

# AN ENGLISH VIEW OF WORKERS' EDUCATION IN THE U. S.

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**T**HIS is not an expert's analysis of workers' education in the United States, simply an observer's report. In the first section I have tried to say, briefly and factually, what I think I have found out about American workers' education, and I wish to make it clear that this survey is, necessarily, based largely on published sources.

I am especially indebted to the report on *The Role of the University in Labor and Industrial Relations* prepared for the University of Michigan by Professors Russell A. Smith and Meyer S. Ryder, and to *Labor Education*, the survey carried out by Joseph Mire on behalf of the Inter-University Labor Education Committee (IULEC).

The commentary which forms the second section of this paper is my own, and I am aware that here, as in the first section, I may well have given undue emphasis to those features of American workers' education in which divergence from the British pattern is most marked.

At the beginning of his book *Universities and Unions in Workers' Education*, Jack Barbash defines workers' education as "any planned educational activity which a union undertakes; or an educational activity undertaken by any agency other than a union, where a major objective is to

build more effective union citizenship. . . . The difference between adult education generally and workers' education is that adult education seeks to improve the individual as an individual. Workers' education consciously relates the student to his union. Not that workers' education does not, in fact, reach the student as a person in his own right, but that is not its central focus."

This definition, which is in all essentials similar to the definitions given by Mire and by Smith and Ryder, immediately suggests that American workers' education is both broader and narrower than its British counterpart: broader in that it regards a wider range of activities as educational, narrower in that it is confined to specifically trade union education.

## **Workers' Education**

There is in the United States no body at all comparable to the Workers' Educational Association as it is known in Britain, Sweden, Denmark and elsewhere. There are several voluntary agencies working in the general area of workers' education—among the most important are the American Labor Education Service, the American Friends Service Committee, the Catholic Labor Alliance and the Jewish Labor Committee—

but none of them run significant teaching programs of their own. For the most part they confine themselves to providing supplementary services (information, teaching materials, speakers) in special areas: the American Friends Service Committee, for example, is mainly concerned with international affairs, the Jewish Labor Committee with civil rights.

At the present time there is (to the best of my knowledge) no provision of workers' education, as such, by agencies of the Federal government, though from 1933 to 1943 the Workers' Education Program of the Works' Progress Administration (WPA), one of the New Deal agencies, was of great importance.

### *Educational Appropriations*

Some state governments, however, do provide through their departments of vocational education and of public instruction classes in various subjects related directly or indirectly to workers' education. And, as will be noted later, some states make specific appropriations for the workers' education programs of their state universities.

The great bulk of workers' education in the United States is carried on either by the unions themselves, individually or as members of regional organizations (usually state federations and councils), or by universities working in cooperation with unions. Mire gives a list, which he recognizes to be incomplete, of 35 international unions and 27 state councils and federations which were currently (January 1956) offering their members an educational program of some kind.

About a year later the AFL-CIO education department reported that 23 international unions had education directors, 31 had education directors with some other responsibility (usually research), and 14 had research directors with some responsibility for education. There were also 26 state councils and federations with educational representatives, most of them full-time.

Although this still represents a sadly small proportion of the total number of international unions (there are 150 or so in the AFL-CIO and others are still independent), it is a considerable increase over previous figures. And the figures themselves could mislead: some of the most active educational programs are conducted by some of the biggest unions, and such programs often involve many people in full-time organizing and teaching roles.

At the beginning of 1957 the United Automobile Workers (UAW) had, in addition to a large education department at Solidarity House, 38 education and citizenship representatives in the various regions. The International Ladies' Garment Workers Union (ILGWU) maintains a national education department, a staff training institute, and between 20 and 30 full-time education directors in the main centers of the industry.

### *The CWA Program*

It may be of some interest at this point to take a closer look at the program of one of the more active unions. The Communications Workers of America (CWA) has about 275,000 members (this figure, like all the

CWA statistics quoted here, includes Canadian membership) and is the twelfth largest union in the AFL-CIO. The objectives of its education department are declared to be: "to promote general understanding of unionism and CWA's policies and programs; and, more important, to stimulate membership loyalty to CWA, by helping members, stewards and local officers develop skills needed to make CWA more effective."

The education program itself falls into four principal parts:

1. Two-day (occasionally three-day) "in-the-field" institutes, designed mainly for stewards and local officers. In the year April 1, 1956, to March 31, 1957, the union held 241 such institutes, with a total attendance of 3,099. University teachers took part in some of these, but most of the instruction was carried on by union staff people. The standard curriculum for the two-day institutes was: (a) CWA government and policies; (b) local problems (organizing, political action, conduct of union meetings; and (c) steward training and grievance handling. Where there was a third day it was devoted to contract analysis. During the year a new two-day institute program designed to train newly-elected officers was introduced.

### **Summer Conferences**

2. Week-long conferences for local leaders. This is a summer school program, with schools held at the union's center at Front Royal, Virginia, and at other centers—almost always universities—throughout the country. Each school offers courses at three

levels: basic, advanced, and local-presidents-only. The content of these courses varies somewhat according to local needs, but all of them pay some attention to international affairs and other political and social issues as well as to the usual union topics. In 1956-57 there were 38 such conferences (13 basic, 14 advanced, 11 local-presidents-only) with a total attendance of 664.

3. Staff conferences. These were formerly week-long affairs held at Front Royal. More recently the union's president, accompanied by other people from headquarters, has moved around the country during the fall holding conferences with the staffs of the various districts to discuss current problems and policies of the international union.

### **Program Emphasis**

4. Production of educational materials (posters, pamphlets, teaching outlines) and distribution of these to local officers, stewards and members.

A few union programs are more extensive than this; most are much less extensive; some place their primary emphasis differently. But the CWA program indicates quite well what kinds of educational activity the unions are concerned with. First (and easily foremost), training for greater union efficiency and effectiveness. Second, increased understanding of society—local, national and international—and of the unions' place in it (often this is frankly a political action program). Third (and a long way behind), development of the cultural and recreational interests of the individual unionist. This last mentioned

activity has not yet appeared on CWA programs: indeed, it has so far appeared on the programs of scarcely any unions.

The ILGWU has long emphasized classes in handicrafts and in painting, sculpture, music and drama. The United Steelworkers of America (USA) has been adventurous enough to sponsor free concerts by the Pittsburgh Symphony Orchestra and to offer at its summer schools workshops in reading, art, music and the mass media.

The UAW, in company with many industrialists, is a sponsor of the Detroit Symphony Orchestra. But most union programs consist almost exclusively of union-building subjects, many of them highly specialized: among the most common are collective bargaining, labor legislation, time and motion study, steward training, union organization, and health and pension plans. The only subjects of wider application to appear at all frequently are political issues, world affairs, and community relations.

In the section of his survey devoted to the workers' education activities of universities and colleges, Mire reports that "at least 15 universities are now maintaining all year round programs of classes, week end summer institutes, conferences and workshops, planned with and for labor groups."

Three more universities appeared to be about to offer such programs and there were about 30 others offering some kind of part-time service. Again Mire is careful to insist that his survey is not exhaustive, and in the January-February 1957 issue of the UAW magazine "Ammunition" there

is a list of universities and colleges carrying on labor education programs which includes eight institutions not mentioned by Mire (some of these had only begun their programs during the intervening year). Even so, this still represents a remarkably small proportion of total number of universities and colleges in the United States—a small proportion, even, of those which conduct some kind of extension program.

### *Oldest Workers' School*

Here again it seems useful to give a more detailed description of one particular program. The University of Wisconsin School for Workers was founded in 1925, and thus appears to be the oldest, as it is certainly one of the most active, of the university-provided workers' education programs. During the year 1956-57 a total of 48 extension classes was provided for local unions at various centers throughout Wisconsin. These classes, which usually met once a week for eight weeks, covered these subjects: steward training (13 classes), time study (nine classes), speech and parliamentary procedure (five classes), labor legislation and labor problems (three classes each), job evaluation (two classes), and one class each of the following subjects—collective bargaining, economics of collective bargaining, labor problems and collective bargaining, advanced labor problems, time study problems, pensions, community services, synthetic standards, automation and related problems, labor journalism, standard data, union administration and steward training, and legislative procedure.

The school also conducts one-day and week-end institutes and conferences in various centers and is host to several unions for a summer school program which in 1957 had a total attendance of 766. The subjects taught on these occasions coincide very nearly with those taught in the extension classes, though there is sometimes greater emphasis on international affairs and current political questions.

During this last year the school held institutes on subjects of a broad civic nature, but there were no classes in cultural subjects during the period. In *Universities and Unions in Workers' Education*, Barbash describes the pilot projects which the school carried out as a participant in the experimental workers' education program of the IULEC a few years back: these projects were concerned with one-day and two-day institutes in international affairs, community participation, and economic understanding and with programs for women trade unionists and the wives of unionists.

### *Similar Subjects*

Other universities may organize and administer their programs differently from Wisconsin, but the range of subjects taught is generally much the same. Some universities (e.g., Cornell and Pennsylvania State) have taken a special interest in trying to meet the shortage of skilled teachers which is one of the pressing problems of American workers' education at the present time.

Others, especially denominational colleges, have emphasized the en-

couragement of better labor-management relations and promoted classes in such subjects as labor's rights and responsibilities and the ethics of labor-management relations.

At the moment only the Trade Union Program of Harvard University offers to unionists long-term educational facilities at the university level (though the ILGWU, as already noted, has its own residential training center, and the UAW is soon to open one). There is, however, much talk of the need for residential workers' education—Walter Reuther, for example, in his presidential report to the 1957 UAW national convention, called for the establishment of a labor university—and Roosevelt University, Chicago, long active in workers' education, seems hopeful of moving into this field.

### *Lack of Finances*

One of the principal problems involved, is that of finding sufficient funds to maintain a year-round residential program. Indeed, workers' education in the United States has always been handicapped by the inadequacy and unreliability of its financial support. This is a complex question, and I am not competent to deal with it in detail.

The broad pattern of workers' education finance, however, seems to be that the programs which unions provide for their own members are financed out of union funds. Regional programs are often paid for by setting aside for educational purposes a certain proportion of the per capita levy on member locals. A university providing a class for a union will

sometimes do so without charge. More frequently the union has to pay all or part of the cost.

Apart from those receiving income in this way, university workers' education programs are normally financed in the same way as the work of other university departments—and this will depend primarily on whether the particular university is a state institution or a private one.

It should be noted that there are a number of state universities (in New York, New Jersey, Michigan, Illinois, and elsewhere) which receive a specific legislative appropriation for workers' education, or, at least, for institutes of industrial relations which include workers' education as an integral part of their work.

Occasionally supplemental grants from outside sources, especially educational foundations, may be forthcoming: the IULEC experimental program which Barbash described, for example, was financed by a grant from the Fund for Adult Education. Mire reports that a few school districts and states are subsidizing workers' education in one form or another and suggests that others might be induced to do so.

The pre-war WPA Workers' Education Program has already been mentioned, but more recent attempts to secure federal aid for workers' education have so far failed—and in the present political climate will probably continue to fail.

### **Teaching Methods**

Perhaps a brief note should be added on the teaching methods and materials used in American workers'

education. One often hears it said that the lecture is an "outmoded educational technique"; nevertheless, the lecture-and-discussion pattern is still very frequently followed. Much use is also made, however, of audio-visual aids and of such techniques as question games, buzz sessions, case-studies and role playing.

It is significant that the UAW's "Ammunition" took up five pages of its special union building issue (January-February 1957) with a discussion of the educational theories of John Dewey: "John Dewey says you find out how things work by working at them."

### **"Mock Congress"**

In recent years the UAW has organized its summer schools along the lines of a "Mock Congress." Participants are divided up (arbitrarily) into committees and each committee studies a special topic on which it reports to the full "Congress" at the end of the week. The materials used include films, tape-recordings, transcripts of speeches, press-releases, pamphlets issued by opposing sides, reprints of magazine articles, and so on. The purpose, clearly, is to lend an air of immediacy and realism to the discussions by presenting students with the raw materials of political and social issues.

Discussion leaders are not university tutors, as they might be in Britain, but union people who have been supplied with a carefully prepared "Discussion Leader's Outline and Notes" which, it is hoped, will carry them safely through the week. A typical UAW summer school workshop for

training local leaders to teach stewards' classes consisted almost entirely of watching and discussing films and learning about various kinds of role playing.

### COMMENTARY

In his recent book *The Organization Man*, William H. Whyte observes that men majoring in business and commerce have now become the largest single group of undergraduates in American universities and that most business courses these days have little or no liberal or humanities content.

Substituted for disciplines have been the teaching of skills and techniques—personnel management, organization and control, business communications, and so on. These developments have their good as well as their bad points, no doubt, but there does seem to be a necessary distinction between *education* and *training* which has been somewhat lost sight of. The same appears to be true of American workers' education: it is called *education*, but most of it is really training in certain relevant, and often highly specialized, skills and techniques.

In both union and university programs the emphasis is on the so-called "bread-and-butter" subjects, such as collective bargaining, steward training, time and motion study. No one questions that these subjects are of vital importance to the trade union movement, but in England, for example, it would be a matter of debate whether they were subjects with which a university might properly concern itself.

In the United States there is less uncertainty on this point: in their excellent report for the University of Michigan, "The Role of the University in Labor and Industrial Relations," Professors Russell A. Smith and Meyer S. Ryder conclude that "It is clear that this University, like others, accepts in practice and in principle the thesis that adult education programs may appropriately be designed to serve the special needs of homogenous groups." The objections often come from those who are much quicker to see the relevance of this thesis to the needs of management than to the needs of labor.

Arguing specifically for the inclusion of "bread-and-butter" or "union-building" subjects in university programs, Smith and Ryder observe: "It is of the utmost importance that people working in industry, whether as executives, prospective executives, or rank and file, be encouraged to increase their general knowledge of their own vocational relation to labor-management problems, or in relation to the unique problems of management and of unions, for out of knowledge and skill come understanding and the ability to think and act intelligently and constructively."

This, to an Englishman, suggests a skillful confusion of the issue: knowledge and skills, thought and action, are surely, from the educator's point of view, very different things. Perhaps in England there is too rigid a separation of technical and liberal education (it is a criticism visiting American educators often make), but there seems to be in America too much confusion of the two. One won-

ders sometimes how much real education, how much liberation of the mind, really does result from these programs, whether of union or of university.

Occasionally, as in some other areas of American education, there is more than a slight suggestion of indoctrination. Union leaders, however earnestly they may seek the welfare of the union and its members, are not always especially anxious to encourage critical thinking among local leaders or the rank and file. More often they want to make sure that official union policies are widely known and supported, and that union loyalty is strengthened.

Many union education departments spend a good deal of time and energy in making sure that union members continue to distrust the bosses sufficiently, for as workers become more and more middle-class in their standard of living and in their outlook it isn't always easy to keep them union-minded.

The problem is a real one, and the unions' response to it is wholly understandable. Nevertheless the old question of objectivity arises, and there is a danger here which the universities, in particular, need to be aware of. The argument used to justify full university participation in union education is deceptively simple: "In a democratic society such as ours strong unions are a good and necessary thing. Therefore, whatever we can do to help strengthen the unions must be good." There is surely a fallacy here of the kind that liberal minds are especially susceptible to.

Of course those who teach unionists must believe in the value of unions

and be sympathetic with their broad aims, but the craft of teaching, especially of university teaching, has its rules and standards too—among them the attempt to maintain objectivity—and these should not be ignored, not even in the interest of getting along with the unions.

We are here in the general area of what many people would consider to be another fallacy: the common American habit of justifying one's educational theories and practices in terms of one's own conception of what is socially desirable.

It is almost universally accepted that the primary aim of education is the betterment of society. But—quite apart from the difficulty of agreeing on what is and is not social betterment—is the social criterion always the right one?

### **What Workers Want**

In Chapter IV of *Labor Education*, the survey he carried out on behalf of the Inter-University Labor Education Committee, Joseph Mire gives a very thorough analysis of the educational needs of American workers, but observes: "The catalog lists the needs of workers as labor educators see them. It does not necessarily, and in fact cannot, express what workers themselves want. A study in which workers define their own educational needs, besides requiring questionnaires and extensive interviews, would have produced less satisfactory results, since part of the problem is that most workers apparently fail to see the need for playing a full part in the life of the union and the community."

One sees what Mire means, but it

is difficult to be altogether happy about it. One of the besetting sins of American workers' education, especially where the universities are concerned, is that more time sometimes seems to be spent in survey and evaluation than in actual teaching—yet here, apparently, a quite basic piece of investigation is still to be done. Mire is almost certainly right in thinking that the results of such a study would not be at all satisfactory; nevertheless, this is surely where one has to start from—the individual worker.

Or is it? Many workers' education programs seem to have grown from the top downwards instead of from the bottom upwards. The union leadership, with or without the cooperation of university administrators, decides what subjects it would be desirable to teach—from a union or a general social standpoint. Then a program is drawn up and launched, and the final step is the attempt to sell it to the workers themselves. (I realize that in many unions people are elected or appointed to take part in courses, while there are a few that have made certain basic courses compulsory for new members or for newly-appointed officers.)

Of course there must be some element of promotion about all adult education programs: the spontaneous yet solidly-supported request for education is a very rare thing. And it can be predicted that subjects closely related to the worker's own experiences are likely to be most appealing to him. But the worker's experiences are not confined to the shop: generally he has some outside recreational, political or even cultural interests, and sometimes

these are of quite a serious nature. It would seem worthwhile to find out whether any workers have educational ambitions along these lines.

### *Missing an Opportunity*

It may be that American workers' education is missing an opportunity to do work which would not only be of personal and genuinely educational value to the individual, but which would surely be socially desirable also, and which might well contribute, a little indirectly but none-the-less surely, to the strengthening of the union.

The idea might not be especially attractive to union leaders at first, but it is surely something which the universities, with their boasted concern for the humanities and liberal studies, ought at least to be experimenting with. But we have already seen that, at the moment, union and university programs are alike in being almost barren of courses of this nature.

It is often objected that such subjects—literature, music, art, history, philosophy, political science, psychology—are not relevant to the purposes of trade union education: but, as a university teacher in Britain has written of trade union education there, the weakness of this argument is that "it requires the tutor to demonstrate in advance that the subject recommended for study is going to be relevant. But this kind of demonstration can never be given in advance. This is the practical point of the truism that the apparently useless subjects are the most practical in the long run, provided the student is stimulated to work hard by a genuine

interest in the subject for its own sake . . . . The only help the tutor can give the student is to lead him as quickly as possible to that particular branch of study which rouses his interest and elicits his special aptitudes. That is the only kind of relevance which is educationally relevant."

### *Liberal Education*

It is taken for granted in Britain that trade union education should not be confined to specifically trade union subjects (though in practice there are comparatively few trade union courses that venture outside the general area of social studies).

It seems to me that this idea must gain acceptance in the United States, too, if the increased leisure unions are fighting for and winning is to be put to any worthwhile use; if union leadership at all levels is to meet with management in an atmosphere of full equality; and if the idea of a labor university is to become a worthwhile reality.

No doubt these ideas will be considered totally unrealistic, and it is certainly true that at the present time, with American unions so much on the defensive politically, it is unlikely that the union leadership would be prepared to embark on new ventures of this kind, even if it could be persuaded of their usefulness.

On the other hand, few things could be better for union public relations than the introduction of such a cultural program, with emphasis on social studies, literature and the arts.

I see the courses as non-credit, quite short at first, conducted by a university or a school district, but spon-

sored by a union or by an area organization of the AFL-CIO and possibly open to other members of the community (in which case representatives of the community might be invited to serve with representatives of the union and of the university on a coordinating committee).

A sincere effort by the unions to make a success of such a program would have a considerable effect upon those opinion-forming groups in the community who are at the moment most inclined to be critical of the unions and of unionism. The ILGWU has certainly gained much prestige in non-union circles through its efforts in cultural and recreational education—and the whole venture would be, at the very least, a good exercise in community relations.

But in making suggestions of this kind it is essential not to forget or underestimate the great difficulties with which American workers' education is faced—difficulties which are often quite outside the experience of workers' education movements in Britain and other European countries.

The position of the unions themselves is by no means fully assured as yet. Visiting Solidarity House, it is sometimes difficult to remember that scarcely 20 years ago the UAW was still fighting for its very existence; but one must always remember that fact, along with such other facts as that so major a union as the CWA is only 11 years old, that in whole areas of the nation unions are still almost unknown, that there are still more unorganized workers than there are organized, and that the whole labor movement is still exposed to attacks of a violence and a virulence

that British unions have not experienced for many, many years.

There are also the great social problems facing the nation as a whole; the race issue, for example (an area in which the unions have made perhaps greater contributions to progress than any other group), and the problem of immigrants who do not speak English.

American unions have on the one hand the extraordinarily difficult problem of combatting cases of internal corruption, while on the other they lack the channel of expression and action and the instrument of political power which British unions possess through their domination of the Labour Party.

All these things help to explain why it is that workers' education in the United States is, frankly, operating at a generally lower level than workers' education in Britain: there is nothing in the United States to compare, for example, with the residential university education offered to unionists by Ruskin College, Oxford, or with the British three-year Tutorial Classes, which union members have long participated in as individuals and some of which are now being provided specifically for trade union groups.

It also becomes easy to understand why the emphasis in America is still very strongly on organizing and on unionizing the organized: the emphasis *has* to be there, say the union leaders, because American unions, unlike those in most parts of Europe, are still in the stage of growth and formation.

It seems relevant to notice, too, that American unions, partly for historical and organizational reasons, partly be-

cause of the nature of the American economy, need far more people skilled in the techniques of collective bargaining and contract negotiation than do most British unions. In Britain bargaining tends to be at the national rather than the local level; in America the reverse is still true—even though one big labor-management agreement may set the pattern for that industry throughout the country.

### *The Same Educational Aims*

One must remember, too, that it is not at all certain that workers' education in Britain and America has had even the same ultimate, let alone immediate, aims in view. It is sometimes said that the differences in the development of workers' education in the two countries have had a good deal to do with the differences between their working-class movements. The British working-class movement has always been socialist, seeking (though not by revolutionary means) revolutionary changes in the social and economic structure. In America the unions have gone out of their way to deny any interest whatsoever in a reconstruction of society.

At the time of the depression, however, there was a fierce, if limited, upsurge of radical sentiment, and this inspired, among other things, some of the early experiments in workers' education. These, interestingly enough, embraced a broad curriculum very much on the English model: economics, the social sciences, literature, even foreign languages—the kind of fundamental education, in fact, with which the leaders of the British working-class were preparing for funda-

mental social change. It seems at least arguable that there is a close connection between the disappearance of American radicalism and the disappearance of the broad curriculum in American workers' education.

Not everyone would agree that British workers' education *is* superior. Many American educators feel that British workers' education is seriously at fault in failing to provide the kind of basic courses in parliamentary procedure, public speaking, and communications skills which are so common in the programs of American unions.

The Workers' Educational Association's Working Party Report on *Trade Union Education* quotes some comments from a report submitted by an American observer: "I suspect that one of the reasons why British workers' education has failed to do what it could have done in the field of trade union education is that the W.E.A. feels that the best kind of education is the kind offered by the institutions of higher learning. Because of this it failed to develop the kind of educational programs which unions need to fulfill their purposes." He ends by suggesting that the gaps in British workers' education broadly correspond to some of the forms of education which have been most successfully developed in America.

This is a comment which the workers' education movement in Britain would do well to ponder: indeed, one of the liveliest controversies in that movement at present is precisely over the question of how far workers' education can move in the direction of teaching basic skills and specifically trade union topics without too greatly compromising its tradition of pro-

viding liberal education of sound academic standard.

One is always too easily disturbed by the unfamiliar, too ready to criticize when things are not done as one is accustomed to seeing them done. Let me say quite plainly, then, that the American workers' education movement seems to me to be doing a great deal of excellent and very necessary work in the face of great difficulties. My criticisms of this work may be simply the effect of the educational prejudices which my experience of British workers' education has given me, but at least they are constructive in intent, if not in fact. For I take it that no one will deny that there *are* serious deficiencies in American—as in British—workers' education.

### **Education First**

My own view is that, although the unions themselves are at fault in taking so narrow a view of education, a larger share of the blame for these deficiencies must go to the universities. One expects a union to put its conception of union welfare first, but one expects the universities to put education first, and this they have not always done. They do not seem to have made much of an attempt to promote studies of a more liberal nature, and, to the best of my knowledge, they have made no attempt at all to reach the unorganized worker.

Only a very small number of universities have shown any interest in the work at all, and many of these seem to have been tempted into it only by the prospect of foundation grants. Often the work has been only

half-heartedly supported or inadequately or only sporadically financed.

Part of the trouble is that too many universities are now thoroughly business-oriented. Business majors form by far the largest group of their students, business organizations provide, in many cases, a very large proportion of their funds. There is plenty of money available for teaching and research in business fields, and nobody questions that this is a right and proper function of a university.

With the notable exception of the Fund for Adult Education, there is little financial support for similar work in the trade union field—and, even today, more influential voices are likely to be raised in criticisms of such work than in praise of it. Segments of the automotive industry may have been largely instrumental in bringing about the downfall of the University of Michigan's first workers' education program.

The atmosphere has changed somewhat for the better since then, but it may or may not be significant that, when the University recently decided to reenter the field, it established—jointly with Wayne State University—an Institute of Labor and Management Relations instead of the exclusively labor education service which the unions would have preferred, and in spite of the fact that the needs of management appear to have been well catered to already. The traditional union suspicion of the universities has long complicated the problems of union-university cooperation: one sometimes feels that the universities might have done more to help dispel that suspicion.

What of the future? In the introduction to the *Report on the UNESCO La Breviere Seminar on Workers' Education, 1952*, we read: "The American participants made it clear that the recent and rapid growth of the trade unions and their still precarious position in relation to American society render it necessary to concentrate their immediate efforts largely on education for trade union service. At the same time they recognized that this situation may well change as their immense problems of assimilating a vast number of new recruits give place to conditions more nearly comparable with those which exist in Great Britain and in Scandinavia."

It may well be that as time goes on American workers' education will penetrate much more widely and deeply than at present and its programs will grow broader and more liberal. I am encouraged to be optimistic both by what I have seen of American workers' education in action—the teaching distinguished by clarity and sincerity of presentation, if not always by depth of content; the discussions lively and forthright, if sometimes a little haphazard and naive—and, even more, by the high quality of the teachers and organizers I have met.

With their high ideals, great energy and genuine ability, they are a small but dedicated and influential group doing remarkable work in what are often unpromising situations: it is sad that they do not always get from their union or university employers the kind of encouragement and support they both need and deserve.