Such adults are largely males, although females are becoming more prominent in these groups. Throughout this thesis, the word "workers" refers to manual workers, who were mostly male.

It is argued that a relatively small proportion of adult workers have participated in liberal, informational and recreational adult educational courses in comparison with their participation in remedial and vocational programmes.¹⁰ Further, it is contended that the educational programmes which have been provided for these adults have largely been utilitarian, with an ideological component of self-improvement. They have aimed

⁹ It is beyond the scope of this thesis to engage in debate over the varying interpretations of what constitutes a working class. The writer is aware of various arguments as developed, in for example, Connell, R.W. and Irving, T.H., Class Structure in Australian History: Documents, Narrative and Argument, Melbourne, Longman Cheshire, 1980, (Chapter 1); Encel, S., Equality and Authority: A Study of Class Status and Power in Australia, Melbourne, Cheshire, 1970, passim; Giddens, A., The Class Structure of Advanced Capitalist Societies, London, Hutchinson, 1973, pp.42-81; Marx, K., Capital, Volume 3, Moscow, Foreign Language Publishing House, 1968, p.862; Connell, R.W., Ruling Class, Ruling Culture, Cambridge, Cambridge University Press, 1977, (Chapters 1 & 2); Thompson, E.P., The Making of the English Working Class, Harmondsworth, Penguin, 1968, p.9. and passim; Wright, E.O., "Class Boundaries in Advanced Capitalist Societies", New Left Review, 98:3-41, 1976, passim; and Braverman, H., Labor and Monopoly Capital, New York, Monthly Review Press, 1974, p.293ff.

¹⁰ These categories of adult education are subsequently defined in this chapter.

Throughout the thesis, no attention is given to informal adult education provision; that is, to education acquired through, for example, reading journals, television viewing, reading books in isolation or discussing issues informally in say, a hotel bar. Such education is viewed as important but has largely been undocumented and is considered as being beyond the scope of this research.

at promoting better citizenship and a better social order, at fostering the development of democratic society and generally enriching individual, social and national development.

Because of the significance of the WEA in providing education for manual workers, this study begins at the time of the Association's foundation in Australia, namely, at the outbreak of World War I. The study concludes in 1975. In that year, the important Trade Union Training Authority began its activities as a dominant working class educationally oriented organisation.

The study is given a background through brief attention to important developments in adult education provision during the nineteenth and early twentieth centuries. Subsequently, and because education provision is affected by, for example, social, economic and political conditions, discussion of the labour movement in South Australia in the twentieth century gives an indication of some of the influences affecting working class adult education. In addition and where appropriate, cross reference is made to working class educational provision in other States. Such reflections are valuable, particularly so far as the WEA is concerned, for the various State Associations were derivative of the British WEA. They had common educational aims in working with the various States' labour movements and universities and were in constant contact with each other through, for example, national executive meetings and the WEA official journal, Australian Highway.

Considerations such as these help contextualise the thesis in its contribution to the study of Australian adult education.

There is a paucity of research into the history of adult education in Australia.¹¹ Perhaps the major single publication has been by Dr. Derek Whitelock.¹² This work was largely based on his Ph.D. thesis where his principal concern was with liberal adult education, essentially of university standard. Whitelock neither intended to concentrate, nor in fact did he focus, on educational provision for adult manual workers.

Dr. Stephen Murray-Smith undertook a massive study of technical education,¹³ and has published widely from this research. His work has provided a much needed basis for a number of studies in the area of vocational adult education.¹⁴ These studies, in addition to that of Whitelock, provide very useful secondary sources for this research.

Other research data for this thesis are obtained from archives such as in the Australian Association of Adult Education (Canberra), the Department of Adult Education, University of Sydney, the United Trades and Labor Council of South Australia,

¹¹ Many small articles and some theses have been written, and these are referred to in the following chapters. But in all, the field is unresearched, a conclusion reached not only from an exhaustive search of available sources, but also from discussions with leading figures in the field.

¹² Whitelock, D., The Great Tradition. A History of Adult Education in Australia, St. Lucia, University of Queensland Press, 1974.

¹³ Murray-Smith, S., "A History of Technical Education in Australia: With Special Reference to the Period Before 1914", (Ph.D. thesis), University of Melbourne, 1966.

¹⁴ See for example, Beeby, J.E.K., "Bridging the Gap: The Development of Middle Level Training in Industry in South Australia, From World War II Until 1974", (M.Ed. thesis), Flinders University of South Australia, 1977; Trethewey, L., "Post-Primary Technical Education in South Australia 1915 to 1945", (M.Ed. thesis), Flinders University of South Australia, 1977.

the WEA of South Australia and the State Library of South Australia. Various theses, in addition to those cited above, parliamentary papers and debates, letters, journals, texts, unpublished articles, Government statistical reports, official reports of enquiry commissions and annual reports are also consulted. Finally, much important material is obtained from transcripts and notes of interviews with people who have played a significant role in adult education development. These include Professor W.G.K. Duncan, Messrs. Badger, Williams and Lawton, and the late Dr. E.G. Biaggini. Furthermore correspondence and interviews with various people such as trade union officials, former adult education students, politicians and educators give valuable information.

The present study differs in general content, structure and approach from previous investigations into adult education provision in Australia. There have been no significant in-depth studies of liberal, recreational, remedial, informational and vocational adult educational provision for the working class in South Australia. The current study aims to rectify this.

In summary, then, the present study concentrates on the development of vocational, remedial, informational, recreational and liberal adult education in South Australia from 1913 to 1975. Emphasis is placed on provision for manual workers, and general provisions of which manual workers could avail themselves. Specific attention is paid to the activities of the three major Adelaide-based agencies, namely the WEA, the University Department of Continuing Education,¹⁵ and the

¹⁵ Attention is only paid to the University Department while it worked in close co-operation with the WEA and provided tutors for joint educational activities.

State Government Department of Further Education and their predecessors. Further, the important formal educational activities from within the working class, and their relationships to these institutional initiatives, are investigated. In considering the work of these bodies, brief attention is paid to developments in the labour movement in the wider South Australian society. The discussion is put into the context of adult education in Australia by cross reference to developments in other States and to its early dependence on the British adult educational system. Throughout the thesis it is argued that there has been little worker-controlled adult education and little radical working class adult education. Rather, that provided, it is argued, has been largely utilitarian with its ideological component of self-improvement, and has been designed to promote individual, societal and national growth in a democratic society.

Adult Education, Some Definitions

In recent years, the concept of adult education has undergone considerable redefinition. Increasingly adult education has been encompassed within the term "life-long education" which rejects any assumption that a person's education is completed at the end of formal schooling.¹⁶

In Australia, the term adult education has been used to cover a wide spectrum of activities for adults, ranging from specifically liberal or non-vocational to vocational plus non-

¹⁶ See the discussion in Duke, C., Life-Long Education: An Australian Prognosis, (Occasional Papers in Continuing Education No.13), Canberra, Centre for Continuing Education, Australian National University, 1976, passim; Haines, N., Post-Secondary, Sub-Adult? The Williams Way to AD.2000, Unicorn, 5(4):391-404, November 1979, passim.

vocational. But as Max Bone, the former Director General of the South Australian Department of Further Education, reported in 1972:

In South Australia (and possibly elsewhere) the mistake has been made of treating 'adult education' as something quite unrelated to the education of adults undertaking vocational and technical courses.¹⁷

Bone's position clearly reflected that of both the Minister of Education and the Director of Education at the first South Australian Education Department Adult Education Conference in 1956. They defined adult education as including activities such as technical education, cultural studies and recreational studies.¹⁸

Adult educators have often found it difficult to define their field of operations.¹⁹ C.D. Legge, for example, has provided a very broad definition. He has suggested that adult education should be seen as education for adults taken in its widest sense.²⁰ It thus includes all the educational

¹⁷ Bone, M.H., Adult Education in the Context of Life-long Education, (Paper presented to Seminar of Australian Association of Adult Education, November 1972), (Mimeograph, 22p.), Adelaide, 1972, p.6.

¹⁸ The Minister's Address and the Director's Address to Conference on Adult Education, Education Gazette (South Australia), 16 July, 1956, pp.208-210, p.209.

¹⁹ See for example, UNESCO, Possible Adoption of an International Instrument on the Development of Adult Education, (Report to Executive Board, 25 April, 1974), (Mimeograph, 18p.), Paris, 1974, p.3; Birman, J., "The Role of Extension in Universities in the Seventies", Vestes, 15(3):322-329, November 1972; Verner, C. and Booth, A., Adult Education, New York, Centre for Applied Research in Education, 1964, p.1; Schroeder, W.L., "Adult Education Defined and Described" in R.M. Smith, G.F. Aker, and J.R. Kidd (Eds.), Handbook of Adult Education, New York, Macmillan, 1970, pp.25-43, pp.27ff.

²⁰ UNESCO, Possible Adoption of an International Instrument on the Development of Adult Education, op cit., p.3.

influences on the adult, for example, formalised vocational and non-vocational education, and informal adult education through clubs and the mass media. And this breadth in definition has been supported by research cited by, for example, J. Adams,²¹ Jerome Ziegler,²² Dr. Chris Duke²³ and A.J.A. Nelson.²⁴

In contrast, Professor Coolie Verner and Alan Booth, have suggested that:

... the term adult education is used to designate all those educational activities²⁵ that are designed specifically for adults.

This rather encompassing definition has inadequacies in it. Some educational activities not exclusively designed for adults, such as matriculation courses, are studied by adults in, for example, night classes. These courses are mainly pursued for remedial or catch-up purposes and such a category is a major component of the broad adult education field in South Australia.

However, Verner and Booth were satisfied that:

Whatever the form, content, duration, physical setting, or sponsorship, an activity is identified as adult education when it is part of a systematic, planned, instructional programme for adults.²⁶

²¹ Adams, J.J., Frontiers of American Culture, New York, Scribners, 1944, passim.

²² Ziegler, J., "Continuing Education in the University" in R.S. Morrison (Ed.), The Contemporary University, Boston, Houghton Mifflin, 1966, p.131.

²³ Duke, C., op cit., p.19.

²⁴ Nelson, A.J.A., A Note on Structures for the Development of the Education of Adults in Australia, (Paper written for Australian Association of Adult Education Conference, La Trobe University, 1974), (Mimeograph, 9p.), Armidale, no date, p.1.

²⁵ Verner, C. and Booth, A., op cit., p.1.

²⁶ ibid., p.2.

Adult education has thus been seen as a planned, instructional, systematic programme. A variety of activities are included, but they must meet the conditions specified above. They must be formally planned, a condition which has also been a requirement of the definitions of adult education formulated by UNESCO and the OECD.²⁷

Within this grouping of formally planned activities, a variety of categorizations of adult education have been isolated. Firstly, remedial adult education, which Whitelock has referred to as, "historically the basic raison d'etre of adult education".²⁸ Secondly, recreational adult education, which embraces largely leisure interest and hobby activities. Thirdly, informational, which embraces propagandist studies. Fourthly, vocational, which includes study of a utilitarian nature. Finally, there is liberal adult education. Hartley Grattan has suggested that:

Liberal adult education is ordinarily concerned with the humanities and the social sciences and should also include the natural sciences, music and the plastic arts. Its primary objective is to deepen the understanding of the human predicament and put men in the way of making relevant judgements and sensitive discriminations among values. It is not concerned, in the first instance, with improving the prospect of greater pecuniary rewards like most vocational education, nor with improving competence in recreation, nor with information of any specialized kind, but

²⁷ UNESCO., Final Report. International Conference on Education, 35th Session, Paris, UNESCO, 1975; Duke, C., op cit., p.19.

²⁸ Whitelock, D., Some Thoughts on the History of Ideas of Adult Education, op cit., p.1. See also Schroeder, W.L., op cit., p.26.

with those varieties of knowledge and understanding that somehow underpin wisdom. Liberal adult education is calculated to assist in the maturation of the individual as an individual - not simply as a factor in the economic equation or as a political citizen, but as a Man. It is more concerned with helping men to be, than to be something ... on the theory that if this can be achieved, all else will be on a higher plane. It is concerned with the great and enduring thoughts, deeds, and creations of the past on the one hand; on the other it adventures on the frontiers of knowledge. It is concerned with literature and philosophy, political science and economics, the behavioural sciences and the arts, dealing with them as only adults can deal with them and on the theory that adults are precisely the ones who can most fruitfully wrest their meaning and significance from them.²⁹

Liberal adult education has been given various names, such as enrichment or general adult education. But in Australia it has been frequently used to refer to non-vocational, non-credit adult education in the tradition of the WEA's and University Tutorial Classes Departments.

Not all adult educators have agreed to the inclusion of vocational education in a broad definition of adult education. The distinction between this group and those espousing definitions including formal vocational education, has been highlighted by people such as Lyman Bryson,³⁰ Reeves, Fansler

²⁹ Grattan, C.H., In Quest of Knowledge, New York, Association Press, 1955, pp.6-7.

³⁰ Bryson, L., Adult Education, New York, American Book Co., 1936, p.3.

and Houle,³¹ Coolie Verner³² and Paul Essert.³³

Many educators and agencies in Australia have taken the more limited view, with adult education being seen as formally planned and systematic, and excluding vocational studies.³⁴

Alf Wesson, for example, defined adult education as:

... those organised activities whereby men and women from outside the mainstream of educational provision voluntarily, in their spare time, learned non-vocational subject matter under some degree of guidance.³⁵

In contrast, Whitelock, in his thesis on adult education in New South Wales, used the broader definition when he stated that adult education was:

... that systematic education pursued by mature people in their own time and of their own free will.³⁶

Both writers thus viewed adult education as a formally planned

³¹ Orliker, J., Introduction to Adult Education Syllabus for Education, Columbus Ohio, Ohio State University, no date cited, quoted in W.L. Schroeder, op cit., p.30.

³² Verner, C., "Definition of Terms" in G. Jensen, A.A. Liveright, and W. Hallenbeck (Eds.), Adult Education: Outlines of an Emerging Field of University Study, Washington D.C., Adult Education Association of U.S.A., 1964, pp.27-39.

³³ Essert, P., Creative Leadership of Adult Education, New Jersey, Prentice Hall, 1951. pp.5 & 8.

³⁴ Finnegan, D.M., op cit., p.4; Duke, C., op cit., pp.17,18.

³⁵ Wesson, A., "Formal Adult Education in Victoria 1890-1950", (M.Ed. thesis), University of Melbourne, 1971, p.2.

³⁶ Whitelock, D.A., "The Great Tradition. A History of Liberal Adult Education in New South Wales from the Beginnings to 1966 With Some Reference to the British Experience", (Ph.D. thesis), University of New England, 1970, p.vi.

systematic activity. And although there were similarities in the themes of these and all definitions, the boundaries differ. Wayne Schroeder summarised this lack of consensus when he wrote, in reference to adult education in an international sphere, and thus applicable to the situation in Australia:

There is still no single definition universally accepted by adult educators nor is there a universally held public image of adult education. The adult educator and layman alike naturally tend to define adult education within the limits of their own immediate experience in it.³⁷

And as mentioned above, an area of major contention between adult educators has been of the inclusion or exclusion of vocational studies.

A term that has been widely used in Britain since World War II, and one which has overcome some of the local problems encountered in attempting to define adult education, is further education. However, even this has been employed variously in different States and countries. But in South Australia it has been used as suggested by the Report of a Committee of Enquiry into Education in South Australia, 1969-1970, known as the Karmel Report, 1970. Here, further education was defined as being concerned with:

... the education of those who have left secondary school, whether having completed full secondary schooling or not, and who are studying courses other than those provided at tertiary level by universities, teachers' colleges, or colleges of advanced education.³⁸

³⁷ Schroeder, W.L., op cit., p.29.

³⁸ Committee of Enquiry into Education in South Australia, Education in South Australia 1969-1970, Adelaide, Government Printer, 1971, p.313.

In other words further education was seen as formally planned systematic post-formal schooling, pre-tertiary credit education.³⁹

The Australian Committee on Technical and Further Education (ACOTAFE) used the rather more precise term technical and further education to specify that area of education which was referred to by the Karmel Report, 1970 as further education. In the first ACOTAFE Report of 1974, the Committee suggested:

... technical and further education should be regarded as describing all organised and sustained programmes designed to communicate vocationally oriented knowledge and to develop the individual's understandings and skills ... It includes what is usually known as "adult education". It does not include activities which have no direct educational purpose and which are not planned as a systematic sequence e.g. social and corporate activities such as meetings of clubs, associations or work camps having no explicit educational aim.⁴⁰

And it is quite clear, just what was considered to be technical and further education. It was seen as formalised, planned vocational, non-vocational, recreational, remedial or informational education for adults. Technical and further education was a re-statement of the definition of further education employed in the Karmel Report, 1970.

However, the terms further education and technical and further education were not widely used in South Australia until the 1970's. And of consequence, their only use in this thesis is in reference to some specific activities in the 1970's.

³⁹ Though courses provided by universities are excluded, arguments in the Report suggest no intention to exclude those provided by the then, Department of Adult Education of the University, many of which are and were of "tertiary level".

⁴⁰ Australian Committee on Technical and Further Education, T A F E in Australia. Report on Needs in Technical and Further Education, Canberra, Australian Government Publishing Service, 1974, p.xxxv.

In the current work, adult education is defined as formally planned, systematic, vocational, liberal, recreational, remedial or informational education for adults. It is largely of a voluntary attendance nature and is post-compulsory school, pre-formal tertiary credit education of diploma or degree level. Adult education embraces middle level technical and commercial education, some aspects of basic trade education, as well as other education planned for, and in which, adults participate. It is thus defined in the manner used by M.H. Bone,⁴¹ by the professional Australian Association of Adult Education (AAAE), by the OECD and by UNESCO. Adult education is also as enunciated by the Minister of Education and Director of Education at the first State Education Department Adult Education Conference held in South Australia in 1956.⁴²

Summary

Adult education provision in general, and working class adult education provision in particular, received a substantial boost with the election of a Federal ALP Government in 1972. Prior to this time and since 1913, this area of adult education, which does not have a widely accepted definition, developed in a fluctuating manner.

Most education provided for the working class has come from the WEA, and its partner, the University Department of Tutorial Classes and later Department of Adult Education, the State Department of Education and the South Australian School of Mines and Industries. Few specific attempts

⁴¹ Bone, M.H., op cit., p.5ff.

⁴² Education Gazette (South Australia), op cit., p.209.

have been made by the working class to provide for a working class initiated and controlled education. Most of these efforts were of an ad hoc nature until the 1970's, at which time TUTA was established and more concentrated union efforts were evidenced.

In South Australia, the major agencies providing for working class education have offered programmes that have been, it is argued, largely utilitarian and designed to promote individual, wider community and national growth in a democratic society.



CHAPTER 1

DEVELOPMENTS IN ADULT EDUCATION FOR WORKERS IN NINETEENTH CENTURY AUSTRALIA: A BACKGROUND FOR

THE TWENTIETH CENTURY

... adult education in Australia, notwithstanding ... a record of some substantial achievement, is still suffering from the effects of a system which was imported lock, stock and barrel from the United Kingdom ... (F. Alexander¹)

Up to 1945 at least its adult education movement was largely the result of importation of cultural baggage from Britain. (D.A. Whitelock²)

Introduction

The major ideas in adult education in colonial Australia had their roots in Britain. There the providers were responding to particular needs and wants, largely created by industrial capitalism.

But industrial capitalism, in terms of large scale production, is only a twentieth century development in South Australia, and in Australia in general. Nineteenth century Britain and its Australian colonies were at different stages of growth. Arguably then, the educational needs of adults could have been different, making difficult any transfer of modes of, and agencies of, adult educational provision.

¹ Alexander, F., Adult Education in Australia, A Historian's Point of View, Melbourne, Cheshire, 1959, p.1.

² Whitelock, D.A., "The Great Tradition. A History of Liberal Adult Education in New South Wales from the Beginnings to 1966 With Some Reference to the British Experience", (Ph.D. thesis), University of New England, 1970, p.546. Here Whitelock was specifically referring to New South Wales, but the comment is generalisable to other Australian colonies and States.

However, as Derek Whitelock related in his thesis on liberal adult education in New South Wales:

William Charles Wentworth ... wrote his ode Australasia in 1823 ... His vision of Australia as a new Great Britain in the South Seas ... British colonists in this period and beyond regarded themselves as transplanted Britons, with a moral duty to civilize wildernesses in Canada, New Zealand or New Holland with British culture, ... the British in New South Wales - or at least those who had not been forcibly transplanted - tended to cling the more fervently to their links with "home" ...³

This bond with Britain has been further highlighted by Geoffrey Serle who has written:

The Australian colonies inherited and reproduced British law, parliamentary government ..., the British versions of Christianity, prevailing ideas in economics, politics, education and culture.⁴

Hence with a tradition of copying aspects of life in the "mother country", it was not surprising that the adult educational pioneers pressed ahead undaunted. In Australia, they developed an adult educational system which was quite clearly modelled on that of Britain.

Australians were to experience a number of experiments in the field of adult education. Sunday schools, mechanics' institutes, the Workers' Educational Association, university extension, working men's colleges and labour colleges were

³ ibid., pp.60-62.

⁴ Serle, G., From Deserts The Prophets Come. The Creative Spirit in Australia 1788-1972, Melbourne, Heinemann, 1973, p.19.

notable examples.

British Adult Education in the Early Nineteenth Century

In Britain, the latter years of the eighteenth, and early years of the nineteenth centuries were periods of rapid change and economic, industrial, social and political ferment.⁵ It was during this time that a variety of experiments were undertaken to provide education for the "ignorant" in the population. Robert Owen, Thomas Carlyle and William Hodgekin, for example, promoted educational ventures. Furthermore, there were the Welsh Circulating Schools, schools established by the National Society for Educating the Poor in the Principles of the Established Church, the British and Foreign School Society and Hampden Clubs. According to the 1919 Report:⁶

The dominant note of these experiments was a mixture of piety, genuine philanthropy and political apprehension ... To the politician alarmed by the growth of political agitation, as to the earnest Christian anxious for the redemption of souls, or the humanitarian reformer shocked by the idle and dissolute habits of the poor, the answer seemed to lie in education ... if religion made it a charitable duty to teach the poor, practical reasons made it socially advantageous. A population which was ignorant was thriftless, and a population which was ⁷ thriftless was expensive and even dangerous.

⁵ See for example, Foster, J., Class Struggle in the Industrial Revolution. Early Industrial Capitalism in Three English Towns, London, Weidenfeld & Nicolson, 1972. passim; Thompson, E.P., The Making of the English Working Class, Harmondsworth, Penguin, 1968, passim.

⁶ Ministry of Reconstruction, Adult Education Committee, Final Report of 1919, London, Government Print, 1919. The report is commonly referred to as the 1919 Report, and was one which has had substantial influence on adult education in Britain. In fact, in 1956, R.D. Waller, Professor of Adult Education at the University of Manchester, referred to the Report as "probably the most important single contribution to adult education literature". Waller, R.D., A Design For Democracy, London, Max Parrish, 1956, p.15.

⁷ 1919 Report, op cit., pp.10-11.

For a variety of reasons, attempts were thus being made to eradicate the ignorance of sections of the population. Among these, as suggested in the 1919 Report, was the important religious motive. Indeed, as Whitelock has suggested, religion was the "... mainstay of British adult education in the eighteenth and nineteenth centuries, ...".⁸ Methodists, Evangelicals and Quakers were prominent. Through their adult schools, efforts were made to give adults a basic education in order that, for example, they could read the Bible. Furthermore, it was hoped that religious education would divert the minds of labourers to socially useful activities.

In calling for support for adult schools, Dr. Thomas Pole reinforced these aims:

Give liberally because adult education will put an end to existing crimes and encourage the principles upon which society depends for its security. The lower classes will not then be so dependent on the more provident members of society as they are now ... Industry, frugality and economy will be their possession ...⁹

Such aims had appeal. If realised, many workers would become more literate, "hard-working" and "responsible". The spread of vice and crime could be curbed and people would, it was hoped, work together in producing a better society.

⁸ Whitelock, D.A., op cit., p.9.

⁹ Pole, T., A History of the Origin and Progress of Adult Schools, Bristol, 1814, p.5., quoted in ibid., p.11.

However, in providing this education a note of caution was sounded. The workers were only to be given a basic education, a smattering of the educational experiences available to members of other social classes. They were not to be "over-educated", a condition which, it was feared, could encourage worker discontent.¹⁰ Thus these adult educational programmes were designed to produce "better citizens" who would work for the common good of society.

Mechanics' Institutes

The religious motivation was one important determinant of adult education provision. Another was the progress which occurred in the field of science through scientific discoveries. This scientific motive had its most important response in the form of mechanics' institutes.

The institutes, which achieved prominence in Britain during the first half of the nineteenth century,¹¹ had emerged at the turn of that century. They were inspired by a Yorkshire Quaker, Dr. George Birkbeck, Professor of Natural Philosophy and Chemistry at Anderson's University in Glasgow.¹² On visiting workshops to superintend the construction of apparatus for his scientific experiments, he found that the mechanics, a working

¹⁰ Waller, R.D., op cit., p.166.

¹¹ In the 1919 Report (p.14) it was estimated that by the mid-nineteenth century in Britain, for example, there were 610 mechanics' institutes with a membership of over 600,000.

¹² J.W. Hudson in his The History of Adult Education, (Reprint of original 1851 edition), London, Woburn, 1969, suggested that the Brotherly Society of Birmingham founded in 1796 was the first real mechanics' institute in Britain. However, Birkbeck is generally acknowledged as the movement's founder.

class élite, were keenly interested in the new machines. Consequently, he opened his lectures and allowed these men to attend. Such action gained a positive worker response. Many mechanics attended his lectures during the time that he offered them in Glasgow, namely, 1799-1804.¹³ This pattern of involvement persisted, for the lectures continued to attract large numbers of mechanics under Birkbeck's successor, Andrew Ure.¹⁴

In 1823, some dissatisfied mechanics broke from the Andersonian Institute and created a mechanics' institute. This was the first time that the name had been used. More importantly however, the institute was financed and controlled by the working class, that is, workers' education controlled by workers.

Worker authority over institute affairs was uncommon. From the outset, control was largely vested in the hands of the middle class. As such, the motivations for the institutes' establishment reflected middle class economic and social ambitions for the working class.¹⁵ In fact, workers were "... faced with a plethora of arguments constructed by those of another social class".¹⁶ This was further verified in the aims of the mechanics' institute formed at Manchester in 1824:

¹³ 1919 Report, op cit., p.14.

¹⁴ Kelly, T., "The Origins of Mechanics' Institutes", British Journal of Educational Studies, 1(1):17-27, November 1952, p.20.

¹⁵ See the discussion in Thompson, E.P., op cit., pp.817-819.

¹⁶ Inkster, I., "The Social Context of an Educational Movement: A Revisionist Approach to the English Mechanics' Institutes, 1820-1850", Oxford Review of Education, 2(3):277-307, 1976, p.285.

The society has been formed for the purpose of enabling mechanics and artisans, of whatever trade they may be, to become acquainted with such branches of science as are of practical application in the exercise of that trade, that they may possess a more thorough knowledge of their business, acquire a greater degree of skill in the practice of it, and be qualified to make improvements and even new inventions in the arts which they respectively profess.¹⁷

There was thus a clear utilitarian orientation with a major function being to educate skilled tradesmen and craftsmen to be more efficient operatives. An understanding of scientific principles relevant to their work would promote this efficiency.

The institutes saw several periods of rapid expansion, namely, 1823-25, 1835-40, 1845-50.¹⁸ However, by 1851, nearly everywhere they ceased being regarded as a medium for the instruction of the working class. They became select rather than popular institutions, with broad curricula that catered for some middle class educational needs.¹⁹ They were mechanics' institutes in name only, a condition foreshadowed as early as 1835. For in that year the Liberal Whig and institute supporter, Lord Brougham admitted that institutes had failed to maintain widespread working class support.²⁰

¹⁷ Dobbs, A.E., Education and Social Movements 1700-1850 quoted in 1919 Report, op cit., p.14.

¹⁸ Peers, R., Adult Education: A Comparative Study, London, Routledge and Kegan Paul, 1972, p.19.

¹⁹ Tylecote, M., The Mechanics' Institutes of Lancashire and Yorkshire Before 1851, Manchester, 1957, p.258, quoted in R. Lawson, "Adult Education for the Masses: Brisbane in the 1880's"; Journal of Royal Australian Historical Society, 58(4):297-303, December 1972, p.298.

²⁰ See especially the discussion in Thompson, E.P., op cit., p.818, and Whitelock, D.A., op cit., p.22.

Their failure to continue to appeal to manual workers was the result of a variety of factors. Certainly, the concentration on scientific subjects and the exclusion of political education affected the continuing attendance of at least some mechanics. In 1824 a group of these adults stated:

Nothing can persuade us ... but that all systems of education are false which do not teach man his political duties and rights.²¹

The mechanics' institutes did not promote working class political education. In fact, radical worker moves to have lectures in politics and economics at the London Mechanics' Institute were rejected by the Institute's ruling body. Such studies were regarded as controversial, and were not to be available in the Institute.

Other factors that hastened the demise of the institutes' appeal to workers were the financial burden placed on the membership, in efforts to ensure the institutes' viability, and the workers' lack of control over their own education.²² This issue of worker control was important, and was one which later affected worker relationships with bodies such as the WEA.

After 1850, with the passing of the Public Libraries Act, some of the institutes became libraries, others became

²¹ Mechanics' Magazine, 11 September, 1824, quoted in 1919 Report, op cit., p.14; See also Thompson, E.P., op cit., p.818.

²² See discussion in Wesson, A., "The Mechanics' Institutes of Victoria", Australian Journal of Adult Education, 12(1):3-10, 1972; Thompson, E.P., op cit., p.818; Whitelock, D.A., op cit., pp.19-20.

technical colleges while many became social clubs.²³ These were similar to the direction taken by many institutes in the Australian colonies.

Owenite Halls of Science, Co-operatives and Working Men's Colleges

An important British experiment in the first half of the nineteenth century was the development of Owenite Halls of Science. Owenites used these as a basis for organising, for example, lecture series, some classes, debates and discussions. The Halls' appeals were not to the mass of the working class. Rather they were to an élite group of adults from both the middle and working classes. In this way, the Halls' orientations were similar to those of many mechanics' institutes and then later, the WEA.

A further avenue through which attempts were made to provide education for the working class, was the co-operative movement. This had both economic and educational aims. Many co-operatives formed libraries, and offered classes and lectures to workers.

Another effort designed to cater for some of the educational needs of adult workers, came in the form of People's Colleges and Working Men's Colleges. The first People's College was established in Sheffield in 1842 and was planned along lines consistent with William Lovett's²⁴ philosophy of education.

²³ Charles Dickens in Chapter XII of his The Uncommercial Traveller ridiculed the management committee of a fictional mechanics' institute for failure to adhere to its original programme goals. Quoted in D.A. Whitelock, op cit., p.26.

²⁴ Lovett was a leading member of the Chartist Movement and was hailed in the 1919 Report (p.18.) as "the first and greatest of working class educational reformers".

This was that education was to be liberal, an approach distinguishing the colleges from the early orientation of mechanics' institutes. The problems of finance and government were to be the responsibility of the students. Again a theme for workers' education emerged. Such education was viewed as necessarily being controlled by workers.

The London Working Men's College was established in 1854. It was founded by a group of Christian Socialists who included F.D. Maurice, Professor of English Literature, History and Theology at King's College, London. Maurice, an ardent theologian, social reformer and convinced advocate of adult education, was influential in directing the college's development.²⁵ There were four major ideas that inspired him in his designs for working class adult education. These were:

The education offered was to be humane, not technical, because a workman 'is a person, not a thing, a citizen and not a slave or even a wage earning animal'; and as such he is entitled, 'not merely to receive certain crumbs of knowledge which fall from the rich men's table, but to share with them in the deepest and most universal parts of their treasure, those which belong not to classes, but to men'. It was to be based on the previous interests of the students, particularly upon their interests in social and political questions ... it was not to eschew topics merely because they were controversial ... It was to be 'regular and organic, not taking the form of mere miscellaneous lectures or even of classes not related to each other'. It was not merely to be a system of instruction, but a way of life shared by teachers and students through membership in a corporate institution.²⁶

²⁵ Thompson - McCausland, L.P., "The Working Men's College", Adult Education (U.K.), 45(6):360-363, March 1973, p.361.

²⁶ 1919 Report, op cit., p.24. For Maurice's educational ideas see, Maurice, F.D., Learning and Working, A Study of the Development of Higher Education Among Working Men and Women, London, Longmans, Green and Co., 1855, passim.

Though this could have been construed as a politically inept attempt to provide, at least in loose form, workers' education controlled by the working class, it was in fact an important theoretical development. The foundation of working men's colleges saw partial advances in theory and practice, accompanying a process of worker struggle and self definition.

The London Working Men's College opened with an enrolment of 140 students.²⁷ However, like other working men's colleges, it was never successful in attracting workers, en masse, to its classes. Working class labour colleges established on a small scale in Australia, suffered similarly. The minor acceptance among the mass of the workers can be attributed, at least in part, to working class weaknesses and disorganisation of the time.

During the nineteenth century, Britain was marked by swings between reliance on political reform as a means to eradicate injustices created by the new industrialisation, and recourse to direct working class action to improve their lot. The franchise was extended and various social and educational reforms occurred. There was a rise in democratic idealism, and the important 1870 Education Act enlarged education provision.

In this environment, various adult educational initiatives were made. Some enjoyed a short life span, while others such as mechanics' institutes, existed, albeit in differing

²⁷ Thompson - McCausland, L.P., op cit., p.361. Today its enrolment is predominantly "working men" though not "industrial labourers" and its enrolment is approximately 2,000.

forms, for longer periods. Certainly, there were many innovations in adult education provision in this period. There were some specific working class initiated ventures, but largely, adult education was a privilege bestowed on the poor by religious men and philanthropists. Adult education was externally controlled and provided for the working class. Its motivations were various, but these included scientific, remedial, religious and utilitarian.

University Extension

In an effort to offer adults a liberal adult education of university standard, yet another innovation was carried out. This was the later nineteenth century experiment in university extension. It arose in the 1870's at a time when élitist universities were coming under pressure to more closely examine their role in society.

According to Moroney,²⁸ the idea of university extension, as it is understood today, probably first found expression in print in a memorandum submitted to the English Schools Enquiry Commission (1864-67) by Miss A. Clough, a pioneer of the movement for the higher education of women. However, it was at Cambridge (1873) and Oxford (1876) Universities that extension became a reality.²⁹ Its proponents saw extension as a means of

²⁸ Moroney, M.B., "Adult Education in N.S.W. Its Present Condition and Future Possibilities", (M.Ed. thesis), University of Sydney, 1960, p.30.

²⁹ Stocks, M., The Workers' Educational Association: The First Fifty Years, London, Allen and Unwin, 1953, p.15.

extending civilization to the educationally under-privileged, that is, those who had been unable to avail themselves of a university education. Extension would involve taking the university to the people rather than attempting to open university classes to all.

These ideas were expressed in memorials received by Cambridge University in 1872:

... these memorialists said, in effect - we know that in many great towns and rural districts there are large numbers of persons who desire the benefits of higher education. These persons have passed the age of attendance at school. But they have not the means, or the leisure, to spend three or four years at a university. Many of them are young men of the middle classes, employed during the day as clerks or shop assistants. Many others are artisans. How are we to provide for the higher educational needs of such persons, who can study only in the evening? We turn, in this difficulty, to the old universities of England. They are the national centres of higher education. Why should not the universities come to us, since those for whom we plead cannot go to them? Why should they not send us teachers, men of high attainment in various branches of knowledge? Such men could render a new and great service to the nation, if as missionaries of the universities, as interpreters of the liberal spirit of education, they would conduct evening classes in our towns for men who have no leisure during the day.³⁰

The memorialists also suggested offering education to women who had already experienced a good education, and had leisure time during the day. Such women were largely middle class.

Clearly, most workers were not to be included in any

³⁰ Jebb, Prof. Sir R., "The University Extension Movement", University Extension Journal, 6(47):19-20, November 1900, p.19.

extension service. It was an élite which was being suggested as part of the target clientele, just as had been the initial client group of Owenite Halls of Science and mechanics' institutes. Again, like the mechanics' institutes, extension was a service provided for workers. However, here, liberal adult education was central to the philosophy of its supporters.

Since the earliest days of the extension service, efforts were made to attract workers.³¹ Like mechanics' institutes before it, university extension failed to attract these people in any large numbers.

Despite such failures, the initiative was an important contribution to British adult education development in the nineteenth century. It foreshadowed twentieth century university involvement in the area, when in partnership with the WEA, various universities made significant contributions to the liberal education of workers.

Extension, mechanics' institutes, adult schools, working men's colleges, co-operatives, Owenite Halls of Science and a multitude of other efforts represented a century of lively innovation in adult education in Britain. There were a variety of motivations for these experiments, but central to many, and certainly to those discussed in this work, were their proponents' intentions to educate the "ignorant", that is, the educationally under-privileged.

³¹ Kermins, L.W., "University Extension and Artisans", University Extension Journal, 1(1):7, October 1875.

In terms of reaching this central goal they enjoyed varying degrees of success, and in some cases, failure. However, they were important developments in adult education in Britain. They provided an educational service that attracted a broad cross-section of the population, but particularly middle class adults. They were also the very foundation on which twentieth century efforts were based. Furthermore, these nineteenth century endeavours were models for nineteenth century colonial adult education in Australia.

Adult Education in Early Nineteenth Century

Australia

Sydney, Hobart and Brisbane were established as convict rather than commercial cities. In contrast, Perth, Melbourne and Adelaide were established more as commercial centres.³²

In the early years of the settlement of Australia, convicts and poor immigrants were the most numerous elements of the European population.³³ These people largely formed the labour force. The overwhelming majority of them had not experienced a national school system, nor for that matter, formal education, although they had experienced the new

³² McCarty, J.W., "Australian Capital Cities in the 19th Century", Australian Economic History Review, 10(2):107-137, September 1970, p.111.

³³ Fitzpatrick, B., A Short History of the Australian Labor Movement, Melbourne, Macmillan, 1968, p.69.

commercialism and industrialism which were transforming Britain both economically and socially. This new commercialism was gradually established in Australia where the pastoral capitalists enjoyed considerable political influence.³⁴ Its formation enhanced the polarisation of society into a class based one. In this environment, major early provision of adult education commenced through mechanics' institutes.

However, prior to the founding of these institutes, and from the settlement of the colony to about 1825, a variety of efforts were made to educate colonial adults.³⁵ Well-to-do people, whom Roe called "culturists",³⁶ and who were equivalent to the subscribers to British literary, scientific and philosophical societies, promoted lectures and formed subscription libraries. Further, some specific efforts were made to give aboriginals and convicts a basic education. As Whitelock has written:

The convicts at Maconochie's classes and the trade classes at Point Puer, the Aborigines learning to read their Bibles or some knowledge

³⁴ Pastoral capitalism had burst into the Australian colonies during the 1830's. See Rowley, K., "Pastoral Capitalism: Australia's Pre-industrial Development", Intervention, 1:9-26, 1972. See also Roe, M., Quest for Authority in Eastern Australia 1835-1851, Melbourne, Melbourne University Press, 1965, (Especially Chapter 2); Burroughs, P., Britain and Australia 1831-1855, Oxford, Oxford University Press, 1967, pp.120-132; Abbott, G.J., The Pastoral Age, Melbourne, Macmillan and Dalgety, 1971, pp.121-122.

³⁵ See Whitelock, D.A., op cit., Chapter 2, for a detailed discussion of adult education in early colonial New South Wales.

³⁶ See Roe, M., op cit., passim., for details on cultural conditions in early New South Wales.

of farming and carpentry, the people studying at Howe's evening school - all these and others were engaged in what would be termed vocational, remedial or religious adult education ...³⁷

However, the provision was piecemeal, for as Whitelock has further argued:

Organised adult education for adults in the colony, where it existed at all, was but a feeble embryo of a movement.³⁸

This condition changed with the creation of mechanics' institutes.³⁹ These agencies made the first major long term contribution to the area of educational provision for adults in the Australian colonies.

Mechanics' Institutes - Australia and in Particular
South Australia

As was the case in Britain, enthusiasts banded together to establish mechanics' institutes. According to Whitelock, their formation was generally welcomed by the more prosperous colonists. They were seen as, for example, helping to provide a more highly skilled labour force, a better educated work-force, and aiding in diverting potential working class radicals into the pursuit of "useful knowledge".⁴⁰

It was in Hobart in 1827 that the first Australian

³⁷ Whitelock, D.A., op cit., p.131.

³⁸ ibid.

³⁹ For a discussion of mechanics' institutes in Australia see especially, Whitelock, D.A., op cit., Chapters 2 and 3 and Nadel, G., Australia's Colonial Culture, Ideas, Men and Institutions in Mid-Nineteenth Century Eastern Australia, Cambridge, Massachusetts, Harvard University Press, 1957, passim.

⁴⁰ Whitelock, D., The Great Tradition: A History of Adult Education in Australia, St. Lucia, University of Queensland Press, 1974, pp.83-100.

mechanics' institute was founded. The institute received the support of Governor Arthur, who was convinced that education would promote moral improvement and raise "working class minds".⁴¹ Similar sentiments were evident in the formation of subsequent institutes.

The important Sydney Mechanics' School of Arts⁴² was founded in 1833 after an inaugural meeting attended by more than 200 colonists, a number which indicated the importance attached to the venture. Henry Carmichael was the major force behind the establishment of the School. A clergyman, and associate of Bentham, Carmichael had come to the colony in 1831 at the request of Dr. Lang, to teach in Lang's proposed Australian College. During the voyage from England to Australia, he lectured to emigrant mechanics on the ship. The education provided was in arithmetic and geometry, with some instruction in political economy. Among the books studied in this latter area were the first two volumes of Adam Smith's The Wealth of Nations;⁴³ hence providing an introduction to classical political economy; the ideological foundation of bourgeois power.

Some months after arrival in the colony, Governor

⁴¹ Clark, C.M.H., A History of Australia, Vol. 2, Melbourne, Melbourne University Press, 1968, p.268.

⁴² An alternative name often given to mechanics' institutes.

⁴³ Turney, C., "Henry Carmichael - His Advanced Educational Thought and Practice" in C. Turney (Ed.), Pioneers of Australian Education, Sydney, Sydney University Press, 1969, pp.59-80, p.69.

Bourke requested that Carmichael proceed with the establishment of the Mechanics' School of Arts. He was ultimately elected to a key administrative position in the School, which he tried to orient to the perceived needs of the colony.

In this regard the socio-moral implication of the spreading of knowledge, as typically emphasised by the Benthamites was stressed. It was asserted that such 'diffusion' would precipitate moral reform by rescuing colonial society from its general degradation.⁴⁴

Quite clearly, it was the working man's "moral enlightenment" which was among the more important of the institution's objectives. Further, the School of Arts functioned to improve the working man by upgrading scientific knowledge. The School was:

... to afford to those practising the mechanical arts in this colony, facilities for acquiring a knowledge of the principles upon which their practical operations are founded ... the diffusion of scientific and other useful knowledge ... and the provision of adequate facilities for the supply of ... deficiencies in early education.⁴⁵

With improved knowledge, the worker could become more efficient. The pastoral industry and the embryonic manufacturing industries, in particular, would benefit. The colony was experiencing an acute shortage of skilled labour, and while the School did not specifically focus on enhancing workers' motor skills, it did aim to extend their understanding of scientific principles, a process invaluable in promoting worker efficiency.

⁴⁴ ibid., p.70. See also, Serle, G., op cit., p.24.

⁴⁵ New South Wales Magazine, 1:2, 1 September, 1833, quoted in A. Wesson, op cit., p.5.

At the Sydney Mechanics' School of Arts, lectures were delivered in subjects which included, for example, geology, gardening and general science. As early as 1835, however, the committee of management expressed some disquiet about lack of success in attracting the colony's mechanics.

Your committee however, cannot but regret that so few of that class, viz., the mechanics of Sydney, for whose benefit the institution was founded should be entered among its members ... How much happier and better is the individual who leaves the halls of such an institution fraught with knowledge useful to himself and beneficial to his fellow creatures, than he who reels from the abode of the drunkard and debauched, tainted with the vices which such a society is sure to entail.⁴⁶

Generally the School enjoyed marked success in attracting students, but manual workers were not prevalent.⁴⁷ Such a condition increasingly typified the institutes which were created in other centres in Australia.⁴⁸ Workers were, in general, not in control of the institutes. The similarity with conditions in institutes in Britain was manifest.

The Hobart Town Mechanics' Institute was founded in the 1820's and enjoyed fluctuating success until the 1850's. The

⁴⁶ Sydney School of Arts, Third Annual Report, 1835, quoted in D.C. Griffiths, Documents in the Establishment of Education in New South Wales 1789-1880, Melbourne, A C E R , 1957, p.201.

⁴⁷ See for example, Whitelock, D., The Great Tradition: A History of Adult Education in Australia, op cit., p.104.

⁴⁸ Murray-Smith, S., "Technical Education in Australia: A Historical Sketch" in E.L. Wheelwright (Ed.), Higher Education in Australia, Melbourne, Cheshire, 1965, pp.170-191, p.174.

Institute promoted temperance and catered for the social regeneration of families.⁴⁹ It did not attract mechanics in any great numbers, and by 1859, like Sydney, there was almost a total absence of manual workers in its classes.

In addition to the Sydney and Hobart Institutes, similar bodies had been established in Adelaide (1838), Melbourne (1839), Brisbane (1849), Perth (1851), and numerous smaller towns in each State.⁵⁰ However, financial problems restricted their overall growth, and in many cases, forced their premature closure. This was the case, for example, with the mechanics' institute at Port Adelaide in July, 1851.⁵¹

In South Australia, it was in 1838, that public notices appeared expressing the plan for forming a mechanics' institute in Adelaide.⁵² The institute was created within three months and as in other colonies, it offered lectures, mainly of a scientific and technical nature, in addition to providing a small library.

Initially the institute was quite active, with a

⁴⁹ Bolger, P., Hobart Town, Canberra, Australian National University Press, 1973, p.121.

⁵⁰ By 1900, there were hundreds of these institutes in Australian towns, but many were mechanics' institutes in name only. See Nadel, G., op cit., p.126.

⁵¹ Meleng, F.E., Fifty Years of the Port Adelaide Institute (Inc.), Adelaide, Institute Library, 1902. Meleng was a leading figure in the Institute Movement in South Australia. "Institute" was the term generally used in preference to "Mechanics' Institute" in South Australia.

⁵² Southern Australian (Adelaide) 23 June, 1838.

predominantly "working class governing committee".⁵³ However, it soon suffered financial setbacks which forced it into temporary inactivity.⁵⁴ Then in August of 1839, a new institute was formed through an amalgamation of the South Australian Literary and Scientific Association, a body which had been established in London and then transferred to Adelaide where it had become dormant, and the previously inactive Mechanics' Institute.⁵⁵ The amalgamation formed the Adelaide Literary and Scientific Association and Mechanics' Institute. It charged fees of six shillings per quarter, and had on its governing body, a number of the State's leading colonists. This contrasted with the management of the institute of 1838.⁵⁶ Of consequence, the amalgamated bodies' programme of lectures seemed to cater more for middle class tastes than those of manual workers. Early lectures included topics such as comparative anatomy and physiology, seventeenth century music, horticulture, botany and natural history.

The institute's programme of lectures soon dwindled, and during the depression years of the early 1840's, it became inactive. However, the idea of establishing an institute in Adelaide had not died, for in 1847, yet another one was founded.

The impetus for this came from among the ranks of

⁵³ Register (Adelaide) 4 August, 1838.

⁵⁴ Southern Australian (Adelaide) 26 June, 1839.

⁵⁵ Register (Adelaide) 10 August, 1839.

⁵⁶ Register (Adelaide) 7 August, 1839.

manual workers, who formed a majority on the institute's governing board. The institute offered lectures in scientific and technical areas. However, major emphasis was soon placed on establishing and extending its library, a move which, in April 1848, led to its amalgamation with the Subscription Library,⁵⁷ giving a body that was called the South Australian Library and Mechanics' Institute. The manual worker representatives on the governing body of the former institute soon lost their places as middle class representatives took control over the management of the new institution.⁵⁸ This was reflected in the nature of the institute's activities, particularly as it became a cultural centre for that class,⁵⁹ providing for example, musical evenings, debates and art displays.

As with many institutes in South Australia and other colonies, it was in financial difficulties by the early 1850's. Only government grants for book purchases kept the institute solvent.⁶⁰

Suggestions that the South Australian Library and Mechanics' Institute should become a public institution (it was after all receiving government grants) led to an Act being passed to incorporate the South Australian Institute. The Institute was formed from the South Australian Library and Mechanics'

⁵⁷ Register (Adelaide) 26 April, 1848.

⁵⁸ See for example, Register (Adelaide) 11 August, 1849.

⁵⁹ Pike, D., Paradise of Dissent, Melbourne, Melbourne University Press, 1967, pp.504-505.

⁶⁰ See for example, Register (Adelaide) 9 December, 1853.

Institute and other bodies that wished to be incorporated. This ended an era, since 1838, when the first mechanics' institute was established in the fledgling colony.

In the Australian colonies, the institutes, like those in Britain, operated with spasmodic success. Only in a very minor way did they provide for the scientific and technical education of manual workers and for their "moral enlightenment", although some formed the bases of technical colleges.

Quickly many institutes became dominated by the more "respectable" citizens and provided for middle class cultural activities. By about 1860, in Australia as a whole, institutes had lost most of the manual worker support which they had firstly attracted:

... many proud artisans were repelled by the patronage of middle class worthies imposing their standards; and there was continual difficulty in finding lecturers who could pitch their material at an appropriate level. Working men needed elementary education of a much more practical kind than the Institutes provided.⁶¹

Essentially workers needed some control over their education. In turn, this education was to comprise really useful knowledge for them. Such components were generally not evident in mechanics' institutes in Australia.

Adult Education in the Second Half of the Nineteenth Century in South Australia

The gold rushes of the 1850's affected Australia's social, economic and political complexion. In the 1840's, there

⁶¹ Serle, G., op cit., p.23.

was serious unemployment. The gold rushes of the 1850's saw many non-mining activities in economic difficulties. Immigrants from Europe, smarting from the social ferment and discontent of the time were arriving in relatively large numbers. Immigrants from Asia also arrived, and this led to the white settlers creating racial tensions.

In the period 1860-1890, Australia experienced rapid economic growth with the trade balance moving away from primary production after 1890.⁶² An increasingly important section of trade was now resulting from industrial expansion. This served to limit the economic power of the pastoralists in favour of urban merchants.

In this period, the development of trade unions, particularly craft unions, and trades hall councils became more pronounced,⁶³ with unions achieving legal recognition in South Australia in 1876.⁶⁴ Unions concentrated their efforts on

⁶² Martin, R.M., Trade Unions in Australia, Ringwood, Penguin 1975, p.1; See also the discussion in Nairn, B., Civilising Capitalism: The Labor Movement in New South Wales, 1870-1900, Canberra, Australian National University Press, 1973, passim.

⁶³ There had been some workers' associations and trade unions in existence, particularly since the late 1820's. With no legal recognition of trade unions, groups of tradesmen adopted the British subterfuge of Friendly or Benefit Societies to provide, for example, unemployment benefits for members. By 1840, there were about ten of these in Sydney. See the discussion in Hutson, J., Penal Colony to Penal Powers, Sydney, Amalgamated Engineering Union, 1966, pp.14,15.

⁶⁴ Clark, C.M.H. (Ed.), Select Documents in Australian History, Melbourne, Angus & Robertson, 1955, p.734; SAPD, 1876, pp.1078-1085. The Act being Act Number 41 of 1876.

improving working and living conditions for their members - the "8 hours day" struggle was indicative of union concern. Although, in the 1880's, unions made quite specific efforts in the political arena in an attempt to have worker views represented in colonial legislatures.

It was during the decades of union growth, labour's political organisation and economic fluctuation of the second half of the nineteenth century, that new important education innovations were taken in the compulsory schooling area,⁶⁵ as well as in the adult area. University extension, and government sponsored technical education, for example, were prominent among moves to ensure a better educated and more highly skilled workforce.

At this time in South Australia, efforts in the field of adult technical education were due to individuals rather than groups.⁶⁶ However, it was the Chamber of Manufactures, which provided the impetus necessary to ensure the development of this form of education.⁶⁷ The Chamber was established in 1867, and in 1876, it formally inaugurated classes in mechanical drawing

⁶⁵ Cook, P., Davey, I., Vick, M., "Capitalism and Working Class Schooling in Late Nineteenth Century South Australia", Australian and New Zealand History of Education Society Journal, 8(2):36-48, Spring 1979, passim.

⁶⁶ Smith, G.M., An Historical Survey of Technical Education in South Australia, (Mimeograph 62p.), Adelaide, November 1955, p.1; See also Jones, H.P., "The History of Commercial Education in South Australia With Special Reference to Women", (M.A. thesis), University of Adelaide, 1967, pp.13-48, where the efforts of the early Business College Principals in promoting commercial education are discussed.

⁶⁷ Wavell, I., "The Origins of the School of Mines". Research Papers in the History of Australian and South Australian Education No. 38, (Mimeograph, 5p.), Murray Park C.A.E., 1972, p.1.

which attracted an enrolment of "as many as 160 persons".⁶⁸ The classes were soon (October 1876) transferred to the administration of the Council of Education.⁶⁹ Nevertheless, the Chamber continued to promote vocational education classes and sponsor lectures in scientific and technical subjects, much as if it were a mechanics' institute of the traditional mould.

In 1886, various pressures were applied to the South Australian Downer Government in an effort to force it to enquire into technical education. These pressures included developments in New South Wales and in Victoria where important advances in technical education had occurred, the efforts of the Chamber of Manufactures, private individuals, and public opinion. As a result, the Government appointed a Board to enquire into and report on, the best means of developing a system of technical education in the colony. The appointment of the Board satisfied the Chamber which had made technical education one of its more important areas of interest.⁷⁰

In order that the mining industry might be assisted,⁷¹ the Government requested that the Board consider the possibilities for development of a School of Mines and Industries. Such a

⁶⁸ South Australian Chamber of Manufactures, Annual Report, 1877, p.4, SRG112, Series 4, SAA.

⁶⁹ ibid.

⁷⁰ South Australian Chamber of Manufactures, Annual Report, 1883; 1889, SRG112, Series 4, SAA; Murray-Smith, S., "A History of Technical Education in Australia: With Special Reference to the Period Before 1914", (Ph.D. thesis), University of Melbourne, 1966, p.466.

⁷¹ SAPP, 1888, p.vii.

school was eventually established in 1889.⁷²

Among the Board's recommendations was one that the Council of the School should consist of twelve men representing "all classes of people within the community", and another that no fees should be charged.⁷³ As recommended, the Council consisted of the twelve men, and consistent with the social ideas of the time, no women. Six came from the Government, two from the University, two from the Public Library, one from the Chamber of Manufactures, and one from the, now important Trades and Labor Council.⁷⁴ The latter Council was keenly interested in improving technical education. To this end, its President had supported the calls for improved technical education with suggestions that had the Government given the Trades and Labor Council money to establish a Trades Hall, they would have established technical education classes.⁷⁵

Fees were charged for a wide variety of diploma courses in fields such as Applied Chemistry, Geology and Mineralogy, Assaying and Metallurgy, Mining, Physics, Mechanics and Engineering. These were higher level technical courses. Apprenticeship courses were also made available.

⁷² Green, D., An Age of Technology 1889-1964, Adelaide, South Australian Institute of Technology, 1964, p.2.

⁷³ SAPP, No.33, 1888. Report of the Board Appointed by the Government to Enquire into and Report upon the best means of developing a general system of Technical (including Agricultural) Education in the Province. p.viii.

⁷⁴ Smith, G.M., op cit., p.41.

⁷⁵ SAPP, 1888, p.xxviii.

In addition to the Adelaide School of Mines, a number of similar institutions were established in country centres. These included the Gawler School of Mines, which began as the Amateur Assaying Club in 1888,⁷⁶ the Moonta School of Mines, which opened in 1891,⁷⁷ and the Port Pirie, Kapunda and Mount Gambier Schools of Mines. All of these institutions operated with government financial support.

The interest of governments in technical education, and more generally, adult vocational education was not restricted to South Australia for other Australian colonial governments also participated in its provision.⁷⁸

Throughout Australia and particularly in Victoria, the closing stages of the nineteenth century witnessed a flourish of activity in the area of technical education provided through such institutions as agricultural colleges, schools of mines and technical colleges. Further, evening schools were established in New South Wales by the Public Instruction Act of 1880. Working Men's Colleges with their liberal and vocational educational programmes were established in Sydney (1878) and Melbourne (1887). Technical education which, in many cases, was

⁷⁶ Coombe, E.H., History of Gawler 1837 to 1908, Gawler, Gawler Institute, 1908, p.148.

⁷⁷ Hand, M.J., "Adult Education in the Northern Yorke Peninsula", Australian Journal of Adult Education, 9(3):120-128, November 1969, p.121.

⁷⁸ See Commonwealth Office of Education, Technical Education in Australia, Bulletin No.31. (Mimeograph, 37p.) Sydney, 1958, pp.2-3 and Report of Conference of Principals of Victorian Technical Colleges, (Mimeograph, 30p.), Geelong, June 1974, p.2.

the only form of education attractive to manual workers, was expanding.⁷⁹

University extension was also expanding.⁸⁰ Lectures sponsored under this scheme had commenced at the University of Sydney in 1886, and by the turn of the century, extension lectures were available throughout the country.⁸¹

By the close of the nineteenth century, there had been a number of adult education experiments in Australia. Motives for such endeavours were various, although religious, remedial and utilitarian emphases were prominent. The ideas for these ventures had been quite firmly rooted in Britain, a country with which the colonists had a close affinity.

Each initiative fluctuated in terms of its successes. This was particularly so with regard to the ventures' attractiveness to manual workers. However, despite such variations, the experiments were most important bases for twentieth century developments of which the School of Mines and the WEA would prove significant in efforts to provide for workers' education in South Australia.

⁷⁹ For a comprehensive analysis of developments in technical education in nineteenth and early twentieth century Australia see Murray-Smith, S., "A History of Technical Education in Australia: With Special Reference to the Period Before 1914", op cit., passim.

⁸⁰ Williams, E., "The Beginnings of the Australian University Extension Movement" in R.J.W. Selleck (Ed.), Melbourne Studies in Education 1972, Melbourne, Melbourne University Press, 1972, pp.185-210, p.191.

⁸¹ Williams, E., "The Foundation of University Adult Education in Australia 1886-1916", (B.A.(Hons.)thesis), University of Adelaide, 1966, p.20.

Summary

In Britain during the nineteenth century, a variety of efforts were made to provide adult education. Adult schools, co-operatives, Owenite Halls of Science, university extension and mechanics' institutes were part of the institutional response to demands brought about by changing social, economic and industrial conditions. Religious, scientific, remedial and utilitarian motivations were evident in these responses. Attempts were made to educate adult workers through such agencies, which in effect were provided for workers.

Although Australia had many convicts and was isolated from Britain, colonial society soon experienced, then current British interests in adult education. Of particular importance were the early religious efforts, the mechanics' institutes, working men's colleges and university extension. The mechanics' institutes tried to attract manual workers to their educational activities. For a variety of reasons, they largely failed in this venture, although they were generally quite successful in terms of providing library services for the general community.

During the second half of the nineteenth century, with growth in manufacturing industries, colonial governments began to strongly promote vocational and particularly technical, education. Such pragmatic education proved attractive to workers and provided a foundation for technical education developments in the twentieth century. Furthermore, universities became involved in defined liberal adult education through extension services. Many would continue such involvement through

working with WEA's in the twentieth century.

The bases for twentieth century Australian education provisions were thus laid. They were bases which reflected innovation in British adult education and presented a thread of consistency in aims and approach to workers' education. For the workers, the experiments were educational provisions from above.

CHAPTER II

A SKETCH HISTORY OF THE LABOUR MOVEMENT IN

SOUTH AUSTRALIA, 1913-1975:

A FRAMEWORK FOR WORKING CLASS ADULT EDUCATION

The working man is a great power everywhere in Australia, but South Australia is his paradise. He has a hard time in this world and has earned a paradise. (M. Twain¹)

Introduction

This observation by Mark Twain, on his visit to Australia in the late nineteenth century, painted a glossy picture for workers in South Australia.² Perhaps, in relation to workers' conditions world-wide, South Australia was a paradise. However, this did not imply the existence of completely harmonious relations between classes. There was, and had been, class conflict. This was especially so, as sections of the labour movement made efforts to arrest any deterioration in workers' living conditions, to generally improve conditions for workers, and to gain industrial and political dominance for workers.

In very early colonial Australia there existed no class structure comparable to that of England. Further, neither industrialised productive forces, nor an urban working class had developed. Militant unionism did not occur in any more than

¹ Twain, Mark (Samuel Clements), Mark Twain in Australia and New Zealand, Penguin Colonial Facsimiles, 1973. Original edition, Following the Equator, 1897, quoted in D. Whitelock, Adelaide 1836-1976. A History with a Difference, St. Lucia, University of Queensland Press, 1977, p.166.

² Stuart MacIntyre in his, "The Making of The Australian Working Class: A Historiographical Survey", Historical Studies, 18(71):233-253, October 1978, p.250, points to the uniquely high standard of living enjoyed by Australian craftsmen in the second half of the nineteenth century.

spasmodic bursts until the late 1880's and the 1890's, and then largely by waterside and pastoral workers.³

These late nineteenth century strikes began as an earnest working class challenge to capitalism, a challenge that was to be accommodated by the forces of capitalism. Similarly, the political challenge through the establishment of Labor Parties was also to be accommodated.

It is the writer's intention, in this chapter, to provide the reader with a sketch background of a variety of developments in the labour movement in South Australia in the period under examination. This will enable the ensuing discussion on workers' education to be put into a contextual framework, for the growth of worker education oriented institutions such as the WEA cannot be explained in terms of the institutions themselves. Rather, their growth is explained against a background of societal change.

Organised Labour Becomes a Force in Politics in South Australia

During much of the second half of the nineteenth century, relations between workers and employers were generally quite amicable. The interests of the working class élite, namely skilled workers, and those of the middle class often coincided.

³ For a discussion of developments in class relations in colonial Australia, see for example, Connell, R.W. and Irving, T.H., Class Structure in Australian History: Documents, Narrative and Arguments, Melbourne, Longman Cheshire, 1980, Chapters 2, 3 and 4.

For example, in efforts to secure an eight hour working day, there is evidence that some employers and some tradesmen (skilled workers) were happy to work together.⁴ Furthermore, although there may have been worker opposition to employers, expressed through avenues such as work absenteeism, there was little overt conflict between semi-skilled and unskilled workers on the one hand, and their employers on the other. Hence, outwardly at least, in a colony with a strong non-conformist tradition, there was much employer, employee cordiality during the second half of the nineteenth century. Until, that is, the last decade of that century.

Perhaps the most serious industrial conflict occurred in 1890 with the Maritime and Tannery strikes being two significant areas of confrontation. Workers and employers were in direct and very bitter conflict. However, the United Trades and Labor Council soon intervened and promoted conciliation between the parties. The disputes were resolved and South Australia entered a period that mirrored many of the years since European settlement in the colony. There was comparative industrial peace.

A severe depression followed the Maritime strike of the 1890's. Exports fell from around six million pounds in 1891 to almost three and a half million pounds in 1898.⁵ Banks were in difficulties, and many businesses went into insolvency.

⁴ Register (Adelaide) 3 September, 1873; 10 October, 1873.

⁵ Whitelock, D., op cit., p.116.

Recovery from the depression was short-lived. Severe droughts⁶ assisted in plunging the Conservative Jenkins' Government into financial difficulties and electoral defeat.

Labour won a political victory with Thomas Price becoming the State's first Labor Party Premier in a coalition government of 1905. He achieved this with the aid of Peake, who had defected from the conservatives to form a Liberal Party. The coalition was outwardly strong, and the government reformist. It had to accommodate not only the wishes of workers, but the government also had to be sensitive to middle class interests. To this end, it did not erode the foundations of private enterprise, and set about legislating for a variety of reforms.

When Price died in 1909, the coalition fell apart. John Verran, the new Labor Party leader, was successful at the 1910 polls and became Premier. Unlike Price, he was unable to unite the Labor parliamentarians. Also, he was unable to stifle rekindled industrial conflict, which was stemming from the slow erosion of workers' standards of living.⁷

Unions became critical of the government, "their government", which failed to arrest this situation. When Premier Verran permitted police to intervene in a minor industrial dispute, arising from a 1910 Rundle Street strike

⁶ Craig, J.I., "A History of the South Australian Labour Party to 1917", (M.A. thesis), University of Adelaide, 1940, p.91.

⁷ Commonwealth Bureau of Census and Statistics, Official Year Book of the Commonwealth of Australia No. 15, Melbourne, Government Printer, 1922, p.899, gives data on the increasing cost of living.

where an employer had refused to grant a small pay increase, this criticism became more bitter. The strike had been called by the United Labourers' Union, which had been founded in Adelaide in 1908, and became the most militant union in the city.⁸ It was vehement in its criticism of Verran's Government. Dale, its Secretary, was reported as saying that the union had

... proof that when the Labor Party got into power, they forgot the class that put them into power.⁹

Verran lacked the ability to counter such criticism and satisfy the industrial wing of the labour movement. His administration was weak, compared to that of Price.¹⁰ By February of 1912, it had fallen from power. Peake's Liberal Government replaced it and immediately set about enacting an Arbitration Bill which included strict anti-strike provisions.¹¹ Such intended legislation did not endear the new Government to organised labour.

The period since 1909 when Price died, to the Verran Government's defeat in 1912, had seen quite significant developments within the labour movement in South Australia. Firstly there

⁸ Playford, J., "History of the Left Wing of the South Australian Labor Movement 1908-1936", (B.A.(Hons.)thesis), University of Adelaide, 1958, p.10.

⁹ Advertiser (Adelaide) 12 December, 1910.

¹⁰ Craig, J.I., op cit., p.102.

¹¹ Acts of South Australian Parliament, No. 1110, 1912.

was Verran's assumption of political power. This was the first Labor Government that governed alone. But it lacked ability to appease its critics in the industrial wing of labour, a condition which future Labor Governments would also have to face. Secondly, there was the growth in industrial unrest, with a Labor Party in government,¹² and thirdly, and directly associated with the unrest, the development of socialist parties.

The Socialist Party of South Australia, which had its nucleus within the radical sections of the labour movement, was founded in 1908 after a visit to South Australia by Thomas Mann.¹³ The Party was critical of the reformist Labor Party which set about restricting its activities wherever and whenever possible.¹⁴ After affiliating with the Socialist Federation of Australia, immediately upon foundation, its members were active in industrial disputes in, for example, Port Pirie. However, the Party was short-lived and after beginning a small Communist Party in 1919 and striving unsuccessfully for socialist unity, lost much of its membership, and ceased to exist by the early 1920's.

Another important group which had roots in South Australia was the International Workers of the World (IWW). The IWW, founded in the United States in 1905, split in 1908 into the

¹² Craig, J.I., op cit., p.103.

¹³ Playford, J., op cit., p.5.

¹⁴ International Socialist Review 31 July, 1909, p.14, quoted in ibid., p.7.

direct action, largely anti-parliamentary Chicago faction, and the Detroit faction. It was the ideas of the former which mainly spread to Australia with the first sub-branch or "local" being established in Adelaide in 1911 when the Labor Party was in government. The IWW favoured direct industrial action in the efforts of workers to wrest control from capitalists. Political action through parliamentary processes, such as through Labor Parties, was denigrated.¹⁵ It thus worked within the industrial, rather than the direct political, in terms of parliamentary representation, wing of the labour movement.

In South Australia, the IWW drew its membership from the more radical sections of the labour movement and became active in worker struggles. As with the Socialist Party, it was a thorn to the Labor Party, and to many in the industrial side of the labour movement.

The IWW and Socialists created difficulties for the Labor Party, and then for Peake's Liberal Government. However, these radical groups did not engender positive responses from the mass of manual workers in their endeavours to promote worker dominance in the State. In fact, during the early years of Peake's term of office after the enactment of the Arbitration Bill there was comparative industrial peace.¹⁶ In this industrially conservative State with its strong non-conformist traditions,

¹⁵ Open letter from IWW Club, Sydney, September, 1909; One Big Union, IWW Leaflet, Adelaide n.d. both reproduced in J. Harris, The Bitter Fight, St. Lucia, University of Queensland Press, 1970, pp.178,179.

¹⁶ In 1913, for example, South Australia recorded nine strikes involving 272 workers. Commonwealth Bureau of Census and Statistics, Labour and Industrial Branch Report No. 5, 1913-14, Melbourne, Commonwealth Bureau of Census and Statistics, 1914, p.73.

Socialist rhetoric did not have widespread appeal in the labour movement. At least outwardly, there seemed to be a general degree of cordiality between workers and employers as government and employer opposition hardened against radicals promoting industrial unrest. During Peake's term of office, workers seemed to be affected by such opposition, in addition to changed economic conditions reflecting yet another depression.

In the early stages of World War I, the State experienced a severe drought,¹⁷ which in combination with the effects of the war, led to increased living costs and higher unemployment.¹⁸

¹⁷ South Australia, Statistical Register 1915-1916, Adelaide, Government Printer, 1916, Part III pp.iv-vi, viii, xi, provide comparative harvest and rainfall figures for the State.

- (a) 1912-13 - 21½ million bushell harvest
- 1913-14 - 17 million bushell harvest
- 1914-15 - 3½ million bushell harvest
- 1915-16 - 34 million bushell harvest

(b) The wool clip decreased quite significantly in 1914-15 compared to immediate preceding years.

- (c) Rainfall for the year - 1913 - 17.20 inches
- 1914 - 11.94 "
- 1915 - 20.62 "

¹⁸ ibid., Part III, pp.xxiv, 191, xxiii provide data to show that in 1914-15, average wages for workers were lower than in 1913-14 and the average number of workers employed in manufacturing and works was 5.13% less than in 1913-14; In the Commonwealth Bureau of Census and Statistics, Official Year Book of the Commonwealth of Australia No. 15, op cit., p.899, data are given to show that the cost of living in Adelaide increased in 1911, 1912, declined in 1913, increased again in 1914, 1915 and 1916. This trend was arrested in 1917, but in 1918, 1919 and 1920 the cost of living again increased.

Like the fate that befell the Conservative Jenkin's Government when a similar economic depression hit the State about a decade earlier, Peake's Liberals lost government. The Labor Party was again governing the State. However, while the Party's election was welcomed by the bulk of the labour movement, the new government soon angered many workers from the industrial wing by having a largely non-union based Cabinet.¹⁹ The prospect of further conflict between the industrial and political wings of the labour movement was thus likely. The Labor Party in power seemed destined, yet again, to have not only politically conservative opposition from groups such as the Liberals, but also some substantive opposition from sections of its industrial wing.

Labour Splits During World War I

In Australia, it was during the war that organised labour split to such an extent that it barely recovered. The cause of the split was conscription. As will be shown, this split was to have repercussions in labour education throughout the Commonwealth. Particularly, it affected the work of the WEA.

The issue arose from the Billy Hughes' Government's attempts to impose conscription for overseas service.²⁰ The

¹⁹ Craig, J.I., op cit., p.107.

²⁰ For discussions on the conscription struggle, see for example, Smith, F.B., The Conscription Plebiscites in Australia 1916-17, Melbourne, Victorian Historical Association, 1974, passim; Robson, L., The First A.I.F: A Study of its Recruitment, 1914-1918, Melbourne, Melbourne University Press, 1970, passim.

Government's campaign split the Labor Party and almost wrecked the labour movement.²¹ The parliamentary leaders of the Party in the Commonwealth, New South Wales and South Australia favoured conscription, while Party executives in all States, the majority of the rank and file unionists and the trade unions were strongly anti-conscriptionist. The officials who supported conscription were expelled from executive positions.²²

At the outbreak of war, the majority of Australians were for fullest participation in the conflict.

Sectarianism and class differences
were blanketed by patriotism.²³

Only in the extreme Left of the labour movement and in some pacifist groups were there misgivings. The IWW and a few Socialists declared themselves against participation.²⁴

By 1916, two years of war had brought great changes. The political Left came out strongly against the war with propaganda such as:

... the capitalists make the war, the
parsons bless it and the workers fight it.²⁵

Australian casualties were disproportionately high, real wages

²¹ Portus, G.V., Happy Highways, Melbourne, Melbourne University Press, 1953, p.173; See also Smith, F.B., op cit., passim.

²² See for example, Advertiser (Adelaide) 1 January, 1916, 15 April, 1916.

²³ Smith, F.B., op cit., p.2.

²⁴ Gollan, R.A., "The Historical Perspective" in P.W.D. Matthews, and G.W. Ford (Eds.), Australian Trade Unions: Their Development, Structure and Horizons, Melbourne, Sun Books, 1968, pp.14-40, p.34.

²⁵ ibid.

had fallen and unemployment was high. These factors contributed to people becoming more receptive to the views of the Left and more critical of the official version of the war. This was particularly the case within the labour movement when Hughes proposed the introduction of conscription.

Labour radicals opposed conscription for they saw the war as a capitalist venture with the working class being the only losers:

... the Australian working class had a particular reason for opposing conscription; the compulsory dispatch of Australians overseas would give local capitalists the excuse to import cheap, docile, coloured labourers, who would be used to break the trade union movement and smash the purity of White Australia.²⁶

In the latter years of the war in a no confidence motion in Federal Parliament, Michael Considine, the Member for Barrier, concluded a bitter attack on conscription and participation in the war by asking:

... how a war fought for the commercial and industrial supremacy of the world is of benefit to the working classes of this or any other country?²⁷

Clearly, this international conflict was viewed, by at least some people, as of no concern for the working class. It had been, and was seen as a capitalist's war and one in which worker involvement would result in disastrous effects on the labour movement. The workers, it was argued, would be the losers. Why therefore, it was asked, should they be conscripted to fight?

²⁶ Smith, F.B., op cit., p.7.

²⁷ Commonwealth Parliamentary Debates (CPD), Vol. LXXXiii, 16 January, 1918, p.3084.

In South Australia during 1915, the State Labor Party conference had unanimously opposed the introduction of conscription.²⁸ This form of service was being advocated by conservative elements in major political parties and generally, within the State. There was considerable discussion of the issue in the press and in particular, in the United Trades and Labor Council. Here, for example, Professor Jethro Brown, President of the Industrial Court and one time university extension lecturer, attended Council and talked on the Universal Service League²⁹ and the League's advocacy of conscription.³⁰ Council opposed conscription,³¹ an opposition that progressively hardened.³²

The Trades and Labor Council mounted a vigorous anti-conscriptionist campaign before a Federal referendum was held on the issue. Its efforts were rewarded with a strong anti-

²⁸ Playford, J., op cit., p.20.

²⁹ Meredith Atkinson, an executive member of the New South Wales WEA was a member of the League. As is discussed in Chapter III, his involvement in both organisations created serious problems for the WEA in its relations with the labour movement.

³⁰ United Trades and Labor Council, Half Yearly Report to January 31, 1916, p.7, in United Trades and Labor Council of South Australia, Minutes, SRG1, SAA.

³¹ ibid.

³² Herald (Adelaide) 15 February, 1916. United Trades and Labor Council of South Australia, Minutes, 30 June, 1916, SRG1, SAA.

conscriptionist vote in South Australia. Three States, in fact, returned majority "no" votes. These were:

South Australia	57.6%	against	conscription	
New South Wales	57.1%	"	"	
Victoria	52.3%	"	"	32

The results saw the Labor Party split with the industrial section of the Party effectively expelling pro-conscriptionist Labor parliamentarians in 1917. The conflicts so obvious between the two wings of the labour movement around 1910, and then again as the Labor Party was elected to Government in the early war years, were in evidence. Subsequently the Crawford Vaughan Government fell in May 1917, when the split Labor Party was unable to defeat a no confidence motion proposed by Peake's Liberals. Thus the now seriously split political wing of the labour movement again began a period, until 1924, in parliamentary opposition.

Conflict over the issue of conscription for overseas service had a severe effect on the labour movement in South Australia and Australia in general. It led to many parliamentarians being expelled from the Federal and various State Labor Parties. Consequently Labor Parties found difficulty in presenting the electorate with a relatively united voice and several governments lost office. Furthermore, in various States, and nationally, the conscription issue resulted in bitter antagonism within the political and industrial wings of the movement, and also between these wings. Such tensions were to

³² Playford, J., op cit, p.24.

have a most severe effect on developments in the provision of workers' education. In South Australia, as in other States, adult educational bodies, such as the WEA, had to work with a labour movement that was quite clearly divided.

Early Post-War I Years: Disarray in the
Left Wing of the Labour Movement

The conscription issue had seen the industrial wing of the South Australian labour movement again flexing its muscles. It ultimately caused the defeat of its own government at a time of weariness with war, increased costs of living and growing industrial unrest.³⁴

Its defeat was also at a time when the Left, and thus, as suggested earlier, that section of the labour movement most likely to provide independent working class adult education, was somewhat in disarray. Since education was, and is, a locus of class struggle, control of working class education was

³⁴ See for example, Commonwealth Bureau of Census and Statistics, Labour and Industrial Branch Report No. 8, 1917, Melbourne, Commonwealth Bureau of Census and Statistics, July 1918, p.120; Kiek, L.E., "The History of the South Australian Labour Unions", (M.A. thesis), University of Adelaide, 1948, pp.142-149; Gibson (Stretton), P., "The Conscription Issue in South Australia 1916-17", (B.A. (Hons.) thesis), University of Adelaide, 1959, p.16; Daily Herald (Adelaide) 16 June, 1917.

crucial to the Left's ambitions for that class. However, such control was made difficult because of the nature of relations between sections of the Left. As Playford has suggested:

It has been shown that the general condition of revolutionary socialist organisation in South Australia was one of disorganised confusion which reflected itself not only in the disunity of the Left, but also in the constant regrouping of existing forces. Such an atmosphere was disillusioning to militants and unlikely to entice new blood to the Left ... But the consolidation of the Left proceeded at a slower pace in South Australia than in other States.³⁵

The Left was in disunity and unable to take advantage of splits in the labour movement over conscription. Neither the One Big Union movement (OBU), which became a focus for attention by labour radicals³⁶ after the IWW was legislated and prosecuted out of existence by 1918, nor the creation of the Communist Party of Australia (CPA) formed in the wake of the Russian Revolution,³⁷ were able to unite the Left in opposition to the forces of capitalism. Such disunity manifested itself

³⁵ Playford, J., op cit., p.24.

³⁶ See various reproduced documents in J. Harris, op cit., pp.179, 271-273.

³⁷ See the discussion in Davidson, A., The Communist Party of Australia: A Short History, Stanford, Hoover Institution Press, 1969, passim, and Dixson, M., "Ideology, the Trades Hall Reds and J.T. Lang", Politics, 6(1):53-65, May 1971, p.54.

in the inability of Left-wing groups to gain control over important sections of the labour movement. The Communist Party for example, like a variety of Left-wing initiatives in subsequent years, failed to gain a major foothold in the relatively conservative South Australian union movement.³⁸

The Party was not only unsuccessful in attracting many unionists to its cause, but it was also continually confronted with obstacles created by other sections of the labour movement. For example, in 1924 the Labor Party disallowed dual membership of both the Communist Party and the Labor Party.³⁹ Left-wing members of the Labor Party, who were also members of the Communist Party, then had to choose which Party would continue to attract their membership. The Left thus became further disunited and the Communist Party became weaker and essentially collapsed. Consequently the difficulties faced by Communists in attempting to gain footholds in sections of the industrial wing of the labour movement were further compounded. These conditions prevailed in the early 1920's despite considerable changes in the nature of the State's production, and changes that were conducive to the further development of an urban working class, traditionally an area from which Communists have recruited members for their party.

³⁸ Playford, J., op cit., p.48.

³⁹ Playford, J., op cit., p.48.

The years prior to the Depression and after the outbreak of World War I, when the Left was relatively weak and was in a state of disunity, had seen a crucial shift to industrialism in Australia. In South Australia, the motor body industry and the steel industry developed as two of the major and most significant industries. Rural production, which had been dominant, was slowly losing its position of pre-eminence, a condition which continued after the Depression. (See Table 2.1).

TABLE 2.1
GROSS VALUE OF PRODUCTION (\$'000)

	1924/25	1928/29	1932/33	1936/37	1940/41	1944/45
Agriculture	30636	23880	20921	26044	20167	23548
Pastoral	16276	12472	5834	12315	14757	17928
Dairying	4305	3810	3654	4310	6079	8880
Poultry	2297	2108	1516	1632	1963	4199
Mining	2353	2755	1885	5505	7448	6449
Other						
Primary	1633	1888	1679	1939	2437	3383
Factories (Net)	22665	25137	15709	24543	33832	54530
TOTAL	80165	72050	51199	76287	86683	118919

Note: Figures do not completely tally, an error due most probably to the rounding of figures in conversion by the CBCS from £ to \$.

Source: Commonwealth Bureau of Census and Statistics, Statistical Register of South Australia 1965-66, Adelaide, Government Printer, 1969, Part VII, page 16.

World War I was an important factor in stimulating growth in industrialisation, a process fostered by government assistance such as tariff protection. However, there was another important factor enhancing industrial growth in South Australia. As E.W. Holden suggested to a Royal Commission on Manufacturing

and Secondary Industries (The Leather Trade):

We started here because it is our home town and because I believe that labour conditions here are better than in any other State.⁴⁰

Labour conditions were attractive. The Communist Party and the Left in general, was weak and in disarray; the Trades and Labor Council leadership was conservative and the Labor Party, under Gunn and, later Hill, was under similar conservative leadership.⁴¹

Very simply then, in South Australia the labour movement, both politically and industrially, was overtly docile in this early post-World War I period of growing industrialisation. In fact, proportionately in these years, until about 1925, for example, workers were far less prone to strike action than their counterparts in for example, New South Wales. (See Table 2.2).

TABLE 2.2

STRIKES AND DIRECTLY INVOLVED WORKERS

Year	South Australia		New South Wales	
	No.	Workers	No.	Workers
1919	32	4437	267	64956
1921	19	2158	535	108573
1923	10	806	200	54809
1925	11	1118	430	123292

Source: Commonwealth Bureau of Census and Statistics, Official Year Book of the Commonwealth of Australia, Melbourne, Government Printer, Various - No.15, 1922, p.890; No.20, 1927, p.541.

⁴⁰ E.W. Holden, Minutes of Evidence (28 January, 1926): Royal Commission on Manufacturing and Secondary Industries (The Leather Trade) First Progress Report. SAPP, No. 57, 1926, p.3.

⁴¹ Hill, for example, raised the ire of the official United Trades and Labor Council organ the South Australian Worker, and came under severe criticism for his reactionary stance in relation to the working class. See for example, South Australian Worker (Adelaide). 6 September, 1929; 13 September, 1929; 11 July, 1930. It is interesting to note that the South Australian Worker, started by D. Bardolph in 1924, claimed that it was the official organ of the ALP, the United Trades and Labor Council, the Waterside Workers' Federation and thence the Australian Council of Trade Unions (ACTU). However, none of these bodies had control over editorial policy. See the discussion in Hopgood, D.J., "Lang Labor in South Australia" (B.A.(Hons.)thesis), University of Adelaide, 1967, p.5.

As Whitelock has argued, at this time conditions for workers in South Australia were generally quite good. The workers here

... achieved their aim - essentially a fair share of the good life - ... and very little of the bitter unrest ...⁴²

Furthermore, industrial capitalism was not well advanced in South Australia, an additional factor explaining worker quietude. Such conditions strengthened conservative control in the labour movement and compounded the problems faced by the Left in attempting to provide radical leadership. Despite this situation circumstances changed in the Depression. Here, a serious deterioration of workers' living standards was evident and there arose a period of some conflict with employers.⁴³ It was in this environment that Communists were able to exert more influence over sections of the labour movement.

In 1929, Communists re-established a Communist Party. The Party had a membership of only 26 persons.⁴⁴ Nevertheless, the Party's foundation heralded Communists' return as an organised political force - albeit a small political force - in this State.

⁴² Whitelock, D., op cit., p.173.

⁴³ Port Adelaide District Trades and Labor Council, Minutes, 15 February, 1929; Curnow, E.T., "Shall We Strike? An Account of the 1928 Strike Struggle of the Waterside Workers in Port Adelaide", (B.A.(Hons.)thesis), University of Adelaide, 1958, passim. United Trades and Labor Council, Minutes, 1929, various, SRG1, SAA. Here references are made of police brutality towards unionists. A further recent portrayal of this bitter struggle has been given in Nick Enright's play, "On the Wallaby". This play had its world premiere in Adelaide in July 1980, at the Festival Centre. It was played by the S.A. State Theatre Company.

⁴⁴ Playford, J., op cit., p.88.

The small Party was of sufficient radical potential to cause some dismay to the Labor Party. It also engendered opposition from the more politically conservative elements of society, including police and some employers.⁴⁵

The Party was not large, but it slowly increased in size as middle class intellectuals were attracted to it. Nationally, it boasted a membership of between 250 and 500 in 1929, approximately 1,000 in 1931 and about 4,500 in 1939.⁴⁶ It was with such small numbers, that nationally, though not quite to the same extent in South Australia, the Party, as one section of a then still disunited Left-wing of the labour movement, became active on the industrial scene during the Depression.⁴⁷

The Depression and Another War Affects the Labour
Movement in South Australia

The economic boom which followed World War I was short lived. Per-capita consumption as one indicator of economic conditions, for example, was gradually worsening from the middle of the decade, (1926-27).⁴⁸ Unemployment was increasing, and generally, economic conditions were worsening. (See Tables 2.3 and 2.4).

However, these economic conditions reached a trough in

⁴⁵ ibid., p.107; Workers' Weekly (Sydney) 27 November, 1931. See also, SAPD, 1930, p.881 where Premier Hill attacked Communists during the second reading of the Public Safety Preservation Bill.

⁴⁶ Morrison, P.J., "The Communist Party of Australia and the Radical - Socialist Tradition 1920-1939", (Ph.D. thesis), University of Adelaide, 1975, pp.323,331.

⁴⁷ For a detailed analysis of the Depression in Adelaide see Broomhill, R., "A Social History of the Unemployed in Adelaide During the Great Depression", (Ph.D. thesis), University of Adelaide, 1975, passim.

⁴⁸ Butlin, N.G., "Long-run Trends in Australian Per-Capita Consumption" in K. Hancock (Ed.), The National Income and Social Welfare, Melbourne, Cheshire, 1965, pp.1-19, pp.5-7.

South Australia, earlier than in other Australian States. In 1927, the State Government was heavily committed to financial repayments. A withdrawal of overseas finance and a severe drought produced conditions which were consistent with economic depression.⁴⁹

TABLE 2.3

LABOUR EXCHANGE REGISTRATIONS & BASIC WAGE

Year	Labour Exchange Registrations	S.A. Basic Weekly Wage (shilling, pence)	(\$)
1921	688	79-6	7.95
1922	880	79-6	7.95
1923	443	85-6	8.55
1924	491	84-0	8.40
1925	718	86-0	8.60
1926	1391	85-6	8.55
1927	1900	88-0	8.80
1928	5009	85-0	8.50
1929	5825	88-6	8.85
1930	11297	78-0	7.80
1931	23588	58-1	5.81
1932	23738	57-2	5.72
1933	20516	59-7	5.96
1934	16559	63-0	6.30
1935	13111	67-0	6.70
1936	10970	69-0	6.90
1937	8033	74-0	7.40
1938	7737	76-0	7.60
1939	8574	77-0	7.70

Source: Commonwealth Bureau of Census and Statistics, Statistical Register of South Australia 1969-70 and 1970-71, Adelaide, Commonwealth Bureau of Census and Statistics, 1973, Part vii, Statistical Summary, p.22.

During the 1920's, wage rates showed only a slight increase while registrations of unemployed showed a dramatic increase, moving from around 700 in 1921 to approximately

⁴⁹ Thompson, M., "Government and Depression in South Australia", (M.A. thesis) Flinders University of South Australia, 1972. Chapter 1, passim.

6,000 in 1929, that is almost a nine fold increase. (See Table 2.3). Then with the effects of the Depression becoming more pronounced, registrations increased to almost 24,000 in 1932, a 34 fold increase on the 1921 figure. At the same time the basic wage was reduced by almost one third to a level from which it only very slowly recovered over the ensuing seven years.

By 1931, unemployment was rife. In Port Adelaide for example, nearly 6,000 men or well over half of the wage earners were out of work and dependent upon ration relief.⁵⁰ Their unions were just simply unable to assist them in their plight, a plight which deprived unions of much needed membership financial support. Such a condition hastened the demise of some unions. For example, in 1930, the Federated Ironworkers' Association's South Australian Branch was in financial difficulty and collapsed.⁵¹

Australian trade unionists were showing serious levels of unemployment. (See Table 2.4).

⁵⁰ Unemployment Relief Council, Quarterly Report, 31 March, 1931. The plight of workers in Port Adelaide was forcefully made in Nick Enright's play "On the Wallaby" op cit.

⁵¹ Merritt, J.A., "The Federated Ironworkers' Association in the Depression", Labour History, 21:48-61, November 1971, p.50.

TABLE 2.4
UNEMPLOYMENT OF TRADE UNIONISTS
IN AUSTRALIA*
(PER CENT %)

Year	S.A.	N.S.W.	Vic.	Qld.	W.A.	Tas.	Aust. Ave.
1921	6.1	11.9	5.9	11.3	8.0	16.7	9.5
1925	4.3	11.0	8.6	6.6	6.1	7.8	8.8
1926	5.2	7.4	6.4	8.4	7.1	13.9	7.1
1927	7.2	7.0	7.4	5.9	5.4	11.1	7.0
1928	15.0	11.3	10.9	7.0	8.2	10.6	10.8
1929	15.7	11.5	11.1	7.1	9.9	13.4	11.1
1931	32.5	30.8	25.8	16.1	27.3	27.4	27.4
1934	25.6	24.7	17.4	11.7	17.8	17.9	20.5
1937	8.2	10.9	9.0	7.3	5.6	9.8	9.3

* Data based on returns from Trade Unions.

Source: Commonwealth Bureau of Census and Statistics, *Official Year Book of the Commonwealth of Australia*, Melbourne (1922-1927), Canberra (1928-1938), Government Printer, various, No. 15, 1922, p.878; No. 19, 1926, p.540; No. 20, 1927, p.550; No. 21, 1928, p.575; No. 23, 1930, p.399; No. 25, 1932, p.804; No. 28, 1935, p.394; No. 31, 1938, p.588; Commonwealth Bureau of Census and Statistics, *Labour Report*, No. 19, 1928, Canberra, Government Printer, 1929, p.128.

Clearly, on a percentage basis, trade unionists were facing severe hardship in South Australia. And since these figures were only for trade unionists, they gave no indication of the total unemployment picture. This was likely to have been much higher than that indicated above, for not all workers were unionised.⁵²

In 1932, the fact that almost one third of trade unionists

⁵² See the discussion in Bentley, P., *Trade Unions in Australia*, Working Paper Series No. 9, Institute of Labour Studies, Flinders University of South Australia, 1974, pp.1-5.

were unemployed, and countless others under-employed,⁵³ provided a guide to the gravity of the economic situation. Many industries were in the economic wilderness. The newly established motor body industry, the building industry and the important small manufacturing industries suffered. Consequently, those workers who were employed in these industries suffered. Over forty per cent (42.3%) of males categorized as industrial employees were unemployed at the time of the 1933 census.⁵⁴

These industries had developed throughout the 1920's providing a genuine but gradual shift from primary to secondary and tertiary industry (see Table 2.1). In this climate, industrial unionism had grown and an urban working class of significance had developed. The Depression, and consequent high unemployment among this group, severely affected working class activities. Many workers were struggling to provide adequate food and shelter for their families. The Left-wing of the labour movement, and particularly the Communist Party, attempted to provide radical leadership for the workers in their struggle to subsist. However, there was not a great deal of substantive worker response to Communist initiatives although there were some confrontations with authorities. The most notable of these was the celebrated Beef Riot of 1931. This was brutally repressed by police,⁵⁵ whose

⁵³ See the discussion in Broomhill, R., op cit., passim.
See also Table 2.3.

⁵⁴ Census of Commonwealth of Australia 1933, Vol.111, pp.307-9.

⁵⁵ Register News Pictorial (Adelaide) 10 January, 1931; See also Broomhill, R., op cit., pp.279-281.

position was strengthened by the conservative, anti-communist, Lionel Hill led, Labor Government. Again, as had been the case, for example, with the first Labor Government of 1910, when in power the Labor Party was permitting strong police action against its own industrial wing, which in this case, was well represented by unemployed workers.

The Hill Government, like most other Labor Governments, had swung to the Right during the Depression.⁵⁶ Such a shift caused further factionalism within the Party.⁵⁷ Hill was, for example, a strong proponent of the conservative Premier's Plan which was designed as a solution to the Depression and for which stand he was strongly attacked from within the ranks of the labour movement.⁵⁸ He was also strongly anti-communist, a position evidenced in his introduction of the Public Safety Preservation Act.

However, this latter stance was typical among members of his Government and among trade unionists. Generally, trade unions were hostile to the Communist Party,⁵⁹ nevertheless there were occasional instances of union support for Communist actions such as for example, the attempts of the United Trades and Labor

⁵⁶ Morrison, P.J., op cit., p.347.

⁵⁷ Hopgood, D.J., op cit., pp.45ff; Pettman, R., "Factionalism in the South Australian ALP, 1930-1933", Labour History, 28:22-30, May 1975, passim; Blatcher, A.D., "Consensus and Division: The Non-Labor Parties in South Australia 1932-1944", (B.A.(Hons.)thesis), Flinders University of South Australia, 1974, p.9.

⁵⁸ During the latter half of 1930, and in 1931 and 1932 Hill was under constant bitter attack in the South Australian Worker. See also Hopgood, D.J., op cit., p.27.

⁵⁹ Morrison, P.J., op cit., p.349.

Council to have the Public Safety Preservation Act withdrawn.⁶⁰

Although the Communist Party had been active in the Depression, its numerical weakness and industrial and political opposition from the Labor Party and other sections of the labour movement, restricted its attempts to provide radical leadership for workers. These factors coupled with the hardships of the Depression, resulted in the Communist Party emerging from this period as an even more fragile political body than it had been in the 1920's. It now had strength at neither the factory floor, nor in unions.

It had little organisation in factories. Its members going into factories were very poorly trained in Communist theory.⁶¹

Hill's actions, police repression, employer and community reaction, worker quietude and Communist Party weaknesses had left the Party in this condition in South Australia. It was unable to provide continued substantive leadership of the working class. The weaknesses in the Left, and thus as suggested earlier, that section of the labour movement most likely to promote worker controlled working class education, that were so obvious in the 1920's, were again evidenced.

Manual workers had undergone considerable economic hardship in the Depression. They emerged industrially non-militant, a condition prevalent immediately prior to the Depression. On only a few occasions, for example, the Beef Riot and the Waterfront Strikes of 1928-1930, did militants present a major threat

⁶⁰ United Trades and Labor Council of South Australia, Minutes, 19 February, 1932, SRG1, SAA.

⁶¹ Finger, A.H., "Notes on Australian Communist Party History in South Australia", Tribune (Sydney), 18 April, 1947, p.4.

to the authorities. As Playford has argued:

... South Australia lacked a basis for revolutionary socialism. The history of the militants was almost wholly confined to Adelaide as population was concentrated in the capital⁶² ... South Australia lacked the appeal of a revolutionary tradition supplied in the Eastern States by convicts, ... and William Lane. The dominant bourgeois values of the non-conformist individualists who founded South Australia filtered down through successive generations anaesthetizing the majority of the working class so far as ⁶³ revolutionary activity was concerned ...

Certainly South Australia was different from other States. Adelaide had been founded by non-conformist theorists. Their traditions affected working class thinking and developments. Working class adults, dominated by non-conformism and middle class values, virtually ignored spasmodic radical proposals for class struggle to arrest from capitalists, control over their lives.

So at a time when the country and this State was witnessing the end of the Depression and a resurgence of industrial growth, the working class lacked a solid base for radical action. Clearly, in general terms, the working class had been successfully accommodated by the forces of capitalism, an accommodation that filtered through all aspects of working class life. Manual workers in this State seemed to approach

⁶² Census of Commonwealth of Australia 1933, Vol.111, p.449. Population of South Australia was 580,949 of whom 312,619 (54%) lived in the Adelaide area. Other major centres - Port Pirie (11,680); Mount Gambier (5,539); Gawler (4,138).

⁶³ Playford, J., op cit., p.123.

their employers in a conciliatory manner, and this particularly during the post-Depression economic boom. Here very little strike activity was evidenced (see Table 2.5). South Australia's workers were industrially non-militant.

TABLE 2.5

STRIKES AND DIRECTLY AFFECTED WORKERS

Year	South Australia		Victoria		New South Wales	
	No.	Workers	No.	Workers	No.	Workers
1933	1	50	12	7156	54	13406
1934	1	44	19	8074	117	33065
1935	3	340	20	7658	134	31356
1936	1	101	10	1599	188	50557
1937	6	1257	11	3770	296	84323
1938	2	73	19	7678	340	116378

Source: Commonwealth Bureau of Census and Statistics
Official Year Book of Commonwealth of Australia,
 Canberra, Government Printer, No. 27, 1934,
 p.730; No. 32, 1939, p.450.

From 1935, the State's industrial growth accelerated under the guidance of the State Auditor General, J.W. Wainwright,⁶⁴ and then Premier Thomas Playford. Wainwright was an important member of a group of public servants and businessmen who promoted a system of regional industrialisation. Such a system was supported by the Butler and thence Playford Liberal Country League Governments. This saw government support for, and

⁶⁴ Mitchell, T.J., "J.W. Wainwright: The Industrialisation of South Australia 1935-1940," Australian Journal of Politics and History, 8(1):27-40, May 1962, p.27. See also: South Australia, Statistical Register, 1951-52, Adelaide, Government Printer, 1952, Statistical Summary of South Australia from its Foundation, 1836 -1951-52. p.14.

concessions to manufacturing, particularly for the Broken Hill Proprietary Company (BHP) at Whyalla,⁶⁵ and Holdens and other companies in Adelaide, in an effort to attract industries to South Australia, and keep them.⁶⁶

With this industrial growth the nature of the workforce began to further change and the industrial workforce increased in significance. Communists again exerted a little influence in this revitalised industrial climate in the pre-World War II and the World War II years. They were successful in gaining some leadership influence in the union movement. However, as on previous occasions, they were strongly opposed both from within, and outside the labour movement.

On this occasion, one area of very strong opposition came from a powerful group of Roman Catholics. Their campaign in the eastern States in particular, was so intense and so successful as to cause a further rift in the labour movement, a rift that helped the Labor Party remain in parliamentary opposition in a number of States and nationally for many years after the conclusion of World War II. In South Australia the rift did not have as serious an electoral effect on the ALP, even though the Party was to remain in parliamentary opposition for about two decades after the conclusion of World War II.

⁶⁵ For a discussion of the historical role of BHP in Whyalla see Burton, R.R., "The Industrial Urbanisation of Whyalla 1937-1961", (B.A.(Hons.)thesis), University of Adelaide, 1971, passim.

⁶⁶ Government assistance was made possible by the establishment, in 1937, of the Industries Assistance Corporation of S.A. Ltd., a public company with government financial backing. Mitchell, T.J., op cit., p.37.

Another Labour Movement Split and its Aftermath

The early post-war years saw the politically conservative elements of the middle class launching an offensive against labour, and wresting federal parliamentary power from it. The offensive was almost assured of success when internal conflicts broke out within the labour movement.

Post-war full employment made strike action attractive to the more militant unions and their political supporters.⁶⁷ (See Table 2.6.).

TABLE 2.6

STRIKES AND DIRECTLY AFFECTED WORKERS

<u>Year</u>	<u>Australia Strikes (No.)</u>	<u>Directly Affected Workers</u>
1948	1141	301025
1950	1276	391481
1952	1627*	488178

* Excludes approximately 85000 working days lost due to overtime bans in the Stevedoring Industry in April, May and June, 1952.

Source: Commonwealth Bureau of Census and Statistics, Official Year Book of the Commonwealth of Australia, No. 40, Canberra, Government Printer, 1954, p.315.

The 1949 coal strike, largely promoted by communists, was the culmination of such action. As a result of this strike, the government introduced emergency legislation, imprisoned some

⁶⁷ Sheridan, T., Mindful Militants: The Amalgamated Engineering Union in Australia 1920-1972, Melbourne, Cambridge University Press, 1975, p.167.

union officials and used troops to work mines.

Such severe measures from a working class based government received the tacit approval of the Australian Council of Trade Unions.⁶⁸ Clearly radicals such as communists were again being opposed by more conservative sections of the labour movement. This opposition further hardened with the work of a Right-wing group, initially known as "The Movement", being important. The 'Movement' forced a Labor Party split in the early 1950's, a split that resulted in the expulsion of some Right-wing Labor members, and a split that was mainly responsible for keeping the federal Labor Party in parliamentary opposition for almost a quarter of a century. The "Movement's" members were fervently anti-communist, were mainly Roman Catholic and succeeded in establishing the Right-wing Democratic Labor Party, which at elections, delivered votes to the Liberals.

As early as 1938, organised attempts were being made to "stop the advance" of communism in the Australian labour movement, and this was particularly so in the heavy industrial eastern States of Victoria and New South Wales. In Victoria, for example, Roman Catholics were organising against communists in the Australian Railways Union and the Boilermakers' Society.⁶⁹

⁶⁸ Martin, R.M., Trade Unions in Australia, Ringwood, Penguin, 1975, p.12. See also the interesting account in Gollan, R., Revolutionaries and Reformists: Communism and the Australian Labour Movement 1920-1955, Canberra, Australian National University Press, 1975.

⁶⁹ Sheridan, T., op cit., p.193.

During the war, the opposition intensified. An informal anti-communist group was established in the Melbourne Trades Hall.⁷⁰ Subsequently officials in the Sydney Trades and Labor Council also became concerned at Communist influence in trade unions.⁷¹ To combat such influence, industrial groups were created to put official ALP views to the workers and to replace Communist union leaders with members from industrial groups. By 1949 these groups were also firmly established in Victoria, and by 1950 the "Groupers", as they became known, were a powerful force in Victorian unions, in particular, and in the ALP.

In a further conservative effort to combat Communism, the vehemently anti-communist Federal Menzies Government introduced the Communist Party Dissolution Bill into Parliament (1950).⁷² A successful high court challenge to the legislation was made by the Communist led Waterside Workers' Federation and Ironworkers' Association.

In the following year another challenge was made to the right of the Communist Party to exist, when the Menzies Government held a referendum seeking the constitutional power to ban the Party. The referendum, which provided the last legal challenge to the existence of the Communist Party and the right for Communists to hold trade union positions, was defeated. However, opposition to

⁷⁰ Murray, R., The Split, Melbourne, Cheshire, 1970, p.14. See also the discussion in Turner, I., In Union is Strength. A History of Trade Unions in Australia: 1788-1974, Melbourne, Nelson, 1976, p.112.

⁷¹ Sheridan, T., op cit., p.195.

⁷² CPD, Volume 207, 27 April, 1950, pp.1994-2007 and passim; News Weekly (Melbourne) 1 February, 1950.

Communists continued through, for example, "Grouper" activity, and also that of conservative politicians.

Grouper support for the "Yes" case in the Referendum saw the ALP in South Australia withdraw support for the industrial groups.⁷³ Just as in other States, these groups had become the centre for Right-wing activity in South Australia. Here, the immediate post-war period saw labour moving politically Right, in an era of internationally heightened Cold War activity between Russia and Western nations.

Such Right-wing industry alienated moderate and Left-wing non-communist members.⁷⁴ After the 1951 Referendum, the State ALP withdrew the group's affiliation on a motion introduced by ALP President, Clyde Cameron, who had originally supported their introduction in 1946.⁷⁵ This move marked a victory for the Centre-Left in the State ALP and ended the group's brief existence in this State.

The action of the ALP in South Australia foreshadowed moves against Groupers and Right-wingers which, nationally, had gained momentum by 1954.⁷⁶ To counter this offensive the Groupers and Right-wing labour members in South Australia, moved to establish an alternative Labor Party. The ALP (Anti-Communist)

⁷³ Advertiser (Adelaide) 25 October, 1951.

⁷⁴ Hetherington, R. and Reid, R.L., The South Australian Elections 1959, Adelaide, Rigby, 1962, p.40.

⁷⁵ Advertiser (Adelaide) 24 October, 1951.

⁷⁶ See for example, Sydney Morning Herald 6 October, 1954; Age (Melbourne) 6 October, 1954; Advertiser (Adelaide) 6 October, 1954.

was created in 1955, and in 1957 it became the State Branch of the Democratic Labor Party (DLP). This Party has been small in this State and has been unsuccessful in attempts to have members elected to Parliament (Federal and State).⁷⁷ Further its creation did not see the dismemberment of the ALP in the State. The ALP had lost some Right-wingers but had not broken up in chaos. It was still able to present a relatively united front to the electorate, unlike the ALP at a national level and the ALP's in some eastern States.

Clearly, relations within the labour movement were, and are, very complex. Conflict was rife, a condition which made, and would make, efforts to provide working class education from within the movement, very difficult. And this particularly so with regard to socio-political education, but not to the same degree in relation to, say, more utilitarian education such as courses in "Negotiation Techniques". As the ensuing discussion will reveal, the presence of such ideological differences within the labour movement was one reason for the South Australian Labor Government's financial support of the WEA in 1972, specifically to provide trade union education. It chose this approach, rather than financially supporting the United Trades and Labor Council in such a venture.

⁷⁷ See the discussion in Warhurst, J., "The Australian Labor Party (Anti-Communist) in South Australia, November - December, 1955. 'Molotov' Labor Versus 'Coffee Shop Labor'"; Labour History, 32:66-74, May 1977, p.66.

Labor Parties in general, were to pay dearly for the confrontation between Left and Right of the war and early post-World War II periods. The Chifley Government was defeated by the conservative offensive, and lost to R.G. Menzies' Liberal Party in 1949. After 1954 when the ALP almost succeeded in regaining government, the split in the Party made the maintenance of power by Menzies, all the more easy. The ALP had truly been dispatched to the political wilderness at the federal level.

With the success of Menzies in 1949, and his onslaught against communism, a comparatively quiet period of labour movement industrial activity was ushered in. Economic prosperity saw unionists participating in short, rather than lengthy, strikes.⁷⁸

The character of unions also began to change. Many small

⁷⁸ Commonwealth Bureau of Census and Statistics, Official Year Book of the Commonwealth of Australia, Canberra, Government Printer, various: No. 41, 1955, p.294; No. 44, 1958, p.197; No. 48, 1962, p.458, give data on lengths of industrial disputes in various years. In 1953, of 1459 disputes, 956 (66%) were of one day's or less duration, 232 (16%) were longer than one day and less than or equal to two day's duration. The major cause for the disputes being physical working conditions and management policy. In 1957, and 1961, in data collected for disputes involving stoppages of 10 man days or more -

<u>Year</u>	<u>Number of Disputes</u>	<u>Duration</u>		
		<u>≤ 1 day</u>	<u>>1 day & ≤ 2 days</u>	<u>>2 days & ≤ 3 days</u>
1957	1103	671 (61%)	168 (15%)	95 (9%)
1961	815	486 (60%)	121 (15%)	88 (11%)

unions amalgamated to form larger unions. There began a decline in the number of unions for semi-skilled and unskilled workers and a growth in white-collar unionism.⁷⁹ Many of these latter unions joined together in the Australian Council of Salaried and Professional Associations (ACSPA) which, in essence, was and is a "white-collar" ACTU.

The ACTU for its part, grew in importance and in the post-war years it assumed responsibilities for conducting, for example, basic wage negotiations for the whole trade union movement.⁸⁰ Importantly, for this discussion, in 1961 it authorized the creation of a committee to promote the education of trade unionists in relevant fields. Here major emphasis was placed on the education of shop stewards and other union officials.⁸¹ The move ushered in a new period of trade union interest in the education of its membership whereby eventually in the mid-1970's a Trade Union Training College was established.

Many of the changes which occurred in the trade union movement, both nationally and in South Australia over these early post-war years, were as a result of the changed composition of the Australian working class. Primary industry became increasingly mechanised, a factor which affected rural working class membership. Manufacturing industry showed very rapid

⁷⁹ Bentley, P., op cit., pp.9-11.

⁸⁰ Murray, R., op cit., p.119.

⁸¹ Duffy, N.F., "Unions in Action: Aims and Methods" in P.W.D. Matthews, and G.W. Ford (Eds.), Australian Trade Unions: Their Development, Structure and Horizons, Melbourne, Sun Books, 1968, pp.41-69, p.43.

growth with resultant increased emphasis on technical education. Partly as a consequence of this growth, the composition of the workforce further changed, with women and migration having a large bearing on this.⁸² Table 2.7 shows the gross production figures in post-World War II South Australia in selected years.

TABLE 2.7

GROSS SOUTH AUSTRALIAN PRODUCTION (\$'000)

	<u>1954/55</u>	<u>1959/60</u>	<u>1964/65</u>
Agriculture	104914	71092	178132
Pastoral	101059	123351	135916
Dairying	25037	29454	37533
Poultry	7727	7230	8328
Mining	18402	51214	71662
Other Primary	12865	11968	15563
Factories (Net)	222055	325947	498588
	<hr/>	<hr/>	<hr/>
TOTAL	492060	620257	945722
	<hr/>	<hr/>	<hr/>

Note: The figures for 1954/55 and 1959/60 do not accurately tally most probably owing to C. B. C. S., rounding in conversion from £ to \$.

Source: Commonwealth Bureau of Census and Statistics, Statistical Register of South Australia, 1965-66, op cit., Part VII, Statistical Summary, p.16.

New suburbs were built and people were encouraged to buy, rather than rent a home.⁸³ Such action resulted in people

⁸² Turner, I., op cit., pp.114-115; See also South Australia, Statistical Register 1951-52, op cit., Part II, p.21; and Statistical Summary of South Australia From its Foundation, 1836-1951-52, pp.11-14, for South Australian data.

⁸³ See the discussion in, for example, Hill, M.R., Housing Finance in Australia 1945-1956, Melbourne, Melbourne University Press, 1959, passim.

entering into long-term financial commitments. This helped discourage participation in long-term strikes, unlike the pre-war years. The car also began to play an important part in working class life and culture as the nature of working class life changed in a changing social, economic and industrial climate. New types of jobs were created by changing technology, and adults were acquiring skills to work in these areas. Meanwhile the concept of "secondary education for all" ensured better educated working class children and thus the future prospect of a more highly educated working class.

The Labor Party Returns to Power

During the immediate post-war II period when the labour movement lost political power at a federal level, and suffered a severe internal split, conservative forces were on the offensive. The radical Communist Party had also split, and in essence, it has since been on a path of retreat under conservative pressure. It has continued to be numerically weak and unable to provide radical leadership in the labour movement in South Australia.

The industrial and political wings of the labour movement on the whole, however, have gradually gained in strength throughout the 1960's. At a federal level, this growth climaxed with a political victory at the polls in 1972, a success which was most important in terms of educational initiatives for adult members of the working class.⁸⁴

The assumption of federal government followed the ALP

⁸⁴ See ensuing discussion in Chapters 4,5,6, and 7.

victory in the 1965 elections in South Australia where Playford lost government after over a quarter of a century in power. The ALP term in office was short. Playford's successor, R. Steele Hall, regained government for the Liberals, only to see sharp internal conflict in the Liberal Country League, leading to a leadership crisis and the ALP winning government under Don Dunstan. Dunstan was a strong leader and his Government initiated significant reforms including many of a social welfare nature and many in the arts, industrial relations and educational fields. By 1975, Dunstan was being heralded as one of the most able and effective politicians in Australia.⁸⁵

During the post-World War II era in which, on a national scale, conservatives held political power, the nation experienced a period of almost unchecked economic expansion and population growth.⁸⁶ Investment of foreign capital increased, and sustained economic expansion and a rising standard of living was experienced. However, the stock market boom of 1969 was followed by the collapse of 1970 and then a period of economic contraction, a period which witnessed growing unrest among Australians over involvement in an unpopular war in Vietnam. Further, there was growing unrest over inadequate welfare provisions for such groups as pensioners and aboriginals. A

⁸⁵ See for example, Australian (Sydney) 20 September, 1975 and Whitelock, D., op cit., pp.295-300.

⁸⁶ See for example, Commonwealth Bureau of Census and Statistics, Official Year Book of the Commonwealth of Australia, Canberra, Government Printer, No. 52, 1966, pp.655-825; No. 60, 1974, pp.497-656, 132-134.

co-ordinated women's movement was formed and it attacked the forced subservient role of women. These factors coupled with the quite rapid movement of women, particularly married women, back into the workforce, created problems for the conservative leadership. In the short term, the problems became virtually insoluble for the Government and a period of factionalism developed, a period which saw the conservatives lose government at a federal level.

The reformist federal Labor Government initially had some business support. It soon lost much of this, and though in a period from 1972 until it was dismissed from office in 1975, it introduced much reformist legislation particularly in social welfare and importantly for this discussion, in the adult education area, it was never in complete control. The conservatives held a majority in the Senate and used this majority to block legislation which was perceived as harmful to their support groups. Dunstan experienced a similar lack of control over the Legislative Council in South Australia. However, he seemed to more effectively manage this lack of control, than did his federal counterpart, Gough Whitlam.

The advent of a federal Labor Government marked another brief period since World War II when, at a national level, the conservatives have been in opposition. The year 1965, and thence Dunstan's assumption of power in South Australia, marked, one similarly brief, and then one much longer, period with conservatives in opposition in this State. Indisputably, in this period (1945-1975), capitalism has been triumphant, and the working class has

been on the defensive. Such a condition has affected educational provision by, and for this class.

Summary

The heterogeneous labour movement has seen much turbulence since the onset of World War I. Conflict between industrial and political wings, conflict between Left and Right, conflict between employer and employee, weaknesses in the working class and the fragile nature of radical working class groups have all, in a variety of ways, contributed to turbulence. This has never been as strong in South Australia as in other States like New South Wales.

The labour movement has suffered from a series of splits over the sixty-two year period under examination in this thesis. The conscription crisis and the split leading to the emergence of the DLP were two of the most notable. However, the effects of these have not been as severe in South Australia as in the more highly industrialised States of eastern Australia.

Further there has been the continued confrontation between Left and Right. In South Australia, the Left has been in disunity, a condition that has left it weak. Consequently, its leadership in the labour movement has been spasmodic and unspectacular.

Against such a background, in which the forces of capitalism have successfully accommodated the industrial and political wings of the labour movement, attempts have been made from both inside and outside the movement to provide working class adult education. Major successes have occurred during the 1970's with the Labor Party governing at the State, and for a time, at the federal level.

CHAPTER III

THE FOUNDATION OF THE WEA AND RELATIONS WITH THE LABOUR MOVEMENT IN AUSTRALIAN STATES TO 1950

The WEA stands for an alliance between Labor and Learning ... It is a missionary organisation working in co-operation with Educational Authorities and Working Class Organisations. It is definitely unsectarian, non-political and democratic.
(WEA of N.S.W.¹)

Working people today are not convinced that universities are performing their real function in the community, and tutorial classes are not regarded by them as an alternative to the democratizing of the universities, but simply as a means by which the universities can be brought into a state magnetic to all those who desire and pursue knowledge.
(A. Mansbridge²)

Introduction

In South Australia by the outbreak of World War I, the labour movement was firmly established both industrially and politically. There had been some periods of industrial conflict in the preceding 25 years. However, the era since the strike-torn years of the latter part of the nineteenth century had been relatively calm. This calmness was disturbed at a time when the Labor Party assumed government in its own right in 1910.

Socialists were organised and became a thorn to conservatives both within and outside the Labor Party. The International Workers of the World (IWW) created similar concerns. In such an environment adult education provision was about to be expanded. The catalyst for this came from the recognised

¹ Workers' Educational Association of New South Wales, First Annual Report and Statement of Accounts for the Year Ending 31st December, 1914, Sydney, WEA of N.S.W., 1914, p.3.

² Mansbridge, A., University Tutorial Classes, London, Longmans Green & Co., 1913, p.37.

failure of university extension, public interest aroused by a Royal Commission into Education (1911-13) and the enthusiasm of some members of the labour movement and some prominent educators. Such stimulus implied that viable suggestions for adult education provision met considerable support from within the young State steeped in a tradition of religious non-conformism, liberalism and voluntarism. The proposal to establish a voluntary body, the Workers' Educational Association (WEA) (which had earlier been founded in Britain), as an institutional response to perceived working class educational needs, was thus heard by a sympathetic audience.

In this chapter discussion is briefly concentrated on the early years of the WEA in Britain and then on key moments in its history in Australia. Such considerations will aid in contextualising the development of the WEA in South Australia.

The WEA's in Australian States, except Western Australia where a WEA was not successfully established, were in close contact with each other. Firstly, there was the national Association publication, Australian Highway and secondly, national meetings³ and interstate visits by State officers. No State Association was totally isolated from the results of social, political and economic influences on other State WEA's.

In South Australia relations between the WEA and the labour movement were relatively amicable. This contrasted with relationships between WEA's in New South Wales, Victoria,

³ The Federal Council of the WEA was established in August 1918. Australian Highway, 1(1):2, March 1919.

Queensland and Tasmania and their respective State labour movements. Conflict in relations in these States left the Association weak as an Australia-wide movement, and had some effects on the South Australian WEA. This was particularly so as regards the local WEA's credibility in the eyes of important sections of the South Australian labour movement.

The Workers' Educational Association is Established
in Britain

In essence, Albert Mansbridge⁴ founded the WEA in 1903.⁵ Mansbridge planned an alliance between trade unionists, co-operators and university extension in a self-governing educational association. He wrote:

Whatever may have been the case half a century earlier, it was clear at the opening of the 20th century that working people had, in the main, proved unresponsive, and would continue to be unresponsive, to facilities devised for them by other people, in however alluring terms they were presented.⁶

It was true that working class oriented educational ventures of the mid to late-nineteenth century had been met, basically,

⁴ Mansbridge was born in 1876, was the son of a carpenter and had won a scholarship to grammar school before becoming an office boy, a junior civil servant in the Board of Education, and a clerk in a co-operative wholesale society. He was intensely interested in university extension, the co-operative movement and the Christian religion. He was a lay reader and Sunday School teacher in the Church of England.

⁵ Initially the Association was named "An Association To Promote the Higher Education of Working Men".

⁶ Mansbridge, A., The Trodden Road, p.55, quoted in G.V. Portus, Inaugural Mansbridge Memorial Lecture to Workers' Educational Association, (Mimeograph, 27p.), Sydney, 19 October, 1953, p.8.

by a poor response from manual workers. Such offerings simply failed to continually appeal to them.

A critical point in this failure was Mansbridge's intimation that the courses were designed by other people for the workers. However, having argued this, he then set about organising an association for the promotion of working class education. He was not a manual worker and he was thus outside of the working class as traditionally defined. His proposal seemed to ignore his evaluation of the performance of earlier working class oriented educational bodies.

He envisaged the Association as a federation of:

... educational and working class organisations, of workers and scholars, for the purpose of stimulating the demand for education and of organizing the supply in the interests of those who are largely occupied by manual labour.⁷

There was a special interest in manual workers. However, Mansbridge envisaged that the WEA would promote the education of workers of all types, including clerks,⁸ and since he was a clerk, he was thus included among "workers of all types". Hence his proposal was consistent with the outcomes of his earlier evaluations of worker-oriented educational bodies, for in his terms, he was a worker, organising workers' education. Nevertheless, this interpretation of worker, ignored recognition of the critical differences between mental and manual labour and revealed weaknesses in Mansbridge's understanding of the nature of the working class.

The WEA was launched as an Association to Promote the Higher Education of Working Men at a meeting at Oxford University following the conclusion of the University Extension

⁷ Mansbridge, A., University Tutorial Classes., op cit., p.4.

⁸ Portus, G.V., The Fiftieth Anniversary of the WEA. Transcript of ABC documentary, n.d. Personal papers of Professor G.V. Portus, PRG204, SAA.

Summer School in August 1903. Subsequently at its first national conference in 1905, the Association dropped its cumbersome title and became the non-partisan, non-party political, WEA. R.H. Tawney joined the executive and William Temple, who later became Archbishop of Canterbury, was the WEA's first president.⁹

The Association's objective was defined as the promotion of:

... the Higher Education of Working People primarily by the extension of university teaching, also (a) by the assistance of working class efforts of a specifically educational character, (b) by assisting in the development of an efficient School Continuation System (c) by the co-ordination of popular educational effort.¹⁰

It is critical to the subsequent development of the Association to consider its aim of "assistance of working class efforts of a specifically educational character". The WEA's proponents strongly emphasised its educational nature in debates with working class and middle class critics who suggested that the Association should have, or from many of its middle class critics, did have, a working class political bias. In Mansbridge's opinion:

It is obvious that being an educational movement, it is both non-political and unsectarian.¹¹

⁹ Mansbridge, A., The Trodden Road, London, J.M. Dent & Son, 1940, p.64.

¹⁰ Stocks, M., The Workers' Educational Association: The First Fifty Years, London, Allen and Unwin, 1953, p.34.

¹¹ Mansbridge, A., University Tutorial Classes, op cit., p.4.

Mansbridge believed in the need for the WEA to offer workers a liberal education in which all sides of questions could be discussed. He did not view the WEA as a working class political body that would promote dogmatism.

The WEA would arouse worker interest in university standard liberal education, an interest which university teachers would satisfy in tutorial classes.¹² This, according to Mansbridge, would contribute to the development of citizenship by enriching workers' lives and thereby the life of the community.¹³ The orientation for hitherto educationally underprivileged adults was obvious.

In its early attempts to make university standard education more accessible to workers, the WEA held an important conference at Oxford University in 1907. As a result of the conference, a committee drafted a report entitled Oxford and Working Class Education which emphasised the need for working class control of workers' education. However, the Association was not controlled by the working class.¹⁴ Nor did it promote specifically independent¹⁵ working class education. Rather the WEA promoted workers' education that was provided from outside the working class. This condition resulted in radical worker

¹² Tutorial classes generally were of two hours duration once per week for 24 weeks each year for three years. They required active participation, essays and often examinations of students.

¹³ Mansbridge, A., "Citizenship" in A.C. Benson (Ed.), Cambridge Essays on Education, Cambridge, Cambridge University Press, 1917, pp.75-101, pp.95-96.

¹⁴ For example, Tawney, Mansbridge and Temple were important executive members, and hardly working class in the traditional sense.

¹⁵ Independent working class education, that is, worker education provided by and controlled by workers.

opposition to the Association.

Some of the critics voicing such opposition were instrumental in fostering independent workers' educational activities such as the Socialist Labor Party's Marxist economics classes in Glasgow.¹⁶ A number of students from these classes enrolled at Ruskin College¹⁷ in 1907, and in protest against orthodox economics classes, arranged Marxist classes for themselves. Subsequently in 1908, these students founded the Plebs League, for the promotion of worker controlled working class education. The League opposed the WEA. It reacted against academic participation in working class education,¹⁸ which was a central characteristic of the WEA University tutorial class system.

The League established a labour college at Oxford in 1909. This it perceived as the true educational institution for the working class. Subsequently a labour college was established in London in 1911 with a stated philosophy that education:

... aims at explaining the facts of life, the way wealth is created. The explanation of these facts gives us our views on social questions. Therefore, those who control education control our actions - since our actions are guided and determined by our view of the facts ...¹⁹

¹⁶ Peers, R., Adult Education: A Comparative Study, London, Routledge and Kegan Paul, 1972, p.154.

¹⁷ Ruskin College was located at Oxford University and was established in 1899 by wealthy Americans for workers' education.

¹⁸ Smith, H.P., Labour and Learning, Oxford, Blackwell, 1956, p.75.

¹⁹ Peers, R., op cit., p.154.

Clearly, just as the authors of Oxford and Working Class Education had argued earlier, working class control of working class education was again seen as crucial. However, this is where the similarity between the two groups ended. The WEA supporters saw workers - broadly defined - "controlling" a university standard liberal education. Meanwhile the Plebs saw worker control of a more politically oriented worker education that would assist the workers' quest for dominance in the State apparatus.

By 1909, two of the major trends in working class education were the WEA and its university partnership professing non-sectarian, non-partisan education, and the partisan Plebs' League. These two bodies affected working class educational development for several decades. The WEA became more general in its appeal, that is, less specifically working class oriented.²⁰ The Plebs' League and its sponsored National Council of Labour Colleges, which persistently opposed the WEA, kept rigidly to their "independent working class" aims.

Despite the labour colleges' competition for students, and the colleges' antagonism to the Association, the WEA's programme certainly appealed to a number of workers in its early years. Manual workers, who, based on the reported occupational categories in Table 3.1, were most probably male, comprised quite a high proportion of the student body.

²⁰ Tawney deplored this changed orientation. See Terrill, R., R.H. Tawney and His Times, London, Andre Deutsch, 1973, p.100.

TABLE 3.1

PERCENTAGE DISTRIBUTION OF WEA STUDENTS BY OCCUPATION

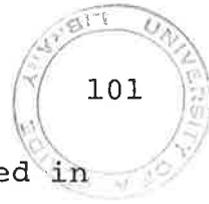
<u>OCCUPATION</u>	<u>ENROLMENT %</u>	
	<u>1911-12</u>	<u>1913-14</u>
Manual Workers	54.8	47.5
Clerks, Telegraphists, etc.	20	20.5
Teachers	7	10
Other Non-Manual Workers	7.7	8
Housewives	3.5	6.5
Miscellaneous & unspecified	7	7.5
Total number of students	2,383	3,035

Source: Peers, R., op cit., p.81.

The figures for 1911-12 and 1913-14 foreshadowed a trend, for the percentage of manual workers in the student population fell in succeeding years.²¹ A condition also experienced by labour colleges.

A variety of reasons can be forwarded to explain this manual worker student decline in 1913-14. These included general lack of appeal of courses, the movement of many workers into the armed services at the outbreak of World War I, radical worker opposition to the WEA, and the condition of working class life itself. Manual work was physically demanding. Consequently, at the conclusion of a day of toil in this period of national emergency, the worker was tired and perhaps disinclined to

²¹ Terrill, R., op cit., p.100.



participate in such rigorous academic study as demanded in night tutorial classes.

The manual worker student decline foreshadowed at the outbreak of World War I was serious, but the establishment of the WEA represented an important experiment in the provision of worker oriented liberal adult education from outside the working class. The Association had built on the foundations laid in the nineteenth century. It very quickly dominated liberal provision for workers and dwarfed independent working class efforts, a condition that would be replicated in Australia.

The WEA is Established in Australia

In Australia during the early years of the twentieth century university extension was still relatively strong although it was showing clear signs of lack of appeal. Lectures, which were concentrated in cultural rather than political subject areas,²² initially attracted large audiences. However, according to Professor Henderson, there was little working class involvement.²³

It was highly unlikely that many workers would have been interested in the 1907 South Australian extension lecture series as detailed in Table 3.2.

²² Williams, E., "The Foundation of University Adult Education in Australia, 1886-1916", (B.A.(Hons)thesis), University of Adelaide, 1966, p.52.

²³ Papers of George Cockburn Henderson 1870-1944, PRG6, Series 1 and 22, SAA. Henderson was a most influential person in university extension in South Australia.

TABLE 3.2
EXTENSION LECTURE SERIES - 1907

<u>Course</u>	<u>Lecturer</u>	<u>Course Tickets Sold</u>	<u>Single Tickets</u>
1. Hamlet and Shakespearian Drama	Prof. Henderson	512	270
2. Underlying principles of Modern Legislation	Prof. Brown	113	106
3. Life in Classic Times in Rome and Greece	Prof. Naylor	569	39
4. Low Temperatures	Prof. Rennie	140	171

Source: Advertiser (Adelaide) 28 October, 1907.

The Series was typical of those offered in other years.²⁴ As Williams has suggested:

Press reports point to the conclusion that middle and occasionally upper class adults formed the bulk of audiences at extension lectures ... Higgins's comment in 1902 that the working class did not attend extension courses in Victoria suggests that Adelaide's experience was typical of Australia generally.²⁵

and further:

By 1913 even the hardiest of optimists in the extension movement must have foreseen its demise. After more than twenty years existence, it had failed to persuade any Australian university to appoint full-time staff to assist directly or to provide substantial financial assistance ... Indeed, the extension movement seemed to be repeating the pattern followed by the mechanics' institutes - educational evangelism, hopes that education would sweep the adult community (particularly the working classes), a progressive decline in educational standards, and apathy from the workers.²⁶

²⁴ Papers of George Cockburn Henderson 1870-1944, PRG6, Series 1 and 22, SAA.

²⁵ Williams, E., "The Beginnings of the Australian University Extension Movement" in R.J.W. Selleck (Ed.), Melbourne Studies in Education 1972, Melbourne, Melbourne University Press, 1972, pp.185-210, p.197; See also Register (Adelaide) 18 June, 1903.

²⁶ Williams, E., "The Beginnings of the Australian University Extension Movement", op cit., p.200.

The attributed workers' "apathy" towards university extension services was not an entirely justifiable accusation. Education for workers was being prescribed from outside the working class. For workers, the provision of lectures by university academics did not, for example, appear to constitute really useful knowledge.

University extension was not attracting workers. Socialist groups were attracting some radicals to their Marxist economics classes, mechanics' institutes were emphasising library activities,²⁷ while trade unions concentrated on industrial and political issues. Hence a void existed so far as the provision of liberal workers' education was concerned. The WEA would attempt to fill this vacuum.

William Temple visited Australia in 1910, and presented a series of lectures on education and democracy. He placed some emphasis on the provision of workers' education by Oxford University and the WEA.²⁸

His visit provided a catalyst for new initiatives in workers' education. However, it was the Congress of Empire Universities, held in London in July 1912, that provided a necessary stimulus. Here tutorial classes and extension work were among the issues discussed.

Melbourne University's representatives to the Congress

²⁷ Register (Adelaide) 29 January, 1910.

²⁸ Register (Adelaide) 28 July, 1910.

included Dr. J.W. Barrett (later Sir James, and Vice-Chancellor), who was convinced of the failure of university extension.²⁹

After the Congress, at which Mansbridge had spoken, Barrett sought approval from Melbourne University to invite Mansbridge to Australia. Sydney University also joined with this invitation.

In a discussion with L. Leathley, the first secretary of the WEA in Victoria, Barrett explained what had prompted him to seek a visit from Mansbridge:

When I was in England on holiday I met the then Master of Balliol, Mr. A.L. Smith, who directed my attention to the work of the WEA. I had the opportunity of examining papers on many subjects contributed by WEA students which impressed me very much. I first approached Mr. Tawney with an offer to visit Australia. He agreed to come but on his services being required on a Royal Commission he had to decline the offer. The Master of Balliol then put me in touch with Mansbridge who agreed to come providing all expenses were paid. I agreed to pay expenses and the wheels were set in motion that led to the establishment of tutorial classes and the WEA.³⁰

At this time, the Sydney University Senate was considering the University Amendment Act which had been drafted by Peter Board for the New South Wales Labor Government. Board, the Director of Public Instruction, like the South Australian Labor Parliamentarian Thomas Ryan, was aware that the University should be meeting the needs of a wider community rather than an élite

²⁹ Crew, B.H., "Mansbridge and His Mission to Australia", Australian Highway, 49(3):9-14, December 1969, p.9.

³⁰ Leathley, L.T., "The Beginnings of the WEA in Victoria", Australian Journal of Adult Education, 3(1):32-37, July 1963. The University of Sydney agreed to pay Mansbridge's travelling and living costs in New South Wales. Alexander, F., "Sydney University and the WEA (1913-1919)", Australian Quarterly, 27(4):34-56, December 1955, p.39. Barrett paid Mansbridge's travelling expenses, Melbourne University Council Minutes, Vol. 16, p.408, 1 September, 1913. Quoted in E. Williams, "The Foundations of University Adult Education in Australia, 1886-1916", op cit., p.148.

group. So, when he had drafted the Amendment Act, he had inserted a clause relating to tutorial classes.

The Act was assented to in December 1912 and included the following clause:

The Senate shall provide for the establishment and maintenance of evening tutorial classes in Science, Economics, Ancient and Modern History and Sociology, and may provide for evening tutorial classes in other subjects. Such classes shall be open to students whether they have or have not matriculated within the University.³¹

Hence the formal framework allowing for the establishment of tutorial classes was established. Classes would be accessible to a wide range of people, a condition ensured by the regulation allowing non-matriculated students to participate. The Act's provisions in this regard were a radical departure from the previously existing conditions.

Tutorial classes on the Oxford model had thus become a real prospect in Australia. The visit of Temple and then this Act had set the necessary framework. Mansbridge would ensure the classes' development.

Before his arrival in Australia, Mansbridge sought the help of David Stewart in preparing the way for the promotion of the idea of a WEA movement in this country. Stewart agreed to Mansbridge's request and saw that the:

... immediate task before me appeared to be to bring the labour movement, particularly the industrial wing, the State Education Department

³¹ University of Sydney, Calendar, 1913, Sydney, University of Sydney, 1913, p.29.

and the University together and focus this union on the objective of promoting working class education.³²

He had recently secured election to the Labor Council as a representative of the Amalgamated Carpenters' and Joiners' Society. This gave Stewart the necessary foothold in the labour movement. He also contacted the Minister of Education in the first Labor Ministry in New South Wales, and the University of Sydney asking what support and encouragement could be expected for such a movement.

Stewart's letter to the Minister of Education brought an immediate positive response from Peter Board. Meanwhile his letter to the University resulted in a lukewarm response, owing to "financial considerations".³³ Stewart's major task was, however, to enlist the support of the labour movement through the Labor Council. This was not easy, for at the time unions were preoccupied with industrial and political matters. Unions did not give a high priority to their direct involvement in worker education, especially highly academic education as proposed through the WEA.

Despite some opposition, particularly from radicals, Stewart gained the Council's support and a committee was established to enquire into the question of its aid to the proposed working class education body. Subsequently, a further committee was appointed to draft a constitution and prepare for a future conference to launch the Association.

³² Stewart, D., "In the Beginning", Australian Highway, 29(1):5-7, February 1947, p.5.

³³ Crane, A.R. and Walker, W.G., Peter Board, Melbourne, ACER, 1957, p.166.

However, before this work could be accomplished, word was received that Albert Mansbridge would soon be arriving in Australia. Thus it was decided to postpone the inaugural conference until his arrival.

In a climate in which provision had been made to ensure that the university was more accessible to a wider range of people, the University of Sydney was persuaded to seek additional government support for the appointment of a tutorial class lecturer. Such a person was also to assist in intra-mural teaching in economic history. The Professorial Board asked the Registrar to act to secure a suitable lecturer and invite the WEA to nominate three members to work on a committee to supervise the tutorial teaching.³⁴ By December of that year, following the formal constitution of the WEA, one thousand pounds was secured from the Holman Labor Government to defray the cost of tutorial classes for one year and Meredith Atkinson was appointed to lecture.³⁵

Hence the Government, Labor Council and Sydney University overtly supported moves to provide for a working class education. A central body in this provision was to be the WEA, an organisation which closely resembled the WEA in Britain. For example, its

³⁴ University of Sydney, Senate Minutes, 13 October, 1913, p.46., extracted in The Origins of Tutorial Classes in Sydney University, (Manuscript, 8p.), Archives, Department of Adult Education, University of Sydney, n.d., p.1.

³⁵ University of Sydney, Senate Minutes, 1 December, 1913, p.59., extracted in The Origins of Tutorial Classes in Sydney University, op cit., p.1.

constitution was modelled on that of the British Association. According to the influential Stewart in his reflections on founding the Association:

The principles which we then regarded as fundamental and which have since stood the test of time were: (1) That the Association should be entirely non-partisan ... This phraseology was adopted as the best means of expressing our belief that the Association should encourage the study of political and controversial questions but could only do so by refusing itself to take sides. (2) The second fundamental principle, in our opinion, was that the Association should be controlled in the main by the representatives of affiliated organisations. The reason for this is that the Association should always seek to serve, and in educational matters to give lead to, working class organisations. This did not mean restricting the Association in any way. All were to be welcomed who cared to come in, but the Association's special mission was to train men and women for the service of the trade unions and other bodies which were co-operating to bring it into being.³⁶

The first principle here was very important, for non-partisan implied tacit acquiescence. From the outset, the WEA was concerned mainly with working class education, but certainly not exclusively with this. Like the British Association, the WEA never intended to prepare workers for class struggle for it was to be, in essence, politically "neutral"³⁷ in policy matters.

The second principle raised questions about the working class nature of the Association. It was to be controlled, "in the main", by representatives of affiliated bodies, not all of

³⁶ Stewart, D., "The Labour Council", Australian Highway, 29(2):20-22, April 1947, p.20.

³⁷ Such a policy was impossible to implement since it was not possible for the WEA to be politically neutral. What the executive intended was that the WEA would not "take sides" in politics. In effect political neutrality implied support of status quo conditions.

which would be working class. Colin Badger confirmed this when he suggested that the principle:

... did not mean that this was an association set up, maintained and directed by 'workers'. Not at all. It was on the contrary, an association of educated, high minded, philanthropic, middle and upper class gentlemen who thought it to be a good thing for the workers to have a chance of education they themselves approved and which was relevant to their state in life.³⁸

However, the meeting of these educated middle class people, with various sorts of working class activists, would occur in WEA classes. These meetings would be important in the continuing development of class relations.

Following the drafting of the constitution, various interested organisations were invited to affiliate. Twenty eight had actually done so by the time of the meeting presided over by Mansbridge, and a total of 48 had affiliated by the end of the first year. Of the 48, 37 were trade unions, 4 public service associations, 3 political labour leagues, 1 co-operative society, 1 friendly society and 2 university associations.³⁹ The dominance of trade unions could be expected in view of the major role played by the Labor Council in the creation of the Association.

Immediately after the inaugural conference, the first Australian tutorial class, of the WEA type, was organised to study economics under Professor R.F. Irvine. It was agreed that a fee of 5/- would be appropriate for classes and would be "... within the reach of all."⁴⁰

³⁸ Council of Adult Education, Annual Report, 1970-71, Melbourne, Council of Adult Education, 1971, p.10.

³⁹ Stewart, D., "The Labour Council", op cit., p.21.

⁴⁰ ibid.

Speaking of the economics class tutored by Irvine, Mansbridge commented:

The reservoirs of mental and spiritual power filled by New South Wales workers are about to be tapped for the good of University and State.⁴¹

The function of the Association was clear. Mansbridge, in fact, was quoted in the Sydney press in 1913 as suggesting that the only way for Australia to "get on" was if the workers received education.⁴² The WEA in association with the University was offering workers a high standard liberal education that was perceived of as being valuable to the interests of the State. Social harmony was a key in these educational efforts in New South Wales and in other States, in which WEA's were established.

Early Development of the WEA

Mansbridge's 1913 visit paved the way for the development of Australian University Departments of Tutorial Classes and State WEA's in all States except Western Australia. However, the partnership between the two bodies often created community confusion over the nature of the responsibilities of each body.⁴³ Just which organisation was doing the teaching? E.G. Biaggini encountered such a problem when he went to the South Australian country town of Renmark as a Department of Tutorial Classes

⁴¹ Mansbridge, A., "Australia - The First Five Weeks", Highway, 6(61):11-13, 1913, p.12.

⁴² Sydney Daily Telegraph 7 August, 1913.

⁴³ A Joint Tutorial Classes Committee co-ordinated the joint work of the two bodies. The Committee had both University and WEA representatives in it.

tutor-organizer of adult education in the district.⁴⁴ In that town, it was important to publicise just who ran the classes. Biaggini felt that it was unrealistic to call for support for adult education, under the banner of a Workers' Educational Association rather than a University Tutorial Classes Department.⁴⁵

If the university side of the partnership was emphasised, and Biaggini was seen as a university employee, as in fact he was, rather than an employee of a workers' organisation, he felt he would have found more ready acceptance in the politically conservative South Australian countryside.

C.R. Badger⁴⁶ has further pointed to the problems inherent in the partnership:

Essentially the WEA was to bring ... through the Joint Committee, requests for tutors from the University to teach classes (of workers!) ... The WEA was to be no more than an organizing body, concerned with and directed towards the workers.⁴⁷

And here lay a problem of interpretation. The WEA was the student body which would organise courses for workers and provide the link between labour and learning. The University was consulted on proposed course offerings, and when a programme was agreed upon, would provide tutors. Hence the classes were

⁴⁴ Biaggini, E.G., "Rural Adult Education in South Australia", Australian Journal of Adult Education, 4(1):13-17, 1964, p.15.

⁴⁵ ibid. Biaggini reiterated this feeling in an interview with the researcher in 1974. See also Biaggini, E.G., You Can't Say That!, Adelaide, Pitjantjara, 1970, p.105.

⁴⁶ Badger was, for a time, a tutor in the Tutorial Classes Department of the University of Adelaide and foundation Director of the Victorian Council of Adult Education.

⁴⁷ Council of Adult Education, op cit., pp.9-10. See also Workers' Educational Association of South Australia, Second Annual Report and Statement of Accounts, Adelaide, WEA of S.A., 1919, p.5., for reference to the special concern with workers' education.

not WEA classes as such, although they were referred to in this way. Rather they were classes, the demand for which may have been created by the WEA, were organised by the WEA and taught by university staff, or their nominees. So Biaggini was a university employee, teaching classes organised by the WEA.

Following Mansbridge's Australian visit, and based on his recommendation,⁴⁸ an Englishman, Meredith Atkinson, was appointed as a lecturer in the University of Sydney with the duty of helping forward tutorial class work in Australia, and more particularly, New South Wales.⁴⁹ He was elected President of that State's WEA in 1914, showing not only university involvement in the executive of the Association, as was the case in Britain, but also a willingness on the part of groups in the WEA to accept academic leadership. As a further example of this influence, Professor Harrison-Moore became President of the Victorian WEA.

Such involvement of university academics did not please all worker groups. The Socialists for example, who, like their counterparts in Britain, were hostile to the WEA, repeatedly attacked it over its relationship with the University.⁵⁰

According to Dr. Bob Bessant, in 1914 a writer in the Socialist

⁴⁸ Badger, C.R., "Meredith Atkinson, Australia's First Director of Tutorial Classes", Australian Journal of Adult Education, 18(2):16-22, July 1978, p.16.

⁴⁹ Highway, 6(64):71, January 1914; His post was actually that of Director of Tutorial Classes. Evidence suggests that he was a middle class élitist with ideals for the working class, Wesson, A., "Formal Adult Education in Victoria 1890-1950", (M.Ed. thesis), University of Melbourne, 1971, p.123; Badger, C.R., op cit., p.18.

⁵⁰ Direct Action (Sydney)1(9), 15 July, 1914; 1(12), 22 August, 1914. See the discussion in Bessant, B., "An Independent Working Class Education", Australian and New Zealand History of Education Society Journal, 2(1):37-43, April 1973, p.38.

asked of WEA classes in Hobart:

... Have these University Gentlemen ...
 who propose to teach the Workers of
 Australia economic law, studied and
 assimilated the works of Karl Marx ...?
 I think the workers would do well to take
 heed of the old proverb - to distrust the
 Greeks when they bring gifts.⁵¹

W.P. Earsman similarly attacked the prospect of university men teaching industrial history and economics to the workers.⁵²

These and other early attacks from the Left did not render the links so fragile that the WEA and University joint work was seriously jeopardised. They were however, typical of the Left's attitude to the WEA, an external and non-independent workers' educational organisation, and its relationship with the University, which the Left saw as a capitalist institution.

During the war years and thus from the WEA's foundation as an active educational movement, conscious attempts were made to "sell" the organisation to governments, the workers and the bourgeoisie. Despite some hostility from the Left, a lack of response from manual workers en masse, and difficulties in attracting financial support to ensure viability, some significant early development was made. This was particularly the case in New South Wales where the Association had a solid foundation through efforts of people such as David Stewart, C.H. Northcott, Professors Francis Anderson and R.F. Irvine, and Peter Board.

⁵¹ Socialist (Melbourne) 15 May, 1914 quoted in B. Bessant, op cit., p.38.

⁵² ibid.

From the outset the growth was in the direction of the achievement of consensus and class harmony through education. This was amply illustrated in an educational conference on trade unionism held in 1915 in Sydney,⁵³ and followed by a similar conference in Melbourne.

In his review of the Sydney Conference, Atkinson summarised areas of general agreement among those producing papers. These included Professor R.F. Irvine, F.W. Eggleston, W.G. Spence, F.A.A. Russell and Professor Harrison-Moore. Important among areas of agreement, were perceptions that the workers were intellectually complacent, were in need of economic education and were placing considerable reliance on parliamentary effort,⁵⁴ reliance which was seen as illusory. There was an underlying concern in the mainstream addresses that working class "progress" depended on enhanced efficiency which encompassed factors such as happy healthy lives, work efficiency, and job satisfaction. The WEA was being promoted as an ideological ally of capitalism, and this at a time when it was trying to attract manual workers, including radicals, to its classes. Its intellectuals were promoting consensus.

Such an orientation largely explained the sustained hostility of the Left to the Association in the industrialised

⁵³ In excess of 100 delegates attended this conference; Workers' Educational Association of New South Wales, Second Annual Report and Statement of Accounts for the Year Ending 31st December, 1915, Sydney, WEA of N.S.W., 1915, p.17; See also the report of William Temple's address on "Democracy and Education" when he talked of the English WEA. Advertiser (Adelaide) 28 July, 1910 where the same orientation is evident, and the discussion in Rowse, T., Australian Liberalism and National Character, Melbourne, Kibble Books, 1978. (Especially Chapter 2).

⁵⁴ Atkinson, M. (Ed.), Trade Unionism in Australia, Sydney, WEA of N.S.W., 1915, passim.

New South Wales. Not only was the WEA closely linked to the University, but also, its intellectuals actively promoted class harmony. The Association's supporters were concerned about social change. However, their interest was not the promotion of revolutionary change, but rather gradual, "responsible" social change within a democratic framework. Such a philosophy was also characteristic of the body in South Australia at its foundation.⁵⁵

Early Development of the WEA in South Australia

Mansbridge was welcomed to this State by the press, trade unions and Adelaide University academics and administrators.⁵⁶ Though from the labour movement viewpoint, relative "indifference to his mission" perhaps best expressed union attitude.⁵⁷

⁵⁵ (a) Workers' Educational Association of South Australia, First Constitution (n.d.) (copy obtained from E. Williams, Director, WEA of S.A.) See also Workers' Educational Association of South Australia, Fifty-Ninth Annual Report, Adelaide, WEA of S.A., 1975, p.3.

(b) The WEA was interested in an élite from among the working class, though it never voiced such a focus. It was interested in higher education, that is, education of university standard and education of which only the most able, and hence the potential working class leadership, would avail themselves.

⁵⁶ University of Adelaide File Dockets 136/13; 358/13, quoted in E. Williams, "The Foundation of University Adult Education in Australia, 1886-1916", op cit., pp.176-177; Williams, E., South Australian Labour, The University, and the Missionaries. The WEA 1910-1913, (Mimeograph, 11p.), Adelaide, 1965, pp.4-8.

⁵⁷ A study of the United Trades and Labor Council of South Australia, Minutes, 1911-1914, SRG1, SAA, revealed some enthusiasm among delegates for Mansbridge and his message. There was certainly not the State based labour hostility to the WEA that existed in Victoria.

In his first Adelaide meeting he emphasised the university side of the work and the educational role of the WEA.⁵⁸ This meeting was followed by several more. On 26 September, 1913, he addressed a large audience at the Trades Hall.⁵⁹ The clear role of the WEA was again enunciated with Mansbridge stressing that:

Labor and scholarship are one and indivisible ...⁶⁰

His reportedly eloquent address was welcomed by his audience. The meeting Chairman, Thomas Ryan,⁶¹ who in 1913, had become President of the United Trades and Labor Council, moved a motion urging that the Council do all in its power to help establish a WEA in South Australia.⁶² The motion was easily carried with voiced support from people such as Professor Mitchell, Mr. Laybourne-Smith (Registrar of the School of Mines) and Mr. Crawford Vaughan (Leader of the Parliamentary Labor Party).⁶³

In March 1914, the inaugural meeting of the Association

⁵⁸ Daily Herald (Adelaide) 23 September, 1913.

⁵⁹ Daily Herald (Adelaide) 27 September, 1913.

⁶⁰ ibid.

⁶¹ Thomas Ryan was a Labor Party Member of the House of Assembly and was responsible for initiating the establishment of the Royal Commission into Education in 1911.

⁶² Daily Herald (Adelaide) 27 September, 1913.

⁶³ ibid.

was held. It was attended by some fourteen union representatives,⁶⁴ and Ryan was elected President.

As the University, no doubt influenced by Oxbridge acceptance of the British WEA, had already indicated its support for the formation of a WEA, in May of 1914 the Association adopted a structure to link it to the University, to link what the WEA saw as labour and learning. This structure, based on the British model, included a Joint Tutorial Classes Committee. The Committee which was to determine a tutorial class programme met for the first time in June 1914.⁶⁵

In the uncertain conditions of the war, Peake's Liberal Government refused to assist the WEA with a financial grant to aid it in beginning its work through the Joint Committee. Hence no courses of significance could be commenced for the University had made its position on the issue quite clear. It could not afford to finance the tutorial classes without specific government financial support.⁶⁶ The tutorial class work did not have a high priority within the University. Intramural commitments took a much higher priority than the new extramural proposals despite Ryan's attempts, since around 1910, to ensure

⁶⁴ Workers' Educational Association of South Australia, Council Minutes, 24 March, 1914. These included - Amalgamated Timber Workers' Union, South Australian Drivers' Union, Federated Builders' Laborers, Australasian Society of Engineers, South Australian Typographical Society, Confectioners' Employees, Federated Implement Workers, Distributing Trades Union, Federated Theatrical Employees' Union, Hotel, Club and Restaurant Employees' Union, Port Adelaide Wood and Iron Ship Wrights, Amalgamated Society of Carpenters and Joiners, Clerks' Union, Boot Trade Employees' Union.

⁶⁵ Workers' Educational Association of South Australia, Council Minutes, 1 May, 1914; University Tutorial Classes Joint Committee, Minutes, Volume 1, 1914.

⁶⁶ Workers' Educational Association of South Australia, Council Minutes, 15 April, 1914.

that the University was accessible to a broader cross-section of the population.

So the workers' educational body was indeed on shaky foundations. Consequently its work was negligible in 1914, non-existent in 1915 and the Association itself, on the brink of collapse by 1916.⁶⁷ Labor Premier Vaughan had refused, as had Liberal Premier Peake, to advance a government grant to the WEA, because of the "unsettled conditions due to the war".⁶⁸

However, the timely arrival of a request from Meredith Atkinson, Director of Tutorial Classes at the University of Sydney, saved the Association. Atkinson asked that the University of Adelaide provide tutorial class services to Broken Hill, since at the time there was no rail connection from Sydney to Broken Hill. Such conditions prevented Sydney from mounting an efficient tutorial class service.

Atkinson's request was approved by the Joint Committee, but finance was still required to implement the scheme. An approach to the government for finance was again unsuccessful.⁶⁹ However, the University solved the problem.

It decided to appoint a lecturer in economics who would also hold the position of Director of Tutorial Classes. The

⁶⁷ In the first minute book of the WEA, minutes of the Council Meeting of 1 May, 1914 are immediately followed by those of 14 September, 1916.

⁶⁸ Workers' Educational Association of South Australia, Special Conference Minutes, 16 November, 1916.

⁶⁹ It is possible that the emerging split in the labour movement over conscription caused the Labor Government to refuse the request. See discussion in Williams, E., "The Foundation of University Adult Education in Australia, 1896-1916", op cit., p.182.

appointment of Herbert Heaton was made and the work of the WEA and the Department of Tutorial Classes, under the jurisdiction of the Joint Tutorial Classes Committee, could thus begin in earnest.⁷⁰ And begin it did in 1917, at a time when the labour movement, both in South Australia and in other States, had been split by the issue of conscription.

Relations Between the WEA and the Labour Movement
During and Immediately After the Conscription Crisis

During the years 1916-18, the WEA in New South Wales was almost wrecked when Meredith Atkinson supported conscription for overseas war service. Atkinson was a foundation member and Secretary of the Universal Service League, which also had the support of people such as Holman, the Labor Premier of New South Wales and the Liberal Party. Inevitably his advocacy of conscription was linked with his presidency of the New South Wales WEA.⁷¹ The Association, as an educational movement, was thus viewed in some labour circles as a supporter of conscription, and was to be opposed.

The first consequences for the New South Wales WEA were that the Railway Workers' Branch of the Australian Workers' Union (AWU) and the Central Executive of the AWU both withdrew

⁷⁰ Workers' Educational Association of South Australia, Special Conference Minutes, 16 November, 1916. At this meeting Ryan mentioned that to this time, the work of the WEA had not yet started owing to a lack of finance.

⁷¹ Workers' Educational Association of New South Wales, Third Annual Report and Statement of Accounts for Year Ending 31st December, 1916, Sydney, WEA of N.S.W., 1916, p.26.

affiliation.⁷² Pressure on Atkinson became so strong that he tendered his resignation as President of the WEA.

This action presented the WEA with a major test of its non-partisan principles. In its classes, the Association actively encouraged the expression of divergent views on controversial issues. It professed a philosophy of political neutrality, that is, the WEA essentially supported status quo political conditions, particularly in regard to the importance of democratic society. The WEA supporters' view with regard to Atkinson was that he had the right to express his views without fear of recrimination, but with the knowledge that he could, and should, be engaged in vigorous debate to defend his position.

As acceptance of his resignation might be seen as his having been forced out of the Association by the anti-conscriptionists, a resolution was made asking him to withdraw it. A motion to this effect was passed by a WEA Council on which, Stewart claimed, were many members who were opposed to Atkinson's conscription views. According to G.V. Portus, who has been a Director of Tutorial Classes at the University of Sydney, Stewart played a significant part in having the resolution supported in order to safeguard the non-partisan nature of the WEA, and the right to free speech.⁷³

⁷² ibid., p.25.

⁷³ Portus, G.V., Happy Highways, Melbourne, Melbourne University Press, 1953, p.173. According to G.V. Portus in a letter to R.S. Parker of the Australian National University (24 July, 1948), Stewart was a strong anti-conscriptionist. Papers of G.V. Portus. PRG204, SAA.

The labour movement reaction to the decision was severe. Negotiations between the AWU and the WEA concerning an education programme for rural workers collapsed. Seventeen organisations including the New South Wales Labor Council also withdrew affiliation,⁷⁴ although following an address by Stewart, this latter body reaffiliated.

In his recollections of the growth of the Association, Stewart wrote of the WEA's decision:

In some trade unions the feeling was so strong that some of our friends who valued their position in the labour movement were reluctant to be too closely identified with the Association.⁷⁵

Such was the feeling of an important part of organised labour towards the Association. He proceeded:

The effect was, and has been ever since, more noticeable in our Conference and other trade union educational projects. We have never been able to get the measure of trade union interest and support we were able to arouse for our first Trade Union Educational Conference in 1915.⁷⁶

The issue also, for example, forced the deferral of the establishment of a WEA Branch in Broken Hill.⁷⁷

Considering the conflict that the conscription issue

⁷⁴ Stewart, D., "The Conscription Issue", Australian Highway, 29(4):59-60, August 1947, p.59.

⁷⁵ ibid.

⁷⁶ ibid., p.60.

⁷⁷ Workers' Educational Association of New South Wales, Minutes, 15 September, 1916, Archives, Department of Adult Education, University of Sydney.

caused in Australian society and, in particular, in the labour movement, it was not surprising that action by the WEA should have caused such union reaction. Relations in the labour movement were fragile and severely stretched. In a sense, labour was polarised and people were viewed as either for or against conscription. The WEA's support for Atkinson's right to support conscription thus placed it, in many workers' eyes, clearly in the pro-conscriptionist camp. Hence, like other pro-conscriptionists, it was to be opposed. And opposed it was, and this not only during the war, but also in subsequent years. For many in the labour movement, the hostility created by conscription became a permanent determining characteristic of their future attitudes to the Association.

The New South Wales WEA endured considerable antagonism from the Left-wing of the labour movement through the conscription crisis. In contrast, the fledgeling branch in South Australia was only minimally affected. Certainly some of its friends - Thomas Ryan for example - suffered because of their support for conscription. The labour movement polarised, thus creating difficulties for the Association in its efforts to provide a working class education. However, the crisis left the Association itself, relatively unscathed.⁷⁸ This typified the WEA's quite

⁷⁸ Notes of an interview with the late Dr. E.G. Biaggini, formerly Tutor-in-Charge of Tutorial Classes Department of Adelaide University, in 1974; United Trades and Labor Council of South Australia, Minutes, (various) 1916, 1917, 1918, 1919. SRG1, SAA. Workers' Educational Association of South Australia, Council Minutes, (various) 1917, 1918, support this conclusion.

amicable relations with the labour movement in this State, a condition which was unique in Australia.

The South Australian WEA had met some early Left-wing opposition. However, the Left was organisationally quite weak in this State. Hence opposition was not sustained, and was thus not a serious obstacle preventing the WEA from maintaining cordial relations with sections of the labour movement. This contrasted to the situation in the more heavily industrialised States of eastern Australia.

In New South Wales, and Victoria it was the Left of the labour movement which was particularly destructive in its assaults on the Association. Radicals attacked the WEA over conscription, and over for example, its non-independent working class nature, and its bourgeois links and orientation. To this end, proponents of an independent working class education duplicated the dual system of British worker education provision by making independent working class educational initiatives which would "enable working men and women to service their class".⁷⁹ Such educational control was important with education being a locus of class struggle.

In Victoria, the formation of the Victorian Labor College in 1917, modelled on the Central Labour College of London, was a body which was perceived by radicals as meeting this need.⁸⁰

⁷⁹ MacInnes, C.M. (Ed.), Adult Education in the British Dominions, London, World Association of Adult Education, 1929, p.103.

⁸⁰ McAughtrie, T., "Some Aspects of Adult Education in Victoria", (B.Ed. thesis), University of Melbourne, 1948, p.4.

The Marxist, W.P. Earsman, was the major force behind its creation.⁸¹ Initially it offered classes in English, Economics and Industrial History, with class struggle forming the recognised basis of teaching.

The Trades Hall Council affiliated with the College in 1918, and in 1922 it discontinued its affiliation with the WEA. At this stage it urged all unions to support the College, with the result that forty organisations were affiliated by the end of 1922.⁸² Subsequently in the latter years of that decade, the WEA made concerted efforts to persuade the Trades Hall of its value, in addition to that of the Labor College. These initiatives met little apparent success.⁸³

Earsman went to Sydney in 1919 to help found the Sydney Labor College, a body which was established by the Sydney Trades and Labor Council. However, it ceased operating in the early 1920's, a condition possibly caused by the factional strife so characteristic of the Sydney Trades and Labor Council at that time.⁸⁴

The radical Victorian Labor College has survived, but it has never enjoyed such labour support as in the years immediately

⁸¹ Bessant, B., op cit., p.40.

⁸² Earsman, W.P., The Proletariat and Education - The Necessity for Labour Colleges, Melbourne, Andrades, 1920, p.15.

⁸³ Workers' Educational Association of Victoria, Council Minutes, 2 July, 1929. Archives, Australian Association of Adult Education.

⁸⁴ Bessant, B., op cit., p.41. See also the interesting analysis by Dixson, J., "Ideology, the Trades Hall Reds and J.T. Lang", Politics, 6(1):53-65, May 1971, passim.

following World War I. Even that support was patchy,⁸⁵ as workers failed to respond to appeals to engage in a dogmatic education. The College has, however, met with more success than similar efforts in New South Wales, South Australia and Queensland.⁸⁶

Stewart, correctly, saw that the Labor College concept was opposed to that of the WEA. He wrote:

The Labour College advocates claim that it is impossible for anyone to be unbiased in his presentation and discussion of controversial issues and it is undesirable that he should be. It is nonsense, they say, to imagine that any tutor could, or would, stimulate and strengthen students in the understanding and expression of views contrary to his own ... In view of this they claim that the policy for the Labour Movement is to employ tutors only with a Labour bias. They go further and argue that tutors employed by the University, by the State or by a State-supported organisation must, by virtue of that fact, have a pro-capitalist bias. Labour's educational service must be independent of any outside control. It must be controlled and directed by the Labour Movement alone.⁸⁷

Thus as in Britain and in Stewart's eyes the two educational organisations were somewhat antipathetic. The WEA professed a non-partisan and alleged politically neutral philosophy. The Labor College made no such claim. It stood for class struggle as the College's supporters argued about errors in adhering to the non-neutrality of formal educational processes. The WEA

⁸⁵ Age (Melbourne) 16 March, 1928.

⁸⁶ MacInnes, C.M., (Ed.) op cit., p.103.

⁸⁷ Stewart, D., "Pioneering the WEA in Western Australia", Australian Highway, 29(5):69-70, October 1947, p.69.

intellectuals who supported the Association's non-partisan, non-party political position, seemed to ignore or reject, the concept of non-neutrality of these processes.

The WEA which was virtually a national movement by the early 1920's, was in favour of fostering cordial relations with the Labor College. The College's supporters did not respond. They viewed the WEA as bourgeois, a tool of capitalist society and thus a body to be opposed. Sections of the Left-wing of the labour movement were thus proving troublesome to the young WEA. However, the hostility was not strong enough to destroy the movement. Nevertheless, the development of its working class educational programme was being hampered.

Adult Education Between the Wars: Conflict for the WEA

Nationally, the various WEA's efforts to provide liberal adult education were severely curtailed during the inter-war years. The Associations had withstood the assaults from the Left-wings of the State labour movements during and immediately after World War I. However, in this latter period of rapid industrial expansion of the early 1920's,⁸⁸ when workers lost their individual identities as they were absorbed by the increasingly automated and mammoth manufacturing industries,⁸⁹ the State WEA's gradually lost much of their working class student body.

⁸⁸ See for example the discussion in Radi, H., "1920-29" in F.K. Crowley (Ed.), A New History of Australia, Melbourne, Heinemann, 1974, pp.357-414, passim.

⁸⁹ F.W., "Educating the Worker", Australian Highway, 19(2):181, November 1936 refers to the alienation workers felt from the mechanised industry.

Workers were being attracted to the more pragmatic courses in, for example, Schools of Mines and Working Men's Colleges. They were not attracted to the same degree to the more liberal educational programmes of the WEA nor the more propagandistic programmes of the Labor College. Involved workers seemed to be seeing specific vocational educational activities as comprising more useful knowledge in these early post-war years.

Furthermore, and contributing to the worker decline in WEA student numbers, was the opposition of sections of the various State's labour movements to the Association in this period of developing industrial capitalism. In Victoria, for example, the Trades Hall Council had renounced support for the WEA in 1922, and many unions followed suit. From 1923 until it dissolved, there were not more than five trade union affiliations with the Association.⁹⁰ Clearly, the WEA in that State had not been able to engender and then retain significant working class support.⁹¹

So concerned were sections of the community in some States about the failure of the Association to consistently appeal to rank and file workers, that occasionally efforts were

⁹⁰ McAughtrie, T., op cit., p.18.

⁹¹ See the discussion in Workers' Educational Association of Victoria, Annual Report, Melbourne, WEA of Victoria, various, but especially 23rd, 1936; 24th, 1937; 25th, 1938, passim and McAughtrie, T., op cit., p.25 and passim.

made to alter its entire character. Such efforts also came from people who argued that the WEA should be a general adult education body. Some felt, for example, that its name was a misnomer as the Association was not in fact, a workers' educational body. Still others felt that its name implied an exclusive orientation, when in reality the Association was not only concerned with liberal education for workers, but quite explicitly stated that its classes were open. Since any adult who wished, was entitled to join these, for the usual small fee. Finally, there were those who wished the body to be exclusively for the working class, an independent proletarian and radical educational association.

In Queensland in 1919, for example, such a change had been suggested. At the annual conference, three nights were given to the discussion of, eventually unsuccessful, proposals to change its entire character. It was argued that in place of the WEA a new organisation should be formed. It would be based on class struggle and designed to inculcate class consciousness in students.⁹² In effect the WEA was to be changed to a workers' college.

Subsequently in 1935 Lloyd Ross who, in addition to his position as Editor of Australian Highway,⁹³ was also Assistant Director of Tutorial Classes at the University of Sydney, felt

⁹² Australian Highway, 1(3):6-7, May 1919.

⁹³ Ross, during a brief period as Editor attempted to provoke discussion on the nature of working class education. See for example, Australian Highway, 18(2):17-19, November 1935.

that the WEA was not satisfying its stated aims in providing for working class education. He claimed at the annual Tutors' Conference, that the WEA was no longer a working class, but rather a general adult education body. Ross wanted a more propagandistic workers' education. To this end, he led an unsuccessful move at the annual WEA Conference to abandon the Association's principles of non-partisanship and adopt a policy that would achieve a Socialist state of society by education.⁹⁴ This was another major attempt to change the WEA's direction.

In a reply to the claim Ross made at the Tutors' Conference, the WEA stalwart, David Stewart, challenged him in his historical interpretation of the direction of the WEA's change. Stewart pointed out that:

The first attempt in Australia to define working class education is contained in a circular, which led to the establishment of the Association and was issued by the Labour Council of New South Wales in March 1913. It read as follows: "The worker requires education, not only for the fuller life which that education gives, and which should be the right of all mankind to enjoy, but he needs it that he may be able to grapple wisely with the many problems of his own position as a worker". The words "not only" were not intended to limit in any way the importance to be attached to "education for a fuller life". I do not think we have changed in this respect, and such an objective does justify even such a series of lectures as that on Geology which rouses Mr. Ross' scorn at the Tutors' Conference.⁹⁵

⁹⁴ Whitelock, D.A., "The Great Tradition. A History of Liberal Adult Education in New South Wales from the Beginnings to 1966 With Some Reference to the British Experience", (Ph.D. thesis), University of New England, 1970, p.337.

⁹⁵ Stewart, D., "What is our Objective?" Australian Highway, 17(4):52-53, March 1935, p.53.

He went on:

I know of no fundamental change in the Association's educational policy. There have been several changes in methods, and, so far as I can judge, those changes are all in the direction of intensifying the propaganda among manual workers, and encouraging studies of social significance.⁹⁶

Stewart and Ross disagreed on the interpretation of "social significance". Stewart believed that the big task of education in Australia was to make democracy function by making democrats. Class consciousness was to be encouraged, but it was to be:

... consciousness which lays emphasis on service to one class rather than antagonism to another.⁹⁷

Social harmony was still a key in the WEA's philosophy, a position which had been made so obvious at its 1915 Conference in New South Wales. The WEA's philosophy had thus not changed, although its practical endeavours revealed some change with its continued and increasing appeal to adults outside the working class.

Ross persisted with his attack by voicing his concern that the initial inspiration of the Association had been lost and it was in desperate need of revitalisation. He felt the WEA had "lost contact with the workers", and had "let the fervour for social reconstruction run to waste".⁹⁸ Despite

⁹⁶ ibid.

⁹⁷ Stewart, D., "WEA and the Labor Movement", Australian Highway, 10(9):201-204, August 1928, p.203. (Part of a paper delivered to a Conference on 21 July, 1928).

⁹⁸ Ross, L., "A 'Highway' Man at Bay", Australian Highway, 17(6):81-82, May 1935, p.81.

being engaged in debate on these issues by those loyal to the WEA, the evidence was clear. The WEA, though not altering its non-partisan, non-party political approach, had lost contact with many in the labour movement, and this was not only the case of New South Wales, but also in other Australian States.

However, such concern at the Association's failures to attract workers was not merely an isolated occurrence of the 1930's. Concern had been expressed earlier. At the WEA annual conference in New South Wales in 1923 for example, members had lamented:

There are certainly more the "cuff and collar" brigade amongst our students than of manual workers.⁹⁹

Later reports of the Association in Tasmania, South Australia and New South Wales, had reaffirmed that manual workers represented only about a quarter of the total student enrolment.¹⁰⁰ This condition persisted.¹⁰¹

There was no doubt that as an institution dedicated to providing working class education, the WEA was failing to attract large numbers of workers by the mid-1930's. This is not to deny that it had some specific successes. The Association had indeed, in the years immediately preceding 1935 and particularly during the Depression, been involved in

⁹⁹ Australian Highway, 5(3):55, May 1923.

¹⁰⁰ Australian Highway, 5(8):151, October 1923.

¹⁰¹ See earlier references to Victoria, and subsequent tables in this thesis.

organising some highly successful tutorial classes and conferences involving workers.

In Tasmania for example, classes were offered in railway workshops and the Trades Hall.¹⁰² In Broken Hill, also, at a time of mass unemployment, B.H. Molesworth taught classes of Economic History, Marxian Economics and World Affairs to workers.¹⁰³ Colin Badger, in recollections of his early adult education classes in Adelaide in the 1920's and 30's, mentioned classes at Port Adelaide of 150 to 200 people, most of whom were unemployed wharf labourers.¹⁰⁴

However, in general terms, by the late 1930's adults from the working class were not being attracted in large numbers to joint WEA University courses.¹⁰⁵ Workers were not responding to appeals to participate in a higher standard educational programme provided by a non-partisan, non-party political, non-independent working class oriented educational body. A variety of reasons were responsible for this position. Some workers, for example, would have argued that the liberal education did not constitute really useful knowledge, unlike

¹⁰² Workers' Educational Association of Tasmania, Annual Report, Hobart, WEA of Tasmania, 1938, passim.

¹⁰³ Molesworth, B.H., Letter to L. Wilson, Department of Adult Education, University of Sydney, 27 December, 1958. Archives, Department of Adult Education, University of Sydney.

¹⁰⁴ Badger, C., "Adult Education in Adelaide", Issue, 4(8):11-16, November 1969, p.13.

¹⁰⁵ Portus, G.V., Happy Highways, op cit., p.195; See also, Biaggini, E.G., A New World for Education, Adelaide, WEA of S.A., 1944, pp.23-24.

more pragmatic education, and they made conscious decisions not to participate in the WEA courses. Others, for example, may not have participated owing to the results of the physical strain incurred in their daily work. This work made them tired and was a deterrent to their involvement in academic night classes.¹⁰⁶ Furthermore, some workers would have shown simple ~~lack of~~ interest and indifference to these externally provided high standard educational courses. However, another important reason for non-participation was certainly the result of general worker hostility and suspicion of the WEA caused by attacks on it by Left-wing and, to some extent, the Right-wing of the labour movement.

As had been the case at the WEA's foundation, the Left still saw it as a bourgeois educational agency. Radicals viewed its supporters as oriented more towards preservation of democratic society, and not interested in "genuine" worker education. Such criticism was, on occasions, matched by Right-wing hostility. The most obvious example of this latter antagonism occurred in Queensland.

In 1939, the Queensland State Labor Government stopped financial grants to the University WEA Joint Committee on the basis of allegations of "dangerous" Left-wing affiliations of the WEA.¹⁰⁷

¹⁰⁶ The writer's personal experiences as a baker's assistant confirm the demotivating effect of such work on involvement in formal educational activities at night.

¹⁰⁷ Alexander, F., Adult Education in Australia, A Historian's Point of View, Melbourne, Cheshire, 1959, p.28.

A Commission of Enquiry into the WEA and University Tutorial Classes Department was appointed in May of 1939 as a result of a number of allegations and a vigorous controversy in the Brisbane press. Here the WEA and the Tutorial Classes Department were accused of the promotion of "communist propaganda". The Commissioners, a Police Magistrate and a School Inspector reported in August 1939, after a relatively superficial enquiry. They concluded that:

... no evidence was adduced to indicate that a policy other than one of neutrality in respect of sect, party or creed was being observed insofar as the conduct of the Tutorial Classes is concerned.¹⁰⁸

A central allegation had arisen as a result of WEA sponsored public discussions such as, Scrap Iron for Japan, in which sections of the audience were alleged to have criticised the Government. This was one of five instances where the Commissioners felt that the WEA had departed from its policy of neutrality. Another instance was six public meetings on the topic, Education - What For?

In these, the Association was criticised for encouraging free student expression. The WEA did not accept such encouragement as a departure from its principle of neutrality, especially when, earlier in the report, the Commissioners had

¹⁰⁸ "Editorial", Australian Highway, 21(5):237-242, October 1939, p.237.

lauded such an approach in classes and discussions. It was, after all, WEA policy to defend the right to free speech, a policy clearly apparent in the furore about Meredith Atkinson's involvement in the campaign for conscription during World War I.

The Commissioners made a number of recommendations. They felt especially that the WEA and the University Tutorial Classes Department should be re-organised into one unit "and placed under the control of the Director".¹⁰⁹ They also suggested that political bodies such as the ALP should not be eligible for representation on the Central Council of the WEA, that a 150 pound per annum increase in government grant should be made, and that:

... advantage be taken of the reduced prices of books made available through the Right Book Club and the Readers' Union, as is being done through the Left Book Club.¹¹⁰

That is, the WEA should be seen impartial in its choice of book suppliers.

In all, the recommendations largely dealt with administrative procedures, with no reference to rectifying

¹⁰⁹ O'Brien, C.D. and Fletcher, F.H., Commission of Inquiry on Organisation, Activities and Otherwise of the Workers' Educational Association and the Department of Tutorial Classes of the University of Queensland (1 April - 17 May, 1939), (Mimeograph, 29p. & Appendices), Brisbane, 1939, p.27. Archives, Department of Adult Education, University of Sydney.

¹¹⁰ ibid., p.28. See reference to the Left Book Club in South Australia in Chapter VI.

alleged Left-wing bias, for none of significance was found. However, the Government, decided to withdraw support from the WEA and the Tutorial Classes Department:

In the Courier Mail of September 5th, the Premier, Mr. Forgan-Smith is reported to have said in announcing the termination of the Government grants to both bodies, that the Government had every desire to assist in the education of adult workers, but it was evident that the purpose was not being achieved under the present conditions. It was hoped to devise a plan by which adequate training might be provided.¹¹¹

In fact, the Premier was correct. The existent conditions had not provided education, on any large scale, to adult workers. However, Forgan-Smith's reasons for withdrawal of support were not simply a result of perceived inefficiency of the WEA. These reasons became clear by 1941.

The WEA executive was critical of the Premier's vague statement, and sought clarification. The Association's supporters believed that the State should allow freedom and initiative for voluntary bodies to carry out adult education. The Premier refused to meet and discuss the matter with a deputation from either the Trades and Labor Council or the WEA, since he was determined that Cabinet would not alter its decision. In such circumstances there was little to be gained from such a meeting.

¹¹¹ "Editorial", Australian Highway, 21(5):237-242, October 1939, pp.238-239.

The Government withdrew financial support from the WEA and University Tutorial Classes Department. During the early years of the 1940's attempts were again made to have the Government grant resumed to the WEA. In February 1941, for example, moves to have it reinstated failed at the State Labor Party Convention. Premier Forgan-Smith told the Convention that there was no reason to supply money to educate some people to become communists. Further, he told the Congress that the Government would have given effect to its own State adult education proposals before this, had it not had to divert money to war purposes.¹¹²

Forgan-Smith still adhered to the unproven allegations made about the WEA and the Tutorial Classes Department prior to the Commission of Inquiry of 1939. At the Congress, he defended the Government's withdrawal of aid from the WEA by asserting that the Committee of Inquiry had found departures from the principle of neutrality. He felt that the Government had no right to subsidise political propaganda from public funds.¹¹³ And here was the central issue. Forgan-Smith and his Cabinet were suspicious that the WEA was an organisation promoting "communist propaganda". The reaction against the Association was brutal and in some ways illustrated the fear that conservative sections of the Labor Party had of it.

The decision of the Government ultimately led to the Queensland WEA ceasing activities by 1950. Clearly, the WEA

¹¹² Courier Mail (Brisbane) 2 February, 1941.

¹¹³ ibid.

had been in a difficult position. A conservative Labor Government had killed it in Queensland, while in Victoria and New South Wales, Left-wing worker leadership was causing it considerable hardship.

Whitford, President of the WEA of South Australia in 1923, and a Member of Parliament, had earlier aptly summed the invidious position in which the Association continually found itself:

... therefore not only is the Workers' Educational Association in Australia attacked very often by the Conservatives, but often by the section calling themselves Communists. It is, as it were, between the devil and the deep blue sea.¹¹⁴

However, in most States it was the Left-wing of the labour movement that created serious problems for the State Associations.

From the above discussion, it is obvious that all was not well with the WEA and its relations with government, trade unions, political parties and some sections of the community in various States in the inter-war years. The WEA was in turn suspected of being, on the one hand, a communist front, offering a radical education, and on the other, a bourgeois educational agency whose intellectuals promoted individual self-development and social harmony. It was confronted with hostile Left-wing sections of labour in for example, New South Wales, where persistent efforts were made to form the WEA into a radical working class educational body, in an effort to ensure an absence of radical influence in adult education.

By the outbreak of World War II, as an Australia-wide movement, the WEA had relatively fragile relations with various State labour movements. Only in South Australia was the WEA encountering little opposition from the local labour movement.

¹¹⁴ SAPD, 1923, p.246.

The WEA: More Conflict in the 1940's

In New South Wales during the 1940's part of the reason for the lack of solid worker participation in WEA classes was to an extent due to conflict between the Association and the joint critics in the Communist Party and the State Labor Party (the Hughes-Evans "rebel" party, not the Australian Labor Party). Although at the time, such conflict seemed to have no overt effect on the Association in South Australia,¹¹⁵ it was important, for on a national scale, it further alienated the WEA from the Left of the labour movement.

The cause of the stir was the discussion course entitled Political Theories and Movements Today, written by P.H. Partridge, a Lecturer in Philosophy at the University of Sydney. In the course Partridge set out to involve his students in an examination of the fundamental doctrines of democracy, fascism and communism.¹¹⁶

The syllabus, published in April 1942, gave information on the contents of the course and of the controversial nature of the questions to be discussed:

The course all the way through is an invitation to talk over again ideas that we have tended to take for granted, and to check up on the basic assumption of

¹¹⁵ E.G. Biaggini verified this is an interview with the researcher in 1975. Jim Moss, a leading member of the Communist Party in South Australia verified this in an interview with the researcher in 1978. Colin Lawton formerly WEA General Secretary in South Australia also confirmed this in an interview with the researcher in 1975 as did Professor W.G.K. Duncan in similar interviews in 1978. A study of WEA of S.A. Minutes and labour newspapers of the period also confirmed a lack of transferred conflict from New South Wales to South Australia.

¹¹⁶ Davern, A.I., "I'll Huff and I'll Puff", Australian Highway, 24(6):81-86, December 1942, p.82.

the main political theories of the day. Not unnaturally then, the writer did not feel bound to elaborate in detail points of view which he took to be well known to all likely to select the course of study.¹¹⁷

Apparently the lecture which examined the Soviet Union as a workers' State, was the session which created heated discussion. Partridge made some categorical statements about the Soviet Union, but indicated the need to draw a distinction between his views and those that were generally held.¹¹⁸ However, according to a report on the course, it appeared that many of those studying the lecture were not clear on the issues being raised. They tended to confuse these with the wider question of the merits of the Soviet regime, a question with which the course was not concerned.¹¹⁹

The State Labor Party and the Communist Party both strongly attacked the WEA over the course.

The WEA was informed that unless the study course was withdrawn within a week, the State Labor Party would commence a campaign to destroy the WEA as a pro-Nazi organisation.¹²⁰

In October 1942 the then Communist controlled Federated Clerks'

¹¹⁷ Department of Adult Education, University of Sydney, Report on Course B.40, "Political Theories and Movements of Today", (Mimeograph, 3p.), Sydney, 23 October, 1942, p.1. Archives, Department of Adult Education, University of Sydney.

¹¹⁸ ibid., p.2.

¹¹⁹ ibid.

¹²⁰ Progress (Sydney) 25 September, 1942, p.3. Progress was the official journal of the State Labor Party.

Union of Australia, entered the campaign over the course, now popularly known as B40. The Union secretary suggested that B40 was contrary to the best interests of the Australian people.¹²¹ Furthermore:

... if it is the intention of the WEA to join the anti-labour "educationists", then there is little need for its existence from the trade union viewpoint, and no justification for its continuance.¹²²

The Clerks' Union's criticism coupled with general pressure on the Association from other labour sources, led to the WEA agreeing to undertake a revision of B40, a revision opposed by Stewart who adhered to the WEA's right to free speech. The State Labor Party was put at ease. It had demanded B40's unqualified withdrawal,¹²³ and a revision was tantamount to the Association bowing to the wishes of the course's opponents.

The WEA weathered the attacks of 1942, but lost the affiliation of several unions such as, the Federated Clerks' Union and the Communist dominated Redfern Branch of the Boilermakers' Society.¹²⁴ However, worse was to follow despite counter-attacks from the WEA, which through the daily press and its own journal, continuously propagandised its right to mount such a course.

¹²¹ Hughes, J.R. (Secretary), Letter from Federated Clerks' Union to D. Stewart. 7 October, 1942. Archives, Department of Adult Education, University of Sydney.

¹²² ibid.

¹²³ Progress. (Sydney) 9 October, 1942.

¹²⁴ Workers' Educational Association of New South Wales, Annual Report, Sydney, WEA of N.S.W., 1942, p.1.

In 1943 the Labor Council withdrew its affiliation from the WEA on the motion of the Federated Ironworkers' Union.¹²⁵ Newcastle, an area of the Ironworkers' strength, became the centre where controversy over B40 was to have major effect. Here the local WEA Secretary, Errol Sweaney, resigned from his position over the course and alleged recent attacks on his union namely, the Teachers' Federation.¹²⁶ Furthermore, the Newcastle Trades Hall Council decided to ask affiliated unions to withdraw their affiliation with the Northern District Branch of the WEA and made preparatory plans to establish their own Workers' Educational Bureau.¹²⁷ In the debate leading to the decision, Sweaney said:

You don't want the Government or University to control workers' education ... The control should be vested in a real workers' educational institution.¹²⁸

These were precisely the sentiments of the proponents of independent working class education in the period 1915-1940. With education being a locus of class struggle, workers' control of their own education was, and is, important.

In Sydney, L.L. Sharkey, the noted Stalinist, and national President of the Communist Party, launched a bitter attack on the WEA, Partridge and the course B40, in a booklet

¹²⁵ Stewart, D., "The Labour Council and the WEA", Australian Highway, 25(3):33-34, June 1943, p.33.

¹²⁶ "WEA Secretary Resigns", Newcastle Morning Herald 17 June, 1943.

¹²⁷ "Labour Council Break from WEA", Newcastle Morning Herald 2 July, 1943.

¹²⁸ ibid.

entitled WEA Exposed.¹²⁹ His exposition climaxed what had been a long and bitter attack by the industrial and political Left-wings of the labour movement. The prolonged struggle had left the WEA yet further isolated from the radical elements of the working class.¹³⁰ The Association had, however, shown significant resilience. It survived the attacks, and continued to pursue its non-partisan approach to adult education in preference to the more dogmatic type of education demanded by radicals. Increasing emphasis was now however, being given to general adult educational initiatives as opposed to specific liberal education of university standard. This approach resulted in it being subjected to some further opposition.¹³¹ The Association seemed unable to rid itself of critics, and this not only in New South Wales, but also in other States.

In Victoria, the WEA experienced many periods of conflict with the labour movement and went into voluntary liquidation in 1948, when the Statutory Council of Adult Education became the major provider of liberal and recreational

¹²⁹ Sharkey, L.L., WEA Exposed, Sydney, Australian Communist Party, 1944. For a succinct exposition of the conflict see Gollan, R., Revolutionaries and Reformists: Communism and the Australian Labour Movement 1920-1955, Canberra, Australian National University Press, 1975, pp.134-136.

¹³⁰ The isolation was strongest where communists were influential in the labour movement, for example, in Sydney and Newcastle. But not so in Broken Hill where at the time they were weak. Miller, J.D.B., Report on Broken Hill to Department of Tutorial Classes, University of Sydney, (Mimeograph, 10p.), Sydney, August 1946, passim.

¹³¹ Duncan, W.G.K., Adult Education in New South Wales. A Survey, (Mimeograph, 53p.), Sydney, August 1944, p.4. Archives, Department of Adult Education, University of Sydney. See also the discussion in Whitelock, D.A. (Ed.), The Vision Splendid: Adult Education in Australia, Adelaide, Department of Adult Education, University of Adelaide, 1973, passim.

adult education in that State. Colin Badger, a strong Leftist critic of the WEA and a former Tutorial Classes Department Tutor in Adelaide, did much to ensure the severance of the WEA, University Extension Board link. He became the Director of the Council.¹³²

A report to the WEA Council in March 1941, saw Badger, who at the time was Director of University Extension at the University of Melbourne, expressing the feeling that the WEA was no longer specifically concerned with the higher education of workers. Rather it emphasised adult education of a more general nature.¹³³ He felt that, although the WEA was interested in obtaining the support of organised labour, the nature of the Association and its courses failed to suggest a policy of workers' adult education. Rather these indicated the WEA's lack of distinction between workers' and general adult education,¹³⁴ a point contested by the WEA Council.¹³⁵

The Council tried to interest workers in its courses. It failed and continued as a non-manual worker dominated organisation until its eventual voluntary liquidation.

¹³² Wesson, A., op cit., p.201.

¹³³ Badger, C.R., Workers' Educational Association and Adult Education in Victoria, (Report of the Director of University Extension to the WEA Council). (Mimeograph), Melbourne, March 1941. Archives, Australian Association of Adult Education.

¹³⁴ ibid. See also Badger, C.R. "Who Killed the WEA in Victoria?" Australian Highway, 40(7):178-182, December 1959, p.181.

¹³⁵ Workers' Educational Association of Victoria, Minutes of General Council, 21 June, 1941, Archives, Australian Association of Adult Education.

During 1947 in Tasmania, W.G.K. Duncan, at the time, Director of Tutorial Classes at the University of Sydney, reported to the State Government on the future of adult education in that State. His examination was comprehensive and did little to please the supporters of the WEA. He found the branch in Tasmania to be in a "bad way", a situation largely created by personal animosities within the organisation. Further, of those whom he interviewed, many, he suggested, had little conception of the original purpose of the Association.

No distinction is drawn between adult education in general, and workers' education in particular; the task of the WEA is assumed to be simply the provision of educational facilities (type unspecified) for "workers", that is, for wage-earners (and especially for industrial wage workers organised into trade unions).¹³⁶

Duncan dwelt on this point at length in the report. He noted but one interview where the interviewee had "any conception" of workers' education as education with some social purpose.

Duncan concluded from his investigations that the WEA was no longer the appropriate body to provide for adult education in Tasmania and recommended the termination of the Government grant and creation of a Statutory Board of Adult Education.¹³⁷

¹³⁶ Duncan, W.G.K., Report on Adult Education, Hobart, Government Printer, 1947, p.5.

¹³⁷ ibid., p.26.

The Right-wing Labor Government accepted his recommendation and thus fostered the total collapse of the WEA in that State.

Hence again, the Association suffered at the hands of sections of the labour movement that it saw itself serving. The ideological heterogeneity of the movement was proving a significant obstacle for it in all States in which it had been established, except that is, in South Australia. Of those States, where it was involved in conflict, only in New South Wales did it have the strength to survive and grow, grow that is, in the direction of a general adult education body. Thus by the middle of the twentieth century, an adult education movement that had been founded to assist workers to acquire a higher education within a framework promoting self-development and social harmony, had been seriously weakened.

Only two Associations remained at the conclusion of World War II. Both of these WEA's, namely, South Australia and New South Wales, persisted to express an interest in workers' education. However, there was an ever-increasing gap between desire and achievement in this area. Workers were, in general terms, unresponsive to the programmes and this condition prevailed even with the provision of more general basic courses at the expense of academic courses.

Partly, this lack of response can be attributed to factors such as the perception of these programmes as not constituting really useful knowledge, lack of worker control over working class oriented education and general worker indifference to the courses. Issues like these contributed to the turbulence experienced by the WEA in its relations with sections of labour movements as it attempted to offer a working class oriented education in Australia from 1913.

Summary

In 1903, a body espousing interest in liberal workers' education was founded in Britain. The WEA, as it became known, was to link workers to universities and was based on a philosophy of non-partisan, non-party political education. This philosophy brought it into bitter conflict with proponents of independent workers' education such as the Plebs' League.

As with mechanics' institutes and university extension, before it, the WEA was transplanted to Australia where in 1913, Albert Mansbridge, the founder of the British Association, promoted its establishment in the various States. The WEA intellectuals promoted social harmony in an education that was provided for workers, from above.

In South Australia at the outbreak of World War I, Mansbridge found an audience receptive to his idea of the establishment of a workers' educational body. Trade union leaders and university officials were willing to promote a WEA. Despite such support, the Association did not offer an effective programme until 1917, at a time when the New South Wales WEA, in particular, had experienced bitter conflict with sections of the labour movement. The issue causing the controversy was conscription.

This controversy almost wrecked the labour movement in Australian States and created difficulties for the WEA in its efforts to provide an education for workers. However, the problems were not as severe in South Australia as in some eastern States.

The years from the conclusion of World War I to the end of World War II had revealed further fluctuating fortunes for the body on a national scale. Alleged Left-wing bias led to the WEA's collapse at the hands of a Right-wing State Labor Government in Queensland. In addition, the WEA's inability to appeal to workers and conflict with sections of the labour movement led to moves to disestablish it in Victoria and Tasmania. Conflict over a course led to serious confrontation between the WEA and the Left-wing of the labour movement in New South Wales, while disagreement over the nature of the WEA resulted in efforts to alter its entire character.

Furthermore, various State WEA's, like their British counterparts, showed a continued decline in appeal to workers. A variety of reasons were responsible for the lack of appeal, but importantly there was some Left-wing opposition to bourgeois controlled education, some indifference to the programmes and some feeling, based on participation rates in more pragmatic courses, that the programmes were not comprised of education that workers viewed as really useful knowledge.

The WEA was thus in serious difficulty in its relations with labour. However, the difficulties were not as severe in South Australia as in other States, although conflict in other States weakened the South Australian WEA's efforts.

CHAPTER IV
THE DEVELOPMENT OF THE WEA IN
SOUTH AUSTRALIA: 1917 - 1950

...Have these University Gentlemen ...
 who propose to teach workers of
 Australia economic law, studied and
 assimilated the works of Karl Marx ...?
 I think the workers would do well to take
 heed of the old proverb - to distrust the
 Greeks when they bring gifts.
(Socialist¹)

Introduction

After being established in Australia, various State WEA's became enmeshed in conflict. In many States, the conflicts seriously weakened and then destroyed the respective Associations. However, in New South Wales, the WEA withstood these challenges and survived.

The South Australian WEA escaped the direct conflict that affected other WEA's. In this State, the Association was not confronted by a hostile labour movement - indifferent perhaps, but certainly not hostile to any marked degree. Weaknesses in radical working class tradition and organisation, the relative lack of capitalist development and the nature of working class conditions in a State with a strong liberal tradition that had been guided by religious non-conformist theorists, contributed to this worker quietude.

¹ Socialist (Melbourne) 15 May, 1914, quoted in B. Bessant, "An Independent Working Class Education", Australian and New Zealand History of Education Society Journal 2(1):37-43, April 1973, p.38.

However, the South Australian WEA's development was, never-the-less, affected by the conflict in which various State WEA's were involved. This was particularly so with regard to the local WEA's credibility as a workers' educational body, in the eyes of sections of organised labour, its relations with the Left-wing of the labour movement, its attempts to interest educationally motivated workers, who were often radicals, in its classes and its later attempts to mount a national correspondence education scheme.

Despite such relationships with sections of the labour movement, the South Australian WEA continued to grow after its foundation in 1914. The Association's development was relatively smooth, if unspectacular, until the mid-1950's. In the same period, its course orientation moved from the largely liberal nature of its early tutorial classes, to a more recreational and utilitarian focus. Such changes did not, however, result in the Association ceasing interest in working class adult education. It still retained an involvement in the area. This was particularly so during the 1960's and 1970's with its revitalised efforts in trade union education.

Early Years of the WEA

As was indicated earlier, the joint WEA University of Adelaide Tutorial Classes Department course work began in earnest in 1917. The labour movement was split as a result of the conscription crisis. The National Labor Party

formed as a *separate party* from the official United Labor Party,² while some unions *also* disaffiliated with the Official Party.³

It was in this environment that the WEA began its work with a polarised labour movement, but with trade union affiliations and trade union representation on its executive.⁴ The anti-conscriptionist, Herbert Heaton, an economic historian and socialist,⁵ was the newly appointed Director of Tutorial Classes.

The WEA's beginning was modest, to the extent that by the end of 1917, two tutorial classes and three preparatory classes, that is, classes preparatory to tutorial classes, were operational. One of the tutorial classes was entitled Economics, under Heaton, whilst the other, English Literature, was under Professor Naylor. The three preparatory classes were entitled Modern State, Psychology and Economics, the latter course being taught in the Trades Hall.⁶

The classes attracted a total enrolment of 231.⁷ Modest

² Gibson (Stretton), P., "The Conscription Issue in South Australia, 1916-17", (B.A. (Hons.) thesis), University of Adelaide, 1959, p.16.

³ Advertiser (Adelaide) 12 March, 1917.

⁴ Workers' Educational Association of South Australia, First Annual Report and Statement of Accounts, Adelaide, WEA of S.A., 1918, passim; Workers' Educational Association of South Australia, Executive Minutes, 31 August, 1917.

⁵ Letter to the researcher from Dr. D.W. Crowley, Director, Department of Adult Education, University of Sydney, 30 April, 1979. Professor W.G.K. Duncan confirmed that Heaton was a Socialist in an interview with the researcher in December 1978.

⁶ Workers' Educational Association of South Australia, First Annual Report and Statement of Accounts, op cit., p.2.

⁷ ibid., p.8. This figure increased to 381 when 7 additional "lecture courses" were included. WEA Winter Programme, 1977.

beginnings indeed, but not unimportant from the point of view of liberal adult education offerings. A voluntary body had made a start in an area, void of substantive provision. Adelaide University extension lecture series were virtually non-existent, while institutes largely provided important libraries and locations for social intercourse, but very few classes.⁸ Thus the WEA and Department of Tutorial Classes programme began to fill the vacuum.

Following the first year of operations, provision and overall student numbers increased, although the workers did not give the Association the active support that it desired. There was still trade union involvement in the WEA's executive, and the first annual WEA Conference was held at the Trades Hall early in 1918. However, such worker interest was not replicated in the WEA student body. In 1918, for example, the preparatory Economics class at the Trades Hall was discontinued because there "was not enough interest".⁹

The WEA was certainly attempting to adhere to the motivations of its founders and provide a higher liberal education for workers. However, large numbers of workers were not positively responding to the provisions. They, unlike many

⁸ Documents from various Institutes held in the Institutes' Association Records, GRG58, SAA., clearly verify this. See also Australian Highway, 1(1):6, March 1919; and Port Adelaide News 1 February, 1918 for reference to classes in drawing, typewriting and book-keeping at the Port Adelaide Institute.

⁹ Workers' Educational Association of South Australia, Second Annual Report and Statement of Accounts, Adelaide, WEA of S.A., 1919, p.1.

non-manual workers, were not attracted to academic tutorial classes or the less highly academic preparatory classes in English Literature and Economics, courses which dominated early programmes in both Adelaide and a variety of other centres. (See Table 4.1).

TABLE 4.1
CLASS ENROLMENTS - 1918

<u>Tutorial Classes</u>	<u>Average Attendance</u>
Economics	32
English Literature	61
Modern State	22
Psychology	18.5
 <u>Other Classes</u>	
Economics (Norwood)	11
English Literature (Norwood)	11
Economics (Port Adelaide)	25
Economics (Gawler)	20
English Literature (Gawler)	16
Economics (Victor Harbour)	18
English Literature (Mt. Gambier)	20
Archaeology	30 enrolled

Source: Workers' Educational Association of
South Australia, Second Annual Report and
Statement of Accounts, op cit., p.5.

The classes were offered in the city and the metropolitan area, in addition to the important agricultural centre of Gawler, Victor Harbour and at Mt. Gambier in the State's South East. Furthermore, a class was offered at Port Adelaide, the State's large shipping centre.

Port Adelaide was a major centre with a strong working class element in the local population. In keeping with its

stated educational interests, Port Adelaide was thus a district where the WEA made considerable efforts to begin tutorial class programmes.

In May 1918, Heaton lectured on Education for Democracy at the Port Adelaide Town Hall. At this address, he outlined the philosophy of the WEA:

Its object was not to provide education for a few, but to place at the use of workers the broad highway along which all might trip if they felt so disposed to intellectual advancement. If they were asked what their aim was, their answer would be self-development, assistance to world service and the service of humanity.¹⁰

Workers were being asked to consider their own largely inadequate formal education, and seek intellectual growth through involvement in rigorous tutorial class study. For the mass of workers, the appeal represented an idealistic appraisal of working class interests. Although for a small working class élite, the proposed programme offered a realistic avenue for intellectual advancement. The questions at issue were however, whether the tutorial class model was a viable method in South Australia, and whether the provisions, by what radicals in the labour movement saw as a bourgeois body that promoted an education for social harmony from outside the working class, would attract a sufficient number of educationally motivated workers.

Heaton felt that a class in economics would be

¹⁰ Port Adelaide News 10 May, 1918.

appropriate as:

Fully 80 per cent of the problems of the day would be put under the heading of economics, and the educational systems had done very little to place the people in a position to understand them.¹¹

So an introductory lecture series in economics was commenced in the hope that during the series enough students (approximately 25), would commit themselves to participation in an economics tutorial class. Such a number of students was required before the tutorial class would be started.¹²

Initially this hope proved fruitless, although the lecture series was completed and included topics such as Banks and Banking, Trade Unionism, Free Trade and Protection and Australian Economic History.¹³ Again as in other States, many workers were not prepared to commit themselves to the rigours of tutorial class study. However, some adults were prepared to involve themselves in the less arduous preparatory classes in which they were able to readily acquire knowledge, which, for them, was useful. There was a curriculum lesson here for the WEA, although the Association's philosophy and motivation virtually prohibited adoption of the lesson. For, at the time, tutorial class establishment and not preparatory class development was a central object of the WEA.

¹¹ ibid.

¹² As mentioned earlier in this thesis, the tutorial classes were rigorous and involved a commitment on the part of the student, to attend the duration of the particular class programme and to submit essays etc., as required. The classes were, indeed, academically demanding.

¹³ Port Adelaide News 24 May, 1918; 5 July, 1918; 12 July, 1918; 2 August, 1918; 16 August, 1918.

Despite the early problems that were encountered in attracting workers to tutorial classes in Port Adelaide, in terms of its overall offerings, the WEA was appealing to some workers. However, these were still not as many as might have been expected considering union affiliations. In fact by 1919, at a time when the WEA's of New South Wales and Victoria were in keen debate with sections of their respective State labour movements over Labor Colleges, union affiliations were quite substantial.¹⁴ See Table 4.2 below:

TABLE 4.2

AFFILIATED ORGANISATIONS - 1919

Theosophical Society	Amalgamated Carpenters' Society
Theosophical Order of Service	Liberal Women's Educational Association
Women's Non-Party Association	Public Service Association
Jewellers' Union	Public Library, Museum etc.
Federated Electrical Trades Union	S.A. Tramways Association
Australian Natives' Association	East Torrens Electorate Committee
Felt Hatters' Society	Australian Society of Engineers
Boilermakers' Union	S.A. Kindergarten Union
Amalgamated Glass Bottle Workers	Federated Storemen & Packers
Classical Association	Timber Workers' Union
Operative Painters' Society	Distributing Trades Union
Operative Plasterers' Society	S.A. School Teachers' Union
Meat Industry Employees' Union	British Science Guild
S.A. Baptist Union	Postal Electricians' Union
Federated Ironmoulders' Society	Clerical Association
Thebarton Institute	Printing Industry Employees
School of Mines & Industries	Boot Trade Employees
Cigar Makers' Union	Meat Industry Employees' Union
Kent Town Democratic Association	
<u>Country</u>	Riverton, Kapunda, Ardrossan, Moonta, Clare and Truro Institutes, Port Augusta Carpenters.

Source: Workers' Educational Association of South Australia, Second Annual Report and Statement of Accounts, op cit., p.8.

¹⁴ In 1919 there were 44 affiliated bodies (Table 4.2). By 1920, there were 56 affiliated bodies including 26 trade unions. Australian Highway, 2(4): 5, June 1920.

Unions were certainly then more prominent among affiliates than they had been at the WEA's founding. However, for a workers' educational body there were some notable omissions. The Labor Party, the United Trades and Labor Council and the numerically small radical labour political associations such as the Socialists, were not affiliated. This last point can be explained in terms of previously cited antagonism on the part of socialists to this "bourgeois educational body" while the Labor Party and Labor Council perhaps declined affiliation on the basis of having not yet recovered from the turmoil that gripped the labour movement over conscription. Certainly WEA, Labor Party¹⁵ and Council records revealed no reasons for the failure to affiliate and in turn indicated no hostility to the WEA. In fact, the Council still had an official representative on the WEA Council.¹⁶

Relations between the labour movement and the Association were on quite a sound basis, and significantly stronger, in terms of union affiliations but not worker tutorial class participation, than at its foundation. The WEA was certainly experiencing difficulty in attracting sustained worker interest in its tutorial classes. Port Adelaide was one location where such difficulties were encountered. Others included two

¹⁵ Australian Labor Party (S.A. Branch), Minutes of Council Executive Meetings and Conferences, SRG73, SAA.

¹⁶ United Trades and Labor Council of South Australia, Minutes, 1918, 1919, 1920. SRG1, SAA.

important industrial towns, namely Port Pirie¹⁷ and the New South Wales town of Broken Hill.¹⁸ Industrial dislocation appeared to be partially responsible for the lack of specific successes with the WEA's tutorial class programme in these two centres which both had substantial working class populations.

The WEA executive felt that quite possibly, the radical nature of working class leadership in both towns militated against such a body as the WEA, with its professed politically neutral, and educational, rather than propagandist stance.¹⁹ As had been the case in New South Wales and Victoria, radical workers opposed the "bourgeois WEA" that they saw as promoting social harmony. However, as had earlier been the case in Port Adelaide, academically able, but not necessarily radical workers showed a lack in desire to commit themselves to a rigorous programme of night study. There were a number of possible reasons for this, including the priorities workers gave to this less pragmatic education compared with more utilitarian education, and worker interest in spending many out of work hours on recreational pursuits.

In the two towns there were a variety of recreational activities to attract workers. Port Pirie, for example, boasted

¹⁷ Workers' Educational Association of South Australia, Fourth Annual Report and Statement of Accounts, Adelaide, WEA of S.A., 1920, p.12.

¹⁸ Letter from B.H. Molesworth to L. Wilson (27 December, 1958) on Molesworth's involvement in adult education at Broken Hill in 1920, and later in Queensland where he became Director of Tutorial Classes. Archives, Department of Adult Education, University of Sydney.

¹⁹ Workers' Educational Association of South Australia, Fifth Annual Report and Statement of Accounts, Adelaide, WEA of S.A., 1921, p.3.

two cinemas. Clientele was such as to support the showing of movies each night, including for a time, Sunday evenings, after church services had concluded.²⁰ Furthermore, the Broken Hill Associated Smelters (BHAS) had a brass band that entertained on summer Sunday evenings.²¹

So after long hard days of toil in the smelters, and on the wharves, where much lead concentrate was hand loaded on to ships,²² a variety of leisure activities were provided for the worker and his family. No doubt, the majority of workers were physically weary at night and saw their evenings as a time to spend with family and friends. Thus while militancy may have been one reason for tutorial class failures, others were related to most workers' priorities in life, priorities among which this form of education did not rate highly.

Nevertheless, the WEA persisted with its tutorial classes and the programme began to expand. Table 4.3 provides data on class enrolments for 1921.

²⁰ Bennett, R., "A History of the Development of the City of Port Pirie from 1845-1920", (Thesis), Adelaide College of Advanced Education, n.d. (probably 1974), p.23.

²¹ ibid., p.17.

²² ibid., p.15.

TABLE 4.3

ENROLMENTS IN JOINT WEA UNIVERSITY TUTORIAL

DEPARTMENT CLASSES - 1921

<u>University Tutorial Classes</u>	<u>Meetings</u>	<u>Enrolled</u>	<u>*Effective Enrolments</u>	<u>Average Enrolments</u>
English Literature 1	24	84	45	44
" "	2	26	30	24
Political Philosophy	23	40	24	24
Modern World History	26	52	34	29
Economics	26	30	25	21
<u>Sub Total</u>		244	158	142
Pt. Adelaide Economics	24	37	24	19
Freeling	24	32	25	20
Gawler	24	25	28	17
<u>TOTAL</u>		338	235	198

* Effective enrolment implied an attendance at more than half of the meetings for the class.

Source: Workers' Educational Association of South Australia, Fifth Annual Report and Statement of Accounts, op cit., p.10.

English literature classes were popular with the increasingly diverse student body (see Table 4.4). However, in terms of specific working class efforts, the Economics tutorial class at Port Adelaide was important. After Heaton's fruitless efforts to establish such a class in 1918, by 1921 an Economics tutorial class was at last operating. Enough academically able workers, and other adults, had now agreed to participate in a highly academic class taught by the internationally respected Economic Historian, Herbert Heaton.²³ The WEA, under Heaton's influence,

²³ One possible reason for the changed interest in the tutorial class since 1918 could have been due to Heaton's reputation. No doubt a number of adults were interested in participating in a class taught by such a highly respected academic. In organising adult educational classes during the 1970's the writer has found that particular teachers always attract a large number of adults to their classes.

was revealing an increasing appeal to workers and to adults, generally. Its tutorial class students ranged across a variety of occupational groupings with manual workers, teachers and clerical and office workers being common in the city. (See Table 4.4). Women who described themselves as home duties were also prominent.

TABLE 4.4

STUDENT OCCUPATIONS - 1921 CITY TUTORIAL CLASSES

	<u>Number</u>
Domestic Duties	51
Clerical and Office Workers	41
Teachers	21
Typists	13
Manual Workers	33
Shop Assistants	6
Miscellaneous Occupations	20
Occupation Unknown	59
	<u>244</u>

Source: Workers' Educational Association of South Australia, Fifth Annual Report and Statement of Accounts, op cit., p.10.

Clearly, of the known occupations of students (total 185), manual workers, who on the basis of the above classification were likely to have been largely males, were in a minority (39 of 185, that is, 21%)²⁴ in city tutorial classes. Although according to a statement in the Fifth Annual Report, in the

²⁴ Manual Workers (33) and Shop Assistants (6) were the obvious categories.

class at Port Adelaide, manual workers were in a clear majority, and in country classes, were a significant proportion of enrolled students.²⁵

Clerical workers and typists were of significance (29%) in city classes. However, as has been suggested earlier, these latter two occupational groupings were more characteristic of the middle class than the working class even though during the later twentieth century they have become, it can be forcefully argued, typical working class occupations.²⁶

In all, the numbers of manual workers in the arduous tutorial classes were important but not a majority. Clearly, the WEA was appealing to a broad clientele. In this way, it was increasingly becoming a more general adult educational body, an orientation consistent with that of other State's WEA's. However, unlike WEA's in, for example, Victoria and New South Wales, the local WEA was not heavily criticised over its changing nature. There were occasional suggestions that it should specifically become a worker controlled body, and others that the Association should change its name to that of a general adult education body. Nevertheless, nothing came of such efforts. The WEA Council still wished that the Association be, in some way, identified as a body with an interest in the higher liberal education of workers. Support

²⁵ Workers' Educational Association of South Australia, Fifth Annual Report and Statement of Accounts, op cit., p.10

²⁶ See the discussion in Braverman, H., Labor and Monopoly Capital, New York, Monthly Review Press, 1974, pp.293-358.

for this position was of sufficient strength to see the WEA's name and orientation remain, an orientation that attracted mild and patchy conservative opposition.

As an example of this the President of the Adelaide Chamber of Manufactures claimed, in reference to tutorial class lectures in economics, that the University had become, to a large extent, engaged in propaganda, and had been used as a lever by "people holding Socialistic views".²⁷

The accusations were directed at the radical, Herbert Heaton and his Economics tutorial classes that were promoted by the WEA for the Joint Tutorial Classes Committee.²⁸ Although the University was mentioned, it was the tutorial classes and thereby, indirectly, the WEA at which criticism was being levelled. However, such criticism from conservatives was very spasmodic in South Australia. The WEA was non-controversial.

As further evidence of this nature, the WEA broadened its programme as it added social activities such as concerts and debates to its interests. G.R. McRitchie, a devout Congregationalist became Association Secretary and enthusiastically promoted its social side. To this end, he was able to report in 1921, that:

... the outstanding success of the year has been the development of the social spirit, as manifested in the club.²⁹

²⁷ MacInnes, C.M. (Ed.), Adult Education in the British Dominions, London, World Association of Adult Education, 1929, p.102. W.G.K. Duncan in an interview with the researcher in December 1978 referred to some hostility generated by G.V. Portus in the 1930's when he lectured on Russia.

²⁸ Workers' Educational Association of South Australia, Sixth Annual Report and Statement of Accounts, Adelaide, WEA of S.A., 1922, p.6.

²⁹ Workers' Educational Association of South Australia, Fifth Annual Report and Statement of Accounts, op cit., p.5.

It is noteworthy that the "outstanding success" was not the WEA's achievements in attracting workers to Port Adelaide, country and city classes. Rather a general recreational activity was highlighted.

McRitchie was largely responsible for the growth of the social side of the Association's activities, many of which were held in the Stow Congregational Hall in Adelaide. They were parallel to earlier developments in the institute movement. Institutes had provided some classes, but many avenues for informal adult education and facilities for activities such as card games. However, where the institutes fostered these latter activities and saw their class programmes fade to insignificance, the WEA steadfastly maintained a balance whereby formal education dominated the social activities. Such educational efforts were slowly growing. (See Table 4.5).

TABLE 4.5

TUTORIAL CLASSES AND FOCUS OF STUDY - 1922

<u>City:</u>	English Literature - Study of e.g. Shakespeare " " - " " /modern dramatists Economics (Heaton) - Study of Economic Theory Modern World History - Study of Making and Unmaking of Modern Europe. Music - Music theory, singing etc. Psychology
<u>Port Adelaide:</u>	Economics (Heaton) - Study of Economic Theory
<u>Gawler:</u>	Economic & Social History - Study of Economic & Social Development from Greece/Rome to present.
<u>Freeling:</u>	Political Science - Details not given.

Source: Workers' Educational Association of South Australia, Sixth Annual Report and Statement of Accounts, op cit., p.5.

These classes like those of earlier years, attracted an occupationally diverse group of people (see Table 4.6).

The domestic duties, manual worker (artisans and shop assistants) and clerical categories dominated enrolments.

TABLE 4.6

STUDENT OCCUPATIONS - 1922

Domestic Duties	142
Clerical Occupations	112
Artisans	103
Teachers	45
Shop Assistants	36
Agents, Factory Managers etc.	10
Misc., e.g. Butchers	37
* Total	<u>485</u>

Note: No figures are given in the "unknown" category.
So "485" is a minimum total. (See Table 4.7)

Source: Workers' Educational Association of South Australia. Sixth Annual Report and Statement of Accounts, op cit., p.11.

An analysis of the domestic duties figure revealed that the large number of people here resulted from the fact that in:

... a great number of cases ...
... husband and wife join the same
class.³⁰

The significance of this category among the student population foreshadowed what was to become a clear trend in the Association's programme,³¹ a programme which by the end of the first quarter

³⁰ Workers' Educational Association of South Australia. Sixth Annual Report and Statement of Accounts, op cit., p.11.

³¹ Though women were not dominant in early adult education classes, they have, throughout the twentieth century, increased their participation rates and are now clearly dominant in liberal and recreational adult education in South Australia.

of the twentieth century had shown considerable growth (see Table 4.7).

TABLE 4.7
TUTORIAL CLASS ENROLMENTS, 1917-1925

	<u>No. Enrolled</u>	<u>Effective</u>	<u>Average Attendance</u>
1917	231	206	154
1918	235	157	156
1919	263	182	143
1920	315	241	176
1921	338	235	198
1922	645	438	403
1923	693	470	433
1924	772	551	482
1925	1039	644	609

Note: These figures underestimate the total work of the Association, for they exclude, for example, public lectures and summer schools.

Source: Workers' Educational Association of South Australia, Annual Report and Statement of Accounts, Adelaide, WEA of S.A. Various.

The first decade for the Association had revealed fluctuating fortunes. Though established in 1914, it was on the brink of collapse and only began effective operations in 1917. The WEA's tutorial class programme met with spasmodic success and much worker indifference, although it grew under the able academic leadership of University economic historian, Herbert Heaton. Parallel with this development, McRitchie fostered the social side of the Association while the executive also promoted educational activities such as lecture series and study circles in addition to tutorial classes.

Workers were attracted to the classes, but not in large numbers, despite a variety of attempts to appeal to such adults. By 1925, the WEA was showing clear signs of becoming

a general liberal adult education body.

Heaton's Departure and WEA Developments
Through the Depression

The year 1925 was a significant date so far as the WEA's provision of workers' education in South Australia was concerned. It was Herbert Heaton's last year in Adelaide before moving to Canada. Heaton's period as Director of Tutorial Classes had been vibrant. Serious efforts were made to involve manual workers in education classes, particularly those of a social or political nature, for example his 1925 class on Working Class History.³² Serious attempts were also made to provide classes in country areas.

However, he was lost to the growing adult education movement, a loss which prompted some comment in the United Trades and Labor Council daily, The South Australian Worker. Here it was alleged he was forced to leave since he was unable to obtain a Chair in Economics at an Australian university.³³ The implication was that his Socialist leanings created this situation. The report went on to suggest however, that Heaton's opinions had generally been of an advanced radical nature for he:

... is a thorough democrat though not a Bolshevik in any sense of that misused word.³⁴

³² Workers' Educational Association of South Australia, Ninth Annual Report and Statement of Accounts, Adelaide, WEA of S.A., 1925, p.7.

³³ South Australian Worker (Adelaide) 26 May, 1925.

³⁴ ibid.

According to Eric Williams, the Director of the WEA in South Australia, Heaton left:

... disappointed at what he saw as conservative opposition to him within the University.³⁵

Williams suggested that his leaving caused a "great outcry in Parliament".³⁶ However, this was not the case, although F. Birrell raised the matter in the Address and Reply Debate in the House of Assembly in August 1925.³⁷

Birrell, a Labor Member of Parliament, argued that Heaton was leaving for a reason not creditable to the University Council and that:

... if you look at the classes he has established in Adelaide and see of whom they are comprised, not only working men but also people of leisure, and professional people and people of all sides of politics ...³⁸

Birrell was referring to Heaton's tutorial class work, where in several classes, Heaton had made efforts to offer workers an education for social transformation. These classes had earlier attracted some mild criticism from the Chamber of Manufactures. Yet there was no evidence that Heaton was educating workers for class warfare. In the wake of the Russian Revolution some conservatives were merely fearful of what they saw as more radical educational activities and thus opposed Heaton.

³⁵ Williams, E., "Wide Support After a Stormy Start", WEA Winter Programme, 1977.

³⁶ ibid.

³⁷ SAPD, 6 August, 1925, p.335.

³⁸ ibid.

Colin Badger agreed that at the time, Heaton was subject to conservative opposition from within the University.³⁹ Indirectly Heaton also confirmed that perhaps his political activities in the State had been at least partly responsible for his failure to obtain a Chair in Economics at an Australian University.⁴⁰

Heaton was to be lost to the University Tutorial Classes Department and thereby to the Association, a loss for which it would be hard to compensate.⁴¹ Gone was an outstanding economic historian with sympathies for the labour movement and a fervent desire to provide manual workers with courses that emphasised social transformation.

His departure was at a time of growth in industrial capitalism with a consequent upsurge in industrial unionism. However, these conditions did not see the WEA pursue, with rigour, Heaton's desire for socially oriented courses that stimulated workers' intellectual development. Rather in a State that experienced considerable worker quietude, WEA efforts were directed towards offering a more general programme.⁴² (See Tables 4.8 and 4.9).

³⁹ Letter from C.R. Badger to researcher, April 1979. Also notes of an interview between Badger and the researcher in 1975.

⁴⁰ Heaton, H., "Progress and Problems of Australian Economics", American Economic Review, 16(2):235-248, June 1926, passim.

⁴¹ Duncan, W.G.K. and Leonard, R.A., The University of Adelaide, Adelaide, Rigby, 1973, p.168.

⁴² See for example, Workers' Educational Association of South Australia, Tenth Annual Report and Statement of Accounts, Eleventh Annual Report and Statement of Accounts, Twelfth Annual Report and Statement of Accounts, Adelaide, WEA of S.A. 1926; 1927; 1928; passim. Also see reports of South Australian WEA in Australian Highway, various issues from October 1925, such as during 1930.

TABLE 4.8

CLASS ENROLMENTS - 1926

	<u>Enrolled</u>	<u>Effective</u>
English Literature	96	61
" "	42	32
" "	42	22
Modern World History	93	58
Psychology (1st year)	81	54
" (2nd year)	40	26
Philosophy	43	35
Public Speaking (1st year)	90	45
" " (Advanced)	52	29
Economics (3rd year)	24	17
" (2nd year)	22	11
" - History of Working Class Movement	28	16
Music and Singing	72	55
Economics (Trades Hall)	23	7
Colonel Light Gardens	24	12
Port Adelaide - Economics	17	13
" " Public Speaking	43	25
Riverton	42	24
Freeling	14	8
Murray Bridge	48	20
Gawler	38	24
Angaston (Study Circle)	38	25
Waikerie (" ")	32	23
Renmark - Social Ethics	40	28
" " Psychology	12	9
" " "	12	9
" Modern World Problems	20	12
" Present European "	20	12
Barmera 7 Lectures	not available	
Monash 2 Lectures	" "	
<u>Total</u>	1148	712

Note: The number of classes in the Renmark district is accounted for by the fact that the Renmark Hotel provided £250 towards the costs of a resident tutor (E.G. Biaggini). The grant was withdrawn in 1927.

Source: Workers' Educational Association of South Australia, Tenth Annual Report and Statement of Accounts, op cit., p.9.

It is interesting to note the increasing diversity of classes in 1926 after Heaton's departure. Classes in Public Speaking, English Literature and Psychology were attracting considerable interest. Economics classes were also showing appeal, although those specifically directed towards workers were not being met by sustained popular response. This condition became a norm throughout the later years of the 1920's.

In 1928 for example, the WEA began a Study Circle in Relations Between Capital and Labor.⁴³ The Study Circle, which was not as academically demanding nor as time consuming as a tutorial class programme, was unpopular. It attracted an enrolment of five students, while other study circles such as Biology and Physics attracted many more. Nevertheless, the WEA persisted with its efforts to attract workers to economics classes in particular, for such classes were seen as important in helping them understand the forces creating the Depression.⁴⁴

See Table 4.9 for details of provisions in 1931.⁴⁵

⁴³ Workers' Educational Association of South Australia; Twelfth Annual Report and Statement of Accounts, op cit., p.7.

⁴⁴ Notes of interview with Colin Lawton, WEA of South Australia Secretary, 1949 to 1957, November 1980.

⁴⁵ A factor that emerges from Table 4.9 is one which adult educators in particular, find most frustrating, namely, the large number of students that cease attending classes after only a few meetings. The effective enrolment of 714, though a minimum figure could possibly be increased by a further 175 if all students enrolled in the Country Lecture Series and the Colonel Light Gardens class, for which "effective" figures have not been given, participated for more than half of the sessions. This would have been a most unlikely event since no other class held all of its initially enrolled students for more than half the sessions. The problem of student drop-out is one which often clouds analysis of enrolment statistics. See the discussion in Brougham, A., Student Attrition: An Investigation into Reasons Why Students Withdraw From Further Education Classes, Adelaide, Department of Further Education, February 1978, passim.

TABLE 4.9

CLASS ENROLMENTS - 1931

	<u>Enrolled</u>	<u>Effective</u>
<u>Tutorial Classes</u>		
English Literature (2nd year)	26	18
" Language (Advanced)	26	20
" Literature (1st year)	27	24
" Language	87	49
<u>Lecture Classes</u>		
English Literature	107	77
Economics	99	39
Economic History	23	13
Economic Geography	34	16
Australian History	22	16
Modern History	95	56
Philosophy	61	46
Psychology	56	28
Physics	29	21
Geology	29	17
Music	48	40
Public Speaking	148	67
<u>Study Circles</u>		
Advanced Economics	16	13
" Philosophy	11	11
Aristotle's Ethics	16	10
Use of Books	8	6
History	12	5
Anthropology	10	8
<u>Port Adelaide</u>		
Public Speaking	49	33
Sociology	27	23
<u>Colonel Light Gardens</u>		
Geology	35	-
<u>Country Classes</u>		
Gawler	11	-
Gumeracha	12	10
Murray Bridge	28	21
Port Lincoln	14	12
Port Lincoln	19	15
Norton Summit (lectures)	30	-
Mannum (")	25	-
Riverton (")	40	-
Strathalbyn (")	34	-
<u>Total</u>	<u>1314</u>	<u>714*</u>

* Note: This figure is as quoted in the above Annual Report, but is a minimum figure for it excludes for example, the Country Lecture Series.

Source: Workers' Educational Association of South Australia, Fifteenth Annual Report and Statement of Accounts, Adelaide, WEA of S.A., 1931, pp.6-7.

Clearly by 1931, at the height of the Depression, the WEA's programme was extensive and was offered through various modes. There was a further drift away from the rigorous tutorial classes, with language classes now the only such classes provided. Liberal educational courses seen as of particular relevance to manual workers were in the form of study circles and lecture series.

These activities had appeal during the Depression years with Sociology classes proving popular. In 1932, for example, when Colin Badger tutored such a class at the Trades Hall, 17 students attended, while another at Port Adelaide attracted 39 students, many of whom were workers.⁴⁶ This response was repeated in 1933. However, in 1934, as the State was emerging from the Depression, a smaller number of workers were attracted to a class in Public Speaking at the Trades Hall.⁴⁷ Such a decline foreshadowed a trend whereby workers were showing a growing disinclination to actively respond to the WEA's efforts to foster their development through education.

By 1939, although 17 of the 22 affiliated organisations were unions, only sixteen per cent of the WEA student body were manual workers (compared with around 29 per cent in 1922), and less than a third were clerical workers. Some of these clerks were, no doubt, members of white collar unions such as the Public Service Association and a number were likely to have

⁴⁶ Workers' Educational Association of South Australia, Sixteenth Annual Report and Statement of Accounts, Adelaide, WEA of S.A., 1932, p.4.

⁴⁷ Workers' Educational Association of South Australia, Nineteenth Annual Report and Statement of Accounts, Adelaide, WEA of S.A., 1935, p.5.

been women. (See Table 4.10)

TABLE 4.10

STUDENT OCCUPATIONS - 1939

	<u>Number</u>
Manual Workers	211
Clerical "	367
Teachers	96
Business and Professional	274
Home Duties	261
Unspecified	140
<u>Total</u>	<u>1349</u>

Source: Workers' Educational Association of South Australia, Twenty Third Annual Report and Statement of Accounts, Adelaide, WEA of S.A., 1939, p.6.

Hence at a time of growth in industrial capitalism when the industrial working class was further increasing in size, the WEA was still not appealing to a large proportion of workers. In this way it was duplicating the endeavours of remaining WEA's in other Australian States. Its supporters seemed to have lost the motivation of the WEA's founders.

Changing Emphasis During and Immediately

After World War II

Despite the economic hardships which were created by the war, the South Australian WEA persisted in offering a range of educational activities in both the Adelaide metropolitan area and in country areas. In fact, a resident tutor had been appointed to the northern industrial towns of Port Pirie, Port Augusta and Whyalla to promote, co-ordinate and tutor in adult education.⁴⁸

⁴⁸ Workers' Educational Association of South Australia and the Joint Committee of Tutorial Classes, Twenty Fourth Annual Report, Adelaide, WEA of S.A., 1940, p.6.

Such efforts saw the Association recording a year of high enrolments in a variety of classes. These ranged from the rigorous tutorial classes in Language and Literature, to lecture classes, largely in social and natural sciences, to discussion groups.⁴⁹ In all, 1851 students were attracted to a programme that included a class at the Trades Hall, in which G.V. Portus gave a series of lectures on Arbitration, and an end session lecture series on Biological Sciences. Occupations of students are shown in Table 4.11.

TABLE 4.11

STUDENT OCCUPATIONS - 1940

	<u>Number</u>
Manual Workers	516
Clerical Workers	329
Teachers	150
Business and Professional	290
Home Duties	271
Unspecified	93
<u>Total</u>	<u>1649*</u>

*Note: 202 students attended the end of series lectures but did not fill out enrolment particulars.

Source: Workers' Educational Association of South Australia and the Joint Committee of Tutorial Classes, Twenty Fourth Annual Report, op cit., p.6.

Manual workers comprised almost a third (31%) of persons enrolled. Such a proportion was rather higher than 1920's and 30's, but could be accounted for by the large number of students coming from the northern industrial towns, namely,

⁴⁹ ibid., p.6.

672 compared with 977 city and suburban students. A WEA tutor was now resident in the industrial town of Port Pirie. The WEA was in turn providing a range of educational activities rather than the specific tutorial classes of its early endeavours. Many workers in these northern towns, participated in educational activities. Such involvement differed from earlier experiences and was at least in part possibly due to the presence of a resident tutor, who was more able to promote and tailor courses to local needs.

The fact that workers from this northern town were engaged in WEA classes was tentatively verified in an analysis of 1941 enrollees in city and suburban classes. (See Table 4.12)

TABLE 4.12

STUDENT OCCUPATIONS - 1941

	<u>Number</u>
Manual Workers	204
Clerical "	268
Teachers	63
Business and Professional	130
Home Duties	247
Unspecified	69
<u>Total</u>	<u>981</u>

Source: Workers' Educational Association of South Australia and Joint Committee of Tutorial Classes. Twenty Fifth Annual Report, Adelaide, WEA of S.A., 1941, p.6.

The occupations of 246 students from the northern areas were not included in the above analysis. However, these would probably have contributed in such a way as to have slightly increased the proportion of manual workers in a total of 981 + 246 students from less than a quarter (21%) of the city and

suburban total of 981, to a figure of between a quarter and almost a third of the adjusted total student number. That is, a figure similar to that of the preceding year. However, in all probability it was in fact lower than the 31% of 1940, for such was certainly the case by the end of the war with many pre-war manual workers in the armed services. (See Table 4.13)

TABLE 4.13

STUDENT OCCUPATIONS - 1944, 1945

	<u>Number</u>	
	<u>1944</u>	<u>1945</u>
Clerical	626	643
Domestic	218	359
Technical	310	80
Shop Assistants	40	36
Teachers	99	112
Students	65	74
Armed Services	52	43
Nurses	45	53
Retired	11	17
Miscellaneous	203	461
<u>Total</u>	<u>1669</u>	<u>1878</u>

Source: Workers' Educational Association of South Australia and Joint Committee of Tutorial Classes, Twenty Ninth Annual Report, Adelaide, WEA of S.A., 1945, p.6.

Clearly manual workers, that is those in the technical and shop assistant classifications, and thus largely males, were, by the end of the war, a small proportion of enrolments - 21% in 1944 and 6% in 1945.⁵⁰ But why the decline, particularly in 1945? Certainly, there was no evidence to suggest that the

⁵⁰ These are minimum percentages and would probably increase if an analysis of the miscellaneous occupations were possible.

New South Wales WEA's conflict with that State's Communist Party had any significant bearing in a State with a traditionally weak extreme Left-wing of the labour movement.

Many unions retained affiliation, and outwardly at least, there was not hostility of any note towards the Association, a condition consistent with earlier periods.⁵¹ Occasionally a union objected to some aspect of the WEA's work, for example, the protest by the Australian Government Workers' Union (AGWU) over the use of Dr. Grenfell-Price as a lecturer. But these were generally settled quite amicably.⁵²

The decline in manual workers in the student body in 1945 is not easily explained without additional information. Figures in other categories excepting technical, domestic and miscellaneous were quite comparable in 1944 and 1945. Hence it would appear that some who may have been in a technical category in 1944 may have been in the miscellaneous category in 1945 because, perhaps they failed to state their occupation and were thus grouped in the occupation unknown category. But whatever the reason for the very low 1945 proportion (compared with 1944), it is clear that manual workers were but a maximum of approximately a fifth of the total student body.

In absolute terms there were more manual workers in WEA classes in the 1940's than in classes in the 1920's. However, their proportional representation had certainly not

⁵¹ Interview with E.H. Crimes, former Labor M.P. and a man of significance in the labour movement since the 1930's, in July 1979. Crimes had been Editor of the Labor Party paper The Herald for a number of years.

⁵² Dr. Grenfell-Price had made some comments on Russia that displeased the AGWU. Solidarity, 23(120): 18 June, 1944, Workers' Educational Association of South Australia, Executive Minutes, April 1944.

increased. Thus as the WEA's student numbers grew, and as later pointed out by the WEA,⁵³ the Association was losing its image as a workers' educational body and acquiring a middle class image. As such it was more obviously a general adult educational agency,⁵⁴ a condition which could have been predicted through consideration of its programmes and students as early as the mid to late-1920's, and a condition similar to that of other State WEA's.

In the 1940's, like the immediate post-Depression years, the State was experiencing significant industrial growth. Hence, it could have been reasonably expected that the Association would have made vigorous efforts to appeal to the expanding industrial working class through promotion of its education for social harmony. However, this was not the case.

Biaggini, Tutor-in-Charge of the Tutorial Classes Department at Adelaide University, stated only too clearly the Association's plight by the end of 1944:

The WEA in Australia has, in all States but Western Australia, made heroic efforts to interest working people in the problems of society and in large measure it has failed ... and in spite of much advertisement and years of valuable work, the movement remains unknown to, and irrelevant to the life of the majority of people.⁵⁵

⁵³ Workers' Educational Association of South Australia, Submission to the Australian Committee on Technical and Further Education, (Mimeograph, 7p.), Adelaide, 1973, p.2.

⁵⁴ This is evidenced, for example, in a WEA advertisement in Solidarity, 23(123): 28 March, 1945.

⁵⁵ Biaggini, E.G., A New World For Education, Adelaide, WEA of S.A., 1944, pp.23-24.

Williams, General Secretary of the WEA from 1958, and then Director of that body, in the 1964 WEA Annual Report confirmed this feeling of failure. He suggested that, in fact, between 1930 and 1945, the WEA seemed to steadily move away from the trade union movement.⁵⁶ The WEA gradually became more interested in literary and cultural subjects than in social and political subjects. Such a move quite possibly reflected relative worker indifference to courses, and worker rejection of activities in which they could not acquire really useful knowledge but also in some way, reflected the preoccupation of Biaggini with literary studies,⁵⁷ and of his and McRitchie's influence over course provisions.

Summary

Around the outbreak of World War I when the labour movement had been firmly established both politically and industrially in South Australia, the WEA was founded in this State. It offered its first effective programme from 1917 at a time when the labour movement was split. The split movement created some problems for the WEA in its attempts to provide for workers' education. Certainly radicals attacked it, but

⁵⁶ Workers' Educational Association of South Australia, Fifty Sixth Annual Report, Adelaide, WEA of S.A., 1964, p.6.

⁵⁷ According to an Advertiser (Adelaide) editorial of 9 December, 1978, Biaggini had two central interests, namely, the cause of adult education and the purity of the English language. The second dominated. See also Lawton, C.R., "A Notable Teacher - E.G. Biaggini", Studies in Continuing Education, 4:69-80, 1980, passim.

in a State with considerable weaknesses in radical working class tradition and a lack of capitalist development, the attacks were not sustained and had little direct effect on the WEA.

The Association was quickly able to gain respectability in South Australian society as it developed its tutorial class programme and other educational and social activities from 1917. Herbert Heaton was instrumental in ensuring that efforts were being made to provide for worker education.

However, following Heaton's departure in 1925, the WEA lost much of its pioneering working class oriented spirit. Manual workers were still reasonably well represented among the WEA's students, contributing about one fifth of overall enrolments. Nevertheless, at a time when some other States' WEA's were being criticised for being too general in their adult educational work rather than more specifically working class oriented, the local WEA was following a similar pattern of development. It was providing a diverse programme including studies in Natural and Physical Science, Public Speaking and Psychology. Some of these courses were in tutorial classes, but many were in less academically demanding study circles, lecture series and discussion groups that proved attractive to a wide cross section of South Australian society.

At various times in the years after Heaton's departure, specific and vigorous efforts were made to appeal to workers. For example, in the Depression of the later 1920's and early 1930's, a variety of classes in Sociology and Economics were offered to workers. Furthermore, during the early World War II

years when a tutor was appointed to the northern industrial town of Port Pirie, some major successes were made in attracting workers to classes. However, in general terms, the specific working class efforts were patchy. By World War II, the WEA clearly had a middle class image as it continued to promote educational activities that had as a central concern adult self-development, as well as wider social and national improvement.

CHAPTER VA REVITALISED WEA IN POST-WORLD WAR II SOUTH AUSTRALIA: 1950 - 1975

It is only in New South Wales that the WEA occupies today the position it originally aspired to. Although in South Australia it is showing signs of vitality and experimenting along new lines, . . . (E.M. Higgins¹)

Introduction

During the 1930's and the 1940's, with substantial industrialization brought about by the onset of the war, the industrial working class grew. The Left-wing of the labour movements, and particularly the Communist Party of Australia, began to assume more influence over the workers. Although, as has been argued earlier, this influence was weaker in South Australia than the eastern Australian States.

In such an environment, various State WEA's, in conjunction with universities, persisted in their efforts to provide an adult education service that, in part at least, appealed to elements of the working class. They were variously opposed by radicals, such as communists, and conservatives in the labour movements. In some States such as Tasmania, Queensland and Victoria, conservative ALP State Governments succeeded in destroying the Association. In New South Wales, radicals attempted to destroy it, but failed largely owing to the strength of the Association in that State. However, in South Australia,

¹ Higgins, E.M., David Stewart and the WEA, Sydney, WEA of N.S.W., 1957, p.114.

the Association faced neither comparable hostile Left or Right-wing opposition, although its credibility as a workers' educational body was impaired in the eyes of some sections of the labour movement, such as among radical groups, by conflict in other States. Hence by the end of World War II, as an Australia-wide workers' educational body, the WEA was under severe stress.

The South Australian WEA emerged from the years of the second world war with an image quite different from that for which its pioneers would have hoped. It did not have a dominant working class component in its joint tutorial classes. Also, the Association's joint programme of classes had swung from concentration on the arduous tutorial classes, to emphasis on lecture series and similar classes in areas such as language and literature, psychology and physical and biological sciences.

The 1950's, 1960's and 1970's proved to be particularly exciting for the Association. Firstly, it began offering its own classes, independent of the University. Secondly, it greatly expanded its recreational adult educational activities and thirdly, and importantly for this discussion, it reforged relatively strong links with the labour movement. Through these links, the WEA initiated an extensive programme of remedial, and more generally, utilitarian education for both manual and non-manual workers who were members of trade unions.

The WEA and Early Post-War Adult Education
in South Australia

In an early post-war environment of labour movement quietude, the WEA and the University of Adelaide Tutorial

Classes Department partnership continued its educational work. The partnership had not been seriously weakened by the bitter conflict that enmeshed WEA's and some sections of labour movements in other States, although its expansion was hampered by internal conflict between the partners. According to Professor Fred Alexander, the Tutorial Classes Department was under the direction of an:

... inadequately paid tutor-in-charge whose lack of authority and recognition in the University was further² undermined by petty friction with the WEA.

The tutor was E.G. Biaggini. Frequently he had been in conflict with the WEA and particularly with its Secretary, G.R. McRitchie.³ He claimed that McRitchie had often reported him to the Vice-Chancellor, and that on one occasion, would not allow him a room in which to lecture, because he was going to "attack God".⁴

Personality conflicts such as these were common between leaders in the University and WEA sides of the adult education work, in all the Australian States.⁵ Even the partnership in New South Wales saw such clashes as the authority of the

² Alexander, F., Adult Education in Australia, A Historian's Point of View, Melbourne, Cheshire, 1959, p.23.

³ See for example, Biaggini, E.G., You Can't Say That!, Adelaide, Pitjantjara, 1970, passim. Biaggini also supported this in interviews with the researcher in January and April, 1975. He made the point that he and McRitchie were "undeclared enemies".

⁴ Notes of interview with Biaggini, January 1975; Workers' Educational Association of South Australia, Council Minutes, 28 April, 1952; and Workers' Educational Association of South Australia, Executive Minutes, 27 April, 1954.

⁵ Interviews with E.G. Biaggini in 1975, C.R. Badger in 1975, W.G.K. Duncan in 1978, C.R. Lawton in 1980, R.H. Carmichael in 1975 and the late J. Davies, formerly Deputy Director of the Department of Adult Education, University of Sydney, in 1975, by the researcher, confirmed the turbulent nature of the relationship in various States.

respective leaders, over the educational programme, was questioned or, in some cases, perceived of as being under threat. The very nature of the partnership established a framework within which clashes were a likely outcome, especially if one of the leaders in the partnership tried to take a dominant role over the joint programme.

However, as would be anticipated this internal conflict was hidden from society at large and the partnership was able to make an outwardly united appeal as an adult education provider. Consequently, it continued to attract adults from a wide cross-section of the community. In addition such broad representation was evidenced among the WEA's affiliates. (See Table 5.1). These may well have been even more extensive had there been better relations between the leaders in the partnership.

TABLE 5.1

AFFILIATIONS WITH WEA - 1948

Clothing and Allied Trades Union	Boilermakers' Union
Postal Workers' Union	Building Workers' Union
Adelaide Co-operative Education Society	Electrical Trades Union
Government Workers' Union	Confectioners Employees' Union
Institute of Marine & Power Engineers	Gas Employees' Union
Australian Labor Party	Iron Workers' Association
Australian Natives' Association	Science & Technical Workers
Railway Union	Manufacturing Grocers Employees' Union
Society of Dairy Technology	Printing Union
Association of Scientific Workers	Transport Workers' Union
Tramway & Motor Omnibus Employees' Union	Engineers' Union
Meat Industry Employees' Union	Hotel etc. Employees' Association
Shop Assistants' Union	National Fitness Council
Howard League for Penal Reform	National Gallery
Vehicle Builders' Union	Plasterers' Society
Wool Employees' Union	Public Library
Common Cause	Public Service Union
University of Adelaide	Home Builders' Club
Women's Temperance Guild	Railway Officers
YWCA	S.A. School of Mines & Industries
S.A. Society of Model & Experimental Engineers	Mayfair Orchestra

Source: Workers' Educational Association of South Australia, Thirty Second Annual Report, Adelaide, WEA of S.A., 1948, p.4.

A notable exception from this list of bodies was the Public Teachers' Association. On being invited to affiliate in 1947, this Association refused. It felt that the WEA was not offering "suitable adult education".⁶ The Teachers' Association failed to elaborate further on its reasons for rejecting the WEA's affiliation invitation. However, unlike the situation in New South Wales, there was no indication of overt teacher union hostility towards the WEA. So quite possibly the reasons were associated with the politics of supporting a voluntary educational body in offering a service which could have been given through the Education Department, and thereby provided by the Public Teachers' Association's members.

Despite the Teachers' Association's refusal to affiliate, the WEA was indeed attracting a number of unions. Both blue and white collar unions affiliated. However, this apparent union interest was not reflected by the involvement of large numbers of unionists in the Association's gradually expanding range of courses, which in the late-war and early post-war years were attempting to attract students in competition with vigorous post-war reconstruction education activities. In fact, in these years there was a decline in enrolments from 2154 in 1946⁷ to 920 in 1948, followed by an increase, so that in 1949 there were 1284, in 1950

⁶ Workers' Educational Association of South Australia, Executive Minutes, 23 March, 1948. The Teachers' Institute eventually affiliated in 1952.

⁷ Workers' Educational Association of South Australia, Thirty First Annual Report, Adelaide, WEA of S.A., 1947, p.3.

there were 1,538, in 1951, 1,720, in 1952, 1,753, in 1953, 1,495 and in 1954, enrolments totalled 3,117.⁸ The large increase in 1954 was partly explained by the WEA offering some short courses independently of the University.

In 1947, the students who attended the classes, included up to 25% who could have been regarded as from manual occupations, that is technical and shop assistants, and thus traditionally of working class background. In addition to these occupational groups, some adults classified as domestic would have been domestic workers and hence working class. Such adults would have been female and would have bolstered the female proportion of a male dominated manual worker category. However, those in the domestic group were very largely spouses of clerks and professionals and were more appropriately classified as home duties.⁹ Thus as with New South Wales, it was white collar employees and their spouses that were dominating the WEA classes. Table 5.2 gives a distribution of occupations of students in South Australian WEA classes in 1947.

⁸ Workers' Educational Association of South Australia, Annual Report, Adelaide, WEA of S.A., various years (1948 to 1954).

⁹ C.R. Lawton, WEA General Secretary 1949 to 1957 confirmed this in an interview with the researcher in 1980.

TABLE 5.2
STUDENT OCCUPATIONS - 1947

<u>Occupation</u>	<u>No.</u>	<u>%</u>
Clerical	408	37.0
Technical	207	18.8
Domestic	174	15.8
Miscellaneous	81	7.4
Students	69	6.3
Teachers	54	4.9
Shop Assistants	53	4.9
Nurses	45	4.1
Retired	9	0.8
<u>Total</u>	<u>1100</u>	<u>100.0</u>

- Note: (1) The difference between the total here and the number of enrolments quoted earlier was accounted for by some students enrolling in more than one class.
- (2) Those categorized as technical included artisans, apprentices and industrial workers, that is, manual workers.¹⁰

Source: Workers' Educational Association of South Australia, Thirty First Annual Report, op cit., p.5.

In its 1947 Annual Report, the WEA admitted that the founders of the Association had wanted to provide workers with an opportunity to understand the social forces surrounding them. Such emphasis had now (1947) changed with the WEA responding to the demand for adult education of a more general type, which

- ¹⁰ (a) Some apprentices could hardly be classified as adults as they could be as young as 15 years, although they were manual workers. But since the number and ages of apprentices in the category was not indicated, no conclusion can be drawn as to the exact number of adult manual workers.
- (b) It is interesting that the occupations of all students were ascertained. This is a most unlikely event (see earlier and later figures quoted). Perhaps those who failed to indicate an occupation were in the "miscellaneous" group.

was not related to any specific purpose other than general cultural development.¹¹ This, in essence, implied a status quo maintenance programme.

Such a provision was in fact, substantially similar to that of the WEA throughout its history. So while, in a number of its early programmes, especially when Heaton was in Adelaide, the Association had overtly promoted some specific working class education, it had soon changed to the extent that by 1947 its programme had not consistently included intentionally working class oriented endeavours. Rather they were more broadly based in an effort to appeal to educationally motivated adults, who were largely middle class. The courses for this group were offered within a guiding philosophical framework that emphasised the need for better citizenship, more creative use of leisure time and a better and more generally educated adult population.

In these early post-war years, the orientation did not arouse opposition from the WEA's affiliates.¹² In fact, one affiliate, the ALP, was at the time urging that more emphasis be given to education for leisure through the education system. The Party was responding to the effects of social changes that were being brought about in an era of post-war economic growth and prosperity in which leisure time was increasing.

In a report from the State Branch, the ALP stressed

¹¹ Workers' Educational Association of South Australia, Thirty First Annual Report, op cit., p.7.

¹² Workers' Educational Association of South Australia, Council Minutes, and Executive Minutes, 1943 to 1954 reveal no hostility or adverse criticism from affiliates over the WEA's programmes.

this need for leisure education.

One of the most important phases of education and one which is becoming increasingly important is the provision for leisure. Labor believes an education system should provide for the enjoyment of leisure and to that end it proposes to develop the various activities serving that end.¹³

There was consistency between WEA and ALP interest. However, the ALP's concern was not so much with the provision of higher education in the tradition of the joint classes, but rather with a lower level educational provision that would assist more adults to more profitably use leisure time.

When the WEA began offering some education studies independently of the control of the Joint Committee, it placed emphasis on such a provision as that suggested by the ALP. In the first year of this programme, namely 1954, for example, it offered Interior Decoration, Crown and People, Do Morals Count Today?, Geneva Conference, Flower Arrangement, Painting, Lino Block Painting and Glove Puppets.¹⁴ Quite clearly, the WEA was providing courses which were not of university standard and which were designed to appeal to educationally motivated middle class adults.

With this new emphasis in its offerings, the WEA altered its constitution in 1954, but retained as one of

¹³ Advertiser (Adelaide) 3 March, 1947. At the time there was a Committee of Enquiry investigating education in South Australia. See Chapter VII of this thesis.

¹⁴ Workers' Educational Association of South Australia, Thirty Eighth Annual Report, Adelaide, WEA of S.A., 1954, p.4. Biaggini as Tutor-in-Charge of Tutorial Classes had some disparaging remarks to make about the Interior Decoration Class - remarks that led to a WEA protest to the Vice-Chancellor. Workers' Educational Association of South Australia, Executive Minutes, 27 April, 1954.

its objectives:

(i) To promote adult education, especially the higher education of working men and women, provided that the Association shall not inculcate the doctrine of any particular political party or religious organisation.¹⁵

Although in theory it still persisted with its interest in the higher education of workers, the WEA appeared to depart from this position in practice. However, the apparent inconsistency in relation to the target clientele was explained by the WEA which now defined "working men and women" quite broadly.

The term "worker" for the purpose of adult education must mean almost everybody in the community.¹⁶

Furthermore, whilst maintaining "... especially the higher education ..." its major thrust in its own independent classes was not university standard liberal education, although, in the joint classes the emphasis was on university standard education. The fervour that gripped the WEA's pioneers with their interest in courses in economics and political sciences had disappeared.

Like the Victorian Council of Adult Education, the WEA, in its independent ventures, had found greater demand for very general enrichment subjects such as arts and crafts, than for the rigorous academic tutorial classes. The Association had also found that in part, such popular subjects aided it to "balance its budget". The middle class wanted, and

¹⁵ Workers' Educational Association of South Australia, Report of Special Meeting, 2 August, 1954.

¹⁶ Workers' Educational Association of South Australia, Thirty First Annual Report, op cit., p.5.

financially supported such classes.

By the mid-1950's, the WEA and University Tutorial Classes Department provision of adult education was different from what it had been at the foundation of the Joint Tutorial Classes Committee. The major aspects of their adult education work in these early post-war years were: the emphasis on lecture classes rather than tutorial classes by the Joint Tutorial Classes Committee; the lack of attention being paid to the higher education of manual workers; the growing conflict between personalities in the partnership; the excursion of the WEA into the teaching area by the provision of its own classes, and the recreational nature of these classes, and lack of attention being given to the provision of any education which was quite specifically aimed at working class adults. There had thus been a shift of WEA emphasis from the pioneering focus on worker-oriented socio-political studies with a central concern on social harmony and the development of better citizens in a democratic society. Furthermore, the WEA, in its independent work, was quite clearly offering programmes that were "not of university standard". These changes in the theory and practice of the WEA were to have severe implications for the WEA University partnership.

In 1956, A.S.M. Hely was appointed to replace Biaggini as head of the University adult education programmes. The Department of Tutorial Classes prepared for a greater rate of growth as a re-organised Department of Adult Education. The re-organisation was welcomed in the local press. There, hope was expressed that the changed department would not submerge the WEA,¹⁷ and that all bodies involved in the provision of adult education would work closely together.¹⁸ The new

¹⁷ Advertiser (Adelaide) 9 May, 1956.

¹⁸ News (Adelaide) 21 May, 1956.

department did not "submerge the WEA". However, its creation saw a further strain in the relationship between the two bodies as the University sought more recognition of its very important role in the adult education partnership, a role so easily ignored with all joint classes being popularly regarded as "WEA classes".

In a report of the University's adult education provision, Hely proposed no departure from his Department's traditional concentration on university standard courses, although he recommended radical changes in the relationship between the Department and the WEA.¹⁹ These changes, in which the Department would now organise its own classes, and collect fees from these, would deprive the WEA of a source of revenue.

In a sense, the University would virtually have its own independent classes of university standard,²⁰ while the WEA would likewise offer an independent programme of largely recreational and utilitarian education. The WEA's courses would not be of university standard and thus not "higher education" in its commonly understood sense.

Clearly, in these early post-war years, in which adult education was expanding in a manner previously unknown in South Australia, the WEA would thus have to seek clients, very largely in competition with the Department and also the State Education Department. The Association had to expand its

¹⁹ Hely, A.S.M., The University and Adult Education, (Mimeograph, 18p.), Adelaide, 22 May, 1957, p.5.

²⁰ The newly formed Department of Adult Education, began to concentrate on courses which it saw as properly the province of the University, for example, extension courses for industrialists and social workers. Warburton, J.W., The University of Adelaide Department of Adult Education, (Paper presented to the Seventh Annual Conference of the Australian Association of Adult Education), (Mimeograph, 8p.), Adelaide, 1967, p.1.

independent programme to ensure its financial viability and thereby survival and growth. Certainly, the direction of this expansion would need to be in areas likely to attract many students, that is, largely in the leisure interest area. For, based on past experience, if the WEA were to concentrate on, for example, manual worker education, it would be unlikely to attract large numbers of fee paying students, unless it was, for example, to undertake some radical restructuring of its curriculum by the provision of courses which workers saw as comprising really useful knowledge.

Upon his appointment as Director of the new Department of Adult Education, Hely had been quick to voice concern about the joint work of the University and the WEA. In this way, he was repeating what educators before him such as Colin Badger, Professor W.G.K. Duncan, Lloyd Ross and Dr. E.G. Biaggini had suggested in their criticism of the partnership's joint work. He felt that, historically, the University had two major expectations of the WEA in their co-operative venture:

that the WEA would be a voluntary body organising groups of workers prepared to undertake serious study in one of the liberal arts subjects, and that it would be the machinery by which the workers could exercise some influence on the type of course offered to workers by the University.²¹

He believed that neither of them were achieved in South Australia,²² although the WEA had retained links with the labour movement.

²¹ Hely, A.S.M., op cit., p.8.

²² ibid., p.9.

Expectedly, in a response to Hely's paper, the WEA took issue with a number of points, including the above. Here, it was argued, the validity of Hely's comment rested on the interpretation of "worker", for:

... why should "workers" mean only manual and industrial workers?²³

This again clearly reflected the thinking of the WEA executive and reinforced the trend, so evident in the early post-World War II days, that the term "workers", as used by the WEA, referred to just about any adult. Literally speaking the executive was correct. However, such an expanded definition did not negate the fact that the WEA was not providing for the education of workers as traditionally defined.

Although the WEA had protested about Hely's attack, there were some executive members who apparently agreed with him.²⁴ Consequently, the WEA reassessed its almost dormant role in the provision of working class adult education. In a sense, Hely's attack was thus a watershed. It led to the Association becoming more active in promoting working class adult education as the WEA very quickly established a class at the Trades Hall.²⁵ Further efforts led to a conference on trade union education in October 1958, the first of its kind

²³ Taylor, A.A., Bywaters, G.A., Thiele, A.O., and Lawton, C.R., WEA Views on Mr. Hely's Report - The University and Adult Education, (Mimeograph, 4p.), Adelaide, 17 October, 1957, p.1.

²⁴ Workers' Educational Association of South Australia, Forty First Annual Report, Adelaide, WEA of S.A., 1957, p.1.

²⁵ Lawton, C., Workers' Educational Association of South Australia (Press Release), 27 November, 1957.

to be held in South Australia.²⁶ The conference resulted from a series of meetings between the WEA and the United Trades and Labor Council of South Australia. The Council undertook an extensive membership survey to ascertain course details for a possible future trade union education programme,²⁷ which it asked the WEA to offer.

The conference on trade union education held in 1958 was of significance. It demonstrated that the WEA officers were interested in providing courses specifically for workers, and courses that workers themselves felt they needed. The WEA made this provision with the assistance of trade union officials. Workers were to be involved in planning for workers' education, a principle so clear in pioneering WEA theory, but largely absent in past WEA practice.

The conference was of two days duration and attended by some fifty eight students²⁸ who reached agreement on the issue of correspondence courses for unionists. Conferees felt that such courses may appeal to unionists who worked irregular hours.²⁹ Workers who were unwilling or unable to commit themselves to regular class attendance could well be attracted

²⁶ Workers' Educational Association of South Australia, Forty Second Annual Report, Adelaide, WEA of S.A., 1958, p.1.

²⁷ Advertiser (Adelaide) 22 August, 1958.

²⁸ Williams, E., "Industrial Relations Training Through the Letter Box" in Australian Association of Adult Education, Education for Industrial Relations, Canberra, AAEA, 1974, pp.82-94, p.94.

²⁹ Lawton, C.R., The Workers' Educational Association of South Australia, (Paper presented to the Seventh Annual Conference of the Australian Association of Adult Education), (Mimeograph, 13p.), Adelaide, 1967, p.1.31.

to this form of study in their homes and at times that suited them.

Though the suggestion was not translated into practice until the 1960's, the conference laid the ground work for the eventual creation of the WEA inspired trade union correspondence education scheme. The lack of open conflict between the Association and the labour movement, and the mild nature of recent historical developments in relations between labour and the WEA, fostered these proposals. The conference had provided the Association with some hope in its then minor working class educational endeavours.

During 1959, Eric Williams, who had some experience of union education in Britain and who was the newly appointed General Secretary of the WEA in South Australia, reported on the then past, present and future prospects of the Association.³⁰ He wrote that the WEA was seen as a general adult education body, but went on to say:

The whole field of trade union education has hardly yet been touched in South Australia or even Australia. This is in striking contrast to developments almost the world over ... The rate of technological change and the increased emphasis on management as a science will make it inevitable in the long run for unionists to require specific educational provision geared to their needs. The smaller size of unions here, will probably prevent any union from setting up its own education department, and I would expect the WEA to be well situated to

³⁰ Williams, E., The WEA in 1959 ... and the Future, (Mimeograph, 11p.), Adelaide, October 1959.

cater for this, at present latent, demand. In the immediate future the WEA's recent policy of working with one union could gradually be extended to include some of the other larger unions with perhaps one or two major projects with the Trades and Labor Council ... Implicit in our agreement with the University is that the WEA should be regarded as the normal link between trade unions and the University. One would expect this agreement to be valid only so long as the WEA shows itself able and willing to cater for trade union needs.³¹

There were three important points raised by Williams in his paper. Firstly, there was the recognition of the smaller size unions in South Australia and thereby the difficulty they would face in diverting part of often meagre financial resources into education provision for members.

The second crucial point, made by Williams, was the recognition that the relationship between the University and the WEA, where the WEA was the link between trade unions and the University, was only valid if the WEA showed itself able to cater for trade union educational needs. Thirdly, the tenor of any WEA trade union education was foreshadowed. It, at least from an official Association viewpoint, would be non-partisan, non-party political. In essence, it would concentrate on remedial and management education for union officials, rather than on higher liberal education. Hence the focus would be different from that of the early years of its activities in working class adult education although there was still a concern with social harmony and worker and wider social development.

With such an emphasis, the WEA in conjunction with the Amalgamated Engineering Union (AEU), held a conference for

³¹ ibid., p.6.

shop stewards in 1959.³² Concentration in the conference was on the topics of Compulsory Arbitration and Collective Bargaining. The venture met with the expressed approval of at least one other union, namely the Australian Railways Union, (ARU).³³ Some active union support was being generated.

Subsequently, the AEU proposed a further weekend school which was held in conjunction with the University of Adelaide. The theme here was World Leadership - Soviet Russia vs. the United States.³⁴ Later that year the AEU, proposed yet another conference. This was on Wages, Prices and Profits. It was held in 1960, with an enrolment of 46 students, and brought praise from the Amalgamated Postal Workers' Union for the Association's efforts with the conference.³⁵

The Australian Tramways and Motor Omnibus Employees' Association (S.A. Branch) approached the WEA for help in the preparation of an 18 session course concerned with "things of interest to members".³⁶ The WEA agreed to assist. Further, the Association hoped to organise a meeting early in 1961, to

³² Workers' Educational Association of South Australia, Executive Minutes, 6 July, 1959; Workers' Educational Association of South Australia, Forty Third Annual Report, Adelaide, WEA of S.A., 1959, p.6.

³³ Workers' Educational Association of South Australia, Council Minutes, 20 July, 1959. Warwick Marshall, former Secretary of the ARU, confirmed his union's support for such WEA courses in an interview with the researcher in March, 1979.

³⁴ Workers' Educational Association of South Australia, Executive Minutes, 31 August, 1959, and Workers' Educational Association of South Australia, Forty Third Annual Report, op cit., p.6.

³⁵ Workers' Educational Association of South Australia, Executive Minutes, 14 June, 1960.

³⁶ Workers' Educational Association of South Australia, Executive Minutes, 14 December, 1959.

discuss trade union education with trade unionists.³⁷ Hence 1958 marked a turning point in the WEA's efforts in working class adult education. The courses attracted only small numbers of unionists. However, they were ventures which revealed renewed appeal of the WEA to some trade unions, particularly the Amalgamated Engineering Union.

In 1961, the AEU and the WEA held a conference on Monopolies in Australia. A further conference proposed by the WEA in conjunction with the Trades and Labor Council failed to eventuate because of "organisational difficulties".³⁸ The interest of the AEU continued and in 1962 a weekend school on Contract of Employment was held. In addition the Union and the Association entered into discussions on the viability of the WEA organising a course, specifically for the Union's members.³⁹

Renewed interest in trade union education was yet further evidenced when:

It was agreed that Mr. J. Nancarrow be given authority to approach trade unions with a view to establishing a committee of interested unionists who might be willing to examine the means through which the Association's trade union work might be expanded and subsequently make recommendations for consideration by the WEA.⁴⁰

³⁷ Workers' Educational Association of South Australia, Council Minutes, 19 December, 1960.

³⁸ Workers' Educational Association of South Australia, Executive Minutes, 20 September, 1961.

³⁹ Workers' Educational Association of South Australia, Executive Minutes, 26 April, 1962, and 11 July, 1962.

⁴⁰ Workers' Educational Association of South Australia, Executive Minutes, 8 August, 1962. Nancarrow was a tram driver, and a unionist who was of considerable help to Williams in his efforts to mount a WEA trade union education programme.

A meeting with interested trade unionists was held in 1963. An Advisory Trade Union Educational Committee was formed and approaches were to be made to unions to obtain financial contributions for a proposed correspondence education scheme.⁴¹

Widespread union interest was shown in the scheme. The United Trades and Labor Council accepted the WEA's invitation to affiliate and the Department of Adult Education of the University of Adelaide also agreed to support it. By mid-1964 over 500 students had enrolled and thirty unions had affiliated.⁴² Initially fees were a \$10 annual union affiliation fee plus 1¢ for each financial union member.⁴³ This enabled the unions' members to enrol, free of charge, in any one of the postal courses.

During that year, three members of the WEA Executive, who were also members of the Trade Union Education Committee, reported on The WEA and Trade Union Education.⁴⁴ In this the authors firstly re-emphasised the traditional missionary role of the WEA - that is, the creation of a link between labour and learning as espoused in the First Annual Report of the Association in South Australia.⁴⁵ They also lamented the fact that the WEA had experienced difficulty in appealing to

⁴¹ Workers' Educational Association of South Australia, Executive Minutes, 27 February, 1963.

⁴² Workers' Educational Association of South Australia, Executive Minutes, 13 July, 1964; Lawton, C.R., The Workers' Educational Association of South Australia, op cit., p.1.31.

⁴³ Workers' Educational Association of South Australia, Submission to Committee of Enquiry into Education in South Australia, Adelaide, WEA of S.A., 1969, p.19.

⁴⁴ Nancarrow, J.V. et. al., The WEA and Trade Union Education (Report to WEA Council, August 1964.) in Workers' Educational Association of South Australia, Council Minutes, 3 September, 1964.

⁴⁵ ibid., p.5.

unionists.⁴⁶

However, because of its traditions and the nature of other adult education bodies, the authors felt that the WEA had a genuine role to play in trade union education. To this end they suggested that the Association should offer a series of courses for trade unionists. These should include remedial and liberal educational subjects in addition to subjects such as Public Speaking. In conclusion, the Committee reported that:

... the WEA can bring to the unionist an education he would otherwise miss, if it can show him how to be more effective in his union or his community, if it can make him more aware of his surroundings, if it can, that is, help him to become truly a living being, then the WEA can say it has made an important contribution to the education of the people it was first established to assist.⁴⁷

The proposed education provision was essentially conservative. Moreover, it was to be a remedial, or general liberal education, to make a "better man or woman", a person more able to participate in, and contribute to, the development of society as a whole, and individuals within it. The emphasis on social harmony so evident at the Association's foundation was again obvious. Furthermore, it was to assist unionists, in particular, to become "better" unionists through education. This would be achieved by placing considerable emphasis on utilitarian education.

A blueprint for future developments in the area had been established.

⁴⁶ ibid., p.2.

⁴⁷ ibid., p.10.

However, by the mid-1960's, although the WEA was becoming more actively involved in trade union education, quantitatively, its major effort was still its very extensive recreational educational programme that it had begun to develop in the early 1950's. This side of the Association's work had considerably aided its growth. In 1965, Hely, the Director of the Department of Adult Education at the University, reviewed adult education provision since 1957, and said:

There can be little doubt that the WEA is in fact,⁴⁸
a good deal stronger today than it was in 1956 ...

It was indeed stronger.

The WEA and the Later Post-War Years: General Classes

Enrolments in WEA programmes had increased substantially in the post-war years of economic boom as the Association attempted to provide educational experiences for an increasingly diverse adult population. See Table 5.3 for enrolments in classes.

TABLE 5.3

WEA CLASS ENROLMENTS - 1955 to 1963

<u>University/WEA Classes</u>		<u>WEA Independent Classes</u>		<u>Total</u>	
<u>Year</u>	<u>No. of Classes</u>	<u>Enrolment</u>	<u>No. of Classes</u>	<u>Enrolment</u>	<u>No. of Classes</u>
1955	44	1,728	16	722	60
1957	40	1,702	24	1,289	64
1959	48	2,341	24	1,508	72
1961	52	2,260	27	1,858	79
1963	61	2,488	40	2,658	101

Source: Workers' Educational Association of South Australia, Annual Report, Adelaide, WEA of S.A., 1959; 1961; 1963.

The educational programme was varied, with the WEA independent

⁴⁸ Hely, A.S.M., "Summary Report for Period 1957-1965", in Workers' Educational Association of South Australia, Executive Minutes, 11 November, 1965.

classes including Cooking, Chess, Buying/Building a Home, Department, Interior Decorating, Stock Exchange, Traveller's Guide, Flower Arrangement and Planning and Running a Small Business. The added strength of the WEA lay not in its ability to attract a larger manual worker clientele, but rather its ability to expand student numbers from the ranks of the middle class by offering courses which satisfied some of their educational needs.

In a 1964 analysis of students enrolled in WEA independent classes, almost three quarters (73.8%) were female. Almost a third (33.2%) were classified as home duties, and thus not traditionally regarded as part of the labour force. Furthermore, 14.1% were professionals, 23.7% office workers, 5.7 skilled workers, 2.2% unskilled workers and 5.0% teachers. The remainder were spread across a variety of occupations. Only 2.2% were 60 years of age or over while 41.2% had an education to at least grade 11 in secondary school.⁴⁹ The general adult educational programme had obvious appeal to women. It attracted a large proportion of non-manual workers and many "housewives", thus giving a similar student profile to that obtained in other Australian and overseas post World War II studies of participants in recreational, liberal or informational adult education courses.

In a very extensive study into characteristics of participants in adult education, American researchers provided a profile of the typical recreational, liberal, informational and non-formal adult education student. Accordingly this

⁴⁹ Lawton, C.R., The Workers' Educational Association of South Australia, op cit., pp.1.34-1.35.

person was described as being:

... just as often a woman as a man, is typically under forty, has completed high school or better, enjoys an above average income, works full-time and most often in a white collar occupation, is typically white and Protestant, is married and a parent, lives in an urbanized area but more likely in a suburb than in a large city ...⁵⁰

This profile was similar, in many respects, to that of the WEA student in South Australia.

Other studies by Boshier,⁵¹ Butterdahl and Verner,⁵² Luckham,^{53,54} Verner and Newberry,⁵⁵ Brennan and McDowell,⁵⁶ and Burgess,⁵⁷ reported that those most likely to participate

⁵⁰ Johnstone, J.W.C. and Rivera, R.J., Volunteers for Learning: A Study of the Educational Pursuits of American Adults, Chicago, Aldine Publishing Co., 1965, p.8. This study used a very broad definition of adult education and included much that could be regarded as of an incidental nature. Hence, it is not valid to directly compare its findings with those from studies which have focussed only on formally planned, systematic adult education. It is however, included here because of its magnitude and significance as a research study.

⁵¹ Boshier, R., "The Participants: A Clientele Analysis of Three New Zealand Adult Education Institutions", Australian Journal of Adult Education, 10(3):131-141, 1970; and 11 (1):21-44, 1971.

⁵² Butterdahl, K. and Verner, C., "Characteristics of Participants in Two Methods of Adult Education", Adult Education: A Journal of Research and Theory, 15(2):67-73, 1965.

⁵³ Luckham, B., "The Characteristics of Adult Education Students", Studies in Adult Education, 3(2):118-139, 1971.

⁵⁴ Luckham, B., "The Image of Adult Education", Studies in Adult Education, 4(1):1-20, 1972.

⁵⁵ Verner, C. and Newberry, J.S., "The Nature of Adult Participation", Adult Education: A Journal of Research and Theory, 8(4):208-221, 1958.

⁵⁶ Brennan, T. and McDowell, D., "Non-Vocational Classes - Is There a Social Barrier?", Adult Education, 41(5):302-307, 1969.

⁵⁷ Burgess, P., "Reasons for Adult Participation in Group Educational Activities", Adult Education: A Journal of Research and Theory, 22(1):3-29, 1971.

in recreational, liberal or informational adult education were well educated and were characteristically middle class. Manual workers were found to be more unlikely to become involved in such activities.

Durston summarised findings from Australian studies including theses by McAughtrie (1948), Dunton (1960), and Moroney (1960).⁵⁸ The general conclusions from these studies suggested that recreational, liberal and informational adult education appealed to those who had the advantage of a good basic education. Furthermore, they were interested in other ideas and cultures, and were non-manual workers, or middle class women who were classified as home duties and were not in the traditionally defined labour force.

Perhaps one of the most interesting surveys conducted thus far has been that of Duke and Butterfield. In specific terms the research was directed at discovering students' perceptions of the Australian National University's Centre for Continuing Education.⁵⁹ Further, it was intended to establish some knowledge of the students in terms of their education, socio-economic standing, life-style, and to discover which social groups were under-represented in courses. Findings largely supported other research studies, namely, that participants were drawn from the higher social strata in terms

⁵⁸ Durston, B.H., "The Clientele of Adult Education" in Australian Association of Adult Education, Recent Projects in Adult Education - Research in Adult Education, (Proceedings of Ninth Annual Australian Association of Adult Education Conference, 2 Vols.) Canberra, AAE, 1969, Volume 2, pp.59-66.

⁵⁹ Duke, C. and Butterfield, M., "A Survey of Students - Rationale and Mode of Enquiry", Australian Journal of Adult Education, 11(1):3-20, 1971.

of occupational and educational status.

Clearly, the types of students attracted to WEA independent classes were not atypical of participants in recreational, informational and non-vocational adult education provided by other bodies.

In an early analysis (1948) of tutorial class students of the WEA and Department of Tutorial Classes of the University of Sydney, Professor Peers suggested that of the 2,637 students surveyed, 347 (13%) could be regarded as manual workers, 746 (28%) as clerical, 582 (22%) as home duties, 189 (7%) as students, 176 (7%) as teachers and 23% in a variety of categories.⁶⁰ The profile of overseas studies is again locally validated.

Subsequently, in 1964 the WEA of New South Wales undertook a survey of 5,000 students in the Sydney metropolitan programme. The results were as follows in Table 5.4.

⁶⁰ Peers, R., Adult Education in Australia, (Mimeograph, 24p.), Sydney, 1951, p.4.

TABLE 5.4

STUDENT ENROLMENTS - 1964

<u>Sex</u>	<u>Students</u>	<u>Percentage of Population based on 1961 Census</u>
Male	31.8	49.7
Female	68.2	50.3
<u>Occupations</u>		
Housewives	22.2	22.1
Clerical, Sales	32.0	16.5
Semi-Professional	20.8	3.0
Professional	5.8	1.3
Tradesmen	5.2	39.2
Students	2.9	1.5
Self-Employed	1.0	5.0
Retired, Pensioners	2.8	11.4
Not Stated	7.3	-
<u>Age Range</u>		
18 - 35 years	34.4	34.9
36 - 50 years	33.6	30.9
51 years and over	16.1	34.2
Not Stated	15.9	-
<u>Educational Background</u>		
Primary School only	1.8	
Some Secondary Education	25.1	
Leaving Certificate	20.7	Not
No Leaving Certificate but some form of tertiary education	8.7	Stated
Leaving Certificate and some form of tertiary training	16.5	
University Degree	11.0	
Not Stated	15.9	

Source: Bentley, C.F., "The Workers' Educational Association of N.S.W." in J.W. Warburton, (Ed.) The Organisation of Adult Education in Australia, (Proceedings of Seventh Annual Australian Association of Adult Education Conference, 2 Volumes), Adelaide, AAAE, University of Adelaide Department of Adult Education, 1967, Volume 1, pp.19-29, pp.23,24.

Comparable enrolment figures for 1969 were analysed by Charles Bentley. He considered both tutorial class and WEA independent class enrolments in the Autumn programme of that year. Table 5.5 below illustrates these data.

TABLE 5.5

AUTUMN STUDENT ENROLMENTS - 1969

<u>Sex</u>	<u>Percentage</u>
Male	29.7
Female	70.3
<u>Occupation</u>	
Housewife	17.3
Clerical, Sales	32.9
Semi-Professional	25.6
Professional	7.1
Tradesmen	3.9
Students	3.0
Self-Employed	0.9
Retired	2.4
Not Stated	6.9
<u>Age</u>	
To 35 years	50.1
36 - 50 years	25.1
51 years and over	13.9
Not Stated	10.9
<u>Educational Background</u>	
Less than Leaving Certificate	29.6
Leaving Certificate or Higher	65.6
Not Stated	4.8

Source: Workers' Educational Association of New South Wales, Annual Report, Sydney, WEA of N.S.W., 1969, p.6.

On the basis of a manual, non-manual dichotomy, the clear dominance of the latter was evidenced in the above tables. Occupations included here were clerical, sales, (the majority of students in this group were most likely clerical), semi-

professional, professional and self-employed. Housewives, students and retired people (20.6% of enrollees) were not in the labour force and based on other comparable studies cited in this work, were likely to have been of middle class background.

Some further obvious factors emerged from the comparison, with the inclusion of WEA independent enrollees in the 1969 figures having variable and uncertain effects on the comparison. There was the persistent dominance of women in courses, and then the increasingly young and more highly educated nature of the student body.

There was a smaller proportion of housewives among the students in 1969 than in 1964. This possibly reflected wider social changes where of late, many women rejoined the traditional workforce, particularly after marriage. Furthermore the percentage of semi-professional and professional people in the student body increased. Again this possibly reflected wider social changes.⁶¹

The category of tradesmen, when taken literally, implied skilled people such as those who had undertaken basic trade (apprenticeship) studies. In the tables, the classification included not only skilled workers, but also semi-skilled and unskilled workers. These latter two groups, which were significantly under-represented in the 1964 student body, compared with their representation in society as a whole, declined as a percentage of the student body in 1969 compared

⁶¹ 1961, 1966 and 1971 Census figures have reflected this growth in the percentage of professional and semi-professional people in the workforce. See Commonwealth Bureau of Census and Statistics, Official Year Book of Australia, Canberra, Bureau of Census and Statistics, 1966; 1969; 1974,

with 1964. In the overall Australian workforce, this group has also shown a small decline over the years concerned.

The profile created of the liberal, recreational and informational adult education participant was again consistent with previous studies. The manual worker was certainly not dominant.

In a study of participants involved in three year intensive liberal adult educational courses offered by the Department of Tutorial Classes at the University of Sydney, Dr. Joan Allsop found a general youth bias. Almost half the enrollees were under 30 years of age and 75% were under 40 years of age.⁶² Considered in conjunction with prior education, the implication was that these people had experienced a longer attendance at secondary school. More than 70% of the women and 90% of the men were engaged in paid employment with 37% of these being considered as professionals. Of this group teachers comprised a third, followed closely by engineers. About half the women were engaged in clerical work, with 42% being private secretaries. The evidence suggested that students were relatively well educated and largely employed in non-manual occupations.

Educational backgrounds were found to be fairly uniform. Half of the students had completed secondary school, with three

⁶² Allsop. J., "Three Year Courses at Sydney: A Progress Report", Australian Journal of Adult Education, 6(2):30-41, December, 1966, passim.

quarters of these having matriculated. Nearly a third of all students possessed some professional qualifications. Thus it could be concluded that professional and para-professional workers were strongly represented in liberal adult education classes, while semi-skilled and unskilled workers were not attracted.

Similar results were obtained in two South Australian studies that were funded by the Federal Government, one conducted by Bob Sumner and Lyn Kerkham,⁶³ and the other by Dianne Finnigan.⁶⁴ Both found that manual workers did not contribute significantly to student numbers in liberal, recreational and informational adult education programmes.⁶⁵

In 1964, the South Australian WEA undertook an analysis of 1,659 of the 2,367 students in its independent class programme. Unfortunately no indication was given of how the sample was chosen,⁶⁶ although results indicated its representative nature.

⁶³ Sumner, R.J. and Kerkham, L., A College of Further Education in its Local Community, Adelaide, Torrens CAE, 1976, passim.

⁶⁴ Finnigan, D.M., Outreach: Awareness of and Access to Adult Education, Adelaide, Department of Further Education, 1977, passim.

⁶⁵ Details of both of these studies are given in Chapter VII where consideration is given to government provided adult education.

⁶⁶ This survey was reported by Williams as being the first comprehensive survey of the nature of the WEA student body for there was a dearth of data on students since its foundation in 1913. Workers' Educational Association of South Australia, Forty Eighth Annual Report, Adelaide, WEA of S.A., 1964, Appendix I, p.1.

Table 5.6 below illustrates these data.

TABLE 5.6

WEA INDEPENDENT CLASS ENROLMENTS - 1964

Sex	Number		Students Percentage	
Male	434		26.2	
Female	1225		73.8	
Total	1659		100.0	

Occupation	Male		Female		Total	
	No.	%	No.	%	No.	%
Unskilled Workers	27	6.2	10	0.9	37	2.2
Skilled Workers	81	18.4	14	1.1	95	5.7
Business Owner or Executive	56	12.9	7	0.5	63	3.7
Sales	23	5.3	14	1.1	37	2.2
Office Workers	65	14.9	329	26.8	394	23.7
Teachers	21	4.8	63	5.1	84	5.0
Professional	103	23.8	131	10.6	234	14.1
Students	16	3.7	46	3.7	62	3.7
Domestic	-	-	562	45.9	562	33.2
Other	24	5.5	23	1.8	47	2.8
Not Stated	18	4.1	26	2.1	44	2.6
Total	434	99.6	1225	99.6	1659	98.9*

Age	Male		Female		Total	
	No.	%	No.	%	No.	%
Under 20 years	22	4.9	161	13.1	183	11.0
20 - 24 years	56	12.7	195	15.9	251	14.5
25 - 29 years	54	12.4	156	12.7	210	12.6
30 - 34 years	63	14.5	165	13.4	228	13.7
35 - 39 years	75	17.2	147	12.0	222	13.3
40 - 44 years	51	11.7	136	11.1	187	11.2
45 - 49 years	23	5.3	85	6.9	108	6.5
50 - 54 years	35	8.0	80	6.5	115	6.9
55 - 59 years	16	3.7	26	2.1	42	2.5
60 - 64 years	6	1.3	16	1.3	22	1.3
65 years and over	10	2.3	8	0.6	18	1.0
Not Stated	23	5.3	50	4.0	73	4.3
Total	434	99.3	1225	99.6	1659	98.8*

Educational Background	Male		Female		Total	
	No.	%	No.	%	No.	%
Primary School	19	4.3	43	3.5	62	3.7
1st Year Secondary School	18	4.1	59	4.0	77	4.6
2nd Year	45	10.2	129	10.5	174	10.4
3rd Year	87	20.0	386	31.5	473	22.4
4th Year	78	17.9	276	22.5	354	21.3
5th Year	29	6.6	118	9.6	147	8.8
Tertiary Education	117	26.9	68	5.5	185	11.1
Not Given	41	9.4	146	11.9	187	11.2
Total	434	99.4	1225	98.5	1659	93.5*

* Balance made up of enrolments in more than one class by the same student.

Source: Workers' Educational Association of South Australia, Forty Eighth Annual Report, op cit., Appendix I, p.8.

The student profile resembled that from similar analyses in previously cited post-World War II studies of adult participation. Manual workers were clearly under-represented in relation to their membership of society as a whole.⁶⁷ Essentially, women dominated courses, and students tended to be young, 76% of the students were under 45 years of age, and comparatively well-educated. Students were either largely non-manual workers or housewives not in paid employment, for the Domestic category was almost totally comprised of middle class women whose work was that of home duties.⁶⁸

Thus, in general terms, adult education of that type provided in the WEA's independent programme was, in the mid-1960's, very much a middle class activity. In this way its student body was similar to that of other agencies which promoted themselves as general adult educational bodies.

Clearly the WEA was responding to popular educational demands from adults. It was providing courses with considerable appeal, a condition evidenced by its growth in student numbers. See Table 5.7.

⁶⁷ See, Commonwealth Bureau of Census and Statistics, Official Year Book of Australia, No. 55, Canberra, Bureau of Census and Statistics, 1969, p.1124.

⁶⁸ Notes from an interview between the researcher and Eric Williams, March 1979, in which Williams discussed the research and its findings.

TABLE 5.7

WEA UNIVERSITY CLASS ENROLMENT - 1955 to 1971

	<u>Joint class enrolment.</u> No. of students	<u>Independent WEA class enrolment.</u> No. of students	<u>Total</u>
1955	722	1,728	2,450
1956	858	1,569	2,427
1957	1,289	1,702	2,991
1958	633	2,916	3,549
1959	1,508	2,341	3,849
1960	2,609	1,985	4,594
1961	2,260	1,858	4,118
1962	2,015	1,633	3,648
1963	2,488	2,658	5,146
1964	2,618	2,638	5,256
1965	2,713	2,902	5,615
1966	2,375	2,700	5,075
1967	2,086	3,617	5,703
1968	1,716	4,683	6,399
1969	1,775	7,302	9,077
1970	1,462	6,710	8,172
1971	1,028	7,549	8,579

Note: Trade union postal course students were not included.

Source: Workers' Educational Association of South Australia, Annual Report, Adelaide, WEA of S.A., 1955; 1959; 1960; 1961; 1962; 1963; 1964; 1967; 1970; 1971.

Its independent classes followed the pattern established in preceding years. They were of a hobby, general interest nature, although some were of a vocational orientation, namely Home Nursing, Photography, Public Speaking, The Stock Exchange, Department, Landscape Gardening and Running a Small Business. Meanwhile, its joint programme with the University comprised classes in, for example, language and literature, and natural science.

This latter programme was showing a slow decline in its appeal to adults. However, before corrective action could be taken, the long and increasingly turbulent relationship

between the WEA and the University Department of Adult Education ended. The WEA, in particular, was hostile at the breakdown of the partnership:

As a result of an unparalleled breach of a solemn agreement by the unilateral action of the University of Adelaide Department of Adult Education, Joint Classes ... were discontinued.⁶⁹

The breakdown was, in a sense, a result of personality clashes between Williams, who actively developed a strong non-university standard WEA independent programme, and University adult educators.⁷⁰

The issue which eventually saw the partnership end, was the WEA's desire to mount three specific courses, including Palmistry, on the University campus. The University opposed the request. The objection was not to the WEA running the courses, as independent courses, but the University adult educators did not want them run on the University campus.⁷¹

From 1972 the former partners would no longer offer a joint programme. The University would pursue its university standard courses with their specific appeal to professionals, while the WEA would continue with its trade union and its broad based recreational educational programme. The partnership had existed for almost sixty years, during which time, it had made an important contribution to adult education provision in South

⁶⁹ Workers' Educational Association of South Australia, Fifty Sixth Annual Report, Adelaide, WEA of S.A., 1972, p.1.

⁷⁰ Interview with C. Lawton, Department of Continuing Education, University of Adelaide, 1980.

⁷¹ Interview with C. Lawton, 1980; interview with E. Williams, 1979.

Australia. But in the WEA's fundamental area of operation, namely, its role in creating a link between labour and the University and encouraging workers to engage in higher learning, the WEA had enjoyed only intermittent successes.

Although the final breakdown in the partnership was caused by a "course issue", for a number of years, particularly since the WEA had begun offering its own recreational programme, there had been little valid reason for the partnership's formal existence. The WEA officers were giving considerable emphasis to their independent courses that were certainly not of university standard. The Association was not linking labour to the University and its previously important role in creating a demand for tutorial classes no longer existed.

During 1972, the WEA offered 196 classes for in excess of 7,700 students, in addition to various weekend schools, residential schools and trade union work.⁷² The classes were often short, being of four, six, eight or ten meetings and comprised such studies as Painting, Planning and Running a Small Business, Stock Exchange, Nutrition, Photography, Accountancy, Law, Visiting Art Galleries, Cinema and Collecting Silver.

The Association offered similar courses in the years from 1972 to 1975, and indeed, in the years to the end of the decade. In 1973, for example, courses in areas such as Architecture and the Home, Gardening and Plants, Collectors' Courses, Art Appreciation, Art Practical, Crafts, Hobbies and Pastimes, Photography, Travel, Natural History, Mainly for Women, English Expression and Grammar, Speech, Clear Thinking, Creative Writing,

⁷² Workers' Educational Association of South Australia, Fifty Sixth Annual Report, op cit., p.1. This enrolment had increased to over 10,500 by 1975. Workers' Educational Association of South Australia, Fifty Ninth Annual Report, Adelaide, WEA of S.A., 1975, p.7.

Reading Improvement, Study Techniques, Psychology, Food and Wine, Music and Drama, Current Affairs, Law and Business, Finance and Investment, were offered.⁷³

Its class programme of 1976 included subjects within the following categories, House and Garden, Collectors' Courses, Art Practical, Crafts, Hobbies and Pastimes, Outdoor Leisure Activities, Natural History, The Arts, Mainly for Women, Literature, English Expression and Grammar, Corsi D'Italiano, Psychology and Life Today, Law and Social Effects, Overseas Countries and Travel, Current Affairs, Food and Wine, Vocational Courses and Business, Finance, Investment.⁷⁴ One of the Current Affairs courses was outlined as:

MONEY IN YOUR POCKET

Dr. J.H. Court and R.W.K. Dawson, M.A., Ad. Dip.T.,
Dip.Ap. Ps., A.B.Ps.S.
8p.m. Tuesdays 6 x 1½hr. Sessions.
September 28, Institute of Technology. Fee: \$8.

Where does our money come from and where finally does it go? Who pays for education, pensions, transport? Is taxation theft, or a method of sharing cost? Does advertising increase the cost of what we buy or does it enable the manufacturer to produce more? Are subsidies a valid method of assisting production? These and other topics will be discussed in this new course.⁷⁵

⁷³ Workers' Educational Association of South Australia, Adult Classes 1973; Spring Courses, 1974; Courses 1974; 1975 Syllabus.

⁷⁴ Workers' Educational Association of South Australia, Spring Courses, 1976.

⁷⁵ ibid.

One course from the Business Finance and Investment section was:

THE STOCK EXCHANGE AND THE INVESTOR

(In conjunction with the Stock Exchange of Adelaide)
8p.m. Wednesdays. 6 x 1½hr. Sessions.
September 15, Meeting Room Stock Exchange, Exchange
Place, Adelaide. Fee: \$10.

This course will prove of value to private investors and trustees of funds. The lectures for this course are:

1. The Stock Exchange
2. Avenues of Investment
3. Company Reports
4. Investment Analysis
5. Outside Influence Affecting the Share Market
6. Building your Portfolio.⁷⁶

The courses were a considerable departure from those proposed at the WEA's foundation.

Throughout its history, but particularly by the mid- 1970's, the WEA gained much respectability in South Australia. It became a strongly established part of the educational scene in the State. Neither radical nor conservative social elements seriously threatened its orientation as it continued to grow into a substantial general adult educational provider.

While the WEA expanded through the 1960's and 1970's, the appeal of its educational programmes was clear. In the liberal, recreational and informational areas, its student body was similar to that of equivalent general adult educational programmes in New South Wales, and countries such as Britain, New Zealand and the United States of America. The middle class wanted, and financially supported, such leisure oriented adult educational activities as those provided by the Association.

However, these programmes, although quantitatively dominating the WEA's formal adult educational work, were not its only provisions. Workers' education, or from 1958, trade union education, was a small but an increasingly important part of the WEA's offerings as the Association attempted to adhere, at least in part, to one aspect of its foundation objectives.

⁷⁶ ibid.

It has been since 1964, when the postal, or correspondence scheme commenced, that developments in this area have been most significant.

The WEA and the Later Post-War Years:

Worker Education

In early WEA constitutions, reference had been made to the promotion of the higher education of workers. Successive WEA executives had resisted attacks on the WEA's lack of emphasis on worker education by broadly defining "workers". However, by the mid to late-1960's, any concern arising over the expanded definition was defused by the WEA's restatement of its main objective. This was:

- (a) To promote adult education, especially the higher education of men and women, provided that the Association shall not inculcate the doctrine of any particular political party or religious organisation.⁷⁷

In both theory and practice, the WEA was to be concerned with the education of adults, irrespective of whether or not they were in the labour force.⁷⁸ However, it still had some interest in workers' education, even though references to this had been removed from its constitution.

Since 1958, as indicated earlier, sections of the trade union movement had become more actively involved in WEA

⁷⁷ Workers' Educational Association of South Australia, Submission to Committee of Enquiry into Education in South Australia, op cit., p.9. See also Workers' Educational Association of South Australia, Constitution and Standing Orders - Adopted 1973, (Mimeograph, 9p.), Adelaide, 1973, p.1.

⁷⁸ For some time, the WEA had appealed to housewives, students and retired people. See the immediately preceding discussion in this chapter.

classes. One area in which their participation has been noticeable, has been in the trade union correspondence scheme. This scheme⁷⁹ began operating early in 1964, and by December of that year over forty unions from throughout Australia had affiliated.⁸⁰

Recognition of the education needs of the trade union movement, such as training in specific skills for union officials or rank and file members led to the introduction of the scheme.⁸¹ Furthermore, the inability of many unionists to participate in programmes which required regular class attendance, often at night, coupled with support from leading trade unionists helped the scheme develop.⁸² As Williams reported:

... the (correspondence) scheme ... was introduced in an industrial environment with virtually no tradition of adult education designed specifically for, and supported by, the organised trade union movement.⁸³

Certainly there was "virtually no tradition" in South Australia, although there had been some intermittent efforts to provide education for unionists over the years since 1917. However,

⁷⁹ The scheme was subsequently endorsed by the ACTU, the Australian Council of Salaried and Professional Associations (ACSPA) and the Council of Commonwealth Public Service Organisations (CCPSO).

⁸⁰ Workers' Educational Association of South Australia, Executive Minutes, 18 December, 1964.

⁸¹ Williams, E., "The Postal Course Scheme for Trade Unionists in Australian Association of Adult Education", Adult Education and Community Advancement, (Report of the Tenth Annual Australian Association of Adult Education Conference, Sydney, 1970), Canberra, AAEA, 1970, pp.191-208, p.192.

⁸² Interview with E. Williams, March 1979.

⁸³ Williams, E., "The Postal Course Scheme for Trade Unionists". op cit., p.192.

there was to be a changed focus in the new correspondence programme in comparison to earlier WEA efforts. Firstly, the mode of presentation was different and secondly, some considerable emphasis was being given to remedial adult education.⁸⁴

Like the initiatives of many adult education pioneers, the 1964 WEA executive was making efforts to remedy deficiencies in the early education of workers. However, WEA practice in the 1960's was different from its focus of 1917. The correspondence programme was not to be of university standard but of a more pragmatic nature. There was a strong possibility that the more basic education would be viewed by workers as more useful and would thus have strong appeal to them.

Initially, the scheme comprised eleven courses.⁸⁵ Subsequently further courses were included. The following is an outline of these.

TRADE UNION POSTAL COURSES

SHOP STEWARDS' COURSE (6 lessons)

A six lesson shop stewards' course intended to develop basic skills and self-confidence among new and less experienced shop stewards. It deals with such important skills as interviewing, negotiating, reporting back and meeting procedure.

84 ibid., p.192.

85 ibid.

ENGLISH (3 Courses)Everyday English (12 lessons)

A practical course for those whose time is limited. Most formal grammar is therefore omitted.

Introductory English (6 lessons)

Covering formal grammar and giving practice in writing and spelling. Nouns, pronouns, structure of sentences, adverbs, etc.

Intermediate English (6 lessons)

Continues the Introductory Course. This and the Introductory Course should be of assistance in preparation for some examinations.

ARITHMETIC AND STATISTICS (6 lessons)

The use of arithmetic and statistics in our everyday life, to support arguments and illustrate reports.

HOW TO STUDY (6 lessons)

To assist the person who comes to study with no idea of how to begin.

TRADE UNIONS IN AUSTRALIA (6 lessons)

Development of unions, aims, methods, organisations, A.C.T.U., A.C.S.P.A., C.A.G.E.O., unions, politics and the future.

HISTORY OF AUSTRALIAN TRADE UNIONISM (6 lessons)

Formation of the Australian working class. Early battles. Trade Unions and the Labor Party. Between the Wars. Post-War growth and the future.

AUSTRALIAN ARBITRATION SYSTEMS - Introduction (6 lessons)

Simple, factual account of arbitration systems and how they work. Ideal introduction or for brushing up on facts.

INDUSTRIAL PSYCHOLOGY (6 lessons)

How differences in skills between individuals are measured. Group relations in industry. The Australian worker. What causes good or bad union-management relations?

PUBLIC SPEAKING (6 lessons)

Basic advice and fundamental principles necessary for speaking to a wide range of groups. Presenting ideas effectively.

CLEAR THINKING (6 lessons)

Clear thinking is a way of life. If we are to get on as individuals with other people, each of us must learn to think clearly. This course aims towards this goal.

RUNNING A MEETING (6 lessons)

A practical course. Describes motions, amendments, points of order, duties of officers, agenda, minutes.

CHAIRMANSHIP (6 lessons)

A follow-up course to the Running a Meeting course. Short but varied and comprehensive exercises.

WORLD AFFAIRS (6 lessons)

Some of the major problems and trends in world affairs are covered.

GOVERNMENT AND POLITICS IN AUSTRALIA (8 lessons)

The main institutions of Australian Government are described. Topics include the Constitution, Senate, House of Representatives, Cabinet, Civil Service, Political Parties, etc.

AUSTRALIA AND SOUTH-EAST ASIA (6 lessons)

General introduction to the area of South-East Asia. Of importance to all Australians.

THE AFFLUENT SOCIETY (Intermediate Economics)
(6 lessons)

Based on the influential book by J.K. Galbraith.

INTRODUCTION TO ECONOMICS (6 lessons)

A basic introduction to the study of how Australia's economic system works. Including national income, banks, trade, employment and unemployment, and economic policy.

WAGES, PRICES AND PROFITS (8 lessons)

A vital subject for all thinking unionists. Just how are prices and profits determined ... and how does this affect your pay packet? A study of this course will give you a clear picture of the most discussed problems in political and union circles today.⁸⁶

⁸⁶ South Australian Council for Union Training, S.A. Trade Union Training Programme, Adelaide, S.A. Council for Union Training. n.d., pp.55-56.

The actual courses offered have varied slightly over the years. For example by 1972, Economics and the Man in the Street, and Intermediate Arbitration were two courses (not detailed here) that were offered.

Colin MacDonald, a former WEA Trade Union Education Officer, in his overview of the scheme, categorised courses into three groups, namely:

Industrial relations education and training, for example, Arbitration System, Trade Union History, Running a Meeting.

Remedial courses for those who experienced problems in their school years or for migrants from non-English speaking countries, for example, Everyday English, Arithmetic and Statistics and How to Study.

Courses which are in the realms of further education, for example, Introduction to Economics, Industrial Psychology and Australia and South-East Asia.⁸⁷

And of the courses with a direct bearing on industrial relations, MacDonald went on to say:

... the objectives are to make trade unionists more aware of the legal, political and social structures within which industrial relations operate in Australia, and to stimulate them to make critical evaluations of existing structures. The courses do not, by and large, suggest answers to the many problems which are thrown up, but it is hoped that the students will analyse the questions within the context of being better informed and being armed with additional information which might assist them to produce their own answers.⁸⁸

It was not the intention of the Association to give unionists a radical perspective on industrial relations. Rather, the WEA's guiding philosophy of non-partisanship and supposed political neutrality filtered through.

⁸⁷ MacDonald, C., "Industrial Relations Education Provision by the Workers' Educational Association of South Australia in Australian Association of Adult Education," Education for Industrial Relations, Canberra, AAEE, 1974, pp.53-61, p.54.

⁸⁸ ibid., p.55

A number of authors had been engaged to write the courses. These included Commissioner J.H. Portus (son of G.V. Portus), H. Hudson, a future Labor Party Deputy Premier, and Professor Ian Turner. All courses had been written for Australian conditions but some had been based on courses offered by Ruskin College, Oxford, and the National Council of Labour Colleges (NCLC) in Britain (now the TUC Correspondence College).⁸⁹ Table 5.8 shows the distribution of enrolments in particular courses in 1972.

TABLE 5.8

WEA POSTAL SCHEME ENROLMENT - 1972

<u>Course</u>	<u>Students</u>
Everyday English	433
Arithmetic and Statistics	326
Public Speaking	232
How to Study	219
Industrial Psychology	193
Clear Thinking	187
English - Introductory	147
Arbitration - Introductory	117
Running a Meeting	114
English - Intermediate	82
The Affluent Society	80
Economics for the Man in the Street	62
Chairmanship	56
Australia and South-East Asia	51
Federal, State and Local Government	37
World Affairs	30
Shop Stewards' Course	22
History of Trade Unions	19
Australian Trade Unions	16
Economics - Introduction	14
Arbitration - Intermediate	4

Source: Williams, E., "Industrial Relations Training Through the Letter Box," op cit., p.85.

⁸⁹ Williams, E., "The Postal Course Scheme for Trade Unionists," op cit., p.193.

The courses mainly appealed to those seeking a catch-up education, and thus it was the remedial courses which attracted most students. This situation reflected not only the deficiencies in the early compulsory schooling of the unionists, but the pragmatism of these people in acquiring basic skills of literacy, numeracy and communication.

With such appeal, the programme grew over the 1960's and early 1970's. See Table 5.9.

TABLE 5.9

WEA CORRESPONDENCE SCHEME ENROLMENTS - 1964 to 1975

	<u>Number of Students</u>
1964	507
1965	524
1966	781
1967	740
1968*	690
1969*	660
1970	649
1971	1,368
1972	2,441
1973	2,467
1974	1,751
1975	1,605

* Estimates only, as figures not available.

Source: Williams, E., "Industrial Relations Training Through the Letter Box", op cit., p.83 and Workers' Educational Association of South Australia, Annual Report, Adelaide, WEA of S.A., 1974 and 1975.

The courses were certainly appreciated by many participants. One member of the Seamen's Union of Australia, for example, wrote that he was:

... only sorry this form of studying was not available 20 years ago.⁹⁰

The attractiveness of the programme to manual workers was soon under some question, as from 1967 there was a clear shift in the nature of the student population. Non-manual workers were clearly dominant.⁹¹

One possible explanation for this non-manual worker domination was as a result of the growth in white collar trade unionism throughout the 1960's. Historically, the WEA's programmes had always proved to be more attractive to non-manual workers and other adults - largely of middle class background, but who were not in the labour force. The situation prevailed in the 1960's and 1970's as white collar unionists engaged in union-oriented studies.

Nevertheless, such domination was not to imply that the WEA failed to make vigorous appeals to manual workers. The Association made repeated attempts to attract these adults.⁹² However, apparently affiliated blue collar unions were tardy in

⁹⁰ Seamen's Journal, 27(7):219, July 1972. See also Williams, E., "Industrial Relations Training Through the Letter Box", op cit., pp.89-91.

⁹¹ Williams, E., "The Postal Course Scheme for Trade Unionists", op cit., p.196. This was very clearly the case by the late 1970's. Workers' Educational Association of South Australia, Trade Union Postal Courses: Trade Union Postal Course Student Survey, (Mimeograph, 15p. + Appendices), Adelaide, July 1979, and Workers' Educational Association of South Australia, Trade Union Postal Courses: 1978 Annual Report, Adelaide, WEA of S.A., 1978, Appendix B.

⁹² See for example, Amalgamated Metal Workers' Union Monthly Journal, October 1973, pp.23,24.

their promotion of the scheme⁹³ and their members may thus not have been aware of it, causing some lack in worker participation. Other factors such as the very nature of correspondence study without its social contact and its requirement for highly motivated students would also have dissuaded participation from all but the most enthusiastic. This form of study requires considerable student discipline and is often characterised by high attrition rates. Certainly the Correspondence Scheme had only a very small proportion of students who successfully completed courses.⁹⁴

Another reason for lack of worker participation was that the studies would not have been viewed as being really useful. What benefits, some workers would ask, could accrue from such studies? Further, worker indifference may also have been a causal factor in low manual worker involvement.

The correspondence project was Australia-wide and by 1972 had received support, in principle, from the ACTU, ACSPA, and the CCPSO. Table 5.10 shows the geographic

93 Workers' Educational Association of South Australia, Trade Union Postal Courses: 1978 Annual Report, op cit., p.3.

94 Lawton, C.R., Educational Opportunity for Mature People, (Mimeograph, 2lp.), Adelaide, 1968, pp.7ff; Interview with E. Williams, 1979.

distribution of enrollees in the scheme.

TABLE 5.10
LOCATION OF CORRESPONDENCE SCHEME
STUDENTS - 1965, 1972, 1975

	1965 <u>Number of Students</u>	1972 <u>Number of Students</u>	1975 <u>Number of Students</u>
New South Wales	38	733	464
Victoria	-	716	382
South Australia	270	334	236
Queensland	58	310	352
Western Australia	66	232	100
Tasmania	2	82	21
New Guinea	-	17	1
A.C.T.	-	16	26
New Zealand	-	1	-
Others (not stated)	90	-	23*
TOTAL	524	2,441	1,605

* These were "wives of trade unionists".

Source: Williams, E., *Industrial Relations Training Through the Letter Box*, *op cit.*, p.84 and Workers' Educational Association of South Australia, *Fifty Ninth Annual Report*, *op cit.*, p.10.

The most popular courses in 1972 are shown in Table 5.8. These were similar to the most popular courses of 1970 except that in 1970 Clear Thinking replaced How to Study. The least popular courses in 1970 were Automation in Australia, Trade Union Branch Officers, World Affairs, Trade Union History and Chairmanship.⁹⁵ In 1975, the five most popular were Clear Thinking, Public Speaking, Everyday English,

⁹⁵ Workers' Educational Association of South Australia, *Fifty Fourth Annual Report*, Adelaide, WEA of S.A., 1970, p.8.

Economics, and Industrial Psychology with the five least popular being World Affairs, Trade Unions in Australia, The Affluent Society, Australian Trade Unions and Australia and South-East Asia.⁹⁶ Hence it was adult education courses of a utilitarian nature which attracted most interest, while some of the specific labour oriented studies attracted least. Participants seemed to pursue studies which remedied deficiencies in early education. They did not show marked interest in such courses as Trade Unions in Australia, which were of less utilitarian value to them. The similarity in the motivation of participants in these courses and in some earlier adult educational programmes was obvious. Participation was enhanced if the programmes were perceived of as giving students benefits.

In an attempt to construct a profile of the students in the programme, Williams analysed a random sample of questionnaires completed by them at the commencement of courses and reported results to a AAAE Conference on Industrial Relations in 1974. No indication was given as to the years which the sample represented, however, it was likely to have related to 1972 considering the overall context of his paper which was reprinted in Education for Industrial Relations. From the sample, Williams prepared the following tables.

⁹⁶ Workers' Educational Association of South Australia, Fifty Ninth Annual Report, op cit., p.11.

Table 5.11 shows the reasons why students enrolled.

TABLE 5.11

WHY STUDENTS ENROL IN CORRESPONDENCE COURSES

	Percentage Replies	
	<u>*Blue Collar Workers</u>	<u>White Collar Workers</u>
Self Development	40	33
Course Itself	35	36
Help Career	14	8
Help Union	9	15
Help Children	2	8

* The blue and white collar dichotomy is that used by Williams.

Source: Williams, E., "Industrial Relations Training Through the Letter Box," op cit., p.87.

Some students (just over one third of each union group) were enrolled because of the nature of the particular course. But most were enrolled for more tangible reasons.

Table 5.12 shows the age distribution of students.

TABLE 5.12

AGE OF STUDENTS

	Percentage Replies	
	<u>Blue Collar Workers</u>	<u>White Collar Workers</u>
18 - 20 years	-	8
21 - 30 years	18	32
31 - 40 years	24	16
41 - 50 years	34	32
51 - 60 years	22	12
61 years and over	2	-
Not stated	-	-

Source: Williams, E., "Industrial Relations Training Through the Letter Box," op cit., p.88.

Interestingly, there was an age profile difference between blue and white collar unionists enrolled in the courses. Almost 60% of blue collar students were over forty years of age. The

comparable figure for white collar employees was 44%. Clearly, the white collar employees had decided to pursue these studies whilst at a younger age than their blue collar counterparts. Such decisions could be assumed to have been, at least in part, linked with the higher formal educational levels reached by the respective groups. White collar workers (see Table 5.13) were more highly educated and therefore would have been more likely to have quickly seen some value in pursuing adult education studies.

TABLE 5.13
EDUCATIONAL BACKGROUND OF STUDENTS⁹⁷

	Percentage Replies	
	Blue Collar Workers	White Collar Workers
First Year High	24	-
Second Year High	36	-
Third Year High	24	44
Fourth Year High	12	40
Tertiary	-	16
Not Given	-	-

Source: Williams, E., Industrial Relations Training Through the Letter Box, op cit, p.89.

The nature of the students was different for the white collar and blue collar classifications. Respondents in the former group were not only more highly educated than their blue collar counterparts, but they tended to be younger. However, such differences did not appear to affect motivations for enrolling in courses.

⁹⁷ Williams' table of educational backgrounds shows no reference to fifth year high school, a category which certainly existed in South Australia at the time. Further there is an error in the blue collar analysis, for the sum of the percentages is 96% which under the circumstances could not have been due to rounding. Hence, some doubt must be cast on the accuracy of this table in his report.

The WEA was providing a service that was appealing to a number of unionists, particularly white collar unionists, throughout the country. The emphasis in its offerings had changed compared with its early efforts of the 1920's, but in terms of working class participation rates, appeal had not. The non-working class controlled educational body, with its central concerns of social harmony and worker and wider social improvement, was unable to consistently generate working class involvement in its activities. This was despite innovations such as the correspondence scheme and other trade union programmes introduced from 1973.

During 1972, the South Australian Labor Government took a significant step in union education and gave the WEA a further opportunity to develop provisions for manual and non-manual workers. It provided the WEA with a grant to appoint a Trade Union Education Officer.⁹⁸ The grant was the first of its nature to be given to an educational organisation to employ a full-time Trade Union Education Officer.⁹⁹

In 1972 a number of unions had approached the State Labor Government asking that funds be made available for trade union education and training. Education was increasingly an area of concern for trade unions,¹⁰⁰ in their efforts, for example, to better represent their members. Originally the Government intended to make the funds available to the United Trades and

⁹⁸ Workers' Educational Association of South Australia, Fifty Sixth Annual Report, op cit., p.1.

⁹⁹ Advertiser (Adelaide) 31 May, 1975.

¹⁰⁰ See, for example, the Amalgamated Metal Workers' Union Monthly Journal from 1970, the Seamen's Journal from 1968. Further the Trade Union Education and Research Centre had been established in 1968 in Sydney and offered courses for unionists. And then, of course, there was the already blossoming work of the WEA.

Labor Council for the employment of an Education Officer. However, the unionists, notably John Scott, State Secretary of the then Amalgamated Metal Workers' Union,¹⁰¹ who were making the representations to the Government, suggested that the funds should be made available to the WEA. This was an existing educational body with "strong trade union links" and thus might be expected to make more efficient use of the funds.¹⁰² The United Trades and Labor Council had no experience in the area and could be expected to experience, at least, initial difficulties in mounting a programme. Additionally, the ever present ideological differences within the Council structure would have enhanced difficulties in curriculum development and programme administration.

A Trade Union Education Officer commenced duties in January 1973 and during that year courses were developed for, and offered to, trade union officials in South Australia.¹⁰³ The programme embraced both skills training and liberal education. Many of the courses were designed to assist union officials to become more proficient and effective in union work. In addition courses in areas such as Economics, Psychology,

¹⁰¹ Interview with C. MacDonald, WEA Trade Union Education Officer, December 1978. Scott spent much of his life in Glasgow and had good exposure to workers' education in Britain.

¹⁰² MacDonald, C., "Industrial Relations Education Provision by the Workers' Educational Association of South Australia" in Australian Association of Adult Education, Education for Industrial Relations, op cit., pp.53-61, p.56.

¹⁰³ Workers' Educational Association of South Australia, Submission to the Australian Committee on Technical and Further Education, (Mimeograph, 7p.), Adelaide, 1973, p.5.

Sociology and Politics were offered. These latter, according to Williams, were not "indoctrination schools",¹⁰⁴ a natural and expected Association assertion in view of its non-partisan, non-party political philosophy.

The WEA saw the need for a specific programme for unionists and viewed trade union education as a means by which manual workers, in particular, could be reached. Further, the Association's officers believed that a knowledgeable trade union movement was essential. This would enable it to more competently make informed decisions, based on a better appreciation of the total environment in which the unions were operating.¹⁰⁵ Certainly, education was not being used to promote class antagonism. Rather it was designed, simply to provide better educated, skilled and competent unionists.

A brochure advertising the programme contained the following:

What is Trade Union Education?

It's ... a mutual self-help exercise ...

It's ... a programme designed to bring union officials to a peak of efficiency ...

It's ... a means of producing a better informed membership.

It's ... a way of easing the pressures on officials and shop stewards by providing them with training in various essential techniques.

¹⁰⁴ Advertiser (Adelaide) 31 May, 1975.

¹⁰⁵ Workers' Educational Association of South Australia, Trade Union Education, (Brochure advertising the programme) n.d. (probably 1974).

It's ... the trade union movement's chance of keeping pace with professional management.

It's ... the trade union movement being sufficiently enlightened to want to be more enlightened.¹⁰⁶

The WEA felt that society had a vested interest in raising the intellectual capacity of the union movement. Also with so much money being invested in management education, the union movement should receive a substantial injection of government funds:

There is no advantage for the community in having increasingly well educated representatives of management attempting to produce a harmonious industrial relations climate with union officials and shop stewards whose educational opportunities have been limited and who have emerged from a school system persuaded to the view that their education has come to an end.¹⁰⁷

Clearly, the educational provision was destined to be conservative, although the very nature of the programme ensured some radical content. Since, despite the stated curriculum, individual lecturers can (and did) modify this in certain instances, and thus offered a radical education.¹⁰⁸

¹⁰⁶ ibid.

¹⁰⁷ Workers' Educational Association of South Australia, Submission to the Australian Committee on Technical and Further Education, op cit., p.6.

¹⁰⁸ Interview with P. Drew (formerly a WEA Trade Union Education Officer) March 1979. This situation also occurred in other WEA classes, for example, Colin Badger referred to an early study circle on the Utopia of St. Thomas More in which weeks were spent arguing the theory of surplus value. See Badger, C. "Adult Education in Adelaide", Issue, 4(8):11-16, November 1969, p.13.

Such a situation was not an isolated occurrence of the 1970's. Although difficult to prove through documented sources, there is no doubt that the content of many of the WEA's courses varied considerably from the stated content appearing in publicity materials. In adult education it is often possible to modify a course once a class has been established and students have voiced their particular interests and needs.¹⁰⁹

During 1973 the WEA trade union programme comprised:

- (a) nine, two day schools for shop stewards and job representatives,
- (b) a day release course of one day per week for eight weeks,
- (c) a two week residential school for Commonwealth Government employees and
- (d) a one day seminar related to Trade Union Youth week.¹¹⁰

Students from over thirty unions participated in these courses. In total, about 350 students participated in courses in 1973, while the figures for 1974 and 1975 were approximately 600 and 500 respectively.¹¹¹

Courses in 1975 included Arbitration, Branch Officers' Course, Communication Skills, Company Refresher Course,

¹⁰⁹ This has been common in the writer's experience in over a decade as an adult educator. For example, in two courses in which the writer was involved in 1980, student needs necessitated a content somewhat different from that which appeared in publicity material. The two courses were Perspectives in Continuing Education and Sociology of Further Education, both of which were taught at Adelaide College of the Arts and Education.

¹¹⁰ MacDonald, C., "Industrial Relations Education Provision by the Workers' Educational Association of South Australia" in Australian Association of Adult Education, Education for Industrial Relations, op cit., p.56.

¹¹¹ Workers' Educational Association of South Australia, Annual Report (1974), (1975), op cit.

Government Economic Policy, Organisers' Course, Researching a Company, Shop Stewards' Course, Vehicle Industry Shop Stewards' Course, White Collar Job Representatives, and White Collar Unionists.¹¹² Obviously, the target clientele was union officials of both non-manual and manual unions.

The demand for courses in 1973 was so great that the WEA decided to appoint a second Trade Union Education Officer. A subsequent successful approach to the Dunstan State Labor Government, saw additional funds being made available to support this appointment. Both the officers concentrated on residential courses, schools, and seminars of several days duration.

After some 18 months in existence, that is by June 1974, the Trade Union Education Office was beginning to establish a pattern of full-time activity. Types of courses provided were:

Introductory Shop Stewards' and Job Representatives'

Schools

Usually two days duration during working hours and for both manual and non-manual workers. These concentrated on developing skills and confidence.

Residential Schools

Normally five days in length and covering topics such as preparation of a case before management.

¹¹² South Australian Industrial Training Council, Index of Training Courses, Adelaide, S.A. Industrial Training Council, 1975, pp.84-85.

Day-Release Schools

Advanced schools designed for experienced shop stewards and job representatives. These were a series of full or half day meetings spread over a number of weeks. The emphasis here was on providing basic information and could focus on, say, industrial relations.

Advanced Two-Day Shop Steward and Special Courses

These were conducted on special topics for example, multi-nationals, or for particular unions.¹¹³

So in the main, the emphasis was on skills acquisition for union officials rather than an education for rank and file unionists that emphasised social transformation studies. Its proposals for the period July to December 1974 reinforced this conclusion.

In July, there was a three day Vehicle Industry Shop Stewards' School. Topics discussed included, The Roles of the Union and its Members, The Shop Steward's Job, Negotiation Techniques, Collective Bargaining, Communication Skills and Workmen's Compensation.¹¹⁴

A two day school on Researching a Company was planned. Included here were topics such as, Where to get Information, Analysing a Balance Sheet, Understanding Financial Indicators,

¹¹³ Workers' Educational Association of South Australia, Union Education Report No. 6, (Mimeograph, 3p.), Adelaide, June 1974, pp.2,3.

¹¹⁴ Workers' Educational Association of South Australia, Trade Union Education Programme, (Mimeograph, 18p.), Adelaide, 1974, p.3.

Ownership and Decision Making and Financial Strategies of Companies.¹¹⁵ The final school planned for July was on Communication Skills.

In August, a six day residential school for union officials on General Membership Problems, Management Negotiation, Communications and General Aspects of Societal Change was planned. In addition, two 2-day Shop Steward Training Schools in Adelaide and Port Pirie were planned.¹¹⁶ A day-release course for unionists covering topics such as Advocacy, Industrial Relations and Unions and the Law, a two day Shop Steward Training School at Mount Gambier and a two day training course for Women Organisers from manual worker unions, were planned for September. October and November saw preparation for a two day non-manual worker Job Representatives' Training School, a one day school for Union Organisers, on Strategy and Legal Procedures in Disputes, a regional two day Shop Steward Training School and a five day ACSPA residential School of Industrial and Labour Studies. An important aspect of these courses was that participants and unions were closely involved in determining curricula.¹¹⁷

So by 1975, when the Trade Union Training Authority was to assume a major role in union education, the South Australian WEA had taken some important educational initiatives in non-manual and manual worker education. Generally, the courses which the Association had developed were of a

¹¹⁵ *ibid.*, p.4.

¹¹⁶ *ibid.*, pp.6,7,8.

¹¹⁷ See Knowles, M., Self-Directed Learning, Chicago, Association Press, 1975, passim, where the point is made that adults need to be closely involved in determining curricula. The writer's experience as an adult educator for over a decade has reinforced this view.

utilitarian nature. Efforts were made to enhance the skills of union officials. There was a demand for courses that would for example, help shop stewards become more effective in communicating with their members. The WEA in this trade union education programme endeavoured to meet some of these needs.

The trade union education programme was an important innovation in South Australia in the 1970's. But, it was only one aspect, albeit a most important aspect, of the Association's endeavours to attract manual workers to its classes and thereby adhere in part, to the philosophy of its founders.

Since 1958, the Association had shown a revitalised interest in the education of manual workers through the major avenue of contact with these people, namely trade unions. It had developed seminars, schools, the correspondence scheme and then its formal trade union education scheme after 1972.

The WEA in South Australia, unlike its counterpart in New South Wales has made considerable efforts to develop such provision. In so doing it has steadfastly maintained its non-partisan, non-party political stance. Its liberal educational provision for manual workers at the time of its foundation, has subsided and its revitalised interest here has been for education, largely utilitarian in nature.

Summary

At the onset of World War I, in a period of rekindled interest in education in South Australia, the non-partisan, non-party political WEA was created to forge a link between labour and learning. It was to promote the higher education

of working men and women, that is, specifically the higher education of manual workers.

Though plagued by difficulties, the Association developed to become a significant provider of non-vocational adult education.

Its early relations with the labour movement were amicable, unlike relations in New South Wales and Victoria, although it met criticism from sections of the movement. In this climate and with academic leadership provided by people such as Herbert Heaton, the WEA set about attempting to provide at least some courses perceived of as relevant to manual workers, and necessary for the development of citizenship and democracy.

It was never able to attract large numbers of these people to its classes. Like university extension and the mechanics' institute movement before it, middle class students increasingly dominated its programmes. These in turn reflected the needs of such educationally motivated people.

Heaton was lost to the Association in 1925 and subsequently, through the Depression and World War II it placed emphasis on general adult education activities. It became a force as such an adult education body, particularly after it began offering its own classes, independent of the University, in 1954. Though retaining some manual worker involvement in its courses, it never became enmeshed in controversy with the labour movement, like its counterpart associations in New South Wales, Tasmania, Queensland or Victoria.

In 1958 the WEA, in a sense, completed a circle in its development. Upon the appointment of Eric Williams as General Secretary, it showed revitalised interest in the education of manual workers, an interest that was fostered through trade unions. To this end, seminars, schools, a postal scheme and more latterly, a trade union education scheme have been provided. Emphases in these union oriented ventures have been on service or remedial courses. They have been largely directed at union officials with an avowed aim to produce a more highly skilled, highly educated and more competent leadership.

The courses have contained some radical content, the extent of which has depended on the individuals running the courses and those participating in particular groups. Outwardly, there is a scarcity of indications of such content, but as courses are run, the mood of those participating can determine whether such content is introduced.¹¹⁸

However, to anticipate significant working class determined radical content in WEA courses is to ignore a fundamental basis of the Association. It has been forceful in its defence of its non-partisan, non-party political nature, as the non-working class controlled body has worked for the improvement of individuals, particularly workers, for the development of harmonious relations between classes, for better citizenship and the growth of democratic society.

¹¹⁸ Interview with P. Drew, formerly WEA Trade Union Education Officer, and Director, South Australian Council for Trade Union Training. April 1977.

CHAPTER VI

ADULT EDUCATION PROVISION FROM

THE LABOUR MOVEMENT: 1913 - 1975

The class meeting is over, and we sit at ease, taking tea and biscuits provided by members' wives. Talk ranges free and wide - problems of philosophy, evolution, politics, literature. Then R.H. Tawney reads to us Walt Whitman's "When lilacs last in the dooryard bloom'd"; this moves a student to give us his favourite from the same source; "Pioneers! O Pioneers! Another follows quoting from a poem of Matthew Arnold that evidently has bitten him, one ending with the magic line, "The unplumb'd salt estranging sea". And for some of us as we sit listening, a new door opens.

(An Old Student¹)

Introduction

Although it has become a most successful general adult education organisation, from its foundation in South Australia the WEA encountered many difficulties and rebuffs in its attempts to attract large numbers of manual workers to its programmes. Nevertheless, since 1913, it has been the major voluntary body making specific provision for working class adult education in this State.

The WEA has survived like its counterpart Association in New South Wales, although, unlike this latter Association, the South Australian WEA has enjoyed a history of relatively peaceful co-existence with the labour movement. Such relative harmony has not however, seen the development of the WEA as a strong working class controlled adult educational agency.

¹ An Old Student, 'Looking backwards: a tutorial class anniversary', in Rewley House Papers, February 1929, quoted in R. Shaw, "Adult Education and the Working Class", Studies in Adult Education, 2(1):1-17, April 1970, p.17.

Rather it has grown as an externally imposed body, which although initially promoting liberal education of a university standard, has subsequently placed emphasis, in its working class educational work, on utilitarian education.

In its programme, the more recently created statutory Trade Union Training Authority (TUTA) has also placed emphasis on utilitarian studies. Similarly, directly sponsored (through the School of Mines) and provided government adult educational work has concentrated on more pragmatic education, while the efforts of employers to provide worker education, a provision that has expanded in the late 1970's, has also had such a focus.

Seemingly, then, there has been a void in working class educational provision so far as liberal and education of an informational and propagandist nature have been concerned. During this century, sections of the labour movement have made occasional efforts to fill the void. However, during the 1970's as these bodies have become more actively involved in promoting and providing educational programmes, their concern has largely been directed at more pragmatic studies which have been viewed as giving workers access to more really useful knowledge.

Labour and Working Class Controlled Education in
Early Twentieth Century Australia

Australian trade unions developed as the successors of the small early nineteenth century trade societies. These bodies formed to protect the interests of specific groups of workers.

It was from the early societies that the gold rush craft unions stemmed. Such unions jealously guarded the

standards and privileges of their craft as they directed their efforts to industrial issues such as improving wages, reducing working hours and improving working conditions.² That is, they set about making life more liveable for their members.

Subsequently, semi-skilled and unskilled workers formed mass unions. These, unlike craft unions, were generally non-exclusive in their conditions of entry and included such unions as the Amalgamated Miners' Association, Amalgamated Shearers' Union³ and the Waterside Workers. The growth of the mass unions eventually saw the dismantling of the exclusive nature of craft unions, and the formation of broad-based industrial unionism in post-World War I Australia.

The period 1900 to 1914 had witnessed a spectacular growth in unionism in Australia. Membership increased from around 100,000 to approximately 500,000, and the number of individual unions increased from 200 to approximately 430.⁴ In their efforts to improve working conditions and the standard of living of their members,⁵ conciliation and arbitration were the most frequently used methods;⁶ methods which helped ensure that latent class conflict remained latent.

² Bentley, P., Trade Unions in Australia, Working Paper Series No. 9, Institute of Labour Studies, Flinders University of South Australia, August 1974, p.1.

³ Spence, W.G., History of the A.W.U, Sydney, Worker Trustees, 1961 (Preface written 1911) has details of the Shearers' Union.

⁴ Child, J., Unionism and the Labour Movement, Melbourne, Macmillan, 1971, p.124.

⁵ ibid.

⁶ Spence, W.G., op cit., p.20; See also the article on the 50th Anniversary of the Trades Hall. Advertiser (Adelaide) 18 March, 1946.

However, frequent delays in arriving at decisions led to union disillusionment with the arbitration system and saw an adoption and promotion of syndicalist ideas. Here direct industrial action to achieve union ends was stressed. Such an approach gained further acceptance with union dissatisfaction in the performance of Labor Parties.⁷

Industrial and thence political issues thus occupied the attention of officials of the established craft unions and of those of the increasing number of broad-based mass unions in the early years of the twentieth century. The provision of formal adult educational programmes did not rank as a high priority in union activities. There were, however, a few intermittent efforts to offer such programmes. For example, in 1910 the Amalgamated Society of Engineers formed a Sociological Club in Melbourne.⁸ The Club provided a forum for much discussion of working class political and social life. However, ideological conflict, a continuing source of irritation in the Victorian labour movement, led to the Club's disintegration in 1911.

Despite a life of such short duration, the Club was an important initiative. It provided an example of early twentieth century working class controlled adult education and

⁷ Child, J., *op cit.*, p.124; Craig, J.I., "A History of the South Australian Labour Party to 1917" (M.A. thesis), University of Adelaide, 1940, p.107.

⁸ Buckley, K.D., The Amalgamated Engineers in Australia 1852-1920, Canberra, Australian National University Press, 1970, p.189.

foreshadowed the nature of the dynamics between participants in such largely propagandistic educational ventures.

Working Class Controlled Education in South
Australia: World War I to the Depression

Endeavours in providing a working class controlled education in South Australia were initially spasmodic. However, such efforts did not represent the full extent of labour movement interest in education. There were attempts to ensure an expansion and extension of already existing educational services so that they would better cater for the education of workers. That is, there was labour movement interest in mainstream established educational provision for its members.

One example of such concern occurred in South Australia in 1910. Here, on the motion of a Labor Member of Parliament (MP), Thomas Ryan, a Parliamentary Select Committee was appointed. The Committee was to report on the best means of making higher education, at the University, available to all "deserving" students.⁹ Ryan wanted to democratise higher education. In this way all people, with the ability and desire, could avail themselves of this level of education, irrespective of their personal social and economic condition. The similarities between Ryan's motives and those of WEA pioneers, such as Albert Mansbridge and William Temple, were evident. In fact, soon after the appointment of the Committee, Temple was in Adelaide as part of an Australian tour. He was lecturing

⁹ SAPD, 1910, p.187.

on education and democracy,¹⁰ and the WEA's role in making university standard education accessible to the educationally deprived, namely, the workers.

Though there was no obvious causal link between Temple's and Ryan's efforts, quite possibly Temple's Australian visit had some influence on fostering Ryan's proposal.

The Committee was eventually converted to a Royal Commission into all branches of education.¹¹ The Commission reported in 1913.¹² Recommendations affecting the University were passed in a University Amending Act, while those necessitating further legislation were passed, when the ALP came to power, in an Education Act of 1915.

Broad educational initiatives were thus forthcoming from within the political wing of the labour movement. But the proposals were not for a working class controlled adult education programme. Rather, the major section of the political wing of the labour movement, namely the ALP, requested an extension of existing educational services. This emphasis was ideologically similar to that requested by the major union council in the industrial wing of the movement at the onset of World War I.

The United Trades and Labor Council had, through its President, the persuasive Thomas Ryan, welcomed efforts to

¹⁰ Register (Adelaide) 28 July, 1910.

¹¹ SAPP, 1913, Final Report of the Royal Commission on Education. As early as June 24, 1910, the United Trades and Labor Council had requested that the Minister of Education receive a deputation requesting this extension. United Trades and Labor Council of South Australia, Minutes, 24 June, 1910. SRG1, SAA.

¹² SAPP, No.75, 1913.

establish a branch of the WEA in South Australia.¹³ The Council affiliated, but the Association was almost educationally inactive in its early years. In such an environment, the Council, like its member unions, failed to seize the initiative and pursue the development of independent working class adult education. This was unlike, for example, the syndicalist International Workers of the World (IWW) which provided a small range of propagandist speakers' classes.¹⁴ The Left-wing of the South Australian labour movement was always more educationally active than the mainstream of the movement. To it, educational emancipation of workers was important for class struggle. However, at the time the mainstream of industrial labour, like the ALP, was generally intent to leave educational provision to bodies with some skill in the area, namely, the State Education Department,¹⁵ the University, the WEA and the School of Mines.

Such a position did not imply complete independent educational inactivity from mainstream labour after World War I. There were some ad hoc efforts, just like those that radicals had earlier promoted. In 1919, for example, after

¹³ United Trades and Labor Council of South Australia, Minutes, 6 June, 1913, SRG1, SAA.

¹⁴ Direct Action (Adelaide), 1(6) 1 June, 1914; 1(12) 22 August, 1914, 2(55) 3 January, 1916, 3(71) 20 May, 1916. No reference to the actual number of such classes was given. However, admission that such were on a "very small scale" was sufficient evidence to deduce that efforts here were bordering on insignificance.

¹⁵ See for example, United Trades and Labor Council of South Australia, Minutes, 16 June, 1916; 14 July, 1916; SRG1, SAA, where attention is given to Council interest in technical education for apprentices.

the conscription crisis had split the movement,¹⁶ Left-wing members of the ALP ensured that the Party establish an economics class, for which W.P. Earsman was considered as tutor.¹⁷

Thirteen people attended its first meeting in the Trades Hall, but after only a few such meetings, and due to lack of worker interest, the class collapsed. A further effort to establish a speakers' class, with an aim of acquainting members with the Party Platform, suffered the same fate.¹⁸ Education of a political nature such as economics, with a labour bias, and a speakers' class with a similar bias, did not sustain worker interest. In general, labour was neither industrially nor politically radical in this State.¹⁹ Co-existence and not conflict was the popular base of class relations in South Australia and this even at a time when labour was split over conscription.

In a vein similar to that of the ALP, the numerically

¹⁶ See for example, Port Adelaide News, 27 October, 1916; United Trades and Labor Council of South Australia, Minutes, 6 May, 1916; SRG1, SAA; Powell, G., "Uncertain Frontiers: A Study of the Waterside Workers' Federation in South Australia 1917-1922", (B.A.(Hons.)thesis), University of Adelaide, 1966, passim; Advertiser (Adelaide) 1 January, 1916, 15 April, 1916, 23 September, 1916; Harris, J., The Bitter Fight, St. Lucia, University of Queensland Press, 1970, passim; Buckley, K.D., op cit., p.273.

¹⁷ Australian Labor Party (S.A. Branch), Minutes, 14 February, 1919, SRG 73, SAA.

¹⁸ Australian Labor Party (S.A. Branch), Minutes, 10 June, 1920; 6 July, 1920, SRG 73, SAA.

¹⁹ Spokesmen in the labour movement also often fruitlessly called for the creation of a labour college to provide education for class conscious workers, for example in 1925, 1926 and 1928. See South Australian Worker (Adelaide) 10 July, 1925; 8 January, 1926; 22 June, 1928.

weak Communist Party, which viewed the education of workers as important to their attempts to overthrow capitalism,²⁰ also made some efforts. Small classes in economics were tutored by Ted Moyle. People such as Dr. Clark Nikola and W.M. Gormlie, the person originally appointed to teach the ALP economics class, and a strong critic of the WEA, also lectured extensively.²¹ However, the Party had limited appeal. Such had also been the problem encountered by the short-lived Plebs' League in 1924.²² These radical bodies' impact on raising the educational levels of groups of workers was problematical.

The fate that befell the ALP, the Plebs' League and the Communist Party in attempting to provide for workers' education was typical at the time. Other groups that tried to make some inroads into offering an independent working class education, met with similar results. The International Industrial Workers which had been formed from the disbanded International Workers of the World, was one such group. It offered a variety of classes including economics, debating, sociology and a speakers' class.²³ None of these continued for any length of time.²⁴

²⁰ Australian Communist (Sydney), 4 February, 1921.

²¹ Playford, J., "History of the Left Wing of the South Australian Labor Movement, 1908-1936", (B.A. (Hons.) thesis), University of Adelaide, 1958, p.41; United Trades and Labor Council of South Australia, Minutes, 23 April, 1926, SRG1, SAA.

²² The League was opposed by the Labor Party and quickly ceased as an effective radical group in the labour movement. It had however, during its short life established a library and economics class. Playford, J., op cit., p.53.

²³ Direct Action (Adelaide) 1(1) May 1928; 1(4) 23 June, 1928; 1(6) 21 July, 1928; 1(8) August, 1928.

²⁴ There was a lack of reference to these classes in Direct Action after August 1928. Hence they most likely had ceased as effective educational groups.

Additionally, and in contrast, there was the Labor Ring in Botanic Park, where each Sunday, largely informational sessions were held. Here speakers would address the assembled audience on a range of topics, but often on aspects of parliamentary work. However, these were not classes as such, but they were, like labour papers and union journals, important avenues from which workers could glean information and opinion, of substance, on issues affecting their lives.

In relation to formal working class controlled adult education, the politically and industrially quiet South Australian working class responded, to the infrequent educational innovations, with little enthusiasm. The WEA's efforts, which were based on a more concrete and planned basis than the independent worker endeavours, were greeted in an almost similar manner by workers. Hence by the outbreak of the Depression in the late 1920's, efforts to provide an independent working class adult education from within the labour movement, and attempts to provide a WEA inspired education, were met with a lack of worker support.

Workers' minimal but highly valued leisure time, awkward shift work hours, feelings of potential educational inadequacies²⁵ and general physical weariness after a day of manual labour²⁶ were factors which affected their attitudes

²⁵ Important in adult learning is the need to overcome such feelings which often stem from relatively unsuccessful experiences with formal schooling.

²⁶ As an educationally motivated adult, the researcher worked for a period in a bakery (1972). The hours were long, the work physically exhausting and this militated against participation in educational activities in the evening. These feelings were verified by a group of production line workers of the whitegoods manufacturer, Simpson Pope, when the researcher interviewed them in May, 1979.

to education. Furthermore, there were the problems of the low value workers placed on knowledge to be gained in the classes (many of which were radical in intent), and of union officials failing to publicise and promote educational work. Union leaders needed to lead unionists not only in industrial areas but also into education programmes. Officials' failure here impeded the promotion of courses and affected their attractiveness to unionists. Some union officials blamed "lack of time" for their inability either to engage in arduous study or to promote educational work while others, for example, revealed attitudes of indifference.²⁷

Education of the type provided by the WEA and sections of the labour movement failed to attract serious supporting responses from many officials or their fellow rank and file unionists. This was somewhat different from labour reaction to skill oriented programmes such as those provided by the South Australian School of Mines and Industries.

Labour, the Depression and World War II

By 1930, South Australia was well into the Depression. Unemployment was rife. Economic and working conditions were suffering, as was the standard of living of the working class.²⁸

²⁷ (a) Port Adelaide District Trades and Labor Council, Minutes, 16 May, 1924.

(b) Quite probably, though such is extremely difficult to document, some union officials having gained an official position in the labour movement, were intent on retaining this and so would not encourage "up and coming" young unionists. Warwick Marshall formerly Secretary of the Australian Railways Union (S.A. Branch) certainly felt that many officials took this attitude. Interview with W. Marshall, March 1979.

²⁸ See the discussion in Broomhill, R., "A Social History of the Unemployed in Adelaide During the Great Depression", (Ph.D. thesis), University of Adelaide, 1975, passim.

Thus worker controlled education was to be of even less concern to union officials than it had been before the Depression. However, there was some support for already established educational provision through, for example, the WEA, and some educational endeavours both on the part of the unionist and non-unionist workers themselves, as well as on the part of organised sections of the labour movement. Many of the unemployed, for example, used the hours of the day to read in libraries.²⁹ This informal adult education, as has been suggested earlier, was an important avenue of self-education.

The Marx Engels Club was formed in August 1928.³⁰ Its members discussed the works of Marx and Engels and a good collection of Marxist works was built up for the use of the Club's small membership. Regular Saturday evening discussions were held, and in 1929, a meeting of the Club's membership changed its name to the Communist Party. The meeting was:

... attended by not more than twelve members, a number that was a fair representation of the whole membership.³¹

²⁹ Interview with J. Moss, November 1978; Interview with E. Crimes, July 1979; See also SAPP, No. 13, various years between 1925 and 1935 where attendances at the Public Library are given and show significant increases over the Depression years-probably caused by the influx of the unemployed.

³⁰ Workers' Weekly (Sydney) 24 August, 1928.

³¹ Correspondence from Jim Moss, September 1979.

The Party had been, and was, weak in South Australia, a condition aggravated by its struggles in the Depression.³² It suffered at the hands of the authorities, particularly the Hill Labor Government. These attacks militated against its attempts to provide leadership in the labour movement.

In such conditions, its own independent educational endeavours were limited. This situation also reflected the educational efforts of much of the industrial and political wings of the labour movement, which as in the concluding years of World War I, had again split.³³

Mainstream sections of industrial labour such as the United Trades and Labor Council tended to support, albeit weakly, the work of the WEA and government provided education.³⁴ The ALP reacted in a somewhat similar manner with the WEA providing tutors for its occasional educational activities. For example, a class on Karl Marx and the Australian Labor Party in 1932 was tutored by Colin Badger, while a speakers'

³² Finger, A., "Notes on Australian Communist Party History in South Australia", Tribune (Sydney), 18 April, 1947. See also SAPD, 1930, Vol. 1, p.881, for references to the Party in debate on the Labor Government's Public Safety Preservation Act.

³³ See for example, the discussion in Pettman, R., "Factionalism in the South Australian ALP, 1930-1933", Labour History, 28:22-30, May 1975, p.23.

³⁴ United Trades and Labor Council of South Australia, Minutes, 29 September, 1933; 26 April, 1935; 15 November, 1938; 20 December, 1939, SRG1, SAA.

class held in 1935 was tutored by a WEA tutor.³⁵

The Port Adelaide District Trades and Labor Council also supported the WEA.³⁶ It offered none of its own classes. Meanwhile unions such as the Australian Government Workers' Association (AGWA) followed suit.³⁷ Thus, as had been the case prior to the Depression, much of organised labour left formal education provision to already established bodies.³⁸

However, through their publications, unions were able to keep their members informed on issues that officials felt were of significance. For example, the AGWA through its publication Solidarity, endeavoured to get ideas on the working class, to its readers. It included articles such as Trade Unionism by Norman Makin MHR, and many others on the apathy of the working class and on the "dangers of fascism".³⁹

Similar informed opinions appeared in papers such as the South Australian Worker and the Labor Advocate and from

³⁵ Australian Labor Party (S.A. Branch), Minutes, 10 March, 1932; 14 April, 1932; 28 February, 1935, SRG73, SAA.

³⁶ Port Adelaide District Trades and Labor Council, Minutes, 17 January, 1930; 15 February, 1932; 11 March, 1932; 5 May, 1933; 9 March, 1934; 4 February, 1938.

³⁷ Solidarity, 12(69) October 1932, p.26; 15(89) February 1938, p.18; Interview with W. Marshall, March 1979; See also the discussion in Chapter IV of this research.

³⁸ For example, neither the large Australian Workers' Union (correspondence from A.S. Begg, Branch Secretary, April 1979) nor the Australasian Society of Engineers offered their own classes. (Interview with A. Griffiths, Branch Secretary, May 1979). Duncan in his significant study on adult education in New South Wales verified this lack in provision in relation to Australia as a whole. Duncan, W.G.K., Adult Education, (Report on Adult Education in New South Wales in 2 Volumes) (Manuscript), Sydney, 1944, Volume 2, pp.227-228. (Copy obtained from author).

³⁹ Solidarity, 4(19) 15 June, 1926, p.21; 14(84) April 1937, p.14; 15(90) April 1938, p.12.

speakers in the Labor Ring in Botanic Park. Then of course, there were the various libraries where workers could read and hence educate themselves in a variety of areas. Such less formal educational provision appeared to attract substantial interest. It was offered in a way that did not demand considerable time sacrifices from the workers, and was of a nature that permitted its pursuit in a very flexible manner. For example, papers could be read during workers' lunch breaks. This could then stimulate extensive discussion among those workers present. Apparently this form of activity often took place.⁴⁰

However, as regards their own formally organised educational work, most unions, as with other sections of the labour movement, were inactive. The Communist Party and the Australian Railways Union (ARU) were important exceptions. Not only did the ARU's journal Railway Review contain many articles of educational value, but in 1935, it created an Educational and Organising Committee.⁴¹

The Committee was to be established:

... for the purpose of developing educational propaganda in the various States by the selection and provision of suitable up-to-date text books, study courses, economics, history, philosophy etc...⁴²

⁴⁰ Jim Moss and E. Crimes both related to the writer their experience of such activities in interviews in 1978 and 1979 respectively. There were suggestions that the practice was widespread, however, the researcher has been unable to verify this from other sources.

⁴¹ See for example, Railway Review, 1(1) January 1932; 1(3) March 1934; 1(10) October 1934; 3(3) March 1936.

⁴² Railway Review, 3(3) March 1936, p.4.

Though not stated here, the emphasis on courses such as economics, history and philosophy implied concern with social change.⁴³ The union believed that:

... only by organisation based upon intelligent understanding of the problems with which we are confronted can we hope to make progress and to solve and overcome the barriers to the workers' emancipation.⁴⁴

So the union saw the value of an educated membership in order to facilitate the emancipation of workers. It believed that in Australia, the mass labour movement was ignorant of basic theory of Socialism.⁴⁵ The Educational and Organising Committee was to provide a basis for creating a means to remedy this ignorance, with its initial proposals in South Australia, at least, being most ambitious.

It decided to conduct essay competitions on various subjects; establish correspondence lecture courses; issue booklets to ARU members on particular topics; issue booklets on subjects such as arbitration and closer unionism; issue boxes of self-contained study material to railway gangs; prepare a roster of speakers in the metropolitan area;

⁴³ Railway Review, 4(4) April 1937, p.8.

⁴⁴ Railway Review, 3(3) March 1936, p.4.

⁴⁵ Railway Review, 4(4) April 1937, p.8. Joe Drummond, Secretary of the ARU (S.A. Branch) for 27 years before his retirement in 1952, was, according to W. Marshall (interview March 1979), an avid reader and supportive of educating the rank and file through classes and the medium of the Railway Review.

develop activities related to working class drama; conduct lantern lectures; develop tutors by bringing suitable members into study circles with a view to equipping them as teachers; extend library facilities and offer radio lectures.⁴⁶

An interesting facet of the proposals was the advanced nature of some of the Union's decisions. The proposals included suggestions that boxes of self-contained study material, correspondence lecture courses, radio lectures and a variety of information packages should be developed.⁴⁷ Such suggestions showed an obvious awareness of the many avenues available for potential use in adult education. The Committee was certainly progressive in its approach to a working class adult education provision.

Other proposals were also important. These included suggestions for the training of tutors, provision of information pamphlets, extension of library facilities, provision of lectures and development of working class drama. Perhaps the major criticism of these proposals is their ambitious nature. Certainly considerable financial support, and officials with

⁴⁶ Railway Review, 3(3) March 1936, p.4.

⁴⁷ In post-World War II Australia, such approaches have become widely used by various authorities in taking adult education to the wider community.

some skill in the areas of curriculum development and adult learning would have been required to efficiently effect them. But, importantly, the Union had made a serious attempt to ensure the development of a more highly educated membership.

The plans seemed to bear little fruit in the early years, for in April 1937, the Committee lamented its ineffectiveness because:

... the ordinary work of the unions too fully engaged the time of State branch officials.⁴⁸

This was clearly a problem, and one that unions constantly faced. Officials claimed, as they had done prior to the Depression, that they were "too busy" with industrial matters, to engage in the organisation and provision of educational activities. What was needed if these were to develop, was an education officer, a person skilled in creating an environment in which unionists could learn. Such a person required empathy with unionists and also needed to possess credibility with them, for without credibility, communication links between teacher and student would not be easily formed. Unionists would then, in all probability, not engage in educational activities.

Nationally, the ARU decided to appoint a federal education officer. The appointment was effected by 1938. The State branch in South Australia would have access to the expertise of this officer, but the State's Educational and Organising

⁴⁸ Railway Review, 4(4) April 1937, p.2.

Committee would continue to promote, organise and supervise the union's educational activities in South Australia. To this end it had offered a study class on Leontiev's Political Economy.⁴⁹

In a preparatory statement on the course, the Committee reported:

It is evident ... that the one thing that would make social transition a vital problem in the world of the workers is that of class education. This education must mean not the stupid mixing of literary and economic "dirty waters", but an approach to the question that has proven itself according to material evolution. It must mean a straight forward attempt to explain to the mass of the Australian workers - the lack of permanency of capitalist society; a basic teaching of the science of Socialism and method and tactics not as we wish them but as they are historically demanded.⁵⁰

The Committee wanted to educate workers for social change. It was to be of Socialist orientation and exclude what was seen as a mismatch in literary and socially relevant studies.⁵¹ No doubt the latter was a reference to the WEA and University Tutorial Class Department's adult education programme.

The aim of the South Australian Branch course was verified at the national level when the ARU launched an educational programme for the five States it covered.

49 ibid., p.8.

50 ibid.

51 ibid.

Outlining the endeavour, it suggested:

... the aim of the educational scheme has been to assist to bring its members and other workers in the railway to a greater understanding of the immediate problems with which they have to grapple. While we have realised the necessity for sound theoretical training in Marxian economics as the only possible foundation for a correct working class approach to the problems of today, we have endeavoured to make this approach as practical as possible.⁵²

The focus on education for a Socialist society was clear. But importantly, the approach was to be pragmatic. The workers were not to be subjected to sophisticated theoretical analyses, a consideration which was important in wooing workers to participate in study courses. Almost certainly most of the workers would not have enjoyed successful school careers.⁵³ Thus the proposals for pragmatism were likely to meet a more receptive response from the workers than proposals for highly theoretical studies. Such was certainly the experience when worker involvement in School of Mines technical courses was compared with the general lack of worker involvement in university tutorial classes. In addition, there was a possibility that such breadth would appeal to a wider spectrum of ARU membership, than had been the case with say, the WEA's more academic tutorial class programme.

The Federal Education Officer began work in the eastern States. Then after speaking to the South Australian Branch Annual Conference, he was invited to conduct a Study

⁵² Railway Review, 5(2) February 1938, p.5.

⁵³ See the discussion in Connell, W.F. et al., 12 to 20: Studies of City Youth, Sydney, Hicks Smith & Sons, 1975, passim, and Commission of Inquiry into Poverty, Survey of Young Workers, Canberra, Australian Government Publishing Service, 1975, especially Chapter 2.

Circle Leaders' School in this State.⁵⁴ It was decided to restrict the School of six days duration, to twelve students, and study "Fascism, War and the Problems of Australian Workers".⁵⁵ Students were to devote attention to this topic which was the basis for the year's work in the yet to be established study circles.

An important condition placed on people joining the course was that they had to undertake to organise at least one study circle, or refund the ARU for expenses the Union incurred in sending the member to the School. Thus some guarantee was made that the School would lead to the establishment of at least twelve study circles.

According to the ARU:

The school provides the first opportunity of this kind ever offered to any body of South Australian workers.⁵⁶

The initiative was significant in terms of developments in educational provision by sections of the labour movement for sections of the labour movement. It was a pioneering attempt by a union to educate some of its own members to lead discussion groups on topics highly relevant to the worker in the immediate pre-World War II years in South Australia. A degree of co-ordination and continuity was thus being given to working

⁵⁴ Railway Review, 5(6) June 1938, p.10.

⁵⁵ ibid.

⁵⁶ ibid. This claim is verified through research of union journals and archival material.

class controlled education of a more liberal nature. This contrasted to some extent with the previous efforts in the area.

There were twelve components in the six day course on fascism. These were: historical background to fascism; how fascism arose in Italy and the first phase of capitalist reaction; private property, the State and the rise of capitalism; imperialism, the collapse of capitalism, fascism and the struggle for the re-division of the world; the general crises of capitalism; fascism and the working class movement - Germany and Australia; fascism in operation - Italy; fascism in operation - Germany; fascist revisionist offensive and the war situation - East and West; the policy of the United Front - Germany, Spain, France; the crises in Britain, America, Australia - planned capitalism, fascist tendencies and the United Front and struggle against fascism and the war in 1938.⁵⁷

The course was eventually held in January 1939. It was attended by eleven students and resulted in study circles being formed in a variety of largely working class centres, such as the Port Adelaide and the Islington railway works.⁵⁸ However, references to the circles ceased appearing in the Railway Review during 1939. In their place, in 1940, references to WEA classes began to appear. This suggested a shift in emphasis from the ARU's own independent work, to that of the WEA, and an associated decline in this independent educational work.⁵⁹

⁵⁷ ibid.

⁵⁸ Railway Review, 6(1) January 1939, p.10; 6(2) February 1939, p.5.

⁵⁹ Repeated attempts to interview one of the Committee's members to ascertain precise reasons for the decline, have proved fruitless. Other sources, such as W. Marshall have been unable to give substantive reasons for this change in educational orientation.

The promise that the ARU's efforts gave for the growth of a co-ordinated working class controlled education had not been fulfilled. However, the work of the Educational and Organising Committee had been significant, if not in terms of the popularity and the longevity of its programme, then certainly in terms of advances in independent working class education initiatives. Its major classes were its Political Economy class of 1937; its "What are we to do?" class, based on Strachey's book of the same title of 1938; its study circle leaders' class on Fascism, War and the Problems of Australian Workers of 1938, and subsequent study circles (which were to be available to all unionists).⁶⁰ Further it used the pages of Railway Review to discuss issues of working class education and developed a theory of working class controlled worker education.

The Committee ceased effective class organisation by the beginning of 1940 when the ARU was courted by the new WEA and Left Book Club Secretary, R. Brewster-Jones. Again, as had been the case in the past, efforts to offer a working class controlled adult education were short-lived. Although, compared with earlier working class provisions, those of the ARU were compounded by the involvement of Australia, and thereby many of the ARU's members, in war-time activities.

Despite the decline of their own independent educational work, ARU officials were still interested in offering educational opportunities to members. They promoted

⁶⁰ Railway Review, 6(1) January 1939, p.10.

the WEA's work and became involved in its classes. Also they promoted and engaged in the activities of the Left Book Club.⁶¹ In fact, the Union established a Left Book Club library for the use of ARU members.⁶² The Union was thus assisting unionists with formal education through a WEA class programme, in addition to assistance with informal education through an important reading club service.

The ARU had shown itself to be somewhat atypical among unions in South Australia. It had made a determined effort to provide its own education for ARU members and had then actively promoted the work of the WEA and the Left Book Club. In a major way, the union had provided a model of educational innovation for other sections of the labour movement, a model that was not readily adopted as the country became involved in another world war. During this period of world conflict, unions and other major sections of the labour movement again left education provision to already established bodies. However, informal educational activities through journals, public talks and meetings in, for example, the Left Book Club, were often actively pursued.

⁶¹ Interviews with W. Marshall, March 1979 and E. Crimes, July 1979.

⁶² Books from the library are now located in the South Australian Centre of TUTA.

The Left Book Club, Fabian Society and Socialist League

A branch of the Left Book Club had been launched in South Australia under the Secretaryship of Brewster-Jones in 1937.⁶³ The Club had originally been established in London by the publisher, Victor Gollancz, in 1936. It provided members with very cheap books of a Left-wing nature. These included, for example, Snow's Red Star Over China. Members had to agree to purchase at least one book per month for at least the first six months of their membership.⁶⁴ By the end of 1938, there were approximately 2,000 members of the Club in Australia.⁶⁵ Membership in South Australia eventually reached a maximum of around 400 people.⁶⁶

Club members in this State seem to have been predominantly middle class,⁶⁷ though as mentioned earlier, trade unions such as the ARU gave it support.⁶⁸ A number of communist intellectuals were members,⁶⁹ as were some Left-wing members of the ALP.

⁶³ Playford, J., op cit., p.118.

⁶⁴ Railway Review, 5(4) April 1938, p.28. To members this book cost 3/9 (38¢), while the retail cost was 23/- (\$2.30).

⁶⁵ Railway Review, 5(11) November 1938, p.9.

⁶⁶ Playford, J., op cit., p.118.

⁶⁷ Interview with E. Crimes, July 1979. Crimes was a member of the Club in Adelaide; See also Playford, J., op cit., p.118.

⁶⁸ Railway Review, 5(11) November 1938, p.9; 7(7) July 1940, p.4; Interview with W. Marshall, March 1979.

⁶⁹ Interview with J. Moss, November 1978.

An important part of the Book Club's activities was the groups that met to discuss particular books. These meetings enhanced members' understanding of Left-wing literature. They also provided an important venue for social intercourse for many of the more academically élite members of the labour movement.⁷⁰ The Club was thus an important forum for the Left-wing intelligentsia in the State. It was not an independent working class initiative, but it was one in which élite working class theoretical leadership could participate; and the forum provided, was one of three available for the Left-wing intelligentsia at the time. The other two were the Fabian Society and the Socialist League. The educational activities of both groups were, like those of the Left Book Club, mainly discussion groups rather than formal lecture classes in such subjects as economics.⁷¹

The Fabian Society, which was similar in orientation to the Society in Great Britain, propagated Socialist principles within the ALP. It was not affiliated with the ALP although the majority of members were ALP members.⁷²

⁷⁰ Interview with E. Crimes, July 1979. In Adelaide the meetings were held in the Argonaut Bookshop which, at the time, was located on North Terrace.

⁷¹ Interview with E. Crimes, July 1979. Crimes was a member of both organisations.

⁷² Interview with E. Crimes, July 1979.

During the 1940's it lapsed into inactivity and was replaced by the Socialist League which continued much of the Society's work. It attempted to keep the ALP aware of its (ALP) Socialist objectives. The League was affiliated with the ALP until an election returned a Right-wing ALP majority executive during the 1940's. This led to opposition to the League, its disaffiliation and consequent decline.⁷³ The League was, in turn, replaced by a rejuvenated Fabian Society which, like its predecessor, quickly lapsed into inactivity. Nevertheless, the two episodes of the Society as well as the Socialist League had, like the Left Book Club, provided an important forum for Left-wing intellectuals and the potential theoretical working class leadership during the war years.

Post-World War II to 1972. A Period of Change in Labour Movement Education

By the end of World War II, few sustained independent educational initiatives had been taken from within the labour movement. The WEA, and more directly sponsored government efforts, had dominated provision, while there had been some infrequent and some short-lived innovations from, for example, trade unions,⁷⁴ the ALP⁷⁵ and the Communist Party (and its predecessor). Such endeavours were not indicative of a

⁷³ Interview with E. Crimes, July 1979.

⁷⁴ See for example, Railway Review, 7(2) February 1940; Solidarity, 19(108) June 1941; 22(119) March 1944; 23 (123) March 1945; United Trades and Labor Council of South Australia, Minutes, 17 August, 1945, SRG1 SAA; South Australian Worker (Adelaide) 22 September, 1944; 23 February, 1945.

⁷⁵ South Australian Worker (Adelaide) 16 December, 1940; 10 January, 1941.

systematic working class controlled adult educational programme.

The post-World War II economic boom saw the gradual improvement of the living and working conditions of the working class. However, so far as adult education was concerned, these early post-war years did not see any spectacular increase in its provision from within the labour movement. The ALP established a committee to arrange day and weekend schools for political education and ultimately, to establish a political education college within the South Australian Branch.⁷⁶ Though the committee organised a one day conference for December of 1951, little else was achieved. The Party gave support to the WEA, rather than develop its own education programme or its own college.⁷⁷ Subsequently it did, however, provide for a Labor Forum, although this was not well patronised.⁷⁸

Similarly, the United Trades and Labor Council, which at the time, was controlled by a Centre-Right section of the labour movement, gave its support to the WEA.⁷⁹ And this was particularly the case from 1958 when E. Williams became General Secretary of the Association. The Council affiliated and sent delegates to various schools, although it occasionally organised its own seminars, for example, one that covered the

⁷⁶ Australian Labor Party (S.A. Branch), Minutes, 8 November, 1951, SRG73, SAA.

⁷⁷ Australian Labor Party (S.A. Branch), Minutes, 10 April, 1952, SRG73, SAA; Interview with E. Crimes, July 1979.

⁷⁸ Australian Labor Party, Proceedings of 22nd Commonwealth Conference, Brisbane, ALP, 1957, p.26.

⁷⁹ United Trades and Labor Council of South Australia, Minutes, 16 August, 1959; 30 September, 1966, UTLC Archives; Interview with W. Marshall, March 1979.

topics of Unemployment, Prices, Education, Vietnam and Development of Natural Gas.⁸⁰

Thus like the major political arm of the labour movement, the large union council used the WEA as a "trade union educational body", as did, in fact, unions such as the Australasian Society of Engineers,⁸¹ the Australian Government Workers' Association,⁸² the Australian Workers' Union,⁸³ the Australian Railways Union,⁸⁴ and the Amalgamated Engineering Union.⁸⁵

The Right-wing South Australian ALP, Anti-Communist, and later the Democratic Labor Party, seemed little involved in educational programmes. Although the associated Catholic Social Studies Movement had as its educational arm, the Newman Institute, with its primary concern being on Catholic social teachings.⁸⁶

⁸⁰ United Trades and Labor Council of South Australia, Minutes, 16 August, 1959; 30 September, 1966, UTLC Archives.

⁸¹ Interview with A.R. Griffiths, Branch Secretary of the Australasian Society of Engineers, May 1979.

⁸² Solidarity, 29(151) April 1952; 30(155) April 1953; 36(12) June 1961 gave evidence of this.

⁸³ Correspondence from A.S. Begg, Branch Secretary, Australian Workers' Union, April 1979.

⁸⁴ Railway Review, 26(3) March 1959; 27(5) May 1960; Interview with W. Marshall, March 1979 revealed ARU support of the WEA.

⁸⁵ See Chapter IV.

⁸⁶ Little, G. B., "The Democratic Labor Party in South Australia" (B.A. (Hons.) thesis), University of Adelaide, 1968, passim; Warhurst, J., "The Australian Labor Party (Anti-Communist) in South Australia, November, December 1955; 'Molotov' Labor versus Coffee Shop Labor", Labour History, 32:66-74, May 1977; Interviews with J. Moss, November 1978, W. Marshall, March 1979, P. Drew, March 1979, E. Crimes, July 1979 and W.G.K. Duncan, November 1978 confirmed this inactivity from the Right.

Once again, it was the Left-wing of the labour movement and particularly, the Communist Party, that was most active educationally. In 1946, for example, the Communist Party had organised an educational conference at which J.B. Miles, Secretary of the Australian Communist Party, addressed the participants on the "Role of Theory in the Australian Labor Movement".⁸⁷ Admission to the conference was by Party card. Hence it was restricted to a target group of Communists, who adopted a resolution:

... which provided for a network of study classes, lectures and improvement of study and tutorial method.⁸⁸

The Communists were to plan for widespread Marxist oriented education within the labour movement. More rigorous study classes were to be offered in addition to the informational sessions like the Botanic Park addresses by such prominent Communists as L. Aarons and J. Moss.⁸⁹

The plans were never effectively implemented,⁹⁰ but with education so central to class struggle, it was not surprising to see a persistence on developing programmes. In 1952 for example, a study guide on Political Economy, for use in private study, lectures on Political Economy and the occasional residential school were held.⁹¹

⁸⁷ Tribune (Sydney) 11 October, 1946, p.5.

⁸⁸ Tribune (Sydney) 25 October, 1946, p.6.

⁸⁹ ibid.

⁹⁰ Interview with J. Moss, November 1978.

⁹¹ Tribune (Sydney) 6 August, 1952, p.5.

Topics considered in these ventures during the 1950's and 60's included:

The History of the Australian Labour Movement
 Marxist Political Economy
 Marxist Philosophy, Dialectical and Historical
 Materialism
 The History of the Communist Party of the Soviet Union
 The Communist Manifesto
 The United Front, G. Dimitrovs' report to the C.I.
 in 1935
 Lenin's State and Revolution
 The experiences of the Chinese Revolution
 Lenin's Imperialism
 L. Sharkey, The Trade Unions
 Material dealing with the international Communist
 Movement e.g. Stalinism, the Sino Soviet
 Split, Czechoslovakia etc.
 Material dealing with the C.P.A's programmes and
 Congress resolutions.⁹²

The Party was thus active in providing a forum for its members to discuss relevant Communist material. However, throughout its history the Party had been numerically and politically weak in this State. This weakness was further aggravated by an ideological split in the 1960's, a split which had a negative effect on its ability to attract radical workers to its educational classes.

As a whole, the labour movement did little in providing its own controlled formal education for its membership, save the few efforts so far cited. This South Australian situation was typical for Australia. In New South Wales, for example, the labour movement was similarly educationally passive.

⁹² Correspondence from J. Moss, September 1979.

Lloyd Ross lamented such inaction in 1955.⁹³ His concern was further endorsed in 1961 by University of Sydney, Department of Adult Education, Trade Union Education Tutor, Richard Carmichael.⁹⁴

Such a situation persisted through into the mid-1960's by which time unions began to take a more active part in providing their own education, and became more involved in educational courses offered by such bodies as the WEA.⁹⁵ For some unions, such as the Amalgamated Postal Workers' Union, it was the need for good future union leaders well versed in union education, that motivated involvement in weekend training courses for their members.⁹⁶ For others, such as the former Amalgamated Engineering Union (AEU), which became the Amalgamated Metal Workers' Union in 1972, there was the genuine desire to train officials in addition to broadly educating members in such areas as international affairs.⁹⁷

There was a felt need in some unions that an educated

⁹³ Ross, L., "A Class in Trade Unionism 1949-51" in J.L.J. Wilson (Ed.), Some Papers in Adult Education, Sydney, Department of Tutorial Classes, University of Sydney, 1955, pp.31-39, pp.31,32.

⁹⁴ Carmichael, R.H., Trade Union Education, (Paper presented to Joint WEA, Department of Tutorial Classes Conference, Newport, September 1961), (Mimeograph 8p.), Sydney, 1961, pp.1,2.

⁹⁵ See the discussion in Chapter V of this thesis.

⁹⁶ Waters, R., Postal Unions & Politics: A History of the Amalgamated Postal Workers' Union of Australia, St. Lucia, University of Queensland Press, 1978, p.194.

⁹⁷ Gnatenko, T., "Trade Unions and Education", Journal of Political Economy, October 1977, pp.87-90, passim. The Amalgamated Metal Workers' Union has subsequently become the Amalgamated Metal Workers' and Shipwrights' Union (AMWSU).

and skilled union leadership was required. Managers were becoming highly skilled. Union officials needed comparable skills and knowledge if they were to adequately represent their members.

Just as the ARU had provided educational leadership for unions in the 1930's, it was the AEU that was to be the leader among South Australian unions with its educational initiatives in the post-World War II period.⁹⁸ In 1964 and 1965 specific moves were made within the Union to provide education for shop stewards.⁹⁹ The courses were to be in areas such as, negotiation with management, and personnel behaviour.¹⁰⁰ These areas would eventually be central to the trade union programmes of the WEA and the Trade Union Training Authority.

In 1969, Ted Gnatenko successfully moved, at the national AEU conference, that the Union recognise the importance of shop steward education. Subsequently, in the 1970's, programmes were developed and the union provided an education fund. Gnatenko was made responsible for developments in the area.¹⁰¹

⁹⁸ The AEU, like the ACTU and ARU appointed an Education Officer during the early 1970's. It had also been a pioneer in its educational work with the WEA in the 1950's. See Chapter V of this thesis.

⁹⁹ Interview with T. Gnatenko, AMWSU (S.A. Branch) Education Officer, October 1979; Amalgamated Engineering Union Monthly Journal, January 1970, p.29; September 1971, p.27; Amalgamated Metal Workers' Union Monthly Journal, September 1973, p.32; Ogden, M., Untitled paper presented to Australian Association of Adult Education Conference, Education for Industrial Relations, Monash University, February 1974, (Mimeograph, 3p.), Melbourne, 1974, pp.2,3.

¹⁰⁰ Interview with T. Gnatenko, October 1979. This focus was similar to that of the Trade Union Education and Research Centre founded in Sydney in 1968. Modern Unionist, 2(5): 5, January/March, 1974.

¹⁰¹ Interview with T. Gnatenko, October 1979.

These programmes grew at a time when the ACTU, through its newly appointed education officer, was also taking some educational initiatives. For example, it sponsored, jointly with the Australian Council of Salaried and Professional Associations (ACSPA) and the Commonwealth Council of Public Service Organisations (CCPSO), nine day national schools in Canberra. In 1973 this included topics such as The Challenge of Change, Women in the Union Movement and Wages, Prices and Profits. The school attracted 132 members from in excess of 60 unions. The ACTU also sponsored the WEA Trade Union Correspondence Scheme and Schools for Unionists in the Commonwealth Public Service.

In 1972 it requested that its State Branches carry out an educational programme. This was to include courses for full-time and part-time officials, and job representatives, in areas such as health, safety, communication, conciliation and arbitration.¹⁰² It also recommended that each Branch provide a series of one day seminars on topics such as inflation and economic policy.

This request followed a successful South Australian United Trades and Labor Council Executive approach to the State Government to secure an increased financial grant to the WEA to allow the appointment of a Trade Union Education Officer.¹⁰³

¹⁰² ACTU, Circular 115/1972, July 1972.

¹⁰³ United Trades and Labor Council of South Australia, Minutes, 24 March, 1972, UTLC Archives.

The education of unionists was arousing renewed interest from sections of the labour movement. Attention was being focussed on planned provision which in the initial stages aimed to produce more knowledgeable and competent union officials.

By 1972 working class controlled education, particularly that of a utilitarian nature, was poised for unprecedented developments.

The Labour Movement and Adult Education Initiatives
Under a Federal Labor Government

Labour had been on the defensive in Australia since the late 1940's. During this time, the nature of the working class had changed radically. There was for example, the migrant influx in the post-war years, the increased affluence of workers, the effects of high technology on workers, the increasing percentage of women in the workforce, and their role in traditionally male domains such as trade unions. Unionism had also radically altered with the formation of, for example, larger unions by the amalgamation of smaller ones, and the growth in white collar unionism. Thus in 1972, when the ALP won federal office in a victory that aroused great hopes in the trade union movement,¹⁰⁴ the nature of the labour movement was different from that when the ALP last held federal government, namely, the 1940's.

¹⁰⁴ Turner, I., In Union is Strength, A History of Trade Unions in Australia, 1788-1974. Melbourne, Nelson, 1976, p.127.

The early years of the 1970's had seen more significant moves in the area of worker and, in particular, trade unionist education than most of the recent preceding decades. The ACTU appointed a full-time education officer. The Western Australian Trades and Labor Council received a grant from the State Labor Government for union education work, and it employed a full-time education officer. This was similar to the case in South Australia where the State Labor Government made funds available to the WEA for the appointment of two trade union education officers. The Labor Council of New South Wales also had an education officer.¹⁰⁵ Some political parties such as the communists provided courses for their members, while several unions began earnest provision of courses, which in the main were utilitarian programmes for union officials. In addition, the small Marxist Victorian Labor College that had been established in 1917 continued its long tradition of working class educational provision¹⁰⁶ that included some basic studies such as English Grammar as well as Marxist Studies.¹⁰⁷

Hence in the early 1970's there was considerable activity in the area of worker education provision. Unlike many earlier worker efforts, particularly in the pre-World War II years, emphasis was now being given to the task of improving

¹⁰⁵ Egerton, J., "Education for Industrial Relations - Trade Union Training" in Australian Association of Adult Education, Education for Industrial Relations, Canberra, AAEA, 1974, pp.36-45, pp.38-39.

¹⁰⁶ In 1963, for example, the Board of Management lamented the small attendances at its classes. Foenander, O. de R., Shop Stewards and Shop Committees, Melbourne, Melbourne University Press, 1965, p.36.

¹⁰⁷ Victorian Labor College, Syllabus 1975,

worker skills and remedying deficiencies in their basic education. This concern became central in the educational policy of the ALP when it won federal government.

On assuming federal government, the Labor Party made important innovations in trade union education, innovations that were to have effects in each State. In November 1973, Clyde Cameron, the Minister for Labor and Immigration, in the Whitlam Ministry announced that:

The Government today approved my proposal concerning financial assistance for the development of trade union training.¹⁰⁸

The finance was to enable the establishment of a National Trade Union College, State Trade Union Training Centres and National and State Councils for Trade Union Training.¹⁰⁹ It was recommended that legislation for the proposals would be brought down early in 1974.¹¹⁰

Cameron hoped that employers would co-operate with the proposals and give leave for employees to attend courses on full pay.¹¹¹ Such a proposal met some employer opposition,

¹⁰⁸ Cameron, Hon. C., Government Proposals Concerning Trade Union Training, (Press Release) 7 November, 1973.

¹⁰⁹ (a) The title reflected the nature of the bulk of courses that would be offered that is, skill acquisition. Largely courses had utilitarian aims.
 (b) Although the proposed Trade Union Training Authority was to be a Statutory Government Authority it would be largely controlled by union representatives and hence is included here as part of the labour movement contribution to working class adult education.

¹¹⁰ Cameron, Hon. C., op cit.

¹¹¹ The Public Service Board of South Australia, for example, approved such leave, Industrial Instruction No.453. A number of awards contain trade union training leave provisions, for example, Municipal Officers' (S.A.) Award 1973, Pulp and Paper Industry (Production) Award 1973, Transport Workers' (Airways) Award 1975, Vehicle Industry Awards (various) and Paint Industry (Manufacturing) Agreement 1975.

and where opposition was not forthcoming there were suggestions of management involvement in course design. This situation was unacceptable to unions, for as M. Beahan, Education Officer of the Western Australian Trades and Labor Council, has said:

... for union training to be successful it must be controlled and administered by unions.¹¹²

The principle was seen as fundamental to directly sponsored union education and training. Management should have no control over employees' education and training as proposed through a trade union programme.

The opposition of some employers to the scheme was matched by that generated from within sections of the various States' labour movements. In fact, Cameron found considerable apprehension, within many unions, about the prospect of Government funded Trade Union Training:¹¹³

Sections of both the Right-wing and the Left-wing suspected that it was a foul capitalist plot to addle and brainwash the minds of present and future leaders of the Trade Union Movement and make them stooges of the capitalist system.

Some employees, meanwhile, saw the scheme as an "evil plot by Peking Communists".¹¹⁴ The ideological divisions in the labour

¹¹² Beahan, M., "The Role of Trade Union Training" in A. Wesson (Ed.), National Priorities - The Role of the Australian Government in the Education of Adults, Canberra, AAEE, 1975, Volume 2, pp.134-135, p.134.

¹¹³ Cameron, Hon. C., Speech given at the Ceremony to mark the unveiling of the Foundation Stone of the Clyde Cameron College at Wodonga on 2 February, 1976, (Mimeograph, 16p.), Adelaide, 1976, p.5. Copy of speech from Hon. C. Cameron.

¹¹⁴ ibid.

movement were again evident. Nevertheless, Cameron was soon able to get widespread union support and Cabinet's approval for the scheme which was to be ideologically "unbiased".

An Interim Committee of the National Council for Trade Union Training was established, and in July 1975 the Australian Trade Union Training Authority Act was proclaimed.¹¹⁵ A college was also under construction in Albury/Wodonga. The Act ensured that trade unions themselves controlled the College and courses offered here and in State Centres.¹¹⁶

The scheme would assist members, shop stewards, union employees and other union officials in participating more effectively in unions. Courses in the scheme have and would be provided at national and State levels:

National courses being conducted include residential courses for union administrators and research officers, and on industrial law and the economic environment.

State Programmes conducted at the State Centres typically include job representative courses, courses for other part-time officers; courses on communication, health and safety; and basic courses on economics, industrial relations etc.¹¹⁷

About 50% of training days have been spent on training union officials, job representatives and activists in the basic skills of union activity.¹¹⁸ Areas here have included communications

¹¹⁵ Australian Training News, No.10, 1975.

¹¹⁶ Cameron, Hon. C., Speech given at the Ceremony to mark the unveiling of the Foundation Stone of the Clyde Cameron College at Wodonga on 2 February, 1976, op cit., p.9.

¹¹⁷ Australian Training News, No.10, 1975; Australian Trade Union Training Authority, First Annual Report, Wodonga (Vic.), TUTA, 1975/76, p.20.

¹¹⁸ Report of the Committee of Inquiry into Trade Union Training, Canberra, Australian Government Publishing Service, August 1977, p.7.

and industrial relations.

Approximately 25% of training days have been devoted to special issues such as, women in the workforce and migrants in the workforce, while 20% have been devoted to leadership development of active unionists, for example, a study of the Australian economic, political and social environment.¹¹⁹ Finally, about 5% of days have been devoted to current issues.

The length of courses varied widely. Some were of one day's duration while others were up to, for example, 15 days duration. The student population in the first year of operation was 3,877 with almost 650 male and female unionists attending courses at the State Centre in South Australia.¹²⁰ Importantly, efforts were being made to provide courses that were relevant to female unionists. Women were, by 1975, becoming increasingly involved in unions. TUTA was making efforts to ensure that these women were better trained to execute their roles in unions in a manner similar to the way in which male unionists were being assisted with their union work.

In providing for this predominantly utilitarian programme, the government was meeting a very important immediate need. However, and not surprisingly, the Labor Government was

¹¹⁹ ibid., pp.7,8.

¹²⁰ Australian Trade Union Training Authority, op cit., pp.6,11. According to Phil Drew, interview with the researcher, March 1979, most of these participants were from blue collar unions with about a quarter from white collar unions. He declined to provide the researcher with a breakdown of individual union enrollees referring to this as "somewhat sensitive".

not catering for substantive development of working class consciousness through a radical political, social and economic education. The structure of the Australian and State Councils for Union Training was such as to prohibit ideological bias from, overtly, influencing the conduct of courses.¹²¹ Even had the government shown a desire to promote ideologically biassed education it would have come under considerable pressure from sections of its union support base, some members of the Parliamentary wing of the ALP, some ALP branches, and from much of society at large.

Union officials have become more highly skilled through participation in TUTA's programmes.¹²² Consequently, these officials should have become better able to represent their membership, an activity that was, and is, an important function for such officials. This central aspect of their role would be assisted to more sophisticated levels after TUTA became firmly established from 1976.

Thus from mid-1975, TUTA was to play a most important part in trade union, including traditionally defined worker, education. From this time, some individual unions have also placed more emphasis on the education of their members. In a few cases, this has been the further development of a provision

¹²¹ Report of the Committee of Inquiry into Trade Union Training, op cit., p.2.

¹²² Interview with David Ruff, Director Trade Union Training Centre (South Australia), October 1979.

that has been evident from the early 1970's.

Unions in South Australia such as The Clothing and Allied Trades Union of Australia,¹²³ Australian Building and Construction Workers' Federation,¹²⁴ Federated Rubber and Allied Workers' Union,¹²⁵ Federated Liquor and Allied Industries Employees' Union of Australia,¹²⁶ Storemen and Packers' Union,¹²⁷ Australian Boot Trade Employees' Federation,¹²⁸ Building Workers' Industrial Union,¹²⁹ Australian Postal and Telecommunications Union,¹³⁰ Merchant Service Guild of Australia,¹³¹ Transport Workers' Union of Australia,¹³² and the AWU,¹³³ have not actively promoted their own programmes but have used the facilities of TUTA or the WEA. Meanwhile other unions such as

¹²³ Correspondence with K.J. Collis, Branch Secretary, The Clothing and Allied Trades Union of Australia, September 1979.

¹²⁴ Correspondence with R.G. Owens, Branch Secretary, Australian Building and Construction Workers' Federation, October 1979.

¹²⁵ Interview with Secretary, Federated Rubber and Allied Workers' Union, October 1979.

¹²⁶ Correspondence with T. Crothers, Branch President, Federated Liquor and Allied Industries Employees' Union of Australia, October 1979.

¹²⁷ Interview with G. Apap, Branch Secretary, Storemen and Packers' Union, October 1979.

¹²⁸ Correspondence with W. Burke, Secretary Australian Boot Trade Employees' Federation, October 1979.

¹²⁹ Interview with Branch Secretary, Building Workers' Industrial Union, October 1979.

¹³⁰ Correspondence with F. Willis, Branch Secretary, Australian Postal and Telecommunications Union, September 1979.

¹³¹ Correspondence with R. Keavy, Branch President, Merchant Service Guild of Australia, September 1979.

¹³² Correspondence with J. Nyland, Branch Secretary, Transport Workers' Union of Australia, September 1979.

¹³³ Correspondence with A. Begg, Branch Secretary, AWU, April 1979.

the Australasian Society of Engineers (ASE),¹³⁴ the Food Preservers' Union and the Waterside Workers' Federation have conducted some job delegate courses and provided for some lectures to officials, on an intermittent basis¹³⁵ that is reminiscent of the bulk of the trade union educational efforts between 1913 and 1970.

The Vehicle Builders Employees' Federation of Australia (VBEF) has, since 1975, provided a number of courses for shop stewards.¹³⁶ These have included the Role of the Shop Steward, Political Parties of South Australia and Workmen's Compensation. However, the significant effort to provide union education has been by the Amalgamated Metal Workers' and Shipwrights' Union (AMWSU), and this has been particularly so from 1975.¹³⁷ Gnatenko was appointed full-time education officer in 1974.¹³⁸

Since 1975, the AMWSU education programme has had three essential components. These have been Basic Courses for Shop Stewards, for example, How the AMWSU Functions ;

¹³⁴ Interview with A. Griffiths, Branch Secretary of ASE, May 1979.

¹³⁵ Huntley, P., Inside Australia's Top 100 Trade Unions, Northbridge (N.S.W.), Ian Huntley, 1976, has details on the educational activities of various unions. Such activities have been, and are, on a very limited scale.

¹³⁶ Correspondence with R. Walker, Education Officer, VBEF, September 1979.

¹³⁷ Interview with D. Ruff, October 1979.

¹³⁸ Interview with T. Gnatenko, October 1979.

Inner Management, for example, Negotiation Techniques; Political Economy, for example, Ownership of Industry.¹³⁹ There has thus been some emphasis on education with utilitarian ends in addition to courses which would result in more politically aware officials in the tradition of early efforts in working class controlled adult education.

John Scott, a worker from Glasgow where he was involved in radical worker education¹⁴⁰ and who was the unionist who played a significant role in obtaining State government finance for the appointment of the WEA Trade Union Education officers, was at the time State Secretary of the AMWSU. He was sympathetic to the development of the AMWSU's education programme and played an important role in the development of the radical political and more basic sides of the Union's work.¹⁴¹

The radical education was atypical of South Australian worker provided education, as was the extent of the AMWSU's activities in the area. It was certainly the leader in trade union controlled education among blue collar unions, and has provided other unions with a pattern of worker controlled adult education.

Worker controlled education provisions have advanced significantly in South Australia since 1975. Shop Steward courses have been fundamental to this development, while other

¹⁴⁰ Interview with T. Gnatenko, October 1979.

¹⁴¹ As much of the AMWSU's educational activity has occurred since 1975, consideration is given to this in the final section of the thesis.

courses have focussed on technological development, industrial safety, unemployment, women in unions, literacy, industrial democracy and public speaking. Courses have largely been of a utilitarian nature, with little effort being expended in areas such as political economy. Pragmatic education has dominated as officials have endeavoured to provide unionists with what they viewed as a useful education.

Unions have also published journals and newsletters containing some articles of educational value. However, such journal content has been limited and material in the journals often focussed on award data and other industrial matters.¹⁴²

The year 1975, was a watershed year for working class controlled education. Since this time considerable advances have been made in independent labour movement education in South Australia, with developments receiving a necessary stimulus with the election of a Federal ALP Government in 1972. In the years 1972 to 1975, the bases were created whereby this post-1975 growth, in mainly utilitarian education, was assured. In a State with a strong non-conformist tradition, and a history of relative worker quietude, such an educational orientation has been receiving increasing support from among sections of the labour movement, a movement which by 1975, was vastly different in makeup from that of 1913.

¹⁴² In a survey of union journals available in the TUTA (South Australian Centre) library, the writer was able to locate very few articles of educational worth. However, the AMWSU was a notable exception with much comment; other union journals, for example, those of the ARU and the Federated Storemen and Packers' Union also contained some articles. The journals consulted were largely for the years 1970-1978 although in several cases, union journals from the 1960's were in the library.

Summary

From the early history of trade unions in Australia, little interest has been shown in mounting union controlled educational programmes for their members. Rather, they have relied on the work of such bodies as the WEA, and this was particularly so in South Australia.

Occasionally the ALP, unions or radical sections of the labour movement have tried to develop independent classes. However, these have largely been of an ad hoc nature, with the Victorian Marxist Labor College being an important exception.

During the late 1960's, and particularly in the 1970's conditions have changed radically, with a number of unions and union councils becoming involved. These included the AMWSU, VBEF, ACTU, and latterly in South Australia, the United Trades and Labor Council.

However, none of the efforts were as large as those of TUTA. This body was formed to ensure the development of more highly skilled and educated trade unionists including blue collar unionists and hence adults traditionally defined as workers. And although TUTA was created by the Whitlam Labor Government, it has survived a period of conservative rule to become a force in worker education with its utilitarian offerings.

The 1975 proclamation of the Act to establish TUTA was fundamental for labour movement education, for it saw the beginning of a more co-ordinated approach to education than had been the case in the past. Adult education was now surely recognised as an integral part of the labour movement's functions.

Unionists were being provided with a pragmatic education that would better enable them to represent their members. Such education involved considerable emphasis on skills acquisition with little consideration being given to liberal and more propagandistic education. The more highly educated union officials of the 1970's have positively responded to these provisions which have been offered to meet some of their more immediate needs as unionists.

CHAPTER VIISTATE PROVIDED ADULT EDUCATION: THE SCHOOL OF MINES,
THE EDUCATION DEPARTMENT AND THE DEPARTMENT
OF FURTHER EDUCATION: 1913 - 1975

Significant Government intervention, apart from subsidies to these private institutions, may be conveniently dated from the Education Act of 1915 and the Apprentices' Act of 1917. The 1915 Act established the Technical Education Branch - the predecessor of my Department - and it commenced operations in 1916. (I might mention that the Department of Further Education, although frequently referred to as a "new" Department, is in fact this year celebrating its Diamond Jubilee. (M.H. Bone¹)

In introducing the Further Education Act, 1975, the Minister of Education (Dr. Don Hopgood) expressed his belief that it would 'provide the foundation of what I believe will be a dynamic and innovative contribution by South Australia in a major field of educational activity, the true importance of which is only now becoming fully appreciated by educational authorities and the community at large. (M.H. Bone²)

Introduction

Since 1975, developments in the provision of working class adult education in Australia have been significant. The labour movement has become more educationally active through the efforts of unions, such as the Vehicle Builders Employees' Federation and the Amalgamated Metal Workers' and Shipwrights' Union in South Australia and councils such as the Australian

¹ Bone, M.H., Education and Industry. The Role of TAFE: TAFE in South Australia. Past, Present, Future, (Paper presented to National Conference on Technical and Further Education, Melbourne, 19 August, 1976), (Mimeograph, 30p.), Adelaide, 1976, p.2.

² SAPD, November 1975, quoted in ibid., p.4.

Council of Trade Unions and the Trade Union Training Authority. There has been a revitalised concern for adult education, particularly narrow utilitarian education.

This renewed educational interest followed the efforts of various State and Federal ALP Governments, in the early 1970's, to support systematic working class adult education through the industrial wing of the labour movement and voluntary bodies such as the WEA. Although in years prior to these a few unions and political parties provided a variety of informal adult education activities and then some formal courses. While the South Australian WEA, particularly after 1958, provided somewhat more consistent formal working class adult educational activities.

In terms of resource allocation since 1913, by far the largest effort in the provision of specific working class adult education and education in which the working class could participate, has come from the various government and associated agencies. These included the South Australian Education Department and later the Department of Further Education, the World War II Australian Army Education Service, the post-World War II Victorian Council of Adult Education (CAE), the then New South Wales Department of Technical Education and the various States' Schools of Mines and Industries and Technical Colleges.

Much of the work of these bodies, except for the CAE, has been in vocational education, and particularly basic, middle and advanced level technical education. That is, vocational education programmes which included those in which manual workers were most likely to have participated. Although since

the mid-1950's the relevant South Australian bodies have also given emphasis to the provision of recreational, remedial, non-vocational and informational adult education.

Developments in State Adult Education Provision
in Nineteenth and Early Twentieth Centuries in
South Australia

In South Australia, government interest in vocational adult education, and particularly technical education, which was defined in the First Progress Report of the South Australian Board of Inquiry into Technical Education 1888 as:

... that course of instruction which deals with the application of scientific processes and manual processes to the industrial arts ..., ³

was expanded in the second half of the nineteenth century.

The colony was heavily dependent on agriculture. There was no developed manufacturing base and the colony's industries were in danger of being submerged by the more advanced manufacturing industries in the eastern colonies. Skilled workers would aid industrial expansion in the colony and assist in preventing its total eclipse in the manufacturing area. ⁴

Pressure from numerous sources within the colony and examples provided from other colonies resulted in the appointment of a Board of Inquiry into Technical Education. In the Board's report of 1888, it recommended the formation of a School of Mines. ⁵ The Government accepted this recommendation and

³ SAPP, No.33, 1888, p.xxii. Like definitions of adult education, definitions of technical education vary.

⁴ For a detailed analysis of this period see Murray-Smith, S., "A History of Technical Education in Australia: With Special Reference to the Period Before 1914". (Ph.D. thesis), University of Melbourne, 1966, pp.446-514.

⁵ Details of the report are in SAPP, No.33, 1888.

established such a School in 1889, the year following the inception of Nurse Education at the Royal Adelaide Hospital and five years after the establishment of the Roseworthy Agricultural College.⁶ Subsequently, smaller Schools of Mines were established in country towns, such as Gawler and Mount Gambier, which were important agricultural centres, Moonta and Kapunda which were important mining towns, and Port Pirie, the major industrial centre outside the Adelaide metropolitan area.

Initially workers did not respond well to the Adelaide School's creation. This perhaps reflected opposition to the emphasis being given to academic courses as opposed to more pragmatic education, the level of fees and the high standards of achievement required of participants.⁷ Nevertheless, workers soon became more prominent in courses. By 1900, there were more than 1600 students at the School with 54% of these attending academic courses, and 46% attending trade courses.⁸ The more practically oriented basic trade education was being given additional emphasis and proving attractive to manual workers.

In the years leading to 1913, the Schools of Mines

⁶ Committee of Enquiry into Post-Secondary Education in South Australia, Post-Secondary Education in South Australia, Adelaide, Government Printer, 1978, p.22.

⁷ See comments in, for example, Advertiser (Adelaide) 12 March, 1889.

⁸ South Australian School of Mines and Industries, Annual Report, Adelaide, South Australian School of Mines and Industries, 1900, pp.1-4.

showed steady growth in student numbers, and importance, as they continued to aid basic technical skills acquisition and maintenance and provided advanced technical education and some general scientific education.⁹ Except for Gawler, they also offered commercial courses.¹⁰ Gross enrolments at the Schools in 1912 were as shown in Table 7.1.

TABLE 7.1
SCHOOLS OF MINES ENROLMENTS - 1912

<u>School</u>	<u>Gross Enrolment</u>
Adelaide	3,522
Port Pirie	436
Moonta	285
Gawler	215
Mount Gambier	164
Kapunda	138
Total	4,760

Source: South Australia, Statistical Register 1912, Adelaide, Government Printer, 1912, Part VII, p.7.

The Schools were attracting large numbers of students. The State was acquiring a more technically competent workforce and workers themselves, were receiving educational opportunities.¹¹

⁹ Advertiser (Adelaide) 20 February, 1908; Register (Adelaide) 18 February, 1909.

¹⁰ The Chamber of Commerce objected to the introduction of Shorthand and Typing classes at the School of Mines and Industries in 1902, labelling it as unjust competition for private commercial colleges. Register (Adelaide) 21 January, 1903; For a discussion on Commercial Education at this time see Jones, H.P., "The History of Commercial Education in South Australia with Special Reference to Women", (M.A. thesis), University of Adelaide, 1967, passim.

¹¹ See the discussion in Murray-Smith, S., "Technical Education in Australia 1788-1914: A Select Bibliography" in R.J.W. Selleck (Ed.), Melbourne Studies in Education 1967, Melbourne, Melbourne University Press, 1967, pp.210-245, p.227.

Such opportunities, enhanced their occupational and even social mobility, as they were encouraged to acquire technical qualifications. Thus not only was the State benefitting, but workers were also receiving advantages through their newly acquired competencies. Self-improvement was a key ideological component of this form of education, a component which had also been central to the early efforts of the mechanics' institutes, and which was still evident in some of the institutes' activities.

However, in general terms, the institutes' activities were no longer such that they directly complemented the vocational provisions of the Schools of Mines by being concerned with scientific and specifically technical education for adults. Rather they concentrated on informal adult education and social and recreational activities. In fact, in 1908 a press report cited only Gawler, Norwood, Port Adelaide, Saddleworth, Wallaroo and Manoora Institutes as making successful efforts in instruction.¹² At this time the Government withdrew its subsidy on fees received from students attending institute classes, causing the Institutes' Association to lament that the lost subsidy would force the closure of classes.¹³

Certainly, classes became fewer from 1908 into the war and post-war years, but whether the Government's action was causal, is not clear from Institute archives.¹⁴ Quite likely

¹² Register (Adelaide) 2 April, 1908.

¹³ Advertiser (Adelaide) 11 September, 1908

¹⁴ Institutes' Association Records, GRG58, Series 1-360, SAA.

it hastened an already clear process whereby the institutes largely left formal education to bodies such as the Schools of Mines, but continued to provide the occasional lecture presentation at places such as Strathalbyn¹⁵ and Lobethal.¹⁶

An interesting and important exception to this trend was in the working class centre of Port Adelaide. The Port Adelaide Institute continued to offer classes in drawing, typewriting and book-keeping well into post-World War I years. In fact in 1918, 33 students attended drawing classes while 62 attended commercial classes.¹⁷ Students in drawing and commercial classes in later years, for example, were respectively 19 and 48 in 1922, and 28 and 68 in 1924.¹⁸ It is doubtful whether these students were manual workers even though the classes were in a portside suburb.

Despite such efforts through into the post-war years, it was clear by the outbreak of World War I that there was a dearth in the provision of commercial, technical and scientific courses in the institutes. The State authorities and the Schools of Mines had however, filled the gap left by the institutes' inadequate coverage of the area. The Government had intervened because industrial efficiency was increasingly linked with education. Better educated and skilled workers would be motivated to aid the fostering of national and individual growth.

¹⁵ Statistical Return, Strathalbyn Institute, (various years), Institutes' Association, Adelaide.

¹⁶ Institutes' Association Records, GRG58, Series 1-360, SAA.

¹⁷ Port Adelaide News 1 February, 1918.

¹⁸ Port Adelaide News 30 January, 1925.

The Royal Commission and World War I Growth

In 1910, on the motion of the Labor Parliamentarian Thomas Ryan, the Government established a Select Committee to enquire into the University of Adelaide.¹⁹ Subsequently, this Committee was reconstituted as a Royal Commission into Education in South Australia. It reported in 1913 and provided the basis for the important 1915 Education Act.

The Commission found that technical education was unco-ordinated and defective.²⁰ Also there was an employee reluctance to voluntarily engage in basic technical education. This was despite the substantial growth in Schools of Mines' enrolments during the years to 1913.

To overcome such opposition and help remedy deficiencies, the Commission recommended the appointment of a Superintendent of Technical Education and the compulsory attendance of apprentices at technical schools.²¹ Furthermore, it recommended that the Schools of Mines should be controlled by the Education Department.²² Clearly, centralisation of technical education under one government authority was the intention. With such control, the Government could ensure co-ordinated development

¹⁹ Register (Adelaide) 4 August, 1910; 27 October, 1910. See the earlier discussion on this Committee in preceding chapters of this thesis.

²⁰ In the 1913 report of the Minister of Education, concern was expressed that "Technical education in this State is behind most of the Western World and other Australian States". SAPP, No.44, 1913, p.16.

²¹ In 1908 the Commissioner of Railways had instructed that all railways apprentices should attend the School of Mines and Industries two evenings per week for three years at the expense of the Railways. Subsequently, they received time off in lieu for attendance at the classes. South Australian School of Mines and Industries, Annual Report, Adelaide, South Australian School of Mines and Industries, 1908, p.62; Advertiser (Adelaide) 15 February, 1909.

²² SAPP, No.75, 1913, Final Report of the Royal Commission on Education. p.xxxvi,ff.

in the area, as the State was striving for industrial strength.

The recommendation affecting the autonomy of Schools of Mines caused some controversy.²³ However, there was little comment by J. Langdon Bonython, Chairman of the Adelaide Schools Council, and controlling influence in the Adelaide newspaper, the Advertiser. This suggested that he had been told by Commission member and Liberal Premier Peake, "not to worry",²⁴ and indeed, he had no cause to worry. The Education Act of 1915, introduced by a Labor Government under Premier Crawford Vaughan, excluded the Adelaide School from falling under direct ministerial authority through the Education Department. In contrast, the smaller and less politically powerful Country Schools of Mines at Gawler, Moonta, Kapunda, Port Pirie and Mount Gambier came under State control.²⁵ Such action precipitated a falling off of support for the Schools from some quarters. For example, in Moonta, the change coincided with a withdrawal of interest by the Wallaroo and Moonta Mining and Smelting Co. Ltd.²⁶

The Royal Commission, and then the 1915 Education Act, led to significant developments in technical education. This

²³ Daily Herald (Adelaide) 5 August, 1913.

²⁴ See the reference in Murray-Smith, S., "A History of Technical Education in Australia: With Special Reference to the Period Before 1914", op cit., p.920.

²⁵ Acts of South Australian Parliament, No. 1223, Part III, Para. 34, 1915.

²⁶ Hand, M.J., "Adult Education in the Northern Yorke Peninsula," Australian Journal of Adult Education, 9(3):120-128, November 1969, p.125.

form of education, particularly at the apprentice and secondary school levels largely came under central government control. Provision was made to appoint a Superintendent for the area. Also, authority was given to create various types of technical schools including preparatory trade schools and schools for advanced technical education.²⁷

Following the passing of the Act, the Government invited Donald Clark, the Victorian Chief Inspector of Technical Schools to advise on technical education development for South Australia. In his report, Technical Education in South Australia of 1916, not surprisingly, Clark argued the need to provide education for those engaged in industries needing special skills, and firstly to industries of greatest importance to the State.²⁸

Although not under direct government control, the Adelaide School of Mines immediately acted on Clark's report. It established advisory committees on trade education. These committees comprised trade representatives and devised curricula for apprentice courses. This brought industry into even closer contact with the School's basic courses and, to an extent further brought curricula under the influence of the manufacturers. The courses were made more relevant to industries' needs,

²⁷ (a) Acts of South Australian Parliament, op cit.
 (b) With regard to the Commission's recommendations on apprentice education, it was not until 1917 that an Apprentice Act made attendance at metropolitan technical schools compulsory. Fenner, C., Apprentice Training, (Bulletin of the Education Department of South Australia), Adelaide, Education Department, 1924, p.8.

²⁸ SAPP, No.59, 1916, Report of Clark, D., Technical Education in South Australia, p.1.

thereby providing the potential for students to better assist industrial growth as well as their own individual development. The nexus between the State's industries and technical education authorities, became more firmly established.

The School was making efforts to overcome some of the criticisms of technical education that were made by the Royal Commission. It was, after all, still the dominant body in vocational education provision at the basic and advanced vocational education levels.

Because of this dominance, the range in levels of vocational courses offered, and the diversity among these courses, the School of Mines drew its students from a wide cross-section of the South Australian population. This is shown by Tables 7.2 and 7.3.

TABLE 7.2

SCHOOL OF MINES: STUDENT OCCUPATIONS - 1913

(FREQUENCY \geq 30)

<u>Occupation</u>	<u>Number</u>
Clerks	225
Carpenters and Joiners	75
Domestic Duties	221
Electricians and Apprentices	47
Engineers " "	64
Fitters " "	90
Labourers	39
Machinists	33
Mechanics	43
Not Stated	163
Nurses	48
Plumbers and Apprentices	49
Shop Assistants	34
Students and Scholars	145
(Miscellaneous categories with frequencies of < 30)	602
<u>Total</u>	<u>1,878</u>

Source: SAPP, No.27, 1913, pp.3,4.

TABLE 7.3

SCHOOL OF MINES: STUDENT OCCUPATIONS - 1918(FREQUENCY \geq 30)

<u>Occupation</u>	<u>Number</u>
Clerks	325
Domestic Duties	298
Electricians	58
Engineers and Apprentices	47
Farmers	47
Fitters and Apprentices	132
Labourers	59
Motor Mechanics	63
Not Stated	218
Nurses	69
Plumbers and Apprentices	30
Students and Scholars	835
Typists	32
(Miscellaneous categories with frequencies of $<$ 30)	835
<u>Total</u>	<u>3,048</u>

Source: SAPP, No.38, 1918, p.4.

Over this period and of the total student body, the percentage of full-time Students and Scholars rapidly increased from 7.7% in 1913 to 27.4% in 1918. Partly this was due to the influx of returned service personnel following World War I, and partly it was due to the increasing numbers of students engaging in higher level technical education, on a full-time basis. Further,

a number of compulsory school age students were engaged in technical studies which also contributed to the enrolment figure.

Manual workers such as Electricians, Mechanics, Fitters, Labourers, Motor Mechanics and Plumbers were well represented in the student body. This factor highlighted the increasingly important role that the School of Mines was playing in providing essentially vocational education for these people, particularly in basic technical education. Interestingly the categories of Clerks and Domestic Duties were very prominent. In 1913, these categories each represented 12% of total enrolments while in 1918, they were, respectively, 11% and 10% of the total. Their representation in the student body was similar to the high proportion of such people in WEA classes that were discussed earlier in this work. Education provided by a variety of bodies had obvious appeal to these adults, in a manner similar to today where the categories Clerks and Domestic Duties or more accurately, Clerks and Home Duties are prominent.

The war years had seen greater emphasis being placed on vocational education and consequently enrolments at the School of Mines rapidly increased. Apprentice education became largely systematised under the Technical Education of Apprentices' Act of 1917,²⁹ and more advanced technical education developed. Many of the vocational educational

²⁹ The Act has been viewed as the most advanced in Australia at the time. See Thiele, C., Grains of Mustard Seed, Netley, Griffin Press, 1975, p.152.

activities were centralised under the State Education Department, although the Adelaide School of Mines retained its autonomy. Finally, a Technical Education Branch in the Education Department was formed. This provided for State involvement in technical education at compulsory school and apprentice levels, and thus formed a dual system of provision of technical education at these levels.

The 1913 Royal Commission isolated serious deficiencies in technical education in the State. The developments during the war were attempts to remedy such deficiencies, particularly at the apprentice level. Thus by 1918-1920, vocational education provision by the School of Mines and the Education Department had shown considerable change.³⁰ In particular the efforts of the School of Mines to provide basic trade education for adult workers (see Tables 7.2 and 7.3), represented important innovation in the adult education area.

At this time, however, and despite these impressive efforts neither body provided systematic recreational, informational or non-vocational courses that were in the defined adult education area.

The South Australian Education Department, the School of Mines and Adult Education from World War I to the Onset of World War II

During and immediately after World War I, Schools of Mines, Technical Colleges, and Government Departments were among the main agencies engaged in diverse compulsory school and post-

³⁰ See also the discussion in Murray-Smith, S., "Technical Education in Australia: A Historical Sketch" in E.L. Wheelwright (Ed.), Higher Education in Australia, Melbourne, Cheshire, 1965, pp.170-191, p.186.

school educational provision that was largely of a vocational nature.³¹ Furthermore, for a short time on a national scale, the Army provided a wide range of educational services.³²

The Australian Infantry Forces (AIF) Education Service came to its predestined end shortly after the conclusion of World War I, after having been established in the closing months of the war.³³ The Service provided largely vocational activities such as educational classes, with the highest average weekly attendance being 22,000, and lectures, which attracted over 350,000 at Depots in England.³⁴ In addition it assisted soldiers in gaining more practically oriented education such as in arts and crafts.

The Service was headed by Brigadier General Long who saw the scheme as:

... not only helping the troops, but of making Australian citizens.³⁵

Its programme aided soldiers who would have been idle in camps in England and France whilst awaiting transport to Australia, and thence demobilisation. And although the Service was short-lived, it had an important role to play, for it exposed many adults to the potential to be derived from adult educational

³¹ In 1915, for example, the South Australian Government established a Mt. Remarkable Estate where discharged soldiers were "trained" in agriculture. Fifty such people took up residence between August 1916 and June 1917. SAPP, No.43A, 1917, pp.10-11.

³² See the discussion in Bean, C.E.W., Official History of Australia in the War of 1914-18, Sydney, Angus and Robertson, 1942. Especially Volume VI, The Australian Imperial Force in France During the Allied Offensive, 1918, passim.

³³ A.I.F. Education Service Journal, Volume 1, No.8, 15 August, 1919.

³⁴ ibid.

³⁵ Bean, C.E.W., op cit., Volume VI, p.1063.

study. Furthermore, the activities of the Service later provided guidance for officers in the Australian Army Education Service of World War II. Finally, the Service assisted in the transformation of part of an Army into a civilian force with skills that were required in post-World War I Australia. The soldiers would return to their homeland better equipped to participate in post-war reconstruction.

Those soldiers who returned to South Australia, and who were interested, must have been impressed at the developments in vocational education since 1914. Certainly, the basic trade area had undergone considerable change, a change that was climaxed when the Technical Education for Apprentices' Act was proclaimed in January 1918, with related classes beginning in 1919. The Act was concerned with apprentices in certain trades, almost all trades in the State, and those within the Adelaide metropolitan area.³⁶

Through the Act, it was intended that the apprentice would benefit from a complete course of instruction which would, according to the Minister of Education, not only enhance craftsmanship, but also foster more responsible citizenship.³⁷ In addition the employer would benefit through having more resourceful, reliable and efficient employees and the State would

³⁶ Acts of South Australian Parliament, No. 51, 1950 made the education of all apprentices in the State compulsory even if the study had to be by correspondence.

³⁷ SAPD, 1917, p.318.

benefit through the increased efficiency of these craftsmen.³⁸ As in previous years, the promotion of the ideology of national efficiency rested on utilitarian education with its key ideological component of self-improvement.

The numbers of apprentices and improvers, that is, the young persons with no trade agreement with their employers, who were engaged in educational trade programmes increased from around 500 in June 1919 to over 600 in 1927. After that year, there was a sharp decline to 91 during the Depression and then a substantial increase in the post-Depression period of economic growth. In fact, there were 1,068 such young people in trade programmes in 1940.³⁹

During 1924, Fenner remarked that of 500 apprentices or probationary apprentices who began education and training under the Act between July 1918 and July 1921, 65% had completed studies and had been awarded a tradesman's certificate.⁴⁰ Thus 325 youthful workers had become skilled adult workers.

Certainly, apprentice education was important in the overall work of the Education Department. However, this was not the Department's only work that was directed at youth and

³⁸ See for example, Fenner, C., op cit., p.8.

³⁹ Report of Superintendent of Technical Education. Various years cited in Karim, K., "The Development of Government Directed Apprentice Training in S.A. 1917-1940", (B.A.(Hons.) thesis), University of Adelaide, 1964, pp.50-58, 82. See also SAPP, No.44, (various years) for details of Apprentice Courses in Reports of the Minister of Education.

⁴⁰ Fenner, C., op cit., p.18.

then young adults. The Education Department also provided vocational education under the Repatriation Scheme, a programme in which some 1,300 adults had gained specialised trade skills before the Scheme closed in mid-1922.⁴¹ Furthermore, the Department had a School of Arts and Crafts which attracted large part-time enrolments to its night classes. In 1922 for example, the School had 1,762 enrolments,⁴² and in 1928 it boasted 2,088 part-time and 66 full-time enrolments.⁴³ Many of these people were of adult age. In 1928, 487 were over 21 years of age and 402 were between 18 and 21 years of age.⁴⁴ With no occupational data available, it has been impossible to generalise as to the proportion of manual workers among the adult students. However, extrapolation from subsequent participation rates in such programmes suggested the involvement of few manual workers in classes of the School of Arts and Crafts. This was in contrast to the Repatriation Scheme example cited, whereby almost all, if not all, students were manual workers who acquired a trade education.

The Department was thus providing some specific vocational programmes that were appealing to adults. Although beyond the Repatriation Scheme and its School of Arts and Crafts, the Department concentrated its efforts in technical education at the apprentice and schooling levels.

⁴¹ SAPP, No.44, 1923, p.10.

⁴² ibid., p.9.

⁴³ SAPP, No.44, 1929, p.10.

⁴⁴ ibid., p.27.

During the 1920's, little in the way of vocational education in advance of apprentice level education, but at a lower level than degree and diploma studies, was available in South Australia. There was a dearth in middle level courses, that is, courses at the post-trade and technician certificate levels and thus levels consistent with the area of defined adult education studies.

Of the few middle level courses which were offered, it was mainly business colleges with their programmes that proved attractive to clerks, that were to the fore as agencies of provision. The Education Department was essentially inactive in the area, while the School of Mines for its part, provided secondary school, basic trade and advanced technical education in addition to business courses at a variety of levels. It, like the Education Department, was not providing middle level courses that would attract workers.

However, to the School's overall broad provisions it attracted a variety of occupational groups including many adults from working class occupations and many students who were 20 years of age or less.⁴⁵ The workers were largely in basic technical courses while the young people were mainly full-time tertiary students and technical school students of a secondary school age, just like those in similar Education Department courses.

Table 7.4 shows the ages of students in various years.

⁴⁵ At the time, and based on the Parliamentary voting age as the age distinguishing adult from youth, such students were not adults.

TABLE 7.4

SCHOOL OF MINES: AGES OF STUDENTS, 1921-1939

	1921	1923	1925	1927	1929	1931	1933	1935	1937	1939
Less than 16 years	775	899	941	1032	993	767	798	986	1012	962
16 - 20 years	1317	1603	1682	1683	1784	1556	1704	1883	2164	2015
21 - 25 years	627	456	365	512	537	431	574	883	978	1043
26 - 30 years	287	268	301	359	402	237	211	407	414	515
31 - 45 years	242	343	224	213	211	206	231	381	341	421
Over 45 years	41	37	25	27	42	42	55	63	50	72
Not Stated	43	54	125	121	205	65	62	54	52	101
<u>Total</u>	3332	3660	3663	3947	4174	3304	3635	4657	5011	5129

Source: South Australian School of Mines and Industries, Annual Report, Adelaide, South Australian School of Mines and Industries, 1921, p.12; 1923, p.13; 1925, p.13; 1927, p.13; 1929, p.14; 1931, p.14; 1933, p.14; 1935, p.14; 1937, p.14; 1939, p.15.

Clearly, the students of 20 years or less were a considerable proportion of total enrolments. They contributed 62% in 1921, 68% in 1923, 72% in 1925, 69% in 1927, 66% in 1929, 73% in 1931, 69% in 1933, 62% in 1935, 64% in 1937 and 58% in 1939.

So far as the student body was concerned those classified as Students and Scholars consistently formed a large proportion of enrolments. These students comprised 21% in 1921, 20% in 1925, 21% in 1929, 27% in 1931, 21% in 1935 and 14% in 1939. Other

categories of students that were dominant included Clerks, Domestic Duties, Mechanics, Fitters and Apprentices, Electricians and Nurses. After the mid-thirties, and in addition to these, Engineers and Apprentices, Labourers, Machinists, Shop Assistants, Typists, Draughtsmen and Teachers began to increase in significance.⁴⁶

With their diverse activities, the School of Mines and the Education Department had important roles to play in encouraging adult self-improvement, and in aiding the economic and industrial development of the State. Thus any major fluctuations in the State's development, or variations in emphases in industrial change, affected student and programme profiles. For example, the differences in the School of Mines' student body in the early and late 1930's referred to above, and in its programmes in the years of economic boom in the late 1930's and 1940's compared with early post-war years. Another example of these differences resulted from the Depression of the late 1920's and early 1930's reducing the output from South Australian industry. Consequently there were reduced apprentice intakes. Why, employers asked, should one bother to train a young person and foster his technical education when skilled labour was readily and cheaply available? The Vice-President of the Chamber of Commerce, G.J. Cowie, reflected this viewpoint. He raised a storm of controversy when he expressed dismay at the rising cost of education and suggested that boys who were going to be labourers did not need much education. For higher (post-primary) education would "... not make them

⁴⁶ South Australian School of Mines and Industries, Annual Report, Adelaide, South Australian School of Mines and Industries, various years between 1921 and 1940.

better labourers".⁴⁷

Though this attitude appeared inconsistent with an overriding aim to acquire a better educated and more highly skilled workforce, it was expressed at a time of economic uncertainty. The western world was in the grip of a major economic down-turn. Unemployment was high and many skilled workers were either unemployed or under-employed. They were readily available for the too few jobs available, thus negating, in some employers' eyes, the need to equip more workers with an appropriate technical education.

Employer attitudes in the mid-1930's were different. At the time, J.W. Wainwright exercised influential leadership as Auditor General, and the State experienced substantial industrial growth. Then vocational education had widespread support. At the time, under Premier Playford, the State became less dependent on agriculture as the motor car industry and ship-building and steel industries grew. The need for skilled manpower as an essential ingredient for the efficient development of these manufacturing industries in the immediate pre-World War II and then early war years, forced more State and Federal Government attention on to this form of education.⁴⁸ Consequently

⁴⁷ Register (Adelaide) 1 August, 1929. See also protests at his remarks in Letters to Editor, Register (Adelaide) 3 August, 1929.

⁴⁸ See the discussion in Sheridan, T., Mindful Militants: The Amalgamated Engineering Union in Australia 1920-1972, Melbourne, Cambridge University Press, 1975, pp.153-156; Murray-Smith, S., "Technical Education in Australia: A Historical Sketch", op cit., p.187.

increased emphasis was given to the area by the School of Mines and the Technical Branch of the Education Department.

Thus fluctuating economic and industrial conditions affected vocational education provision. In the post-World War I years before the Depression of the late 1920's, economic and industrial growth saw emphases placed on basic trade and advanced commercial and technical (degree and diploma) level programmes. Such concentration helped ensure an adequate supply of skilled tradespeople and more highly educated commercial workers and technologists. This emphasis shifted during the Depression only to return in the post-Depression period of economic growth.

Both the Education Department and the School of Mines made significant advances in education provision in the inter-war years. There was a continuing concern with enhancing the State's development and providing a framework for individual self-improvement through largely utilitarian studies. However, in relation to post-compulsory schooling, this education was at either the basic trade or advanced technical and commercial levels. Little that was within the area of middle level education was consistently provided. There was the Repatriation Scheme, the work of the School of Arts and Crafts, a few intermittent middle level course provisions and the involvement of adults in latter years of apprenticeship education. However, this was but a small part of the educational work of both institutions.

World War II brought considerable changes with both institutions expanding provisions as federal and state governments revealed a keen desire to promote

adult educational work.

World War II and the Major Educational Effort
in the Army

In early 1940 Australia was involved in a world war. This situation was atypical for Australian society and led to a variety of innovations in adult education. Possibly the most significant of these were the armed services schemes, and particularly the Australian Army Education Service (AAES).⁴⁹

According to W.G.K. Duncan, it was "easily the largest experiment in adult education yet attempted in Australia".⁵⁰ The Service was created in 1941 by P.C. Spender, the Minister for the Army in the United Australia Party Government. It was placed under the gifted leadership of Sydney University Extension Board Secretary, R.B. Madgwick. Strong support for its formation came from men such as Sir William McKell, Premier of New South Wales, and Dr. C.E.W. Bean, Official Historian of Australia in the War of 1914-18.

The Service's charter was wide. Education was to be provided for all troops at home and abroad, and during demobilization the troops were to be prepared for the return to civilian life, particularly through vocational education programmes.⁵¹ There was an obvious similarity between these

⁴⁹ See Whitelock, D.A., "The Great Tradition. A History of Liberal Adult Education in New South Wales From the Beginnings to 1966 With Some Reference to the British Experience", (Ph.D. thesis), University of New England, 1970, pp.403-466 for an extensive discussion of the AAES.

⁵⁰ Duncan, W.G.K., "Army Education and the Australian Public", Australian Quarterly, 15(2):33-38, June 1943, p.35.

⁵¹ Madgwick, R.B., "The Australian Army Education Service - Another Point of View", Forum of Education, 8(2):53-63, October 1949, p.53.

latter aims and those of the Education Service in the AIF in the closing years of World War I.

Not surprisingly the Service's objectives were primarily military.⁵² According to a former Colonel in the AAES and later Director of Sydney University Tutorial Classes Department, J.L.J. Wilson, its functions were basically two-fold. It was to help men become more effective soldiers and to help soldiers become better men.⁵³ Such functions were clearly reflected in the aims of the AAES, which were:

- (i) to provide the troops with educational facilities and mental recreation in order to sustain morale and dispel boredom; and
- (ii) to collaborate with other authorities in the problems of post-war rehabilitation, by training men for re-absorption into civilian life.⁵⁴

These aims became the real charter for the Service as it made its positive contribution to the maintenance of morale, an area in which four fundamental problems were identified, namely:

- First, the problem of developing and maintaining a positive faith in the cause for which the nation is fighting.
- Second, the problem of keeping men aware of the changes that are occurring in society.
- Third, the problems of fitting men to meet these changes.
- Fourth, the problems of helping to profitably fill the spare time of the soldier.⁵⁵

It was hoped that education would enhance morale and foster individual development. Soldiers would be more knowledgeable

⁵² ibid., p.63.

⁵³ Wilson, J.L.J., Army Education Service in War, (Mimeograph, 3p.), Sydney, n.d., p.1.

⁵⁴ Duncan, W.G.K., Adult Education, (Report on Adult Education in New South Wales in two volumes), (Manuscript), 1944, Volume two, p.269. (Copy obtained from Professor Duncan.)

⁵⁵ Jones, Major R.T., A Short History of the R.A.A.E.C.: The First Ten Years - 1941-1950, (Mimeograph, 7p.), January 1965, p.3. (Copy from Army Education Corps, Keswick Barracks, South Australia.)

and thereby would be better soldiers. To this end the Service provided a variety of activities.⁵⁶

Talks and lectures were given by civilian and army personnel on topics such as business practice and psychology.⁵⁷ Visual education including a variety of general interest films were offered.⁵⁸ Discussion groups on topics such as Democracy and Standards of Living,⁵⁹ concerts, correspondence courses, debates and hobby activities attracted much interest from the student body. In addition a variety of formal class activities were provided for service people including specific activities for illiterates.⁶⁰ The Service had good libraries, its officers did much work in hospitals and it published two highly regarded journals, namely SALT and C A B. In these varied activities the AAES was fortunate in having many excellent teachers and a large student body that was not distracted by the activities of normal life.

The provision was extensive. For example, in the 12 months to December, 1942, approximately 1½ million service personnel of all ranks and thus from a wide range of pre-war occupational categories, attended a total of 16,000 lectures.

⁵⁶ Duncan, W.G.K., Army Education and the Australian Public, op cit., pp.34-35.

⁵⁷ Army Education, Letter to Commandant 4MD, 12 December, 1941, (Mimeograph), Department of Defence File 51/1/17, AP613/24/S10, Commonwealth Archives Office (CAO).

⁵⁸ Army Education, Letter to Unit Education Officers, 18 November, 1941, (Mimeograph), Department of Defence File 54/4/1, AP613/24/S10, CAO.

⁵⁹ Army Education, Circular No. 6, Memo 3341, n.d., (Mimeograph), Department of Defence File 54/4/1, AP613/24/S10, CAO.

⁶⁰ Tests in the Australian Military Forces in 1943 showed an illiteracy rate of approximately 3%. Australian Services Education Council, Minutes, 6-8 May, 1943. Department of Defence 51/1/17A, AP613/24/S10, CAO.

About the same number witnessed over 5,500 documentary or educational films and over a ¼ million attended more than 1,500 music recitals.⁶¹ Many more were involved in discussion groups. In all, from 1942 until the end of January 1946, the Service presented about 149,600 lectures to a total enrolment of almost 9½ million.⁶²

In Four Military District (4MD), which embraced South Australia, in 1945 for example, 684 lectures were attended by approximately 35,000 personnel while 477 films attracted 26,932 and 381 music recitals attracted 13,690 personnel.⁶³

According to T. Coates,

All members of the Service were allowed freedom to lecture on controversial topics, but were debarred from using the peculiar privilege of their position as lecturers for advocating or propagating views.⁶⁴

That is, lecturers were to be objective and non-partisan in their views in the teaching and learning situation. The similarity with the position of the WEA was manifest. Controversial issues such as religion were not avoided, but this brought the Service into disrepute in certain quarters. Some conservative elements, for example,

⁶¹ Duncan, W.G.K., *Army Education and the Australian Public*, op cit., pp.34-35.

⁶² Whitelock, D., The Great Tradition: A History of Adult Education in Australia, St. Lucia, University of Queensland Press, 1974, p.240. Obviously, many personnel participated in more than one activity over the period.

⁶³ History of Australian Army Education, 4MD, 1941-46, Department of Defence File 73A/1/6, AP613/24/S10, CAO.

⁶⁴ Coates, T.H., "Education in the Australian Army, 1941-1946", (M.Ed. thesis), University of Melbourne, 1948, p.80. Coates was the Director of AAES from 1946-1948.

Robert Menzies, felt that the Service was a haven for Left-wing propagandists.⁶⁵ Again, as had been the case with, for example, the WEA's work, adult educational activities generated some suspicions.

However, despite its critics, army education achieved much. L. Wilcher lauded its work when he wrote:

When I think of the pleasure, interest and mental stimulus which A.A.E.S. gave ... to so many hundreds of thousands of men and women, instinct tells me ... the effort was not in vain.⁶⁶

These remarks were endorsed by participants. For example, in 1944 a soldier wrote:

We have the Army Education Service out here every Friday night to give us a lecture, and they are very interesting too. I'd rather miss my breakfast than a lecture ...⁶⁷

Duncan provided similar support for the work of the AAES in a survey of adult education which he undertook in New South Wales in 1944. He wrote:

By far the biggest and most important enterprise in Australia is to be found within the armed forces. No attempt will be made here to describe either the range or the scale of its activities. But one or two of the lessons it has taught should be mentioned. For the first time in the history of

⁶⁵ Whitelock, D., The Great Tradition: A History of Adult Education in Australia, op cit., p.242.

⁶⁶ Wilcher, L.C., "Australian Army Education" (unpublished notes) quoted in D.A. Whitelock, "The Great Tradition. A History of Liberal Adult Education in New South Wales From the Beginnings to 1966 With Some Reference to the British Experience", op cit., p.462. Wilcher was a Lieutenant-Colonel in the AAES.

⁶⁷ Soldier's letter from Darwin, 1944. Directorate of Army Education Files, quoted in ibid. p.380. Former participants in the Scheme namely, Mr. J. Mitchell and Mr. G. Smith verified these remarks in interviews in March 1978 with the researcher.

Australia, an organisation has been built up by the Army Education Service which:

- (a) brings adult education to its public
- (b) deliberately diversifies its work, so as to reach people with different interests and at different levels of educational development
- (c) recruits full-time personnel and makes some provision for their training in theory and methods of adult education
- (d) provides adequate equipment in the form of books, films, gramophone records, printed publications, hobby craft material etc.
- (e) provides special premises, which can be equipped as Education Centres, and used exclusively for adult education work.⁶⁸

An important factor which ensured the Service of wide appeal, was its "captive audience", in terms of service personnel and the enforced social conditions of service life. The AAES had a monopoly on the provision of adult education to these personnel and was thus assured of relatively wide impact, especially when Army unit officers actively promoted the Service's work to their soldiers. Further factors which enhanced the AAES's ability to provide a good service, were its talented leadership, good teachers and sound financial basis.

The Service had a variety of lessons to teach civilian adult educators. There was the need to provide remedial education in basic subjects for many who were almost illiterate. There was also the need for pre-vocational education, craft

⁶⁸ Moroney, M.B., "Adult Education in N.S.W. Its Present Condition and Future Possibilities", (M.Ed. thesis), University of Sydney, 1960, p.67.

work and hobby activities. The provision of these, Madgwick felt, would ensure that more of the great mass of people participated in adult education.⁶⁹ Furthermore, civilian adult educators could learn to seek out their audiences, for based on army educational experiences, there appeared to be a demand for adult education, even among many who showed no outward interest in such activities.

Madgwick has suggested that the main lesson that the Service could teach civilian adult educators, was that adults would accept an educational programme provided it was designed to satisfy their requests and provided it was sufficiently varied to appeal to people of various standards of education.⁷⁰

In relation to educationally motivated sections of the middle class, post-war civilian adult educators can be seen as either having learnt from army education, or at least, as having pursued similar policies.

In these years, adult educators placed less emphasis on the rigorous and academic tutorial classes and more on, for example, recreational activities that have been sought by adults. However, the programmes have not appealed to the great mass of workers. Adult educators have virtually made no attempt to ascertain the real non-vocational, recreational and informational educational needs of workers. Not surprisingly, education, particularly perceived non-utilitarian, non-vocational,

⁶⁹ Lecture by Col. R.B. Madgwick quoted in Duncan, W.G.K., Adult Education, op cit., p.273.

⁷⁰ Madgwick, R.B., "The Australian Army Education Service - Another Point of View", op cit., p.63.

recreational and informational adult education, has been prescribed and has had only limited appeal to workers. This has contrasted with the more pragmatic vocational and remedial education, particularly basic literacy and numeracy skills acquisition which although prescribed, have appealed to large numbers of workers. Such utilitarian education has met, at least some of the immediate educational needs of such adults, as it has provided concrete avenues for self-improvement. It has thus satisfied conditions specified by Madgwick.

The AAES provided incredible potential for civilian post-war adult education in terms of trained personnel, potential students and organisational experience. Officers such as Madgwick, A.J.A. Nelson and J.L.J. Wilson greatly influenced the development of post-war adult education in Australian States including South Australia. The AAES also affected the growth of library services.⁷¹ However, the excellent leadership to be given to post-war civilian adult education, particularly liberal, informational and recreational adult education was not immediately supported by adequate government finance and hence the very good service offered by the AAES was not to be quickly replicated in civilian provisions. Furthermore, many soldiers who participated in programmes did not sustain an interest to become involved in post-war adult education, although a number engaged in reconstruction educational programmes of a specifically vocational nature and some went into higher education. Hence much of the

⁷¹ The R.A.A.E.C. - A Brief Note, (Mimeograph, 14p.), n.d., p.3. (Obtained from Major A.A. Sandery - formerly of Army Education Corps).

potential generated by the AAES was to be unrealised in the post-war years.

Upon demobilization the AAES began to concentrate mainly on vocational education.⁷² Such was the outcome of one of this century's most significant ventures in Australian adult education,⁷³ which like the Education Service in World War I, had exposed many adults to the potential benefits of adult education studies.

State Government, School of Mines and Adult Education
During and Immediately After World War II in
South Australia

Although the AAES was the most significant body providing for the education of adults - of all classes - during the war years, it was not the sole agency. In South Australia the WEA, as shown earlier, the School of Mines and Education Department were also of some considerable significance. The WEA, for example, provided courses for both civilian and service personnel. However, it was the Education Department and the School of Mines that provided important vocational education in support of the war effort.

The demand for industrial labour was so great, particularly in the metal trades, that the School of Mines and the Education Department's Grenfell Street Trades School and Adelaide Technical College, were operating 24 hours a day by

⁷² Whitelock, D., "The Great Tradition. A History of Liberal Adult Education in New South Wales from the Beginnings to 1966 With Some Reference to the British Experience", op cit., p.460.

⁷³ In the post-war wind-down of the Army, the AAES, was reduced to virtually a "caretaker staff before becoming the Australian Army Educational Corps in 1948". Jones, Major R.T., op cit., p.6.

September 1940.⁷⁴ The Federal Government supported technical education in the States and in 1941 it instituted the Technical Training Scheme to help fulfil defence industry needs. The Education Department, for example, actively participated in the Scheme and over 20,000 men, mostly fitters for the RAAF, were trained by its Technical Branch.⁷⁵ This was a major effort in providing essentially worker education, in an atypical war-time environment. Thus during the war, the Department as with the School of Mines gave some considerable emphasis to education for the war effort.

Similarly, as the war drew to a close, the Department and the School, like the AAES, made attempts to educate service personnel for their return to civilian life through the Commonwealth supported Reconstruction Training Scheme. The Scheme was designed to provide training and education for ex-service men and women in order that they might be re-established in civilian occupations, and that the labour requirements of reconstruction programmes might be satisfied.⁷⁶ In the Scheme, the Technical Branch of the Education Department primarily, but not exclusively, focussed on basic skills acquisition, and by the mid-1950's, over 20,000 ex-service personnel had passed through it.⁷⁷ Many of these people, like the participants in

⁷⁴ Thiele, C., op cit., p.192.

⁷⁵ Education Gazette (South Australia) 15 August, 1956, p.233.

⁷⁶ Education Department, Memo 4911, 17 November, 1948, GRG18 Series 195, SAA. By 1947 nearly a quarter of a million Australians had been selected for training under the Scheme. Waddington, D.M. Radford, W.C. and Keats, J.A., Review of Education in Australia 1940-1948, Melbourne, Melbourne University Press, 1950, p.28.

⁷⁷ Education Gazette (South Australia) 15 August, 1956, p.233.

AAES activities, were from pre-war manual worker occupations.

The war had created an atypical situation in adult education. Armed services education developed significantly while the Federal and State governments made other specific educational endeavours in support of the war effort. In addition, civilian bodies made important contributions. Hence, by the conclusion of the war, there was a great breadth of experience in adult education provision in the Australian States. Also there had been major changes in the complexion of provision in various States compared with the 1920's and 30's. In fact, in addition to the more vocationally oriented Schools of Mines, technical colleges and branches of State Education Departments, there were by 1950, four main types of liberal, remedial, recreational and informational adult education organisations in Australia. These were the WEA University Tutorial Classes Department arrangement as remained only in New South Wales and South Australia; a Council or Board of Adult Education of a statutory nature, as in Victoria⁷⁸ and Tasmania; a Board of Adult Education, under the direct control of the State Department of Education as in Queensland and a Board of Adult Education set up by a university, as in Western Australia. The major differences between these bodies were manifest mainly in the differences between the WEA and University provision and that of the Councils and Boards. The former agencies had an espoused emphasis on liberal academic education, while the latter bodies

⁷⁸ The Council of Adult Education in Victoria was an important innovation in that State in 1946. Colin Badger was instrumental in its formation and the development of its broad educational objectives. See, for example, Council of Adult Education, Annual Report 1948-49, Melbourne, Council of Adult Education, 1949, p.5.

concentrated their efforts on offering a far reaching, and less intensive service, like many of the war-time AAES provisions.

With these structures, manual workers were still not well represented in the liberal, recreational and informational adult education classes. Professor Peers verified this in a survey in 1950.⁷⁹

In contrast to such conditions in non-vocational, recreational and informational adult education, manual workers were represented in post-war vocational (particularly technical) courses of basic trade, newly introduced middle levels and in some cases, advanced levels. These programmes were provided by various State Education Departments, or Department of Technical Education as in New South Wales, Schools of Mines and Technical Colleges.

Until the onset of World War II, essentially there were two levels of technical education available in South Australia. These were basic and advanced technical, that is, tertiary degree, diploma studies.⁸⁰ However, in 1941 the School of Mines recorded its intentions to offer, what it termed, technician courses.⁸¹ That is, courses that were between the trade certificate (apprentice) and a professional diploma,⁸² and

⁷⁹ Peers, R., Adult Education in Australia, (Mimeograph, 24p.), Sydney, 1951, p.19.

⁸⁰ The latter is beyond the scope of the present discussion.

⁸¹ South Australian School of Mines and Industries, Annual Report, Adelaide, South Australian School of Mines and Industries, 1941, p.12.

⁸² Loveday, R.R., "The S.A. Institute of Technology - Its Future Role", Journal of Industry (Adelaide), 35(6):45, 1967; Bone, M.H., "Technical Colleges in South Australia", Journal of Industry (Adelaide), 35(7):42, 1967.

courses that were more academic than practical. These studies were in the defined adult education area.

They were designed to prove attractive to adults who had gained an apprentice certificate and wished to proceed to more advanced but sub-tertiary technical studies. Also they would have appeal to students who chose not to study at the apprentice level, but wished to immediately engage in the more advanced middle level studies.

Approximately a decade later the Technical Branch of the Education Department indicated that it also intended to offer middle level subjects, but subjects which in complexity were between the levels of apprenticeship and technician. These were to be pragmatic and were a logical extension of basic trade studies. They were to form the basis of the practically oriented post-trade certificates which were offered from 1957.

However, prior to the creation of these courses in the early war and post-war years, there were no definable attempts, by either the Education Department or the School of Mines, to provide post-apprentice, pre-professional level technical education awards, despite occasional calls for such education.⁸³ The School had infrequently presented single subjects at this level. For example, in 1941 a subject titled Electrical Wiring and Machine Management was offered. But these efforts were on an ad hoc basis and were isolated endeavours.

⁸³ South Australian Chamber of Manufactures, Annual Report, Adelaide, Chamber of Manufactures, 1938, p.20; SAPD, 1941, p.172.

Neither the School, nor the Education Department were sufficiently convinced of the need to consistently offer such middle level courses in the late 1930's and early 1940's, since basic level and advanced level technical courses were seemingly meeting needs for State and individual development.

Developing technologies in a war-time environment changed this situation. The School began providing technician courses in Mechanical, Electrical and Automotive Engineering.⁸⁴ Clearly these engineering courses, which would equip their graduates with the skills to translate the ideas of technologists into a language which trades people could easily understand, were in most demand in a State increasingly dependent on manufacturing industries such as its rapidly expanding motor vehicle industry. However, though established, the lengthy courses and additional ones, did not graduate large numbers of technicians. In fact, they graduated very small numbers. See Table 7.5 for data on graduates in the early post-war years.

TABLE 7.5

SUCCESSFUL STUDENTS IN TECHNICIAN CERTIFICATE COURSES

Technician Certificate	1951	1952	1953	1954	1955
Automotive	1	1	-	-	2
Electrical	6	-	1	1	1
Mechanical	-	2	-	-	-
Radio	2	2	2	-	4
Radiography	11	3	6	1	4

Source: South Australian School of Mines and Industries, Annual Report, Adelaide, South Australian School of Mines and Industries, 1952-1956.

There was some, but relatively small, student demand for

⁸⁴ South Australian School of Mines and Industries, Annual Report, Adelaide, South Australian School of Mines and Industries, 1942, p.165.

the rigorous courses. Rather than embark on lengthy technician studies, people seemed happier to engage in basic trade or advanced courses. Certainly these middle level courses were extremely demanding on students. They had considerable academic content, a content militating against the involvement of the unskilled and semi-skilled and even many skilled tradesmen, whose schooling had not equipped them for such arduous study.

From the student occupational data of the School, it has been impossible to isolate just which people were engaged in technician courses. However, discussions with former technician students⁸⁵ suggested that such people were not, in general, working class adults. Rather, they were students who had recently left secondary school.

Despite this apparent lack of manual worker involvement in middle level courses and thus courses consistent with defined adult education studies, the School was still able to attract a large number of workers to its wide range of courses. These now included basic trade, middle level and advanced level technical, scientific and commercial studies.

As with the pre-war situation, the School of Mines' students came from a diverse range of categories. Assemblers, Civil Servants, Domestic Duties, Draughtsmen, Engineers, Fitters, Foremen, Improvers, Laboratory Assistants, Labourers, Machinists, Mechanics, Nurses, Office Boys, Students, Teachers, Toolmakers and Welders were strongly dominant in 1949. In 1953 and 1955, Assemblers, Laboratory Assistants and Toolmakers became less

⁸⁵ Interviews with G.G.R. Dick, J. Gurr, Adelaide College of Arts and Education and D. Rushworth, School of Mechanical Engineering, Regency Park Community College, October 1979.

substantial groups. Clerical occupations, which included adults such as Civil Servants, grew, while Electricians, Farmers, Plumbers, Salesmen, Shop Assistants, Stenographers and Typists all increased representation to become major occupational categories in the student body.⁸⁶ Women who were in the labour force were by 1955 contributing an increasing proportion of the student body, for although women classified as domestic duties had been a major component of the student body for many years, the majority of these women were not in the labour force as they were more correctly classified as home duties.

By the mid-1950's, the School with its utilitarian offerings, was certainly providing a most important avenue for the education of sections of the working class. Many workers were attracted to basic programmes of study that enhanced their technical competencies and provided them with opportunities for occupational and even social mobility. However, workers were not yet being attracted to a major level of defined adult education studies, that is, the academic and rigorous technician studies. This non-involvement provided an interesting parallel with lack of worker participation in the academic and rigorous tutorial classes provided by the WEA and the University Department of Tutorial Classes. Although it contrasted to some extent with worker participation in the more pragmatic post-trade courses offered by the Education Department.

⁸⁶ South Australian School of Mines and Industries, Annual Report, Adelaide, South Australian School of Mines and Industries, 1949; 1953; 1955.

In 1952 the Education Department's Technical Branch offered some post-trade subjects. These courses were provided in the expanding Automotive, Building and Furnishing trades. It was in the post-trade area that skilled adult workers enrolled.⁸⁷ Again, as with so much of the vocational educational offerings, attention was directed at men and not women.

A total of 59 men undertook post-trade studies in 1952.⁸⁸ This figure almost doubled by 1955 (102). In 1956, the year before the introduction of post-trade certificates, enrolments increased to 153.⁸⁹

The numbers of adult manual workers involved in formal post-trade and thus defined adult education studies were relatively small in the years from their introduction to 1956. Nevertheless the pragmatic courses had more appeal to workers than technician studies, although both aspects of middle level studies coupled with basic trade studies were important avenues for the further education of working class adults and in the latter case, more youthful workers.

However, this was a largely vocational education. In the courses, scant emphasis was being given to the broader education of participants. In fact, little attention was being paid by both the School of Mines and the Education Department (except for some art and craft hobbyist courses) to liberal

⁸⁷ Q. Durwood, an apprentice teacher of long-standing in South Australia stated in an interview in April 1980 that post-trade subjects were for those studying the latter stages of apprenticeship, and thus adults, and those who had completed apprenticeships who wished for more advanced study.

⁸⁸ SAPP, No.44, 1953, p.5.

⁸⁹ Education Department Technical Education Branch, Annual Report, Adelaide, Education Department, 1952, Section III, p.7; Section III, p.1.

recreational and informational adult education, either as part of the middle level awards or outside these. This provision was left to other programmes such as those of the WEA.

Clearly, so far as the allocation of resources and effort was concerned, in these early post-war years, considerable attention was being given to vocational education which was important in a State that was experiencing an economic and industrial boom. So far as adult workers were concerned, it was this aspect of their education that was emphasised by the State and State supported School of Mines.

The Education Department's Charter for Adult Education Growth

G.V. Portus, in a strong case to the Education Inquiry Committee in 1945, stressed the need for more concentration on general adult education.⁹⁰ The Committee reacted favourably to this submission and established a case for substantial government involvement in recreational, informational and non-vocational adult education. In its report, the Committee recognised that, in a changing society, an adequate adult education system was required. And although there existed adult education agencies such as the WEA and the Young Men's Christian Association (YMCA), these did not "constitute an adequate system of adult education".⁹¹

The Committee had been aware of the shortcomings of the WEA and the moves in various eastern States to replace support to that body, by a State-controlled service. It had also heard

⁹⁰ Education Inquiry Committee, Evidence to Committee, Adelaide, 26 November, 1945, pp.1191-1199, GRG18, Series 171, SAA.

⁹¹ Education Inquiry Committee, Final Report, Adelaide, Government Printer, 11 August, 1949, p.36, GRG18, Series 171, 172, SAA.

evidence at a time when the AAES had been successfully operating for some years and when adult education had been under considerable discussion. For example, there had been the important 1944 WEA Conference in New South Wales, in which consideration was given to the future of adult education in Australia.⁹² Accordingly the Committee recommended:

... that an organisation similar to that in Victoria be created in this State at a convenient time.⁹³

This recommendation, though not acceded to by the Playford Liberal Country League Government, did in fact, foreshadow significant growth in government funding for adult education from the mid-1950's. The Government would not develop a statutory adult education authority as in Victoria. Rather it would expand the adult education service of the Education Department, where the infrastructure for such provision already existed. So, perhaps belatedly, the hopes that the AAES had raised with regard to substantial post-war non-vocational, recreational, remedial and informational adult educational development were, in part, about to be realised in South Australia.

In 1956, the Minister of Education recommended that government spending on adult education be increased, with the University Department of Adult Education and the WEA receiving larger grants.⁹⁴ However, it was clear where the

⁹² Duncan, W.G.K. (Ed.), The Future of Adult Education in Australia, Sydney, WEA of N.S.W., 1944.

⁹³ Education Inquiry Committee, op cit., pp.1199.

⁹⁴ News (Adelaide) 21 May, 1956.

Government saw greatest developments occurring. The Minister said:

The University and the WEA are already planning to make good use of increased Government grants, but I think the greatest future development will lie in the Education Department's hands.⁹⁵

The Government intended to diversify and more directly control adult education provision, as in other States except New South Wales and Western Australia. No longer were the informational, recreational and liberal spheres to be mainly in the area of voluntaryism, by being the almost exclusive province of bodies such as the WEA, the YMCA and to an extent the University. Adult education provided by the Education Department was to have a wide appeal throughout society.

Although the Education Department received its charter for organised expansion and development of informational, recreational, liberal and remedial adult education in 1956,⁹⁶ the early post-war years had seen some developments. Recreational adult education classes, mainly of a craft nature, were offered in both metropolitan and country areas. By 1955 these had shown steadily increasing appeal to the extent that there were approximately 7,300 subject enrolments in the country, and 1,000 in the metropolitan area.⁹⁷

There were no data available, in Departmental records, to enable occupational analysis of these students to be made. However, extrapolating from studies of recreational adult educational participation,⁹⁸ it is likely that they were

⁹⁵ Advertiser (Adelaide) 22 May, 1956.

⁹⁶ Bone, M.H., The Adult Education Service of the Education Department of South Australia, (Paper presented to the Seventh Annual Conference of the Australian Association of Adult Education), (Mimeograph, 15p.), Adelaide, 1967, p.1.

⁹⁷ Education Department Technical Education Branch, Annual Report, Adelaide, Education Department, various 1949 to 1955.

⁹⁸ See for example, the brief surveys in Chapter V.

predominantly middle class. The working class participated in adult vocational education, but tended to ignore hobbyist arts and crafts subjects and, in general, more academic liberal adult education.

In 1956, the Education Department held its first adult education conference. The Minister of Education of the State Liberal Country League Government, Sir Baden Pattinson, and the Director of Education, E. Mander-Jones, enunciated what Max Bone saw as including the Department's philosophy for adult education.⁹⁹ Hence this conference was most significant. It was called to plan the details of the Education Department's proposed wide expansion in adult education.¹⁰⁰

The Minister said:

We are very anxious, of course, to pay increasing attention to such further activities as music and musical appreciation, documentary films, the study of dramatic art, and discussions on current affairs and literature in addition to subjects now taught in Adult Education Centres. In fact, there will be no restriction at all on the kinds of subjects which may be taken by the public. My aim is to provide an Adult Education Service to meet the needs of the people in every part of the State. Wherever a group is anxious to follow an approved course of study, arrangements will be made so far as is humanly possible for lecturers and leaders to be provided.

⁹⁹ Bone, M.H., The Adult Education Service of the Education Department of South Australia, op cit., p.1. M.H. Bone has been singularly the most prominent figure in the development of post-war II education for adults in South Australia. He guided the formation and initial development of the Department of Further Education until his retirement as Director-General of Further Education in 1976.

¹⁰⁰ Texts of Ministers' and Directors' Addresses to Conference on Adult Education, Education Gazette (South Australia) 16 July, 1956, p.208.

Many people will continue to attend classes for strictly vocational reasons. Many others will develop their interests in the arts and crafts and others again will take courses of a more general nature to improve themselves as men and women.

I am completely confident that in whatever field the subjects may be, the people of this State will come, through pursuit of their studies to a greater understanding, to wider interests and to better citizenship...

The Director said:

I consider that these are four aims of any Adult Educational Service in any community that calls itself an advanced one:-

1. Adult Education aims at the provision of opportunity for development of vocational and technical skills and knowledge.
2. It ought to include all those things which lead to an appreciation on the part of the people of the beauty in the world around us, whether that is in nature, in art, or in human development ...
3. We ought to aim at giving every person in our community an opportunity of becoming aware of and understanding the world in which he lives ...
4. Embracing all those and related to each of those three aims is the spread of information in respect of actual facts and, combined with that, the critical evaluation of those facts, the capacity to assess their true value, whatever that value may be ...¹⁰¹

Though Pattinson suggested that there would be no restriction on the kinds of subjects to be taken by those who wished to participate, he later qualified his remarks. He added that where people wished to follow an "approved course", efforts would be made to provide lecturers and leaders.¹⁰² So complete flexibility in the types of courses offered was not suggested. Rather, non-vocational, recreational, remedial and informational courses were to be, and have been, similar to those of the

¹⁰¹ ibid., p.210.

¹⁰² ibid.

Victorian Council of Adult Education. Frequently leisure interest classes, but also courses such as matriculation studies.

Mander-Jones and Pattinson clearly laid the philosophical framework of the service. It would, they hoped, lead people to "better citizenship". Mander-Jones further pointed out:

... it is of the greatest importance to ensure that we, as an education authority, are concerned to put the facts before the people and not try to determine their attitude towards these facts. It is so easy to go on after giving the facts to suggest an attitude towards them, because the people are asking you to do it. I think it is wrong for us to do it.¹⁰³

The similarity between these remarks and the non-partisan objective approach of the AAES and the WEA was evident.

Lecturers were expected to resist the temptation to reveal their own social or political attitudes in discussions with students. Resist that is, when they were contrary to established social norms and values.¹⁰⁴ Mander-Jones' request was, however, understandable in view of the nature of State provision.

As Bone indicated in 1967, when he was Superintendent of Technical Schools and thus the senior adult education

¹⁰³ ibid.

¹⁰⁴ Such a demand upon teachers is an impossible demand, for one's ideological position on issues, dictates emphases placed on particular points, inclusion and omission of material and the framework within which the teaching and learning process occurs.

administrator in the Education Department:

In keeping with the policy stated by the former Minister of Education, the Education Department, in introducing new subjects has had as its aim the self-development of the individual as a person and also as a member of a democratic society.¹⁰⁵

And this policy showed considerable consistency with that of the WEA. Only by moving outside this mainstream, to the more radical avenues, such as within the Communist Party, would adults, particularly working class adults, engage in studies for radical social change. The major providers of adult education in the State were thus in agreement about the aims of an adult education service.

The State service, like the WEA's, was available to any adult who wished to participate. It had no special charter to focus on the provision of general adult courses for manual workers, aborigines or poorer migrant groups. It would however, provide some remedial assistance, specifically for the latter two groups, and would attract the former group to its vocational programmes, particularly technical education studies.

The conference of 1956 was seen as a turning point of adult education development in South Australia.¹⁰⁶ The Minister, Pattinson, announced the policy for adult education. J.S. Walker,

¹⁰⁵ Bone, M.H., The Adult Education Service of the Education Department of South Australia, op cit., p.7.

¹⁰⁶ See for example, Walker, J.S., Address to 1966 Conference on Adult Education, (Mimeograph, 12p.), Adelaide, 1966, passim; Bone, M.H., The Adult Education Service of the Education Department of South Australia, op cit., p.3; Lillicrapp, D.A.J., "The Adult Education Centres of South Australia," Adult Education, December 1965, pp.16-21; Loveday, Hon. R.R. (Minister of Education), Official Opening, Adult Education Conference, (Mimeograph), Adelaide, 1965, for evidence of this.

as Deputy Director of Education, and like Max Bone, saw this as the charter for adult education development in South Australia.¹⁰⁷ The charter recognised the importance of non-vocational, informational, remedial and recreational adult education in addition to the technical and more generally, the vocational sphere.

The Dominance of the Education Department in South Australian Adult Education Provision From 1956 to 1972

The re-organisation of the Technical Education Branch had an immediate impact on enrolment. There was a rapid increase over the years from about 8,000 in 1956,¹⁰⁸ to approximately 37,500 by 1965.¹⁰⁹ In 1957, it was noted that the largest number of enrolments was in the "women's craft" areas of millinery and dress-making, where the total enrolment was 10,518.¹¹⁰ The occupational records were not retained. However, it is reasonable to presume that the bulk of the students would have come from the middle class, or the more educationally motivated, or upwardly socially mobile, sections of the working class.¹¹¹ Classes such as dress-making were used

¹⁰⁷ Walker, J.S., op cit., p.1.

¹⁰⁸ Lillicrapp, D.A.J., op cit., p.16.

¹⁰⁹ Education Department Technical Education Branch, Annual Report, Adelaide, Education Department, 1965, p.64.

¹¹⁰ ibid., p.65.

¹¹¹ N. Smith, Principal, Adelaide Hills Community College and M. Hand, Principal, Brighton College of Further Education, both long serving State adult educators verified this middle class dominance of courses in correspondence to the researcher on 3 October, 1979 and 10 October, 1979, respectively.

for specific vocational purposes by some adults, whilst others used the same classes as recreational activities. However, irrespective of motivation, these so-called "women's craft" courses tended not to appeal to, or attract, a dominant working class clientele.¹¹²

Successive press comments,¹¹³ and reports of the Technical Education Branch, highlighted the yearly growth of adult education after 1956. In 1963, enrolments in adult classes, including trade courses, totalled 28,640.¹¹⁴ This

¹¹² The researcher's own experience in adult education supported this conclusion. Furthermore, correspondence with N. Smith and M. Hand (October 1979) and an interview with G. Tasker, formerly Superintendent of Research in the Department of Further Education, in May 1975, verified this conclusion.

¹¹³ Sunday Mail (Adelaide) 11 March, 1957; 25 May, 1957; 19 July, 1958.

¹¹⁴ Education Department Technical Education Branch, Annual Report, Adelaide, Education Department, 1963, p.4.

figure comprised the distribution shown in Table 7.6 below.

TABLE 7.6

TECHNICAL EDUCATION BRANCH: ENROLMENTS

IN ADULT CLASSES - 1963

<u>Student Classification</u>	<u>No.</u>
University	38
Diploma and Certificate	216
Public Examinations Board (PEB)	5,835
Apprentice	2,743
Adult Trade	23
Primary and Secondary	3,421
Migrant	1,195
Commercial	2,016
Vocational	1,094
Art/Drama/Music, etc.	3,190
Men's Craft	2,229
Women's Craft	4,245
General Adult	2,224
Teachers' Classification Subjects	171
TOTAL	28,640

Source: Education Department Technical Education Branch,
Annual Report, Adelaide, Education Department,
 1963, p.4.

The range of subjects provided for by the Branch was extensive. But in some areas, such as "University", it acted as an agent for the University of Adelaide in the servicing of some external studies subjects that were offered to teachers in rural areas.

Clearly, largely recreational studies, in the craft, art, drama and general adult education areas were popular. These accounted for 42% of total enrolment. Remedial courses of an academic nature, that is, Public Examinations Board (PEB) subjects, and bridging primary and secondary school subjects, were also popular. These accounted for 32% of total enrolment. Finally, specific vocational courses of apprentice, adult trade,

vocational and commercial accounted for 21% of total enrolment. The other major group of studies was migrant courses of a remedial nature. These attracted 4% of total student enrolment.

At the time, students were staying at school longer, and the children of working class adults were receiving more education. Young people were entering jobs, generally better educated, or schooled, than many adults in similar jobs. There were thus pressures on less well educated adults to develop their own levels of knowledge and skills. And this would have had particular influence on enrolment in a variety of areas such as vocational studies, bridging courses at primary and secondary level and PEB subjects.

Undoubtedly people in PEB subjects, were studying to matriculate, or gain tertiary registration points, and thence embark on tertiary studies.¹¹⁵ At the time, entry to tertiary study, based on maturity, was not a common practice. Students, whether mature age or not, were required to undergo requisite PEB studies. It was most unlikely that the people involved were, in any significant way, from the working class. Rather, those in middle class related occupations dominated. However, such was not the case with apprentice, adult trade or vocational studies of a post-trade level. Nor was it the case

¹¹⁵ During the years 1969 and 1970, the researcher taught P.E.B. Mathematics to adults enrolled in evening adult education classes. Certainly adults in these classes were studying in the hope of thereby entering courses in tertiary institutions and enhancing skills and knowledge and thereby occupational mobility.

with remedial migrant education courses. These courses, often in basic English literacy and numeracy, were attempts to remedy deficiencies in migrants' education and as such were important Education Department provisions for an almost exclusively working class clientele, including a number of women.

In a recent study conducted for the Research Branch of the Department of Further Education, Dr. Ron Witton has verified the remedial nature of much of this migrant education.¹¹⁶ He quoted interview responses from a number of migrants engaged in such studies.

I joined a writing class after I was promoted at work. The work I am doing involves some writing. When I wrote reports I realised how little English I knew. That's when I decided to join writing classes. I honestly think I have learned much through writing and it gave me confidence in myself.
(German, aged 30, brewing plant operator engaged in a DFE English Literacy class).¹¹⁷

The reason that I join a writing class was to improve my spelling which I consider very important in any language. All so I need to write reports at work and when they are not written correctly will be hard for the maintenance men to understand.
(Italian, aged 43, die-setter, enrolled in a DFE English Literacy class).¹¹⁸

¹¹⁶ Witton, R., The Development of Further Education For Non-English Speaking Australians, Adelaide, Department of Further Education, 1980, passim; Although the study is a recent one, Witton's comments are equally valid for the 1960's and 1970's. Mr. F. Wilson, Deputy Head, Language and Migrant Education Centre, Department of Further Education, verified this in an interview with the researcher in August 1980.

¹¹⁷ Witton, R., op cit., p.46.

¹¹⁸ ibid., p.82.

Ideologically, a key to the Department's programmes was self-improvement. And this not only with its migrant directed courses, but more generally, its total activity in adult education. It provided courses which fostered occupational and social mobility, heightened cultural awareness and promoted better citizenship in a democratic society.

Importantly also, from an overall societal point of view, its courses, particularly in the vocational area, were central to the promotion of national growth. To this end, and adhering to the perceived need for individual self-improvement, the Department progressively expanded its middle level post-trade activities.

There had been 153 tradesmen enrolled in post-trade courses in 1956, and 397 in 1960.¹¹⁹ By 1964, the number reached 1,288, while in 1965 it was 1,193.¹²⁰ These courses were increasing in popularity, at a time when industry was expanding rapidly. Similarly, this was the case with other middle level courses such as technician studies which were still being provided by the School of Mines and Industries.

Technician courses attracted slightly more than 200

119 Education Department Technical Education Branch, Annual Report, Adelaide, Education Department, 1958, Section III, p.1; 1960, Section III, p.1.

120 Education Department Technical Education Branch, Annual Report, Adelaide, Education Department, 1964, p.29; 1965, p.34.

students in 1957, a number that had jumped to 634 by 1963.¹²¹ The academic nature of these courses had not altered, and nor had their relative unattractiveness to workers. Many of these students were immediately ex-secondary school.

In all, the School, thence the South Australian Institute of Technology (SAIT), like the Education Department still attracted large numbers of students to its broad ranging vocational programmes as it expanded its offerings in the early post-war years. However, in a manner similar to earlier years, many of these students were young, that is, between 16 and 20 years of age, a factor which reflected increasing enrolments in its tertiary degree and diploma level courses. See Tables 7.7 and 7.8.

TABLE 7.7
SCHOOL OF MINES (SAIT): AGES
OF STUDENTS, 1957 - 1965

<u>Age</u>	<u>1957</u>	<u>1959</u>	<u>1961</u>	<u>1963</u>	<u>1965</u>
Less than 16 years	1569	1686	905	1004	305
16 to 20 years	2956	3665	3455	3758	3459
21 to 25 years	1886	2406	1740	2397	2803
26 to 30 years	1497	1832	1191	1016	1476
31 to 45 years	2324	2778	2216	2017	2425
Over 45 years	443	505	393	451	628
Not stated	270	333	741	471	143
Total	10945	13205	10641	11114	11239

Source: South Australian School of Mines and Industries, Annual Report, Adelaide, South Australian School of Mines and Industries, 1957; 1959 and South Australian Institute of Technology, Annual Report, Adelaide, South Australian Institute of Technology, 1961; 1963; 1965; passim.

The decline in its students of less than 16 years of age was

¹²¹ Evans, S.I., "The South Australian Institute of Technology", Vestes, 7(2):111-118, June 1964, p.116. Evans was the Director of the South Australian Institute of Technology for a number of years.

a result of apprentices increasingly being educated by the Education Department. Furthermore, students in their compulsory schooling years, who had attended the Technical School in the School of Mines, were transferring to the Education Department's Technical Schools.

Table 7.8 shows the occupations of students.

TABLE 7.8

SCHOOL OF MINES (SAIT): STUDENT OCCUPATIONS, 1957 - 1965

<u>Occupation</u>	<u>Number of Students</u>				
	1957	1959	1961	1963	1965
Accountants	120	155	211	214	217
Apprentices	-	-	107	141	131
Architects	-	-	-	18	20
Assemblers	17	28	10	-	-
Assessors	-	-	23	25	29
Bank Officers	170	221	151	134	333
Book-keepers	61	88	11	15	21
Boilermakers	20	29	18	17	8
Builders	19	32	15	36	18
Butchers	30	38	23	24	-
Cadets	34	39	134	112	225
Carpenters/Joiners	122	156	60	67	39
Cashiers	14	14	-	-	18
Chemists	93	117	65	51	176
Chiropodists	-	-	-	-	33
Civil Servants	431	534	219	276	799
Clerks	1289	1606	1882	2442	1762
Company Directors	-	-	27	19	40
Comptometrists	41	43	17	22	18
Computer	-	-	24	38	19
Credit Officers	-	-	31	45	40
Customs Officers	-	-	-	5	8
Demonstrators	-	-	23	41	-
Domestic Duties	680	792	434	591	643
Draughtsmen	771	925	582	614	745
Dressmakers	30	38	29	27	31
Drivers	39	54	49	49	24
Electricians	84	113	39	146	32
Engineers	339	422	280	302	364
Estimators	-	-	-	18	31
Executive Trainees	-	-	26	170	16
Factory Hands	-	-	29	59	89
Farmers	93	68	45	63	50
Fitters	314	381	133	96	144

(Cont.)

<u>Occupation</u>	<u>Number of Students</u>				
	1957	1959	1961	1963	1965
Foremen	122	165	116	132	130
Gardeners	18	22	11	-	7
Grocers	30	41	-	-	-
Hairdressers	16	21	-	18	21
Health Inspectors	-	-	20	-	-
Inspectors	60	74	62	98	69
Insurance Officers	28	45	14	32	42
Laboratory Assistants	121	159	125	232	220
Labourers	201	245	128	163	100
Land Agents	40	44	52	76	24
Lecturers	-	-	-	-	20
Librarians	13	12	-	-	10
Machinists	60	76	98	96	83
Managers	150	190	259	232	500
Mechanics	86	76	28	84	91
Medical Practitioners	-	-	-	-	12
Metallurgists	-	-	-	-	12
Metal Finishers	17	29	10	-	-
Metal Workers	33	43	17	24	74
Motor Mechanics	39	12	14	-	-
Not Stated	290	347	535	726	151
Nurses	141	523	413	156	55
Office Boys	45	72	-	-	-
Painters	19	19	-	14	10
Panel Beaters	-	19	-	-	-
Pattern Makers	22	31	-	-	3
Pay Masters	-	-	-	19	6
Personnel Officers	-	-	46	34	22
Photographers	-	-	-	-	14
Physiotherapists	-	-	-	-	10
Planners	23	30	-	-	-
Plumbers	204	261	45	43	10
Police	15	37	45	93	44
Postal	209	253	-	-	-
Printers	15	-	29	33	19
Process Workers	18	25	30	-	15
Programmers	-	-	-	-	12
Purchasing Officers	18	28	38	45	36
Quantity Surveyors	-	-	-	31	10
Radio Mechanics	98	134	16	-	-
Radiographers	-	-	10	28	64
Railway Employees	54	78	-	17	12
Receptionists	-	-	-	-	20
Refrigeration Mechanics	25	36	-	-	-
Representatives	-	-	-	189	215
Research Officers	-	-	-	34	39
Salesmen	214	345	349	385	245

(Cont.)

<u>Occupation</u>	<u>Number of Students</u>				
	1957	1959	1961	1963	1965
Secretaries	64	81	95	95	135
Shop Assistants	109	152	42	107	155
Shop Keepers	-	-	25	4	14
Soldiers	15	22	16	-	-
Stenographers	208	273	118	134	117
Storemen	65	92	45	87	44
Students	1508	1884	1938	1041	856
Sundry Occupations	891	210	245	-	-
Supervisors and Superintendents	127	167	298	134	197
Surveyors	-	-	29	60	46
Teachers	123	120	71	139	212
Technicians	-	-	43	88	262
Telephonists	25	23	27	35	32
Time Study Officers	25	48	25	29	71
Toolmakers	58	63	38	46	50
Travellers	56	71	65	-	-
Typists	209	328	129	112	177
Unemployed	-	-	29	-	-
Upholsterers	-	14	-	-	-
Welders	95	142	90	55	36
Wool-classers	97	108	35	35	285
X-ray Mechanics	15	22	16	-	-
TOTAL	10945	13205	10626	11112	11239

Source: South Australian School of Mines and Industries, Annual Report, op cit., 1957, 1959; South Australian Institute of Technology, Annual Report, op cit., 1961, 1963, 1965, passim.

It is impossible to generalise too much from the above table. However, it is clear that the School of Mines, thence SAIT, attracted many manual workers to its wide ranging vocational programmes. The institution was thus still an important agency whereby these adults could acquire a higher education. But it is not clear just what percentage of these people were enrolled in the latter stages of apprenticeship and middle level and thus, adult education programmes. It was unlikely that

many workers would have engaged in advanced (degree or diploma level) studies. Hence the bulk of the workers engaged in studies at the School would have been in vocational education courses at an adult education level. Few of these would have been in technician courses, for in 1963 only 634 of over 11,000 students were in such courses. And as argued earlier, many of these students were not working class adults, but rather, young students immediately ex-compulsory schooling.

During the late 1960's and following changes in its award structures after the Martin Report,¹²² many of the sub-tertiary courses at the SAIT were transferred to the State Education Authority. Thus SAIT was effectively removed from the sphere of defined adult education provision. It had played an important role by its offerings of basic and middle level courses since World War I, but from the late 1960's it concentrated on degree and diploma level tertiary studies. Thus by 1970, the Education Department had control of most pre-tertiary post-secondary adult vocational education.¹²³ In addition it had substantial control in the recreational, remedial, informational and non-vocational areas.

In 1965 subject enrolments in the Department's programmes reached 37,447, with 32,644 individual enrolments.¹²⁴

¹²² Committee of Enquiry into the Future of Tertiary Education in Australia, Tertiary Education in Australia (3 Volumes), Canberra, Australian Universities' Commission, 1964. Known as the Martin Report.

¹²³ It was not the sole authority. For example, the Department of Agriculture also conducted courses. But these were largely short seminars for farmers and their families. Engel, A.E., Agricultural Extension: The Department of Agriculture, South Australia, (Paper presented to the Seventh Annual Conference of the Australian Association of Adult Education), (Mimeograph), Adelaide, 1967, passim.

¹²⁴ Education Department Technical Education Branch, Annual Report, (1965), op cit., p.33.

Later in 1966, the corresponding figures were 38,565 and 33,633.¹²⁵ In 1965, of subject enrolments, 7,344 were in academic subject areas, 4,206 in art and music, and 9,523 in crafts. A similar situation existed in 1966. Obviously, when comparing these enrolments with those of the WEA, the Department was dominant.

In its then large adult education programme, the State Department of Education was committed to the development of better citizenship, a more highly educated and skilled workforce and, the promotion of democratic society. As an institution within the State Government apparatus, it worked within a conservative framework, and as such, offered non-controversial courses. There was a constraint on the Department, which was a public service body. It had to answer to the Government for its actions. Restrictions on it were, and are, thus technically much more stringent than on the Department of Tutorial Classes of the University of Adelaide, which as a University Department, had some degree of autonomy, and more stringent than on the WEA, which was responsible to its council.

Throughout the 1960's, at a time of almost unchecked national economic growth, the chief industrial developments in South Australia were in the automotive, building trades and electrical industries. A Liberal Government was still in power at a Federal level, as had been the case since the early post-

¹²⁵ Education Department Technical Education Branch, Annual Report, Adelaide, Education Department, 1966, p.34.

war defeat of the ALP. At a State level, the political dominance of Sir Thomas Playford, Premier for a quarter of a century, ended and with it came the conclusion of Liberal Party dominance over State politics.

During this period of political change, provision of education for adults grew, particularly in the remedial, recreational and informational areas. Growth was also evidenced in the Education Department's post-trade and technician courses.

Importantly, the courses in the vocational areas such as engineering, commerce and nutrition were strictly of utilitarian function. For as Bone suggested:

... modern technical education has become
synonymous with education for a job ...¹²⁶

Traditionally, within these areas, students were not exposed to liberal studies as any significant proportion of their training. The argument supporting this was simple. Tradesmen and women were required. Time was "too precious" to spend on liberal studies when there were large numbers of technical subjects which were deemed more relevant.

Bone proposed that such courses as art or music should be included in technician studies and further suggested:

... this part of his education might be to give the student an understanding of the importance of the job for which he is training in relation to his firm, to his business, to the economy of the country, and its relation to the social structure of the community in which he lives.¹²⁷

¹²⁶ Bone, M.H., "The Technician - His Duties and His Education," South Australian Education, 2:13-18, December 1968, p.13.

¹²⁷ ibid., p.16.

Thus the liberal courses were to be either clearly related to, in this case, the technician's vocation, or else, entirely "liberalising". Essentially the proposals were socially neutral and thereby largely in support of status quo conditions. Such a position was entirely consistent with the function of a government educational body.

With regard to the curricula for post-trade and technician courses, there was an exclusive vocational composition. Furthermore, the studies were of a very full nature. Each course or subject within a certificate was tightly packed so that little opportunity was available for diversification into liberal studies areas. And further, from a sample of opinions obtained from students, the inclusion of liberal studies was seen as a "waste of time".¹²⁸ The socialization role of schools was evident. These students selected vocational courses and expected time to be profitably spent pursuing such studies. They did not enrol to undertake liberal studies, and saw little benefit from undertaking such studies within a vocational certificate. If they desired to pursue such liberal studies, then they would have done this by enrolling in other programmes.

¹²⁸ In 1974, while lecturing in the Industrial Studies Certificate at Panorama Technical College (now named Panorama Community College of Further Education) the researcher posed the question regarding the inclusion of liberal studies in the certificate course. Students generally gave quite negative responses.

Table 7.9 below shows the changes in Education Department adult enrolments in metropolitan colleges from 1964 to 1969.

Table 7.10 shows changes in overall enrolments from 1964 to 1969.

TABLE 7.9
EDUCATION DEPARTMENT: ENROLMENTS IN
METROPOLITAN COLLEGES, 1964 - 1969

	1964	1965	1966	1967	1968	1969
Total subject enrolments	8770	8964	10448	10542	10440	15361
Number of apprentices receiving instruction	5553	5983	6551	6398	6093	5893
Number of apprentices studying at the Post-Trade Certificate level (a)	805	617	701	896	878	887
Subject enrolments in Technician courses	-	-	-	-	23	499
Individual enrolments in other adult courses	2637	2689	3004	3336	3532	7220
Total individual enrolments	8190	8672	9555	9734	9625	13113

(a) Apprentices nearing the end of their apprenticeship (and thus adults) could enrol in post-trade subjects.

Source: Education Department, Annual Report, Adelaide, Education Department, 1964 to 1969, passim.

While both apprentice and post-trade enrolments changed little, the enrolments in technician courses increased dramatically from 1968, with their gradual transfer from SAIT.

TABLE 7.10

EDUCATION DEPARTMENT: ENROLMENTS IN

ADULT* CLASSES, 1964 - 1969

	1964	1965	1966	1967	1968	1969
Metropolitan Technical Colleges*	8190	8672	9555	9734	9625	13113
Country Adult Education Centres and Technical Colleges	13610	16385	16482	16053	16829	18321
Metropolitan Technical High and Adult Education Centres	7967	10238	11422	13700	18082	22013
Technical Correspondence School	4683	5052	5207	5818	5261	4963
Migrant Classes	5951	5621	5492	5157	6009	5415
School of Art (Non-Diploma)	475	456	699	687	632	1050
Commonwealth Training Scheme	19	22	15	11	2	3
TOTAL	40895	46446	48872	51160	56440	64878

* These figures included students enrolled in basic trade courses and because, as suggested earlier, entry was permissible at 15 years of age, not all of these apprentices would have been adults. Refer Table 7.9.

Source: Committee of Enquiry into Education in South Australia, Education in South Australia, 1969-1970, Adelaide, Government Printer, 1971, p.326.

Although the subject distribution was diverse, Public Examinations Board subjects, necessary to meet matriculation requirements, attracted many students.¹²⁹ The catch-up or remedial or second chance nature of courses was obvious in studies designed to foster self-improvement in students. Many who needed, or desired,

¹²⁹ Education Department Technical Education Division, Annual Report, Adelaide, Education Department, 1969, p.9.

matriculation or similar qualifications, used adult education facilities for this purpose. Arts and crafts subjects, remedial migrant studies, language studies and general recreational activities, in addition to vocational courses, also attracted many students.

Despite the seemingly high enrolment in the classes, the number of students, when added to those enrolled in WEA and University of Adelaide Department of Adult Education classes, formed less than ten per cent of the South Australian adult population. Thus adult education was not an activity of a large majority of South Australians. This was consistent with conditions in other Australian States.¹³⁰ But of all participants in non-vocational, recreational, remedial and informational programmes, the higher status occupations, characteristic of the middle class were disproportionately represented. Such was also the case in many vocational studies where those in clerical occupations were prominent. There was a far greater percentage of these high status students among adult students than among the population as a whole.¹³¹

¹³⁰ See for example, Australian Committee on Technical and Further Education, TAFE in Australia. Report on the Needs in Technical and Further Education, Canberra, Australian Government Publishing Service, 1974; 1975, passim.

¹³¹ There were no comprehensive data on occupations of participants in Department courses, but enquiries made of experienced Principals of Further Education Colleges endorse the stated position. Communications from M. Hand, Brighton College of Further Education, October 1979 and N. Smith, Adelaide Hills Community College, October 1979. Also notes of discussion with I. Saunders, Principal, Gawler College of Further Education, August 1979, and B. Stanford, Principal, Open College of Further Education and formerly Principal of the then Panorama Technical College, in December 1974.

Workers actively participated in adult courses, particularly, migrant, post-trade and the latter stages of apprenticeship, but these adults contributed a much less significant proportion of enrolments, than higher status occupational related groups.

A stimulus towards altering this situation came subsequent upon the report of the Karmel Committee of Enquiry into Education in South Australia, 1969-70. Karmel recommended the creation of a new autonomous Government Department of Further Education with the Education Department's Division of Technical Education forming its nucleus. Bone, was its first Director and the new Department began operations in 1972.

Bone recognised that the new Department would extend the work of the old Division of Technical Education and would concern itself with non-vocational, remedial, recreational and informational adult education. However, he went on to say that one of its primary tasks was to help people acquire skills. Not surprisingly, the Department would give emphasis to vocational education and educate people for their jobs.¹³² This was to be achieved through courses such as post-trade, technician, apprentice and other vocational courses of a middle level nature. Such courses would attract people from a diversity of occupational groups, but particularly unskilled, semi-skilled and skilled trades people and clerks.

However, its general adult programme, while available to all, would as in the past, most likely prove attractive to

¹³² Bone, M.H., "The Role of Further Education", Issue, 2(6):10-14, September 1972, p.12.

adults from home duties, clerical, professional and para-professional groups. Its expanded remedial literacy and numeracy programmes would, in contrast, attract many adults from working class backgrounds.

All these aspects of its provisions in adult education received yet a further injection of support after the ALP won Government at a Federal level in 1972, and established an enquiry into those branches of education covered by the new Department.

The Department of Further Education and Working Class Adult Education to 1975

The year 1972 was the conclusion of over twenty years of continuous Liberal-Country Party Federal Government. Under the political hegemony of Sir Robert Menzies, Prime Minister for the majority of the years of Liberal-Country Party rule, there was an industrial boom. This boom brought with it a need for more highly skilled workers in some areas¹³³ and consequent increased affluence and enhanced job and social mobility for some in the working class. However, there were problems, both latent and manifest, in education provision. Though the Federal Government assisted and encouraged vocational and to an extent, recreational, remedial, informational and non-vocational adult education development, the whole area remained very much the Cinderella in the education continuum.¹³⁴

¹³³ Though there has been concern expressed about the need for a more highly skilled workforce, for example, in the 1974 and 1975 reports of the Australian Committee on Technical and Further Education entitled TAFE in Australia..., it is important to remember that with advances in technology, there have been changes in the labour processes in some traditional trades leading, in effect, to a de-skilling of sections of the workforce.

¹³⁴ For a brief discussion of this see Fooks, D., TAFEC. The Resources Needed for TAFE and the Best Methods of Obtaining Them, (Paper presented to Australian Association of Adult Education Conference, Adelaide, October 1976), (Mimeograph, 23p.), Adelaide, 1976.

With the advent of the Federal Labor Government, there arose the potential for new developments in adult education. Initiatives from the new Government were soon forthcoming. In April 1973, an Australian Committee on Technical and Further Education (ACOTAFE) was established under the chairmanship of Myer Kangan.¹³⁵ The Committee was asked to:

...advise the Australian Government on the development of technical and further education in Australia and to make recommendations for financial assistance to State technical and further education institutions.¹³⁶

The Committee was requested to consider community attitudes and individual needs, in addition to the needs of industry, commerce and governments, as they adjusted to technological, economic and social change.¹³⁷

In its philosophical deliberations, the Committee suggested that, technical colleges should consider more than the specific vocational training of students to meet industries' needs. The "development of the whole person" was an important aspect of this work that had been under-emphasised. Needed were more people who were not only skilled, but also "good citizens", better equipped to foster the development of democratic society. The broadening of curricula to include some liberalising elements, such as had been proposed by Bone in the late 1960's, would assist this change.

¹³⁵ TAFEC News, 1:1, October 1975.

¹³⁶ ibid.

¹³⁷ ibid. See also Kangan, M., "Most of Labor Force Have No Formally Recognised Qualifications", South Australian Teachers' Journal, 14 August, 1974, p.9.

Such considerations were not radical departures from previous guiding philosophies in either State-provided or WEA-provided adult education. The Committee was informing the Government that it needed to ensure co-ordinated, planned efforts in educating adults. Thereby the growth of individuals and the nation, as a whole, would be promoted.

In support of this suggestion, ACOTAFE considered, at length, the important question of then current access to study in adult education. The Committee admitted to a low rate of participation of "disadvantaged groups", mainly the working class, including trade unionists, a conclusion later supported in South Australia by Sumner and Kerkham in 1976 and Finnegan in 1977.¹³⁸ This poor participation rate was particularly evident in the non-vocational, recreational and informational areas, but not so in the vocational and remedial areas. Hence the Committee was stressing what had been revealed in a number of earlier analyses of adult educational participation.

The Report of the Committee was far-reaching. It was designed to allow for significant Federal financial support to be injected into this area of post-compulsory school, pre-

¹³⁸ Sumner, R.J. and Kerkham, L. A College of Further Education in its Local Community. Adelaide, Torrens CAE, 1976, passim; Finnegan, D.M., Outreach: Awareness of and Access to Adult Education. Adelaide, Department of Further Education, 1977, pp.58,59.

tertiary education. It, according to Bone, set a blueprint for the development of adult education in Australia.¹³⁹

The resultant Commission, and now Council, has seen a national co-ordination of the area, particularly in the State Government controlled sections. It has promoted staff development, research, curriculum development and above all, has represented the various States' technical and further education departments or branches, to the Federal Government, on issues such as funding.

The Commission's establishment was important. However, its formation did not precede the significant developments in South Australia. Rather, it followed the creation of the State Department of Further Education. The Department since its foundation in 1972, was already growing as it attempted to respond to individual and societal educational wants and needs by offering wide ranging educational programmes.¹⁴⁰

In a period of economic downturn and rising unemployment, as has characterised much of the 1970's, the Department has been concerned with aspects of education earlier foreshadowed by Bone. Much emphasis has been given to vocational studies. In fact,

¹³⁹ Bone, M.H., Access, (Address to the National Conference of Heads of Technical Correspondence Schools, and the Conference Curriculum in Further Education, Raywood, South Australia, 24 October, 1974), (Mimeograph, 9p.), Adelaide, 1974, p.3.

¹⁴⁰ Department of Further Education, Annual Report, Adelaide, Department of Further Education, 1973, p.11; Bone, M.H., Education and Industry: The Role of TAFE, TAFE in South Australia, Past, Present, Future, op cit., passim.

about 60% of its resources have been devoted to such courses,¹⁴¹ a focus reflecting the more expensive nature of much technically oriented education. Also this emphasis has illustrated the main concerns of the leadership of this Government Department and the importance accorded such education in terms of individual and national growth.

The Department's aims became an extension of those offered by the Education Minister (Pattinson) when he foreshadowed the expanded adult education service of the Education Department in 1956. These objectives were put in an enlarged form by 1975:

The responsibility of the Department of Further Education is to provide education to those who have left secondary school, whether having completed full secondary schooling or not, and who wish to study courses other than those provided at tertiary level by universities, teachers' colleges or other colleges of advanced education. The policy of providing a great diversity of educational offerings is based on the fundamental belief that education is a life-long, continuous process.

The most significant areas covered by Department of Further Education courses are:

1. Vocational Education - relates to one's present or future occupation, and includes apprentice, sub-professional and general academic courses. In addition, adults may complete secondary education (usually taken as a vocational course pre-requisite) and thereby gain the opportunity of a 'second chance'.
2. Enrichment Studies - courses to assist individuals to achieve fulfilment and satisfaction in civic, family and cultural roles.

The Department of Further Education realises that the educational development of the State and its economic and social development are closely related. Therefore, it provides courses keeping in mind the economic, social and cultural needs of the people of the State ... The institutions

¹⁴¹ Bone, M.H., Education and Industry: The Role of TAFE, TAFE in South Australia, Past, Present, Future., op cit., p.9.

of the Department of Further Education, will, as far as possible, operate on an open door policy. It is and will continue to be contrary to the Department's philosophy and function, that formal pre-requisites should preclude any person with potential ability from entering on a course of study. The major emphasis will be on student success and student-centred methods within a general policy of providing for people of all ages a broader exposure to, and a better preparation for, the world in which they live.¹⁴²

In meeting these objectives, the Department's provision was extensive. Courses were categorised as shown in Table 7.11 below, where the 1976 groupings have been given.

TABLE 7.11

DEPARTMENT OF FURTHER EDUCATION: GROUPS OF COURSES - 1976

Agriculture and Animal Care
 Art and Craft
 Automotive Engineering
 Building
 Business, Commerce, Government
 Child Care, Domestic Skills
 Clothing Production
 Communication and English Language Skills
 Dental Technology and Hygiene.
 Electrical
 Electronics, Radio and Television
 Food and Catering
 Graphic Arts
 Hairdressing and Grooming
 Horticulture
 Humanities
 Languages
 Library
 Mathematics, Science and Computers
 Mechanical Engineering
 Music
 Performing Arts
 Photography
 Plumbing and Sheetmetal Work
 Sports and Recreation
 Pre-matriculation
 Matriculation
 Apprentice

Source: Department of Further Education, Programme '76.

¹⁴² Department of Further Education, Staff Handbook, Adelaide, Department of Further Education, 1975, pp.2-5.

In addition, special services were provided for aborigines and migrants, particularly in the basic literacy and numeracy skill areas.

The non-controversial programme attracted large enrolments, particularly in the recreational and more specifically in the vocational areas. In 1973, subject enrolment was 108,385 with an individual student enrolment of 78,214, of whom 30,697 were in vocational subject areas, compared with 108,481 and 78,540 respectively in 1972.¹⁴³ In 1975, 8,763 classes were conducted in over 1,000 separate courses for a total student enrolment of 94,939.¹⁴⁴ Many of the students in vocational courses were apprentices, 9,160 in 1975, of whom a considerable proportion were of working class background. They were largely young unskilled workers¹⁴⁵ attending classes to become skilled tradesmen and women. Their counterparts in non-vocational courses, 49,153 in 1975, were predominantly of middle class background.

During the early years of the Department's operations there were many students enrolled in technical courses of a

¹⁴³ Department of Further Education, Annual Report, (1973) op cit., p.25.

¹⁴⁴ Parkinson, K.J., The Department of Further Education, South Australia, (Paper presented to Seminar on Continuing Education, University of Adelaide, 1976), (Mimeograph, 11p.), Adelaide, November 1976, p.2.

¹⁴⁵ Occasionally companies such as General Motors Holdens sent management cadets on apprentice courses.

defined adult education level. For example, 1,633 students were enrolled in technical courses at technician level in 1972. In subsequent years the numbers of students in these courses were, 1,693 in 1973, 2,015 in 1974, and 2,112 in 1975.¹⁴⁶ Meanwhile, in 1972, 2,963 students were enrolled in post-trade studies.¹⁴⁷ In 1974 and 1975 respectively, 3,082 and 2,771 students were enrolled in these courses.¹⁴⁸ And as discussed earlier, these specifically vocationally oriented courses, particularly the post-trade studies, but not technician studies, attracted an almost exclusively working class clientele.

There were no specific working class educational ventures and little worker participation in other areas of the Department's very extensive provisions, (see examples in Table 7.13), except for the Department's remedial courses for migrants and courses for aboriginals, such as education courses in the areas of basic numeracy and literacy.¹⁴⁹

¹⁴⁶ Department of Further Education, Annual Report, (1975) op cit., p.38.

¹⁴⁷ Department of Further Education, Annual Report, Adelaide, Department of Further Education, 1972, p.36.

¹⁴⁸ Department of Further Education, Annual Report, Adelaide, Department of Further Education, 1974, p.30; 1975, p.38.

¹⁴⁹ In a study of 402 students who had enrolled in the Department's Adult Literacy Programme at its Language Centre between 1976 and 1978, 27.1% of those classified illiterate were semi-skilled or unskilled workers, 28.6% skilled and 23.6% unemployed. Matthews, A.P., "A Profile of Adult Literacy Students in South Australia", (Dip.T. (Tech.) Thesis), Torrens CAE, 1978, p.26.

In 1972, 3,568 migrants received tuition in basic English literacy classes, while figures for 1974 and 1975 were 3,352 and 3,861 respectively.¹⁵⁰ These programmes were conducted in a variety of locations including the migrants' workplaces. With respect to the Department's work with aboriginals, this was in its infancy in 1974, at which time, an officer was appointed to co-ordinate the Department's aboriginal work.

The work with aboriginals and migrants was designed to help both these groups of adults to better cope with the complexities of life in a foreign culture. It was a most important part of the Department's work that gradually increased in significance throughout the 1970's. However, in terms of resource allocation, migrant and aboriginal adult education was a small section of the Department's provisions. Vocational courses at basic, and middle levels still attracted most of the available financial resources.

In relation to the Department's overall student body, an indication of its profile is shown in Table 7.12 and 7.13. These tables show the occupations of students, the vast majority of whom were studying part-time, in a 1975 case study

¹⁵⁰ Department of Further Education, Annual Report,
op cit, 1972, p.28; 1974, p.14; 1975, p.18.

conducted at the Department of Further Education's Panorama Technical College, now Panorama Community College of Further Education. The College's Schools of Technical Studies and Business Studies both conducted, almost exclusively, vocational courses.

TABLE 7.12

PANORAMA COMMUNITY COLLEGE OF FURTHER EDUCATION:

SCHOOLS OF BUSINESS AND TECHNICAL STUDIES,

STUDENT OCCUPATIONS - TERM I, 1975

Occupation	Business Studies		*Technical Studies	
	No.	%	No.	%
Professional	25	3.2	16	4.5
Technical	33	4.2	9	2.5
Administrative (Managerial, Executive)	30	3.8	6	1.7
Clerical	361	46.1	9	2.5
Sales	4	0.5	4	1.1
Transport and Communication	2	0.3	5	1.4
Skilled Workers	51	6.5	261	72.9
Semi-Skilled Workers	2	0.3	20	5.6
Unskilled Workers	3	0.4	5	1.4
Armed Services	-	-	1	0.3
Home Duties	1	0.1	-	-
Occupation inadequately described	9	1.1	4	1.1
Unknown	262	33.5	18	5.0
Total	783	100.0	*358	100.0

* 699 Apprentices were excluded from these figures.

Source: Sumner, R.J. and Kerkham, L., op cit.,
p.65.

Though the occupations of apprentices were not recorded, the very nature of apprenticeship implied that students were employed within trade areas. The occupation distribution per se in Table 7.12 was as expected. Those in clerical occupations formed the bulk of Business Studies enrollees, especially if one assumed that of the large unknown category, many students were clerks.¹⁵¹

The large number of skilled people in the School of Technical Studies was due to the fact that the subjects considered for the analysis were almost exclusively post-trade, and hence studied by those who possessed a trade certificate. Some 699 apprentices in this School were not included in the analysis, but if they had been, the occupational percentage distribution would have been significantly different with these largely falling in semi-skilled and unskilled categories.

Cautious generalisations across South Australia from this case study gave a clear picture of just which types of people formed the bulk of apprentice, post-trade and vocational certificate enrollees in 1975. These people tended to be those from the lower status non-manual occupations such as clerks, or from skilled, semi-skilled and unskilled labouring jobs, that is, manual workers. They were people who perhaps aspired for individual self-improvement, for attendance was, save for

¹⁵¹ Based on experience the researcher gained as a lecturer in that School in 1974, the inference drawn is valid.

instances where employers "forced attendance", on a voluntary basis.

The Business Studies' technician courses, unlike the earlier middle level studies offered at the School of Mines, tended to attract adults who were employed and not immediately ex-secondary school. These adults who were mainly in clerical occupations, seemed attracted to the more academic technician level studies. Most of these clerks would have been better equipped to cope with these studies, than were manual workers in attempting to cope with technical technician level courses.

While manual workers and clerks totally dominated the Schools of Technical Studies and Business Studies, the same was not true of students in the School of General Studies. This School offered largely recreational, remedial, informational and non-vocational courses, but also some of a vocational nature, for example, Farriery. Table 7.13 shows the occupational distribution of students in this School in Term I, 1975.

TABLE 7.13

PANORAMA COMMUNITY COLLEGE OF FURTHER EDUCATION: SCHOOL OF
GENERAL STUDIES, STUDENT OCCUPATIONS - TERM I, 1975

<u>Occupation</u>	<u>No.</u>	<u>%</u>
Professional	421	20.3
Technical	112	5.4
Administrative (Managerial, Executive)	56	2.7
Clerical	487	23.5
Sales	32	1.5
Farmers	8	0.4
Transport and Communication	19	0.9
Skilled Workers	116	5.6
Semi-Skilled Workers	40	1.9
Unskilled Workers	10	0.5
Sport, Recreation, Service Workers	4	0.2
Armed Services	9	0.4
Self-Employed (for example small firm)	17	0.8
(Cont.)		

<u>Occupation</u>	<u>No.</u>	<u>%</u>
Home Duties	453	21.9
Unemployed	54	2.6
Retired	21	1.0
Occupation inadequately described	146	7.0
Unknown	68	3.3
Total	2073	99.9

Source: Sumner, R.J. and Kerkham, L.,
op cit., p.65.

Manual workers were clearly under-represented.

A survey of a sample of 327 participants in the defined functional area of the School of General Studies allowed for the following conclusion:

From the data available on the participants it was obvious that they tended to have been drawn largely from the middle class. There was a very high percentage who had experienced tertiary education and whose family had also enjoyed this advantage. Women consistently out-numbered men in all age groups and in all course classifications - individual subjects were largely dominated by women except in subjects such as woodwork, in crafts and the vocational subjects such as Farriery, Speed Reading and Business English and Report Writing. The over-representation of women in courses in the School of General Studies was due, at least in part, to the many courses which were popularly designated "women's interests" - Crochet, Cake Decorating, Dressmaking and various types of Cookery.

Although the largest group of women overall, were housewives, it was notable that their spouses were mainly classified under professional and managerial/executive occupations. Thus the commonly assumed indicators of social class - namely education and occupation - showed that the participants in the School of General Studies of the College were from the middle class.¹⁵²

These conclusions were supported by Finnegan in her comprehensive

¹⁵² Sumner, R.J. and Kerkham, L., op cit., pp.96-97.

1976 survey of 2,500 adults in the Adelaide metropolitan area. She reported that, in relation to recreational, informational, remedial and non-vocational adult education participation:

... the type of person ...
 ... is more likely to be female ...
 is probably under thirty six years of
 age and is employed. She has reached
 a high level of schooling and is probably
 middle class.¹⁵³

Three very experienced Principals in the Department of Further Education confirmed the profile, based on their own vast experiences as adult educators.¹⁵⁴ This finding was consistent with conditions in other Australian States so far as the Government's major recreational, informational and non-vocational adult educational provisions are concerned. For example, in an early study of students attending classes in the Autumn programme of the Victorian Council of Adult Education, M. Lacuesta¹⁵⁵ found that the enrollees included an almost negligible proportion of unskilled workers and a very small proportion of manual

¹⁵³ Finnegan, D.M., op cit., p.59. Conglaton's four point scale of socio-economic status based on occupational ratings was used to define status. Conglaton, A.A., Status and Social Prestige in Australia, Melbourne, Cheshire, 1969.

¹⁵⁴ Interview with I. Saunders, Principal, Gawler College of Further Education, August 1979. Correspondence with M. Hand, Principal, Brighton College of Further Education and N. Smith, Principal, Adelaide Hills Community College, October 1979.

¹⁵⁵ Lacuesta, M.G., "Survey of Students Attending Adult Education Classes in Victoria During Autumn 1953", (M.Ed. thesis), University of Melbourne, 1954.

workers per se.¹⁵⁶ This conclusion was verified in 1966 analyses of the Council's Autumn and Winter classes.¹⁵⁷ However, a major difference between the 1975 adult education student body in South Australia (that is referred to above) compared with that of earlier years was the increasing contribution from women who were in the labour force and who were middle class.

In its non-vocational, recreational and informational programmes the Department of Further Education's appeal has been little different from the WEA as it emphasised leisure education and education for better citizenship. However, where the Department was, and is, important as regards working class education, was in its migrant, aboriginal and general remedial education programmes, its basic trade and post-trade level studies and in the late 1970's, its women's studies courses. The Department has been the significant agency providing utilitarian courses that have been viewed as essential to worker self-improvement and the promotion of societal and national growth. In this way, it has carried on a long established tradition in education provision that has appealed to adult workers in South Australia. Workers have tended to involve themselves in utilitarian studies where they can acquire what is for them, more useful knowledge.

Summary

Although the State, through the Education Department, had been involved in adult education on a small scale before

¹⁵⁶ Anderson, N.D., "These Were Our Students" (July 1954) quoted in A. Wesson (Ed.), Basic Readings in Australian Adult Education, Melbourne, Council of Adult Education, 1971, pp.114-115, p.114.

¹⁵⁷ Council of Adult Education, Annual Report, 1966-67, Melbourne, Council of Adult Education, 1967, p.23.

1913, it was after the Report of the Royal Commission of that year that rapid developments were made. The Government provided more structure to apprentice education, and the vocational work of the Department and the School of Mines and Industries grew. The nexus between industries and vocational educational authorities became more firmly established.

The Depression had a marked detrimental effect on adult enrolments. But in the subsequent economic boom there was recovery in vocational education while workers were educated for the more highly mechanised manufacturing industries. Such growth continued during World War II as people were educated for work in, for example, munition factories. Also at this time, the influential AAES was formed to provide a large adult education service for troops at home and abroad.

After the War, the School of Mines and the Education Department began to expand their middle level adult education provision and cater for the repatriation education of returned ex-service people. In addition, the Department developed other sides of its adult education work, which resulted in its total domination of the area by the late 1960's. At this time it had acquired almost all of the base and middle level vocational education programmes from the SAIT and had a well-developed pragmatic middle level programme of its own. These pragmatic middle level and base level technical courses attracted many workers. This contrasted with the appeal of the Department's non-vocational, recreational and informational programmes which largely attracted middle class adults. In this latter area the Department's provision was similar in appeal to that of

the WEA and other States' government bodies providing similar adult educational programmes.

During the 1970's there arose the potential to change this condition. The Report of the Karmel Committee of Enquiry into Education in South Australia 1969-70 was the catalyst for unprecedented growth in the area of government involvement in adult education in South Australia.

A Department of Further Education was established and grew rapidly under the able leadership of Max Bone. It set about providing a co-ordinated adult education service to help promote industrial efficiency, better citizenship, individual self-improvement and societal growth. The new Department was assisted in this endeavour when it received considerable financial support from the Federal ALP Government via the Technical and Further Education Commission (now Council). Adult education had been accorded higher status in the eyes of legislators.

The Department has provided basic literacy and numeracy courses, bridging courses and remedial courses for adults such as migrants, women and aboriginals. It has offered middle level vocational courses in for example, technical, scientific and commercial areas and in these, has been successful in attracting many adults from the working class. Further, the Department has developed an extensive recreational adult educational programme which has shown particular appeal to the middle class.

Hence, although many of the Department's courses have proved attractive to the middle class, just like those provided by the WEA, it has nevertheless appealed to many workers in

its more utilitarian programmes. Here it has been similar in appeal to like programmes offered from within the labour movement and by the WEA. Workers have shown a readiness to participate in more pragmatic studies and those where they have been able to acquire what they view as more really useful knowledge. Their response to utilitarian programmes whether provided from within or outside the labour movement has contrasted with their disinclination to participate in other forms of formal adult education.

RETROSPECT AND PROSPECT

... While Australian adult education may claim substantial achievement, it remains in all its forms beset by many problems ... Australian adult education still suffers from lack of recognition in many quarters. It is neglected ... (Zelman Cowan¹)

In essence, the potential of adult education is analogous to the harnessing of a significant new energy resource; the possibility has been in existence for a considerable time, but its full utilisation requires new initiatives and insights. Australia's future is as dependent upon harnessing its human potential as upon harnessing its physical resources. (Australian Association of Adult Education²)

RETROSPECT 1913 to 1975

Introduction

As has been shown, the history of workers' education in South Australia is complex; consequently an adequate summary poses problems of omission. There have been some periods of uncompromising planned activity and lengthy corresponding periods of either intermittent or no activity. This has been particularly so in relation to formally planned adult education, and to a lesser extent, with informal adult education through, for example, labour newspapers and union journals.

This examination has not been concerned with informal working class adult education. Such a research restriction has created obvious problems. Much worker adult education,

¹ Cowan, Z., Preface to D. Whitelock (Ed.), Adult Education in Australia, Sydney, Pergamon, 1970, p.11.

² Australian Association of Adult Education, Education Policies to Meet Australia's Needs, (Mimeograph, 3p.), Canberra, no date, probably August 1980, p.3.

like all adult education has been, and is, informal. To consider only formally provided education thus means that the overall picture of provision is incomplete.

However, the writer recognised the importance of such, largely undocumented informal provision, in the same way that more formal educational activities in, for example, churches are noted. Nevertheless, the major concern here has been with offerings from the central agencies of formal working class adult education provision, namely the WEA, the School of Mines, the Education Department, and later, the Department of Further Education and sections of the labour movement.

Earlier in this work, conclusions were drawn about agencies' activities at various times. Such conclusions will not be repeated except where they contribute to this retrospective survey.

Background to Adult Education in South Australia

Adult education has enjoyed a short and often turbulent history in Australia. It has been steeped in British adult educational tradition through such avenues as mechanics' institutes, the WEA, university extension, university departments of tutorial classes and thence departments of adult education and labour colleges.

Such a tradition is not surprising. The colonists were, after all, predominantly from the British Isles, and although they had sailed to a land thousands of miles from the "mother country", their cultural links were strong.

Of the various adult educational initiatives which

had effect in the early Australian colonies, the mechanics' institute movement was important and widespread. Today, throughout Australia, and particularly in towns in rural districts, the relics of this vibrant movement remain as testimonies of a period of educational creativity.

Although the major motivation for establishing the institutes was scientific, there were important religious and improving motivations. Mechanics were not only to be given a smattering of the sciences, they were also to be "morally enlightened" and "improved". Thus aims espoused in relation to much later adult education provision such as those suggested in the 1919 Report,³ in an early post-world War II (1949) edition of the Californian Handbook of Adult Education⁴ and in a Sydney University Joint Tutorial Classes submission to a 1960 Committee of Enquiry into Higher Education in New South Wales,⁵ and by academics and educators such as J.F.C. Harrison,⁶

³ 1919 Report quoted in A.B. Thompson, Adult Education in New Zealand, Wellington, New Zealand Council for Educational Research, 1945, p.2.

⁴ Californian Handbook of Adult Education quoted in J. London, "A Study of Social Controls in the Adult School", Adult Education, 10(3):146-156, Spring 1960, p.149.

⁵ Joint Committee of Tutorial Classes, University of Sydney, Submission to Committee on Higher Education in New South Wales, 1960, (Mimeograph, 11p.), Sydney, 1960, p.6.

⁶ Harrison, J.F.C., Learning and Living 1790-1960. A Study in the History of the English Adult Education Movement, London, Routledge and Kegan Paul, 1961, p.359.

A. Liveright,⁷ R. Dunbar⁸ and W.G.K. Duncan,⁹ were central to the institutes' work. Efforts were being made to ensure "better and more responsible" citizens.

The institutes enjoyed quite considerable success in Britain, throughout the English-speaking world and not least in Australia, before their eventual demise as formal educational bodies. In Australia, there was a proliferation of the agencies throughout the nineteenth century, although by the early twentieth century only a few continued to provide formal education programmes. Some, for example, Sydney and Brisbane formed the bases of new Technical Colleges, while most became libraries and venues for social gatherings.

The institutes lost most of their élite working class clientele - the mechanics. In this sense they were regarded by some commentators as educational failures. In the broader sense they were neither educational nor social failures, for in the provision of libraries, the institutes became important centres for informal adult education, a role quite evident in some of the local institutes remaining today. However, in terms of formal working class adult education, the institutes were not continually successful. Control was not in the hands of workers.

⁷ Liveright, A.A., A Study of Adult Education in the United States, Boston, Centre for the Study of Liberal Education for Adults, 1968, passim.

⁸ Dunbar, R.E., "The New South Wales Department of Technical Education; Adult Education" in J.W. Warburton, (Ed.) The Organisation of Adult Education in Australia, (Proceedings of Seventh Annual Australian Association of Adult Education Conference, 2 Volumes), Adelaide, AAE, University of Adelaide Department of Adult Education, 1967, Volume 1, pp.145-152, p.145.

⁹ Duncan, W.G.K., Report on Adult Education, Hobart, Government Printer, 1947, p.11.

The institutes were not providing an education that the workers viewed as useful and they largely ignored the institutes' activities.

With their decline as providers of formal adult education, there ended an innovative period in Australian adult education, and a period in which a blueprint for future adult educational provision was moulded. Workers received an education from above. Institute officials, largely of middle class background, offered an education which they felt was appropriate for workers. This was to become a constant factor in education provided for the working class. It was evident for example, in the work of the WEA and earlier, university extension.

As with institutes, extension was founded in Britain and was later duplicated in Australia. It was developed out of efforts to democratise the universities of England. Their teachings were to be made more accessible to those who had been unable to avail themselves of university level studies in a further effort to enhance the development of democratic society. By the turn of the twentieth century extension was available in Australian universities, although lectures provided under the system did not attract many workers. Rather, they attracted the "more respectable" citizens and by 1913, almost everywhere in Australia there was recognition of the failure of extension in democratising the universities. Extension was high-minded and was merely allowing mainly educated citizens to attend public lectures that were sometimes given by eminent university lecturers, such as Professors Naylor and Henderson in Adelaide.

However, the venture was important, for it exposed lecturers, as educators, to adults outside of a university academic staff - student environment. It also brought universities into the area of adult educational provision, an area which saw increasing activity with the foundation of the WEA.

The WEA

A most important working class adult educational venture established in Britain and then conceptually transplanted in Australia, was the WEA. It was formed by Albert Mansbridge who initially found support for his venture from among sections of Oxford University, some labour unions and the Anglican clergy. The Association's aim was to promote the higher education of working men and women. In practice, it was to provide a link between workers and the universities. The WEA, like university extension, was thus designed to appeal to sections of the working class and assist these people to experience a university standard education. Emphasis was placed on having students perform at a high standard, a difficult prospect for any but the highly academically able and potential working class leadership.

The British WEA suffered the same fate as many previous movements which espoused an interest in workers' education. It was essentially imbued with middle class values and proved unattractive to workers. Workers did not initiate courses, nor determine curricula, nor control the movement. They received an education from above, which was not only true in Britain, but also in Australia.

In Australia, WEA branches were established in conjunction with University Departments of Tutorial Classes in all States excepting Western Australia. Their aims were as for those of their British counterparts. The WEA's were to provide for the higher education of working men and women through liberal adult education courses.

Although the agencies enjoyed variable success in different States, that established in the more heavily industrialized New South Wales was significant. With support from the State Government, through Peter Board, the labour movement and the University of Sydney, the Association set about offering an education promoting social harmony. Adults were being educated for better citizenship in a democratic society by this professed non-partisan, non-party political working class oriented body which had as a leading figure, the idealistic Socialist, David Stewart.

The Association, in attempting to provide such an education for sections of the working class through the organised labour movement, had set itself an onerous task. It had to contend with extremes of political opinion in the movement and, at times, had to attempt to work with a split movement. The conscription crisis of World War I provided a most salient example of this latter condition in New South Wales. Furthermore, the attacks levelled at the WEA over the World War II course popularly known as "B40" were additional evidence of the difficulties faced by the Association.

The Left-wing of the labour movement relentlessly

attacked the Association in New South Wales. For example, it was under constant assault from Communists who anathematized it. The Association's close working relationship with, what Communists saw as capitalist universities, its largely bourgeois leadership and its principle of "political neutrality" were scorned. In Victoria, the Marxist Labor College was created as a concrete example of Left-wing opposition to the Association. For the Left-wing, education was an important locus of class struggle. Worker control of education was thus crucial in endeavours to ensure worker control of their lives and dominance in society. The WEA was seen as an obstacle to these aims and had to be opposed.

In contrast to the Left-wing hostility in New South Wales, in Queensland, and to an extent in Tasmania, it was the Right-wing of the labour movement that engineered substantive opposition to the WEA, and fostered its demise. The WEA was in a difficult position.

The problems faced by the Association in Australia were accentuated by class relationships. In periods of heightened class conflict such as during the first and second world wars, the WEA came under strong attacks from Left and Right-wings of the labour movement. For example, the attacks of 1917, left the Association's image permanently tarnished in the eyes of its target student body, namely, members of the working class.

Simply, one problem facing the WEA was its non-independent working class nature and its attempts to promote

university standard working class adult education, while professing a non-partisan, non-party political philosophy. Its expectations of adhering to such a philosophy and the promotion of objective critical, and perhaps even the delusion of "value free", discussion of sometimes controversial topics, was ill-founded. Certainly this theoretical position was partly responsible for it becoming alienated from the labour movement, firstly in 1917 and then further in 1944.

It is interesting that the conflict which embroiled the Association in Queensland, New South Wales, Victoria and Tasmania was relatively absent in South Australia with its strongly non-conformist and non-radical tradition. Certainly, the WEA was subject to some hostility from the Left and, occasionally, from the Right. Nevertheless in total, this opposition was relatively weak in a State in which extremes of political opinion have not had powerful supporting bases and where the Association's executives have generally maintained non-hostile relations with officials in the labour movement.

The WEA has attracted the involvement of a wide cross-section of the community and has courted governments, both Conservative and ALP. It has offered largely non-controversial courses.

After 1925, when the articulate academic, Herbert Heaton, left Adelaide University, until around 1958, the WEA offered few courses that were directly oriented towards workers. Throughout this period however, and with an emphasis on social harmony and improving workers, it did try to attract

these adults to its liberal adult educational courses. In these ventures, the WEA was not highly successful. The courses that were offered were academic and did not appear to constitute what workers viewed as really useful knowledge. Furthermore there was considerable worker indifference to the programmes and a disinclination to participate in demanding night studies after exhausting days of manual labour.

To some degree, the position changed after 1958 with Amalgamated Engineering Union and other trade union interest and involvement in worker oriented programmes of a more utilitarian nature. Such programmes grew rapidly. This was especially so with the development of the national correspondence education scheme, a scheme in which utilitarianism dominated unionists' choices of courses. Those courses which were more pragmatic and perceived of as being of more immediate use to enrollees were popular. Those courses with less tangible outcomes attracted least interest. Workers were demonstrating an interest in less academic and more pragmatic education, an interest similar to that which had also been earlier shown in vocational programmes offered by the School of Mines and Education Department.

The scheme was an important innovation, but one foreshadowed by, for example, the Australian Railways Union (ARU) in the late 1930's. The correspondence scheme provided a means by which adult workers could enhance, for example, basic literacy and numeracy skills, or develop their knowledge of the labour movement. The scheme also provided a solution to one major difficulty faced by workers in attempting to acquire a

formal education. It enabled them to overcome problems caused by shift work. However, in surmounting this obstacle, the scheme created additional concerns. Correspondence study required, and requires, considerable discipline, good study skills and high motivation on the learner's part. Few workers, with their often unhappy and even academically unsuccessful experiences of schooling, would have possessed such skills and discipline. Nevertheless, some workers did involve themselves in such studies, and from their own reports, perceived these as avenues for self-improvement through the acquisition of really useful knowledge.

The work of the South Australian WEA, in offering courses directed specifically at trade unionists, developed throughout the 1960's under the pioneering leadership of Eric Williams. In fact, so far as voluntary bodies were concerned the Association was a national leader in providing for working class education, a position enhanced by cordial relationships between the WEA and much of the union movement in a State that experienced considerable worker quietude.

This educational leadership received yet a further boost in 1972, at a time when the partnership between the University and the WEA ended, and when at the request of unionists, the State ALP Dunstan Government made finance available for the appointment of a Trade Union Education Officer. This educator was later joined by another Government funded educator. With these two officials developing an extensive utilitarian programme, a vast number of unionists, including many officials of blue collar unions, were attracted to a variety of activities. These included Shop Steward Courses and courses in,

for example, Negotiation Techniques. Although the courses were outwardly utilitarian, a number contained segments on, for example, the nature of the working class and political economy. Like many adult educational programmes, educators in these courses were prepared to include discussions on non-advertised issues, depending on student needs. The extent of such activities is virtually impossible to document, but its existence provided an important avenue for liberal and perhaps propagandistic education in an otherwise utilitarian programme.

It was only after the establishment of the Trade Union Training Authority in 1975 that a labour movement challenge was directed at the quantitative supremacy of the work of the South Australian WEA, in providing for specific types of workers' education. Thus for almost twenty years, the local WEA had made a dominant contribution to working class adult education. The activities have largely been pragmatic, as the Association has responded to both the challenge created by a more highly educated management and to the general need for a more highly skilled and knowledgeable union leadership in a democratic society.

In parallel to the growth in worker education, the WEA extensively developed its recreational, and to some extent, its liberal and remedial adult educational activities. However, courses in these areas have largely attracted middle class adults; although some remedial courses have had specific appeal to workers. By 1975, so far as enrolments were concerned, these latter popular recreational activities totally dwarfed those of a specific worker orientation, namely, the WEA's trade union

programmes and some remedial courses.

Only two State WEA's remained by 1975. Only two survived the turbulence since 1913 when the Association became an Australian reality. The Associations concerned were those of New South Wales and South Australia. Both survived as a result of strong executive leadership, for example, David Stewart in New South Wales; because they formed sound basic structures; because they have trodden a careful path between the political Left and Right; because their relationships with, and support within respective State universities were strong, and where it became weak, as in South Australia, the Association was strong enough to continue alone; because they were able to withstand attacks from the Right-wing of the labour movement and attempts by Communists, and thus those likely to possess counter-hegemonic ideas, to influence them; because they were able to work with, or stand aloof from, the State Trades and Labor Councils; and most importantly, because they reoriented themselves, so that they retained financial viability by extending their educational services to include a vast array of less academic, recreational and informational adult education that attracted educationally motivated middle class adults.

Although by 1975 the South Australian WEA had reoriented itself and had provided courses with widespread appeal, it has still retained an interest in workers' education. The non-worker controlled non-radical WEA has catered for some workers' educational needs by providing, what workers have viewed as, useful knowledge. This has been pragmatic, and of variable

educational standard. It has been largely non-controversial and has been developed within a framework emphasising consensus views of social relations. Such courses have promoted self and wider union and social improvement in a capitalist society.

The Labour Movement

In the early years of the present century, one of the most important moves from within the various States' labour movements to provide radical workers' education was expressed in the form of the Labor College in Victoria. This Marxist College was established in the wake of the conscription crisis to offer workers what was viewed as a relevant social, political and economic education. Its classes, however, did not appeal to large numbers of workers even though it attracted many union affiliations. Again, as with the academic programmes of the WEA University Department of Tutorial Classes, workers were not attracted to highly theoretical studies. They were, in general terms, not enchanted by a class in, for example, Historical Materialism. For the bulk of workers, such studies did not constitute really useful knowledge.

Other than the sustained work of the Victorian Labor College, few advances of significance were achieved in worker controlled formal education in the years from World War I leading to World War II. South Australia was little different from other States with efforts being largely of an intermittent nature. The ALP occasionally offered speakers' classes and economics classes. Similarly, the Marx Engels Club offered some courses as later did the numerically weak Communist Party.

These programmes were not well patronized by workers.

The major educational work of such groups and unions was not formal adult education but rather informal adult education provision. The Labor Ring in Botanic Park was one example. Others included important journals and papers with the South Australian Worker, the Labor Advocate, the Herald and Direct Action being some examples. In these, many industrial and political issues were discussed, in addition to the provision of, in some cases, pages of literature review and other very occasional direct educational discussion.

Such avenues for educating workers were important, as indeed were books made available through various library services. Combined, they offered workers an important avenue for self-education. They could be used flexibly and required no formal class attendance. As such, they proved popular modes for worker education, particularly during the Depression when many unemployed and under-employed people, for example, made considerable use of libraries. However, this form of education was not formalised, and hence has not been a focal point of the current research.

In South Australia, in relation to formally provided working class adult education, it was in the late 1930's that the Australian Railways Union made an important advance in both the theory and practice of working class adult education.

Not only did this Union have a journal comprising much educational comment, but it also made specific efforts to provide a formalised Socialist education for its members. Nationally, the Union appointed an education officer, and in

South Australia, relevant and important initiatives were taken by an Organising Committee.

The Union proposed a pragmatic Socialist education and it showed with its deliberations about such provisions, that its thinking on adult education method was well advanced. The Committee had significant vision. It proposed a quite sophisticated range of educational activities which included the training of group leaders, a correspondence scheme and the use of a variety of available media. The union was making efforts to ensure the development of a viable and attractive adult educational service, just as had the earlier Army Education Service of World War I and would the later Australian Army Education Service (AAES) in World War II.

However, the Union's efforts were directed at a Socialist education, at a time when Australia was at war with Germany, which in turn had a peace pact with Russia. It was thus not surprising that the nationalistic and politically unsophisticated Railway Union members failed to respond in any substantially positive way to the Union's programme in the early 1940's.

The Union's pragmatic approach had been an important advance in an effort to provide an education attractive to workers. However, to a large degree, this advance was nullified by the programme content. Workers in this State, steeped in a history of non-conformism and liberalism, in general, had a scant regard for the usefulness of radical studies. When they showed a strong desire to become involved in programmes, the programmes tended to be more utilitarian in nature as, for example,

with post-world War II middle level technical courses.

With the general lack of appeal of the courses to workers, in the 1940's the WEA courted the ARU and the Union officials encouraged its members to attend WEA courses. The Union's independent education programme, in a formalised sense, was disbanded, although it continued to promote the education of its members through its journal, the WEA and the Left Book Club.

So by the early 1940's, at a time when the AAES was assuming a dominant leadership role in adult educational innovation and provision, the end had come to a most enterprising and progressive union-controlled adult educational initiative. In South Australia, it was destined not to be replicated until the 1970's when a utilitarian thrust to union-controlled educational work had become central in the thinking of union education programme co-ordinators.

However, such lack in union or, in general, labour movement educational provision did not imply a complete void in the area immediately after the 1940's. For in the War and early post-war years, the Left Book Club, the Fabian Society and the Socialist League were important avenues for the education of adults including a working class élite. The education was not in terms of formally organised courses, but rather less formal adult education. Again, there was a concern with avenues for the further education of academically élite adults including workers, an area that had been central to many earlier formal educational efforts, for example, university extension. Concentrated efforts were thus directed at the

existing and potential working class leadership.

Nevertheless, in terms of quantity of provision and, thus, activities directed at not only academically élite adults, including workers, but also at the larger mass of workers, formal educational offerings of the AAES (in the War years) and those of the WEA, the School of Mines and the Education Department were dominant. That is, sustained worker education provision came from outside the immediate sphere of labour movement activities. The movement's major interests and efforts were on directly political and industrial issues. In a sense, there was considerable pragmatism in the movement's concerns. Education, while important, was best left to those with expertise in the field. Such a philosophy dominated movement thinking on the issue until the 1970's.

At this time, there was largely altered labour movement composition through the influx of women and migrants into the workforce. Also Australia had experienced an economic boom but was now entering a period of virtual recession. Youth were becoming more militant over conscription for the Vietnam war, just as their grandparents had done over a similar issue in World War I. The conservative political parties experienced leadership crises and then there were continuing significant changes in social and family life. In this environment, labour movement controlled formal educational ventures increased dramatically.

The Amalgamated Metal Workers' Union (AMWU) was a leader. It designed many of its courses to assist union officials, such as shop stewards, to better represent their

members, both to the union and to employers. The AMWU also made efforts to enhance unionists' knowledge of the Union and to aid their understanding of the "plight of workers" in a capitalist economy.

The leadership of the AMWU in providing worker education, could have been anticipated. Since the late 1950's for example, and throughout the 1960's, one of the core unions that formed the AMWU, namely the Amalgamated Society of Engineers, had co-operated with the WEA by having the Association provide courses for the Union's members. Concurrently other efforts were being made throughout the 1960's to enhance the awareness of other unions' officials to the need for unions to provide education for their officials.

Hence to the 1970's there was a gradual build-up of an awareness of the need to provide a union-controlled education. Not all unions were involved. Some of the smaller ones found education provision financially impossible, while others saw the area as better left to those with expertise. Nevertheless, there was certainly heightened activity from the turn of the decade.

In all these activities there was a clear emphasis placed on the provision of courses in perceived "useful knowledge". These were largely utilitarian as some union leaders saw a need to equip union officials with an education that would aid them to be more effective in a complex environment that demanded better educated and skilled representatives.

The flourish of union activity in the early 1970's was climaxed when the Federal ALP Government legislated for a statutory trade union educational authority.

The authority, named the Trade Union Training Authority (TUTA), was largely conceived by Clyde Cameron, a former shearer and a South Australian trade union leader, who was a Labor Minister in the Whitlam ministry. Cameron wanted to ensure a more competent, better educated union leadership. Such leadership was required in an era of highly educated managers and rapidly changing social, economic, technological and general industrial conditions.

So the planned education was to be largely pragmatic. TUTA was not attempting to replicate the earlier highly academic educational ventures such as those of the various State WEA's and Departments of Tutorial Classes at their foundation. Nor was it attempting to provide a radical education.

TUTA's foundation was a significant achievement for the ALP Federal Government, and more particularly Clyde Cameron. And although attracting initial suspicion from various sections of the labour movement, and from the Conservative Federal Liberal Country Party Government after 1975, TUTA has become firmly established. It has survived a post-1975 Federal Government initiated Committee of Inquiry, largely due to its non-controversial nature, and has continued to grow both at State and Federal levels. TUTA's establishment was concrete recognition by the Government of the need for the labour movement to provide for and, to an extent, control the education of its members.

As TUTA has developed, so have the educational provisions of many individual unions. By 1975, such provision by the labour movement was formalised, consistent and set to develop at an unprecedented rate. Except for some Left-wing activity, it was not a radical education. Rather it was largely utilitarian. Many union leaders had recognised unions' responsibilities for educating their officials and to some extent their broader membership.

After sixty years of intermittent interest, sections of the labour movement were firmly committed to the need for substantial labour movement controlled education.

The Education Department and School of Mines to
The Early 1950's

Although in nineteenth century Australia there were important developments in the provision of vocational education, for example, the Melbourne Working Men's College, Roseworthy Agricultural College and the Adelaide School of Mines and Industries, 1915 was a most significant year for South Australia. In that year, the State Labor Government enacted the 1915 Education Act, an Act which provided for substantial modifications to technical education in South Australia.

In terms of this form of education, the Act was the legislative culmination of the Report of the Royal Commission into Education, a Commission which reported in 1913. The Commissioners had despaired over the unco-ordinated, weak, technical education provisions of the State. Such a condition was seen as potentially damaging to a State with developing industries and one which was already clearly industrially inferior to some eastern Australian States. Improved technical

education was deemed to have been needed to help overcome this industrially subservient position.

To this end the Government centralised control of country technical education provision and legislated to ensure controlled growth in compulsory school and base trade level technical education. It did, however, permit the powerful city-based School of Mines to retain its autonomy and provide for compulsory school, basic trade and advanced (diploma) level technical and commercial education. And thus much to Charles Fenner's irritation and dismay, the Government effectively legislated for a dual system of basic technical education.

The Government enlisted the help of a Victorian, Donald Clarke, to recommend on technical education development, and appointed Charles Fenner as the Education Department's first Superintendent of Technical Education. Under the guidance of Fenner, this branch of education, at the compulsory school and basic trade levels, developed significantly. Young unskilled people entered apprenticeships and graduated as skilled adult tradesmen.

There were many of these people in both Education Department and School of Mines classes. And although Fenner fought for total control of technical education, the School of Mines grew into a most powerful institution with the influential Langdon Bonython as its Council President. It established a firm nexus with industry and its extensive programme of varying levels of technical and commercial education attracted many workers. An ideological basis of individual self-improvement was underlying the School's courses as it

worked to promote national growth.

However, save for the final years of apprenticeship level studies, none of this education could be classified as adult education. Very simply, middle level courses, and thus those consistent with defined adult education, were not offered. There was no perceived need for such educated people. Basic and advanced level technical and commercial education were deemed sufficient to meet individual and State needs.

The Education Department similarly offered no such middle level courses. Although it provided extensive programmes in, for example, arts and crafts and had provided wide ranging post-World War I rehabilitation courses. Many of these latter courses attracted unskilled and semi-skilled workers, although it is doubtful whether the former were patronised by a similar clientele.

While these efforts were important, they did not represent a consistent approach to the provision of middle level courses attractive to workers. Nevertheless, they foreshadowed significant activity from the 1940's.

During World War II, both the Education Department and the School of Mines became actively engaged in the war effort by training people for a war economy. The work was substantial, but it was an effort that resulted from a national emergency. Similarly, in the early post-war years, there were major attempts to educate and train former service personnel for post-war civilian lives. Much of this work was in technical education whereby many service people from a variety of pre-war occupations, including workers, were assisted to become skilled tradespeople.

In addition to this work that was directly related to the War and its effects, the School of Mines and later the Education Department, offered middle level courses. In fact, from the early 1940's, until the late 1960's, the School of Mines, and from 1960 the South Australian Institute of Technology (SAIT), offered middle level technical courses. The School called these technician courses.

The courses were not well patronised and did not attract many workers. Rather, they tended to appeal to young secondary school graduates. The courses were academic, demanding and seemingly of little direct benefit to workers. Workers were neither motivated nor, in many cases, academically equipped to successfully engage in such studies. There was a parallel here between such minor worker involvement in technician courses and small worker participation rates in academic liberal adult education provided by the WEA and University Department of Tutorial Classes. In neither area was the education pragmatic.

Following the release of the Martin Report, SAIT which had attracted many young workers to its basic technical programmes, re-oriented its functions away from this base level education, and concentrated on advanced level (degree, diploma) technical, scientific, commercial and then social education. As such it was no longer an institution providing courses in the defined adult educational area, and consequently ceased being an avenue for worker adult education.

An era had concluded in the work of the School, and in technical education provision in the State. At base level,

dual provision ended and the School, or as it then was, SAIT, no longer would offer a diverse range of education, at various levels, including that with appeal to unskilled and semi-skilled workers. Rather, it would focus its entire efforts on tertiary programmes. This was unlike the Education Department which would continue to concentrate on sub-tertiary education in its post-compulsory school work.

Both the School and the Education Department had enjoyed substantial growth in the economic boom of post-World War II, a war in which an outstanding example of adult educational enterprise was revealed. This was the Australian Army Education Service (AAES).

The AAES

The AAES, like the Army Education Service which had developed in the latter years of World War I, made important contributions to post-World War II adult education theory and practice. It had considerable government financial support, gifted leadership, some excellent teachers, a clientele not distracted by the activities of normal life and a flexibility to respond to changing adult needs.

The Service was designed to assist in the promotion of soldiers' morale, and upon demobilization, aid the Service personnels' return to civilian life. To these ends, the AAES was most effective. In fact, it was heralded as one of the greatest adult educational ventures in the history of Australia. The Service provided both formal and informal adult educational activities through avenues such as lectures, discussions, theatre, music, libraries and two excellent publications, CAB and SALT.

From the point of view of civilian post-war adult education, the AAES revealed what could be achieved in adult education given adequate finance, and excellent teachers and leadership. It demonstrated the importance of flexibility, wide ranging activities and of providing adult education at varying levels. It also showed that under certain conditions there was a wide acceptance of adult education especially if it was designed to meet people's needs.

Although the Service was national, it also offered its broad-based activities in 4 Military District (4MD), a district which included South Australia. Here, as in other States, its programmes attracted many soldiers. In this way, the AAES exposed a number of adults, from a variety of pre-war occupations, to the potentialities to be derived from adult education studies. Many of these adults were in pre-world war manual worker occupations.

The potential for post-war civilian adult education, in relation to clients and experienced educators was great. However, the potential was to some extent unrealised as despite the work of the AAES, many of its educators and students were lost to civilian adult education, especially liberal adult education. There were notable exceptions with officers such as R. Madgwick, A.J.A. Nelson and J.L.J. Wilson having an important impact on civilian adult education. Furthermore, although in the long term many soldiers did not continue to participate in post-war liberal, vocational, remedial, recreational or informational adult education, a large number did in fact,

involve themselves in the rehabilitation scheme, particularly where they could acquire a more utilitarian education. Such education would equip these adults with skills and knowledge necessary for civilian occupations. Perceived useful studies, particularly pragmatic courses, again had appeal.

Two of the major agencies involved in assisting ex-service personnel acquire an education through this scheme were the South Australian School of Mines and Industries and the Education Department. Both provided an extensive vocational education that had widespread appeal to adults, including many workers.

Post-war Education Department and Department
of Further Education Work

From 1956, the Education Department's offerings grew to resemble, on a smaller scale, those of the AAES. However, these 1956 changes did not occur in isolation. For some time there had been pressure on the State Government to expand its involvement in adult education. Significant sources of this pressure came from, for example, a Committee of Inquiry into Education which had heard evidence and had reported in the wake of the successes of the AAES and the important 1944 Conference on adult education in New South Wales.

In its newly expanded post-1956 non-controversial adult educational pursuits the Government wanted to provide its citizens with facilities to more profitably use their leisure time and aid the development of a better society. These aims

supplemented those of its already extensive vocational adult educational provision of basic and post-trade levels whereby workers were encouraged to promote their own improvement in addition to that of society and the nation as a whole.

The newly expanded Departmental Service grew quite rapidly throughout the late 1950's, 1960's and early 1970's. This paralleled that of the Victorian Council of Adult Education, the New South Wales Department of Technical Education and, in particular, and on a smaller scale, the South Australian WEA. The development was at a time of almost unchecked economic growth, but at a time of changes in the State's political control, the structure of its labour force, the nature of family and social life and at a time of growing political militancy.

Significantly during this period, workers were not well represented in liberal, recreational and informational adult education courses. This contrasted with their involvement in vocational adult education, particularly technical studies. Also remedial adult education, particularly basic literacy and numeracy programmes attracted working class adults, many of whom were migrants or aboriginals. Hence by the early 1970's, as had been the case for much of the period since 1913, workers were involved in a clearly defined area of adult educational provision.

Not even the foundation of the Department of Further

Education in 1972, or the injection of Federal funds as a result of the Reports of the Australian Committee on Technical and Further Education (ACOTAFE) changed matters. Within an ideological framework of self-improvement, manual workers were clearly attracted to programmes of a utilitarian nature, programmes which were given some attention, and significant finance, within the new Department.

Max Bone, the Department's foundation Director and former Director of Technical Education in the Education Department, strongly influenced the Department's areas of major emphasis. He guided the new Department in such a way that vocational education was allocated substantial proportions of the Department's budget. Liberal, recreational and informational education was regarded as having the potential to be almost financially self-supporting, just like similar WEA classes. Vocational adult education was a more politically acceptable area to receive heavy financial input from a government department, than was leisure education. However, despite this disproportionate allocation of funds to the vocational area, the Department's remedial, non-vocational, recreational and informational adult educational activities rapidly increased. In fact by 1975, the Department was attracting over 100,000 students to its programmes. It was indeed a significant body.

Like similar bodies, its non-vocational, recreational and informational courses appealed to the middle class. To an extent this was also the case with remedial courses such as university prerequisite studies of matriculation level, and some vocational courses, for example, Business Studies.

However, many of the Department's remedial programmes attracted migrants of working class background, aboriginals and other educationally deprived adults. Similarly, its adult vocational courses in the technical area, at some basic and post-trade levels attracted working class adults. The Department's utilitarian programmes, like those of TUTA and the WEA received a positive worker response. Workers participated when they viewed the courses as of benefit to them and many of the Department's vocational activities satisfied these criteria.

Summary

Over the years since 1913, there have been some major advances in working class education provided both from within and outside the labour movement. Early efforts such as those of the WEA and its University partner were concerned with higher liberal studies for workers that had a general concern for social harmony and the promotion of "better and more responsible citizenship" in a democratic society. Such initiatives contrasted with more propagandistic adult education from radical groups and vocational adult education with its concern for self and national improvement from the School of Mines and Education Department. Worker quietude in South Australia militated against radical programmes as workers showed a willingness to engage in more pragmatic vocational studies.

After the second world war and the undoubted successes of the AAES as an adult educational service, significant advances were made in general adult education provision. Workers, as had been the case during, for example, the Depression,

persisted with an interest in flexible informal adult education. However, importantly they also positively responded to expanded remedial and vocational offerings of the Education Department.

There was a consistency between the dominant ideology surrounding the post-war provisions and those of the early efforts of the WEA. In both cases, there was a concern among the relevant educators for the preservation and development of a capitalist society. There was however, a major difference between the two provisions in that the early WEA and University efforts focussed on higher level studies of a more liberal nature, while much of the 1950's efforts of the Education Department and to a lesser extent, the School of Mines, were concerned with a more pragmatic education. Such provision as this and similar programmes from TUTA and the WEA Trade Union Programme showed more widespread appeal among workers than higher level liberal studies or indeed more recreational adult education.

With regard to worker adult education provision over the years considered, educators have mainly worked in a framework that has promoted consensus views of society. Within this framework, it can be argued that the dominant social class has largely defined the content and structure of education as it has controlled provision.¹⁰

Such control has been opposed by some educators. A

¹⁰ See for example, the discussion on comparable American developments in Sallach, D.L., The Meaning of Hegemony, (Modification of a Paper presented to the Conference on the Thought of Antonio Gramsci at Washington University, St. Louis, Missouri, February 1973), (Mimeograph, 14p.), Washington, 1973, p.6ff.

number of these have promoted, but still using consensus views of social relations, worker control of worker education. This contrasted with educators who, employing conflict theories of social relations, have argued for and have attempted to develop, working class control of the content and structure of worker education.¹¹ But as has been revealed throughout this thesis such arguments have not been readily accepted in South Australia where, for example, worker quietude and the traditions in the industrially small State have militated against radical worker education. In this State, workers have shown a readiness to engage in adult educational programmes provided from outside and within the labour movement when the studies have been of a utilitarian nature, and have not been highly academic. There appears to have been little concern with the ideology surrounding such provisions. Rather the dominant concern has been whether or not the studies have constituted what workers perceived as really useful knowledge.

¹¹ See for example, Peers, R., Adult Education: A Comparative Study, London, Routledge and Kegan Paul, 1972, p.154; Bessant, B., "An Independent Working Class Education", Australian and New Zealand History of Education Society Journal, 2(1):37-43, April 1973, p.37; Beahan, M., Training - What Can Industry Do? (Paper presented to Australian Association of Adult Education Conference, 1974), (Mimeograph, 2p.), Perth, 1974, p.1.

PRESENT MOMENT AND THE FUTURE

Introduction

If it is hard to summarise adult education's past, it is infinitely more difficult to predict the future.

In 1975, the date at which this study ends, the future for adult education growth seemed propitious. There was an enthusiasm among educators. The ALP Government had recognised inadequacies in provision and had made efforts to remedy deficiencies. It had established ACOTAFE, TUTA and had injected much money into the area, particularly vocational adult education.

However, after 1975 with a conservative federal government, the mood of optimism changed. TUTA was the subject of a Committee of Inquiry, but survived after a favourable report of August 1977. The Government also tightened educational spending and placed the Technical and Further Education Commission under the virtual control of a Tertiary Education Commission. These changes affected adult education provision at the State level.

The WEA

The South Australian WEA had continued to show quite rapid growth. Its enrolments were 10,632 in 1975 and 21,075 in 1979.¹² Middle class women dominated its recreational, informational and liberal programmes, while the aged and manual workers were clearly under-represented.¹³

¹² Workers' Educational Association of South Australia, Sixty Third Annual Report, Adelaide, WEA of S.A., 1980, p.5.

¹³ ibid., pp.12-14.

In relation to its trade union work, in 1979 the WEA attracted around 300 students to its programmes.¹⁴ A high proportion of these enrollees were now from the white collar union, the Public Service Association of South Australia. A number were also from the Credit Union League of South Australia. To these courses, the Association was attracting predominantly white collar unionists, an involvement that became a clear trend after the mid-1970's. In 1978, for example, 32 courses attracted about 500 students, the overwhelming majority of whom were from the Public Service Association.¹⁵

One reason for the involvement of these unionists in the courses was because of their paid study leave provisions. Some unions have such conditions, and since the WEA was not in a position to reimburse students for any loss in pay incurred in attending courses, only those with such study leave allowances tended to participate in WEA trade union programmes. Blue collar unions with no such provisions tended to attend TUTA courses, as TUTA had the facility to reimburse for pay loss.

It would appear that for the foreseeable future, the WEA will continue to offer trade union courses, and its clientele will be from white collar unions. White collar employees such as clerks have, historically, always been well represented in adult educational activities.

¹⁴ ibid., p.19.

¹⁵ See Workers' Educational Association of South Australia, Sixty Second Annual Report, Adelaide, WEA of S.A., 1979, pp.1-5.

The other major trade union work of the WEA is its postal course scheme. In 1979, this national programme attracted in excess of 2,000 enrolments, not all of whom were unionists, with almost 500 coming from South Australia and the Northern Territory.¹⁶ Again, remedial courses attracted major enrolment, although compared with 1978, there were noticeable increases of enrolment in courses such as History of Trade Unionism, Trade Unions in Australia, the Shop Steward and Government and Politics in Australia.

The scheme's enrollees came from a variety of unions and the general public. In South Australia, representatives of unions such as Administrative and Clerical Officers' Association, Australian Public Service Association, Australian Telecommunication Employees' Association, Commonwealth Bank Officers' Association, Royal Australian Nursing Federation, and Public Service Association of South Australia, dominated. That is, as with the other union work of the WEA, white collar unionists were the main participants, here contributing over two thirds of the enrolment at a time of growing white collar unionism.

It would appear that this trend will continue, although there have been suggestions that TUTA will assume responsibility for the scheme. At the present time there are no overt signs of this transfer occurring, and so the WEA will continue to provide its national correspondence programme to, so far as unionists are concerned, a predominantly white collar union clientele. It is possible, that with wider publicity within

¹⁶ Workers' Educational Association of South Australia, Sixty Third Annual Report, op cit., p.23.

unions, the scheme could well attract vastly increased enrolments.

The WEA's overall trade union work has continued to develop since 1975. In the same vein, but in a much more spectacular manner, its informational, recreational, remedial and liberal adult educational programme has seen significant growth. Such growth is likely to be sustained in the immediate future. The WEA officers have demonstrated remarkable entrepreneurial skills with their liberal, informational, remedial and recreational programme. They have responded to popular demand, have advertised extensively and have shown a commitment reminiscent of the WEA pioneers. Consequently, courses deemed as popular, popular that is, with the more educationally motivated in the population, namely, middle class adults, have been provided. These adults have responded to advertisements such as the following -

..."Spring is the time to start thinking about getting out of the house and taking up new interests", says WEA Education Officer, Edwina Levey.

"And what better way to begin than by enrolling in a WEA course?" she said ...

"Finally", she said, "a special course had been organised to provide intending visitors to the Pompeii Exhibition with background information on the life and times of Pompeii. The tutor would be Dr. Anne Geddes, of the University of Adelaide".¹⁷

The 1980 Spring programme had a variety of short courses under headings such as, Outdoor and Leisure, House and

¹⁷ Advertiser (Adelaide) 9 August, 1980.

Home, Collectors' Courses, Lifestyle, Psychology and Health, Relationships, Cookery and Entertaining, Current Affairs, Practical Art, Personal Style and Public Image, Crafts and Handicrafts, Creative Writing, Language, Gardening, Nature's World, Photography, Travelogues, Hobbies and Pastimes, Music, Literature and the Arts, Study and Thinking, Business and Management, Finance and Investment, Vocational Skills.¹⁸

While the adult education commitment of the new WEA leaders resembles that of the Association's pioneers, the focus is now different. No longer is there considerable emphasis on the higher education of manual workers. Rather this is placed on a more broadly based programme, a programme that will grow over the next few years. And this especially in view of the current tight constraints being placed on similar recreational, informational and liberal adult education activities of the Department of Further Education.

Although this side of the WEA's programme is likely to be dominant over the next few years, some effort will also be given to providing education for manual workers, and workers - more broadly defined - in general. This work will be promoted by the Association's able leadership in Eric Williams and Colin MacDonald. On a small scale, there will be efforts to ascertain workers' educational needs and to provide for them. It is very likely that in the immediate future such needs will be for

¹⁸ ibid.

utilitarian programmes. However, with the prospect of shorter working weeks, it is possible that more workers will redefine what they see as really useful knowledge, and begin participating more prominently in the WEA's general programme, in addition to their involvement in trade union courses and the Trade Union Postal Scheme.

The Labour Movement

The significant development in labour movement provided education in South Australia since 1975 has been the work of TUTA. It has continued to provide an extensive utilitarian education for unionists, particularly shop stewards, and increasingly migrants and women unionists.

The future of TUTA was clouded when the Conservative Coalition Government came to power in 1975 and initiated an enquiry into TUTA's activities. However, TUTA has survived although some changes in its control were introduced after the Committee had reported in 1977.

In South Australia, there has been considerable demand for TUTA courses. In 1978/79, over 900 unionists attended courses¹⁹ which ranged from short intensive courses to longer ones of up to five day's duration. Participants in courses came from a variety of unions with the Amalgamated Metal Workers' and Shipwrights' Union (AMWSU) and the Vehicle Builders Employees' Federation (VBEF) being significant. In fact, these blue collar unions contributed around 45% of the participants in 1978/79.²⁰

¹⁹ Interview with South Australian State TUTA Director, D. Ruff, April 1980.

²⁰ Interview with D. Ruff, April 1980.

Considering the work that TUTA has already carried out, it is likely to continue these activities in the immediate future. Especially since its provisions are, at least outwardly, non-threatening to management and government. It will proceed with its dominance of labour movement controlled educational provision as it continues to receive federal funding.

However, with the amalgamation of some unions and following examples, such as that of the Amalgamated Metal Workers' and Shipwrights' Union and the Vehicle Builders' Employees' Federation, it is likely that more unions will develop their own education programmes. These are important, for TUTA is not permitted to offer courses for individual unions. Hence, a vehicle, in addition to the non-worker controlled WEA, is needed to assist, for example, shop stewards in acquiring knowledge that is quite specific to their union and their union's policies.

Since 1975, a number of unions have displayed interest in providing their own education both formal and informal. The AMWSU has been a leader with its publications such as Australia Uprooted and Australia Ripped Off and with its education officer, Ted Gnatenko being very active in the provision of formal courses, for example, Shop Steward, Industry and Advanced Courses. In some of these programmes, Gnatenko has shown that he is not interested in strictly utilitarian offerings, but is concerned to give workers a broader understanding. He links theory and practice as he assists workers to better understand society through a conflict model of social relations. However, his efforts are not typical of worker educational provision.

The Printing and Kindred Industries Union has a part-

time education officer whose job includes retraining members where technological change demands. The VBEF has an education officer who conducts courses in a variety of areas, such as issues of concern to members. Other unions such as the Waterside Workers' Federation of Australia and the Federated Miscellaneous Workers' Union also provide occasional seminars for officials.

Over recent years there has been an increased awareness among many union officials of the need for involvement in educational activities for members, particularly job representatives. This awareness is likely to increase and result in more unions becoming actively engaged in providing their own education to supplement that of TUTA, and perhaps the WEA, and maybe even the Department of Further Education.

So far as other efforts from within the labour movement are concerned, the most likely source is the Communist Party. This Party continues to provide radical educational activities for Party members. However, the Party is small and its likely overall educational effect on the labour movement is problematical.

Hence, in the immediate future, labour movement provided education will be dominated by TUTA with its utilitarian programmes, although unions will also become more active, particularly in the wake of rapid technological change.

The Department of Further Education

This Department, like the WEA, has continued to grow very rapidly since 1975. It had been operating as a separate department since 1972, although it was in 1975 that it became formally established under the Further Education Act of that year.

Max Bone, the former Director of the Education

Department's Division of Technical Education, presided over the new Department's rapid growth. Bone was concerned with the provision of adult education in its broadest sense, although it was vocational education on which he placed most emphasis. Such a focus has been politically popular. However, it is interesting to ponder this emphasis in the light of one of the fundamental educational principles underlying the Department's work. Bone has written:

... we (the Department of Further Education) see no hierarchy of subjects - neither are vocational or enrichment considered of greater importance nor does either warrant our greater attention. We serve the needs of the individual.²¹

In relation to this principle, there has been a gap between theory and practice. Nevertheless, much has been achieved by the Department. It has provided for important remedial education in the form of, for example, matriculation and preparatory studies, adult literacy and aboriginal education. Remedial adult education will continue to be a most important avenue in adult education provision, just as has been the case throughout the nineteenth and twentieth centuries. The Department of Further Education will continue its work here although its responsibility for adult matriculation and preparatory studies may be assumed by the Education Department's secondary schools. These schools now have some autonomy, and many are making conscious efforts to open their facilities to adults.

The Department's informational, recreational and non-vocational programmes have grown throughout the seventies.

²¹ Bone, M.H., Education and Industry: The Role of TAFE. TAFE in South Australia, Past, Present, Future, (Paper presented to the National Conference of Technical and Further Education, Melbourne, August 1976), (Mimeograph, 30p.), Adelaide, 1976, p.5.

There have been attempts to make classes accessible to all, through adherence to a philosophy of open access. However, again there has been a gap between theory and practice,²² although attempts have been made to improve accessibility for some people, for example, the physically handicapped, single mothers, previously house-bound women and adults in isolated rural areas. Education has been taken to the workplace and to the home. Nevertheless, there has been a shortfall. The economically deprived have not been attracted in large numbers, the aged have also been noticeably absent. In a sense, then, so far as cultural enrichment is concerned, the Department's programmes of informational, recreational and liberal adult education, like similar WEA programmes, have effectively served to widen the gap between workers and the middle class.

In relation to its vocational classes the Department has continued to attract many manual workers. Workers' skills have been developed, and in many cases, the students have been exposed to a more broadly based education. A number of previously narrow middle level vocational programmes, now contain a very small liberalising educational component. This has also been the case with some apprentice courses which have, in a number of cases, allowed for adult entry in recent years. However,

²² See for example, Stanford, B.K., Unrestricted Access, Adelaide, Department of Further Education, 1979, passim, and Stanford, B.K., "The Concept of Unrestricted Access and its Implications for the Organisation of a College of Further Education in South Australia", (M.Ed. thesis), University of Manchester, 1977, passim.

they still remain the province of the younger person who enters such studies at age 15 or 16 years.

Such young people are also the main participants in the more academic middle level technician courses. These courses have remained under Department control during the 1970's, although there are indications that some tertiary Colleges of Advanced Education, would like to assume a role in their provision. This has been especially the case in recent years when such Colleges' tertiary courses have frequently been under quota, and when the Colleges are being directed along clearly vocational lines, with no chance of providing new programmes that compete with universities.

With rapid changes in technology, it is likely that the Department will place increased emphasis on its middle level vocational courses in order to educate and re-train adults for changing occupations, or developments in their own occupations. In this way, the nexus between industry, commerce and the Public Service on the one hand, and the Department on the other, will be furthered.

In the longer term, the Department may continue to provide some liberal, recreational and informational adult education, but evidence at the time of writing casts some doubt on the extent of such offerings. To continue to work in these areas the Department will, in the immediate future, need to ensure relevant courses are largely self-supporting, like those of the WEA. It appears that in time of economic uncertainty, administrators incorrectly, the researcher believes, place emphasis on vocational education, to the detriment of other

adult educational activities.

Adults require the opportunity, for example, to formally discuss and try to understand rapid social and technological changes; such as some of the changes that have resulted from the invention of the transistor in the early post-World War II years, a discovery that has revolutionised the workplace.

Adult education is vital in equipping people with the skills and knowledge to cope with and control this rapid change. To this end there will be a need to give adults a more general education rather than a specialist narrow vocational education.²³ The Department of Further Education has an important role to play in this endeavour. It must be given the leadership and financial support to enable it to meet these obligations to the State's adults. However, with its close relationship to industry, commerce and the Public Service, it is likely that the Department will continue to develop the pattern of offerings that was firmly established in the 1970's. In relation to workers, such education will be utilitarian.

A Final Note

The experience of the last half of the 1970's would suggest little immediate change in the ideological framework of non-labour controlled formal educational provision for workers. There have however, been occasional recent innovations largely outside this framework and additional to those considered in this thesis. For example, the Adelaide College of the Arts and Education (Adelaide CAE) has commenced tertiary level (Associate

²³ This point was forcibly made by historian and author, Barry Jones, M.H.R., in an interview with "Technological Change and the TAFE Teacher Project" research assistant at SCV Hawthorn in 1980. The writer has a copy of the audio-cassette tape of the interview.

Diploma) courses for trade unionists and others. To date the courses, some of which have been radical and have recognised the organic relationship between theory and practice, have attracted unionists including some blue and a number of white collar employees. This is an important development in education for, in this case, academically élite workers.

However, as with the early WEA and University academic adult education programmes, innovations such as that at Adelaide CAE (which is not within the ambit of defined adult education) have had limited appeal to traditionally defined workers. Rather they have shown more appeal to people such as clerks, who in advanced industrial capitalism since the late 1960's, have been included by some theorists, in an expanded working class.²⁴ Such theorists have argued against traditional distinction between mental and manual labour.

However, the central concern of this thesis has been with workers as traditionally defined. For such adults, education has been largely outside of their control. It would appear that a desirable future practice would be for adult educators to give workers a larger measure of control over their own education, such as is being done through some unions, and thereby more control over their lives.

²⁴ See particularly the discussion in Braverman, H., Labor and Monopoly Capital, New York, Monthly Review Press, 1974, passim.

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The following abbreviations are used:

AAAE	-	Australian Association of Adult Education
ACTU	-	Australian Council of Trade Unions
ALP	-	Australian Labor Party
CAO	-	Commonwealth Archives Office
N.S.W.	-	New South Wales
S.A.	-	South Australia
SAA	-	South Australian Archives
<u>SAPD</u>	-	<u>South Australian Parliamentary Debates</u>
<u>SAPP</u>	-	<u>South Australian Parliamentary Papers</u>
UTLC	-	United Trades and Labor Council (South Australia)
WEA	-	Workers' Educational Association

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Mr. G. Apap, Branch Secretary, Storemen and Packers' Union.

Mr. C. Badger, formerly Director, Council of Adult Education, Victoria.

Dr. E.G. Biaggini, former Tutor-in-Charge, Department of Tutorial Classes, University of Adelaide.

Branch Secretary, Building Workers' Industrial Union.

Branch Secretary, Federated Rubber and Allied Workers' Union.

Mr. R. Carmichael, former Lecturer-in-Charge, Trade Union Education Programme, University of Sydney.

Mr. E. Crimes, Editor of the ALP paper in South Australia and former Member of State Parliament.

Mr. J. Davies, former Deputy Director, Department of Adult Education, University of Sydney.

Mr. G. Dick, a former Apprentice and later a Technician Teacher and Adult Educator.

Mr. P. Drew, formerly Director, S.A. Centre, TUTA.

Prof. W.G.K. Duncan, former Director, Department of Tutorial Classes, University of Sydney.

Mr. Q. Durwood, Apprentice and Post-Trade Teacher, Department of Further Education, S.A.

Mr. T. Gnatenko, Education Officer, Amalgamated Metal Workers' and Shipwrights' Union.

Mr. A. Griffiths, State Secretary, Australasian Society of Engineers.

Mr. J. Gurr, a former Technician Student. Now Adult Educator.

Col. Hitch, Army Education, Canberra.

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Mr. C. Lawton, former Secretary, WEA of S.A.

Mr. C. MacDonald, Assistant Director, WEA of S.A.

Mr. W. Marshall, former Secretary, Australian Railways Union (S.A. Branch).

Mr. J. Mitchell, former soldier in Army Education Courses.

Mr. J. Moss, Communist Party.

Production Line Workers, Bob, Anne and Ted. Simpson Pope Limited, Beverley, S.A.

Mr. D. Ruff, Director, S.A. Centre, TUTA.

Mr. D. Rushworth, Technician Teacher.

Mr. I. Saunders, Principal, Gawler College of Further Education.

Mr. G. Smith, former soldier in Army Education Courses and member of Communist Party.

Mr. B. Stanford, formerly Principal, Panorama Technical College.

Students Peter, Lyn, Marilla, Ian, Business Statistics Class, Panorama Technical College.

Mr. G. Tasker, formerly Superintendent of Research, Department of Further Education.

Mr. E. Williams, Director of WEA of S.A.

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