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Canada

GENDER, CLASS, AND ADULT LEARNING: THE WORKERS'
EDUCATIONAL ASSOCIATION OF TORONTO, 1918-1942

by

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Thesis submitted to the School of
Graduate Studies and Research in
partial fulfilment of the requirements
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Paul S. O'Donnell, Ottawa, Canada, 1989

ABSTRACT

This thesis examines the activities of the Workers' Educational Association of Toronto in the twenty-five year period after its founding in 1918, and explores the response of Toronto's working-class community to the W.E.A.'s initiatives. The prominent educators who founded the W.E.A. saw the organization as a vehicle for promoting "good citizenship", but during the Depression the W.E.A.'s new leadership modified the Association's aims and sought to provide a more practical educational service for Toronto's working people and organized labour movement.

These changing objectives were reflected in the evolution of the W.E.A.'s curriculum, the increased scope of its activities, its relationships with the University of Toronto and the city's labour unions, and the growth of its membership. The W.E.A.'s commitment to popular education saw it launch several innovative projects in an effort to make education more accessible and relevant to its clientele. Lacking the resources to carry out most of these projects, the W.E.A. collaborated with government, education, and labour organizations. But the W.E.A. and its collaborators often had irreconcilable interests; many of these projects ended in failure for the W.E.A., and by the mid-1940s, the Association was struggling to survive.

This thesis uses routinely-generated W.E.A. sources to "look inside" the Association, and examine it in terms of both ideas

and experiences. W.E.A. publications, Annual Reports, and Minutes illuminate its agenda for workers' education, while membership and enrollment statistics give insight into the educational interests of the thousands of men and women who took W.E.A. courses. This approach builds upon recent historiographical developments, and shows as well the need to combine perspectives from the too-often distinct fields of historical investigation. By analysing evidence from both the "top" and the "bottom", this thesis explores the W.E.A. in the context of Canada's tumultuous interwar years.

ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

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INTRODUCTION

Adult education cannot be imposed on the people, but must grow out of the needs of the people.

Drummond Wren's Address to the Board of the Workers' Educational Association, 1951.

In the 1920s and 30s, thousands of working-class men and women attended evening classes offered by the Workers' Educational Association of Toronto. The W.E.A. had been founded in 1918 by leading Canadian educators who, troubled by the labour militancy of the latter war years, saw the organization as a vehicle for promoting "good citizenship" among the city's working people. During the Depression, however, a new leadership modified the Association's aims and the W.E.A. embarked on an ambitious programme to provide a more practical educational service to both working people and organized labour.

The W.E.A. was part of a virtual explosion of educational activity in post-World-War I Ontario. The Adolescent School Attendance Act (1919) raised the age of compulsory attendance to sixteen years, and over the course of the next decade, the number of students in high schools quadrupled.¹ Many of these students were enrolled in manual training, domestic science, and other new courses which were added to the curricula under the "New Education" reforms of this era.² A heightened interest in the education of youths is revealed by the rise of education lobby groups. The most influential of these were the Ontario Home and School Association, founded in 1919, and the National Conference

of Education, which held its first conference in the same year.³

Adults were also being drawn into the educational sphere. The University of Toronto's enrollment quadrupled in the two years following the war.⁴ Moreover, between 1918 and 1921, the University of Toronto, Queen's University, and the University of Western Ontario established Extension Departments in an effort to make university services available to a wider audience.⁵

University expansion was aided by the Dominion government's Technical Education Act of 1919. Backed by ten-million dollars, the Act marked the entry of the Dominion government into the funding of post-secondary education.⁶

Nationalist groups entered the educational sphere with an extensive campaign to promote Canadian culture in the post-war era. As John Herd Thompson says in his study of this period, "something definitely was happening in the once-somnolent world of Canadian arts and letters."⁷ Cultural organizations such as the Canadian Clubs and the Native Sons of Canada publicized Canadian achievements in literature, music, and visual arts. The Canadian National Newspapers and Periodicals Association was founded in 1919 to promote Canadian journals, a number of which date from this period, including the Canadian Bookman, Canadian Forum, the Canadian Historical Review, and Maclean's Magazine.⁸

While all of these educational developments became ongoing features of Canadian society, the labour radicalism which characterized the period of the W.E.A.'s founding soon passed. Canadian historians are unanimous in the opinion that 1919

represented a peak year of labour protest throughout the country. The most famous of these protests, the Winnipeg General Strike and the formation of the One Big Union, took place in western Canada. But Ontario also experienced a wave of strikes, which Stuart Jamieson has chronicled in Times of Trouble.⁹ Labour strength in Ontario was further reflected in the election of the provincial labour/farmer party in 1919. After 1919, labour militancy and union membership throughout Canada steadily declined until the late 1930s. Few strikes in the 1920s were successful, and the number of unionized workers in 1919 (378,047) was not again reached until 1937.¹⁰ As Bryan Palmer has said, "the Canadian working class entered the 1920s defeated and fragmented."¹¹

No existing study of the W.E.A. has attempted to fully explore the influence that educational reforms, nationalism, and organized labour's fragmentation had on the Association's development. Peter Sandiford's 1935 survey of adult education in Canada gives a good description of the W.E.A.'s activities at that time, but it lacks the historical perspective needed to appreciate the significance of those activities.¹² Studies done in the 1970s by Netto Kefentse and J.A. Blyth shed some light on the W.E.A.'s relationship with the University of Toronto. Kefentse's thesis looks briefly at this relationship in the early 1920s, while Blyth's monograph carries the narrative through to the end of the relationship in 1942.¹³ Neither Kefentse nor Blyth regard the W.E.A. as a successful organization, but both

rely too heavily on sources generated by the University to make this assessment. The W.E.A.'s self-published histories go to the other extreme: using a limited range of W.E.A.-generated sources, these promotional booklets concentrate almost exclusively on the Association's positive accomplishments.¹⁴

The best study of the W.E.A. is Ian Radforth and Joan Sangster's "'A Link Between Labour and Learning': The Workers' Educational Association in Ontario, 1917-1951." This article gives a balanced and critical assessment of the Association's accomplishments, and the roles that University of Toronto and labour officials played in the W.E.A.'s development. The authors argue that the W.E.A. originated as a "social control" vehicle for imperialist members of the educational elite who, in the context of the labour radicalism of the latter war years, saw the Association as a means of instilling "responsible behavior" in working-class men and women. During the 1930s, the W.E.A.'s founders lost their grip on the Association, and the W.E.A.'s new leadership used the organization to promote the interests of the working class, which led the Association on an ambitious programme to become the "educational arm" of labour. In the 1940s, however, unions jealously guarded their territories, and after unsuccessful attempts to control the W.E.A., used "red scare tactics" to undermine it.¹⁵

The strength of Radforth and Sangster's article is its account of the W.E.A.'s relationship with the organized labour movement. The authors examine both the negative and positive influences

that several leading unionists had on the W.E.A., and attempt to assess the Association's contribution to the organized labour movement. In this sense, "A Link Between Labour and Learning" is primarily a history of the W.E.A. as a labour organization; the W.E.A. as an educational association is given secondary consideration. While the authors explore the antecedents of the W.E.A.'s educational programme--the parent organization in Britain--they fail to examine educational movements underway in Canada which help to illuminate the W.E.A.'s development. Their article takes only a cursory look at the Association's classroom curriculum, which evolved considerably in the interwar period. Similarly, Radforth and Sangster make no systematic attempt to analyse the extent to which either students or organized labour used the W.E.A.'s services.¹⁶

Those familiar with central debates in Canadian education historiography over the last two decades will recognize that the "radical revisionism" of the early 1970s was also subsequently criticised for failing to examine how schools and educational services were actually used by the public.¹⁷ Led by Michael Katz, "New-Left" revisionists focussed on the motives of education officials. Katz argues that, far from acting on humanitarian or altruistic impulses (the interpretation of Whig historians) education officials in the nineteenth century used education to promote capitalist values and social order.¹⁸ The "social control" thesis which Katz espoused inspired concerted research into the way public school curriculum was used to

promote the aims and values of influential social groups.¹⁹

Critics of the "social control" theory argue that it is a "top-down" approach which needs to be balanced by an examination of the motives and aims of those using the schools in order to gain a wider appreciation of both the education process and social values. One response to this criticism is exemplified in the work of Robert Gidney and his collaborators, who argue that we need to examine "the influence that local authorities and school users exercised in determining the success or failure of particular education policies."²⁰ Several studies have revealed that provincial education policies were subsequently modified or rejected altogether in the face of local resistance.²¹ The shift in emphasis towards an investigation of how the public participated in the education process is leading to an understanding of what motives lay behind individual and collective schooling behaviour. Chad Gaffield's studies of Prescott Township reveals that a variety of social variables including occupation, language and ethnicity, gender, and life-cycles help explain individual schooling decisions and thus the development of Prescott's school system.²² Jean Barman's study of Vancouver's public school system in the 1920s demonstrates that education reforms introduced in that decade made schooling more attractive to working class parents, whose children soon enrolled in greater numbers, and stayed in school for longer periods of their lives.²³

Interestingly, the emerging literature on adult and higher

education indicates that, more frequently than is the case with research on youths, behavioural evidence is being explored in light of what it reveals about student motives. Historians assume that adult students attend school voluntarily; thus the types of courses they choose are considered to reflect their ambitions. John Reid's study of female enrollment at Mount Allison University in the late nineteenth century suggests that the University was not primarily used by women as "a finishing school for the rich," as has sometimes been assumed, but that many women from a variety of social backgrounds took courses which prepared them for careers in occupations such as teaching and nursing.²⁴ In Chad Gaffield, Lynne Marks, and Susan Laskin's analysis of Queen's University students at the turn of the century, the authors used information about student's career plans, as well as data on their family backgrounds, to help explain the educational choices that students made.²⁵

The few extant studies of university extension programmes in Canada examine the motives of education officials as well as student usage of educational facilities. Gordon Selman's studies of the University of British Columbia's Extension Department reveal that during the 1930s, extremely high unemployment levels, and public demonstrations and riots prompted the Patullo government to dramatically expand the Department's programme in an attempt to improve public moral and ward off further radicalism.²⁶ Carol Dennison's examination of British Columbia's Women's Institutes relates a similar theme: in the midst of

Depression-era urban woes and labour unrest, the province's government supported this and other rural movements as part of its "back to the farm" philosophy.²⁷ In Jim Lotz and Michael Welton's study of New Brunswick's "Antigonish Movement" in the 1930s, the authors demonstrate that the co-op and credit-union study club network was strongest in urban centres, especially in "areas dominated by big capital where the social differentiation process was well advanced." Thus the authors argue that thousands of the province's residents used adult education as a vehicle for populist protest.²⁸ Padraig Blenkinsop argues that Saskatchewan's agrarian education movement in the seventy-five years after 1870 illustrates a convergence of government and populace motives; the entire province saw agrarian education as a means of improving agricultural productivity and uniting the province in an effort to resist central Canada's dominance of the Saskatchewan economy.²⁹

The studies by Lotz and Welton, and Blenkinsop, suggest that Canadians have used adult-education movements as vehicles through which to protest against and improve their economic conditions. This notion is a good reference point from which to explore student and trade union usage of the W.E.A.. Yet, from the current state of working-class and labour historiography in Canada, there is little indication that working people have used education to promote their interests as a class. Labour historians have shown an overwhelming tendency to focus on union struggles and dramatic moments of confrontation rather than

alternative avenues of protest. One of Canada's best-known labour historians, Bryan Palmer, criticizes the "first generation" of labour historians for their preoccupation with "traditional concerns: key personages, central events, major developments."³⁰ Yet Palmer's exploration of "working-class culture," in A Culture in Conflict, rarely looks beyond the culture of skilled working men,³¹ and many of the leading labour historians of Palmer's generation focus on union movements and conflicts to the exclusion of a wider range of working-class experiences.³²

Labour historians' tendency to concentrate their attention on the struggles of organized labour has created a situation where we know very little about the lives of ordinary working people in Ontario during the 1920s and 1930s. Irving Abella, who documents the battles among union leaders in the 1930s and 1940s in Nationalism, Communism, and Canadian Labour, says almost nothing about rank and file union members.³³ Desmond Morton and Terry Copp's survey, Working People, offers little to correct this imbalance. In the book's chapter on the Depression, dramatic events such as the "On to Ottawa Trek" are emphasized, several pages are devoted to the rise of the C.I.O. in the United States, but next to nothing is said about how the mass of ordinary Canadians coped with the economic recession.³⁴ Palmer's survey of Canadian labour, Working-Class Experience, exhibits this same tendency to focus on labour's elite and dramatic events in the interwar period.³⁵ To gain an understanding of how

average Canadians coped with the hardships of the 1930s, we need more research along the lines of Patricia Schulz's study of the East York Workers Association. The E.Y.W.A. established its own relief programme, organized a barter system for the exchange of necessary services, and promoted educational ventures such as craft workshops and public lectures and debates.³⁶

Schulz is among the few working-class historians to emphasize the value of education to the labour movement, yet the labour movement clearly recognized its value. Morton and Copp's Working People, while offering no discussion of the importance of education to the labour movement, reprints the T.L.C.'s 1898 "Platform of Principles", which listed as the first item "free compulsory education".³⁷ It must be admitted that some progress has been made by labour historians towards developing a theory of the value of education to the labour movement. Russell Hann, in his study of the Toronto News in the 1880s, demonstrates the potential value of informational services to organized labour. The Toronto News discussed issues of the day from a labour perspective and thus "contributed imaginatively to the growth of a working-class movement ... without it, the Toronto Knights of Labour would have been immeasurably poorer."³⁸ Radforth and Sangster advance a similar argument when they claim that the W.E.A. "provided trade unions with research and educational services before many unions had such facilities."³⁹ A somewhat different concept of the value of education to the labour movement is implicit in Palmer's A Culture in Conflict. Here,

Palmer advances the argument that the power of working class movements is derived from the underlying strength of its cultural activities. But Palmer sees educational organizations as only one of the many associations which sustained working-class culture. Hamilton's Mechanics' Institutes are seen by him as no more important than baseball clubs, fire brigades, and the like in the process of cultural maintenance. This view seems to underestimate significantly the role of education in sustaining working-class culture. As Michael Welton argues, adult education is a primary means by which knowledge and values are transmitted throughout society; adult learning "is central to societal reproduction, resistance, and transformation."⁴⁰ Examining the role the W.E.A. played in shaping the views of working people, and the services it provided organized labour, is a way of exploring the relationship between education and working-class culture.

But questions of social class must be pursued in the context of gender; thousands of women enrolled in W.E.A. courses in the 1930s and 1940s. In her survey of recent developments in the field of Canadian women's history, Margaret Conrad argues that, "gender is a separate category of analysis which historians ignore only at the risk of rendering their work woefully inadequate."⁴¹ Historical research into the education of adult women in Canada have been limited, for the most part, to their attendance at universities, and while it now appears that certain working-class women did attend university, these institutions

were largely inaccessible to them.⁴²

Some progress has been made in the study of women's participation in rural adult education movements. Blenkinsop's thesis and Dennison's study shed some light on the educational activities of rural women in the interwar years. A common theme is evident in both of these studies: the education women received reinforced their traditional social roles. The journal of the Saskatchewan Women's Homemaker's Club (the name itself is revealing!) claimed that the clubs were designed "for the study of scientific homemaking; of sanitation, ventilation, the composition of foods, hygiene, the care of children, the improvement of the environment, etc., and to improve social intercourse."⁴³ Likewise, the B.C. Women's Institutes gave women the opportunity to meet, learn sewing and cooking techniques, make handicrafts, and organize charity projects.⁴⁴ Both authors note that these activities prepared women to take on greater social roles in the 1930s, albeit in their 'proper spheres'.⁴⁵

The same theme is reinforced in the most recent studies of Canadian women in the interwar period, which question the conventional wisdom that this era marked a "new day" for women. The authors of the survey, Canadian Women: A History, claim that during this period, "most commentators continued to stress motherhood as the principal and most rewarding career for Canadian women." ⁴⁶ Women were urged to view paid work and education as temporary stages in their lives. Newspapers and magazines: "bombarded women with anxious pronouncements on the

virtual impossibility, and, above all, the undesirability of combining marriage with a career."⁴⁷ Women were shunned by organized labour, and when employment opportunities worsened in the 1930s, women encountered a conspiracy to get them out of the workforce. Their wages and working conditions deteriorated, and traditionally-female jobs in industries such as textiles were "redefined" as male jobs.⁴⁸ Veronica Strong-Boag, in her study of the interwar period, says that misogyny was a ubiquitous social hierarchy reinforced by the education system. In public schools, girls were taught to court the admiration of males, prepare themselves for motherhood, and take domestic science courses, all of which "groomed [them] to accept the privatization of the household and the strict division of labour between the female homemaker and the male breadwinner."⁴⁹ In high schools, females were herded into courses such as shorthand, typing, and bookkeeping--skills which trained women to enter the workforce into what were rapidly becoming traditional female occupations: secretarial and clerical positions. In universities, women were likewise concentrated in arts and science programmes which "prepared young women for the career opportunities that existed for their sex, notably as teachers, social workers, librarians, clerical workers, saleswomen, and wives."⁵⁰ Thus, the overwhelming impression left by Strong-Boag and other historians is one of an educational system which at every level repressed feminist consciousness by promoting female fulfillment within narrowly-prescribed, maternal roles.

This thesis proposes to examine this and other themes that characterize contemporary historiography as they relate to the history of the W.E.A. of Toronto, emphasizing the period of the Association's greatest activity--1933 to 1943. First and foremost, this is a study in educational history, but the questions being asked here address issues currently debated in working-class and woman's historiography. What motivated the educators who founded the W.E.A., and how did the Association's goals change in response to the Depression? What does student and union usage of the W.E.A.'s services reveal about working men and women in Toronto, and the city's organized labour movement?

Chapter I provides an overview of the history of the W.E.A. of Toronto from 1918 through its growth into a national organization in the 1930s to its near collapse in the late 1940s. The chapter will examine educational and ideological currents underway in the latter war years which help explain the W.E.A.'s origins, and discuss the development of the W.E.A. in light of its relationships with the University of Toronto, and, to a lesser degree, with the organized labour movement. The Association's administrative structure and finances will also be examined. This chapter gives the necessary institutional background to provide the framework for an analysis of the W.E.A.'s educational programme and its membership.

Chapter II explores the W.E.A.'s classroom curriculum to assess the quality and type of courses offered. Examining the

evolution of the Association's curriculum over the thirty-year period following 1918 provides a means of uncovering the corresponding shifts in the aims and values of the Association's leadership. The W.E.A. made numerous official statements of intent throughout this period, but the approach taken here is to focus on how the Association acted upon its intentions.

Chapter III analyses the W.E.A.'s student body during the 1930s. Enrollment statistics reveal the popularity of courses in the W.E.A.'s curriculum, and this analysis permits a comparison of how the educational interests of the Association's male and female students changed over the course of the decade. Data on the occupational composition of the student body reveal what types of working-class students the Association attracted during the 1930s. In addition, limited data allow an analysis of the occupational composition of all students, and the marital status of female students, in individual courses for one particular year.

Chapter IV examines the W.E.A.'s numerous non-classroom educational services in the 1930s and early 1940s to reveal the full scope of the Association's overall programme. Some of these practical services were intended for student use, so like Chapter II, this chapter analyses student participation in the W.E.A.'s programme. However, most of these services were designed for use by labour unions, so this chapter picks up the theme of the W.E.A.'s relationship with the organized labour movement. In

addition to making informational services available to organized labour, the W.E.A. embarked on a number of educational projects in partnership with labour unions and government agencies. Examining the fate of these projects illuminates organized labour's internal relations during a pivotal chapter of their history.

The sources used for most of this thesis are contained in the Workers' Educational Association Papers at the Archives of Ontario in Toronto. Records used include Annual Reports, Minutes of meetings, membership lists, official correspondence, and W.E.A. publications including research pamphlets and bulletins, and transcripts of its radio show. Additional W.E.A. publications located at the Department of Labour Library in Hull, P.Q., (henceforth "DLL") have also been consulted, as have the W.L. Grant and Canadian Congress of Labour manuscript collections at the National Archives of Canada in Ottawa. Another important document, Drummond Wren's resignation speech ("Address to the President and Board Members of the W.E.A. of Canada", delivered March 31, 1951--henceforth "Wren's Address") is held by the W.E.A. of Canada offices in Toronto, Ontario.

The W.E.A.'s Annual Reports are the most valuable source for this investigation. The Annual Reports chronicle the growth of the Association, list enrollment statistics, give information on the occupational structure of the student body, and contain broad discussions of the Association's goals. The Annual Reports of the W.E.A. of Ontario and the W.E.A. of Canada are in final,

published form. However, the W.E.A. of Toronto's Annual Reports after 1922 are in various stages of preparation: all are typed, but in many cases handwritten amendments were added, presumably by the Association's Secretary-Treasurer. In some cases, membership and enrollment statistics in the Toronto chapter's Annual Reports do not agree with statistics in the provincial and national Association's Annual Reports. Since the latter records are in final form, statistics were taken from them whenever possible. Thus, no claim is being made here that membership and enrollment statistics are entirely accurate; they are the best available at this time. Many W.E.A. publications held by the DLL are missing title pages, and the date of publication is thus unknown. Wren's "Address", delivered on the occasion of his resignation from the position he held for over twenty years, gives a survey of the W.E.A.'s accomplishments during his tenure. Although the "Address" illuminates some aspects of the W.E.A.'s activities not otherwise documented, it contains some minor inaccuracies, mostly related to dates of some of the events he described. Whenever possible, Wren's testimony has been verified using additional sources. The W.L. Grant Papers give some insight to the W.E.A.'s relationship with the University of Toronto, while the C.L.C. Papers give an indication of how the W.E.A. was viewed by organized labour.

The general ambition of this study is to examine the Workers' Educational Association in terms of both ideas and experiences. Evidence from the "top" and the "bottom" reveals that the ideals

of the W.E.A.'s leaders were not always shared by the Association's clientele: the experiences of individuals and organizations that used the W.E.A.'s services indicates that Toronto's working class was not the homogeneous group that the W.E.A. anticipated. This thesis aims to build upon recent historiographical developments, but to show as well that a thorough analysis of the W.E.A. needs to combine perspectives from the too-often distinct fields of historical investigation. By exploring the class and gender dimensions of ideology and behaviour, this thesis seeks a fuller understanding of the W.E.A. and the community of which it was a part, during Canada's tumultuous interwar years.

NOTES TO INTRODUCTION

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6. N.L. Nicholson, "The Federal Government and Canadian Universities: A Review," STOA, 3,1 (1973): P.18.

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12. Peter Sandiford, Adult Education in Canada: A Survey (Toronto: University of Toronto Press, 1935).

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14. Workers' Educational Association, History of the Workers' Educational Association: Diamond Anniversary, 1917-1977 (Toronto:

W.E.A., 1977); Workers' Educational Association, Challenge and Innovation: A History of the Workers' Educational Association (Toronto: W.E.A., [ca.1985]).

15. Ian Radforth and Joan Sangster, "'A Link Between Labour and Learning': The Workers' Educational Association in Ontario, 1917-1951" Labour/Le Travailleur, 8/9 (Autumn/Spring, 1981/82): 41-78.

16. These criticisms will be discussed in more detail in the following chapters.

17. The term comes from J. Donald Wilson's historiographical article, "Some Observations on Recent Trends in Canadian Educational History," in An Imperfect Past: Education and Society in Canadian History, ed. J. Donald Wilson (Vancouver: Centre for the Study of Curriculum and Instruction, University of British Columbia, 1984). Wilson's essay gives a good overview of the debate between the "radical revisionists" and their critics. Chad Gaffield's article, "Back to School: Towards a New Agenda for the History of Education," Acadiensis, 15,2 (Spring, 1986):169-190, also examines this debate, as well as other themes in recent educational historiography.

18. Michael Katz, "The Origins of Public Education: A Reassessment," History of Education Quarterly (Winter, 1976); and Class Bureaucracy and Schools: The Illusion of Educational Change in America (New York: Praeger, 1975).

19. Alison Prentice's The School Promoters: Education and Social Class in Mid-Nineteenth Century Upper Canada (Toronto: McClelland and Stewart, 1977) is the most consistent application of the "social control" approach to studying public school curriculum. This approach is also evident in Nancy Sheehan's article, "National Pressure Groups and Provincial Curriculum Policy: Temperance in Nova Scotia Schools, 1880-1930," Canadian Journal of Education, 9,1 (1984):73-88, and in some of Robert Stamp's studies (see Chapter II).

20. Robert Gidney and D.A. Lawr, "Who Ran the Schools? Local Influence on Education Policy in Nineteenth-Century Ontario," Ontario History 72, 3 (September, 1980): p.131.

21. Ibid. Gidney and W.P.J. Millar have a good discussion of the tensions between local and central interests in "Rural Schools and the Decline of Community Control in Nineteenth-Century Ontario," Fourth Annual History of Ontario Seminar Proceedings (Guelph: University of Guelph Continuing Education, 1980): 70-91. David Jones and Timothy Dunn reveal that the reforms recommended in British Columbia's "Kidd Report" were abandoned in the face of massive public resistance in "'All of Us Common People' and Education in the Depression," Canadian Journal

of Education 5, 4 (1980): 41-56.

22. Chad Gaffield, Language, Schooling, and Cultural Conflict: The Origins of the French- Language Controversy in Ontario (Kingston: McGill-Queen's University Press, 1987). See also, Gaffield, "Schooling, the Economy, and Rural Society in Nineteenth-Century Ontario," in Childhood and Family in Canadian History, ed. by Joy Parr (Toronto: McClelland and Stewart, 1982).

23. Jean Barman, "'Knowledge is Essential for Universal Progress But Fatal to Class Privilege': Working People and the Schools in Vancouver in the 1920s," Labour/Le Travail 22 (Fall, 1988): 9-66.

24. John Reid, "The Education of Women at Mount Allison, 1854-1914," Acadiensis 12,2 (Spring, 1983): 3-33, and Mount Allison University: A History to 1963. Vol. II: 1914-1963 (Toronto: University of Toronto Press, 1984).

25. Chad Gaffield and Lynne Marks, "Women at Queen's University: A 'Little Sphere' All Their Own?" Ontario History 78, 4 (December, 1986): 331-349; Chad Gaffield, Lynne Marks, and Susan Laskin, "Student Populations and Graduate Careers: Queen's University, 1895-1900," in Paul Axelrod and John Reid, ed. Youth, University, and Society: Essays in the Social History of Higher Education (Kingston, Montreal: McGill-Queen's University Press, 1989).

26. Gordon Selman, Adult Education in British Columbia During the Depression (Vancouver: Centre for Continuing Education, University of British Columbia, 1976). See also Selman's A History of Fifty Years of Extension Services by the University of British Columbia, 1915 to 1965 (Toronto: Canadian Association for Adult Education, 1966).

27. Carol Dennison, "Housekeepers of the Community: The British Columbia Women's Institutes, 1909-1946," in Knowledge for the People: The Struggle for Adult Learning in English-Speaking Canada ed. by M. Welton (Toronto: OISE Press, 1987).

28. Jim Lotz and Michael Welton, "'Knowledge for the People': The Origins and Development of the Antigonish Movement," in Knowledge for the People: The Struggle for Adult Learning in English-Speaking Canada ed. by M. Welton (Toronto: OISE Press, 1987).

29. Pdraig Blenkinsop, "A History of Adult Education in the Praries: Learning to Live in Agrarian Saskatchewan, 1870-1944," (Ph.D. thesis, University of Toronto, 1979).

30. Bryan Palmer, "Working-Class Canada" in Contemporary Approaches to Canadian History, ed. Carl Berger (Toronto: Copp Clark Pitman, 1987).

31. Bryan Palmer, A Culture in Conflict: Skilled Workers and Industrial Capitalism in Hamilton, Ontario, 1860-1914 (Montreal: McGill-Queen's University Press, 1979). See p.xii for Palmer's reasons for limiting his investigation to the elite of the working class.

32. For example, see Bryan Palmer and Gregory Kealey, "Dreaming of What Might Be": The Knights of Labour of Ontario, 1880-1902 (New York: Cambridge University Press, 1982); Craig Heron, Working in Steel: The Early Years in Canada, 1883-1935 (Toronto: McClelland and Stewart, 1988); For examples of working-class histories which explore the lives of the masses as opposed to labour's elite, see Terry Copp, The Anatomy of Poverty: The Condition of the Working Class in Montreal, 1897-1929 (Toronto: McClelland and Stewart, 1974); Michael Piva, The Condition of the Working Class in Toronto, 1900-1921 (Ottawa: University of Ottawa Press, 1979). For a fascinating look at the "culture" of the "unskilled" workingman, see Peter DeLottinville, "Joe Beef of Montreal: Working Class Culture and the Tavern, 1869-1899," Labour/Le Travailleur 8/9 (Autumn/Spring, 1981/82): 9-40.

33. Irving Abella, Nationalism, Communism, and Canadian Labour: The CIO, the Communist Party, and the Canadian Congress of Labour, 1935-1956 (Toronto: University of Toronto Press, 1973).

34. Desmond Morton and Terry Copp, Working People: An Illustrated History of Canadian Labour (Ottawa: Deneau and Greenberg, 1980).

35. Bryan Palmer, Working-Class Experience: The Rise and Reconstitution of Canadian Labour, 1800-1980 (Toronto: Butterworth & Co, 1983).

36. Patricia Schulz, The East York Workers Association: A Response to the Great Depression (Toronto: Hogtown Press, 1975).

37. Morton and Copp, Working People, p.61.

38. Russell Hann, "Brainworkers and the Knights of Labour: E.P. Sheppard, Phillips Thompson, and the Toronto News, 1883-1887," in Essays in Working-Class History, ed. by Gregory Kealey and Peter Warrian (Toronto: McClelland and Stewart, 1976): p.56.

39. Radforth and Sangster, "A Link Between Labour and Learning," p.78.

40. Michael Welton, "Reclaiming Our Past: Memory, Tradition, Kindling Hope," in Knowledge for the People, p.7.

41. Margaret Conrad, "The Re-Birth of Canada's Past: A Decade of Women's History," in Contemporary Approaches to Canadian

History, p.181.

42. See the previously-mentioned studies by Reid, and Gaffield, Marks, and Laskin. In addition, see Paul Axelrod, "Moulding the Middle Class: Student Life at Dalhousie University in the 1930s," Acadiensis 15, 1 (Autumn, 1985): 84-122; Margaret Gillett, We Walked Very Warily: A History of Women at McGill (Montreal: Eden Press Women's Publications, 1981); and Anne Rochon Ford, A Path Not Strewn With Roses: One Hundred Years of Women at the University of Toronto, 1884-1984 (Toronto: University of Toronto Press, 1985).

43. Blenkinsop, "A History of Adult Education in the Prairies," p.337.

44. Dennison, "Housekeepers of the Community," pp. 52-62.

45. Blenkinsop, "A History of Adult Education in the Prairies," p.363; Dennison, "Housekeepers of the Community," p.54.

46. Alison Prentice, et.al., Canadian Women: A History (Toronto: Harcourt Brace Jovanovich, 1988): p.218.

47. Ibid., p.244.

48. Ibid., pp.230-234.

49. Veronica Strong-Boag, The New Day Recalled: Lives of Girls and Women in English Canada, 1919-1939 (Markham: Penguin, 1988): pp.12-19.

50. Ibid., pp.23-4.

CHAPTER 1

Why was the W.E.A. founded in 1918? The immediate post-war era in Canada witnessed heightened educational activity, growing nationalism, and increasing labour radicalism, and all three of these movements contributed to the formation and early development of the W.E.A. of Toronto. This chapter will examine the origin of the Association, and its development until the mid-1940s, focussing particularly on the W.E.A.'s relationship with the University of Toronto.

In their study of the W.E.A., Radforth and Sangster argue that it "was introduced to Ontario by an educational elite which, in the context of the radicalism and unrest of the years 1917-1920, was interested in using workers' education as a means of social control."¹ After reviewing the careers of the W.E.A.'s founders, the authors conclude that "the prime movers ... for the most part, were imperialists dedicated to the cause of strengthening imperial ties."² W.L. Grant, the Principal of Upper Canada College, and a key figure in the W.E.A.'s early history, had strong roots in Britain, had taught at Oxford University, and, after helping establish the W.E.A. in Toronto, taught W.E.A. courses in British history and politics. Two other founders of the W.E.A., Arthur Glazebrooke, an exchange broker, and Robert Falconer, the President of the University of Toronto, were both members of the imperialist Round Table movement. A

fourth founding member, the Classics professor W.S. Milner, was also an avowed imperialist, according to Radforth and Sangster.³ Imperialism gave the W.E.A.'s founders "a common aim" claim the authors: "it seems very likely that they all believed the W.E.A. would provide a means to spread imperial ideas among workers."⁴ Thus, for Radforth and Sangster, the founding of the W.E.A. in 1918 is explained by labour unrest in the latter war years, and the desire of an educational elite to deter radicalism by means of an imperialist educational programme.

Employing the notion of imperialism to explain the rise of the W.E.A. in Ontario has much to commend it. After all, the W.E.A. was originally a British creation, and the W.E.A.'s founders in Ontario must have admired the Association's success in Britain. The W.E.A. was founded in Britain in 1903 by Albert Mansbridge, an evangelical whose favorite phrase was "the glory of education,"⁵ and who saw the potential benefits of education to lay in the "spiritual development" of the individual.⁶ Mansbridge found support for his scheme among left-leaning liberals at Oxford University who, like Mansbridge, believed that the benefits of higher education should be extended to the working class. According to J.A. Blyth's study of adult education in Britain, Oxford professors such as R.H. Tawney believed that "ordinary men and women should have the opportunity to reflect upon the great philosophical questions related to life," which would assist in "liberating individuals from their depressed economic conditions."⁷ Within ten years, the W.E.A.

was a thriving national organization. Over thirty-two hundred members were enrolled in classes at several English universities, studying a liberal-arts curricula that included courses in economics, history, literature, and philosophy.⁹ By 1918, the W.E.A. was seen by many as a model of cooperation between labour and the educational establishment, and as such must have been regarded as an outstanding British institution by observers in Canada. The W.E.A. of Toronto's first Annual Report supports this interpretation. It claims that the Association's first meeting was "inspired by the success which the Workers' Educational Association had attained in Great Britain and other parts of the Empire, and animated with a desire to establish a similar movement in Toronto."⁹

However, it would be misleading to characterize the W.E.A. in its early years solely as a social control vehicle for promoting imperialist sentiment. The W.E.A.'s constitution stated that:¹⁰

It is essential that every citizen receive a training which will fit him to assume his true responsibilities The worker can take his proper place in industry and in the organization of society only when he is fitted by means of education to assume that place. This education it is the aim of the W.E.A. to provide.

The W.E.A.'s emphasis upon citizenship underscores the effusive burst of nationalism that was manifest in Canada in 1918. As Canadian historians have long argued, Canada's contribution to the war in Europe gave an enormous boost to nationalist sentiment. Frank Underhill wrote that: "the four years' career

of her fighting troops in France forms the real testimony of Canada's entrance into nationhood, the visible demonstration that there has grown upon her soil a people not English nor Scottish not American but Canadian--a Canadian nation."¹¹ Radforth and Sangster's argument that the W.E.A.'s founders aimed to spread imperial sentiment is convincing only when it is realized that nationalism was a corollary of imperialism in 1918. Carl Berger, in his study of Canadian imperialism, A Sense of Power, demonstrates that "imperialism was one form of Canadian nationalism."¹² Berger says that W.L. Grant was among those who sought to reform imperialist thought in a manner which would accommodate Canadian nationalism.¹³ The reformist group believed that Canada's influence within the Empire was expanding and would continue to do so as long as the Empire remained strong and intact: "these imperialists believed that a weak or diminished Empire meant the subversion of Canadian nationalism because the imperial system was a vehicle through which she would achieve nationhood."¹⁴ Promoting imperialism, then, was consistent with promoting Canadian nationalism, and so the W.E.A. can be seen as a nationalist vehicle rather than an imperialist one.

In the years following Prime Minister Laurier's promise that "the Twentieth Century belongs to Canada," nationalists began arguing that education was the key to Canada's future. The Dominion government's Technical Education Act, 1919, justified a federal role in education on nationalistic principles. The Act was the recommendation of the 1910 Royal Commission on Industrial

Training and Technical Education (the Robertson Commission), which concluded that federal assistance was warranted in light of the tremendous contribution education made to Canada's prosperity and prestige. The Commission's Report argued that if Canada's "place of honour, influence, and power among the nations is worth caring for, the kind of training and instruction which determines the abilities and qualifications of its young people for working and living are of supreme importance."¹⁵ Although the main recommendation of the Robertson Commission was federal assistance to fund technical education in secondary schools, it is clear from the Report that the contribution of education to national prosperity was conceived in a more widespread and general sense. The Report argued that: "every national problem can be dealt with by intelligent men and capable women ...[and] training and instruction in some form are the chief means of developing the powers, capabilities, and characters of individuals."¹⁶

The Robertson Commission was echoing popular sentiments of the era, especially those of Canadian capitalists. The Canadian Manufacturers' Association said in their journal, Industrial Canada, in 1900, that: "if our manufacturers had in their factories a class of labourers more intelligent and skilled than can be produced in other industrial centres of the world, the manufacturing establishments in Canada will be able to more than hold their own in the race for commercial supremacy."¹⁷ What is notable about both the Robertson Commission and the C.M.A. is that neither argued that 'ideal' Canadian workers should be

merely capable and skilled; they should be intelligent too.

In effect, government and business representatives argued that, for national purposes, the best education for Canadians was a broad one. This same philosophy inspired the "New Education" reforms of the early twentieth century. George Tompkins claims that the Robertson Commission's recommendations "served as a blueprint for implementing the New Education."¹⁸ The New Education reforms led to an expansion of the curriculum in public schools in an attempt to make schooling "more practical and relevant" for both students and society as a whole.¹⁹ As Nancy Sheehan has said, reformers "viewed the school as a vehicle for integrating the child into the social structure", and believed that a more varied curriculum would produce well-rounded individuals better able to adapt to the demands of modern society.²⁰

As members of the educational elite, the W.E.A.'s founders were aware of arguments linking education to national progress. Nationalist goals lay behind the Association's declared aim of educating workers for "intelligent and effective citizenship." The W.E.A.'s founders saw the Association as a way of preparing the working class for a what Grant called "a new concordat between Capital, Labour, and the State under which the working man may play his part as owner alike in industry and politics."²¹ The success of the Association in achieving this goal thus depended on working-class participation in the W.E.A., which can be quantitatively measured in two ways: the amount of support

lent it by organized labour, and the number of working-class members of the organization.

By the first criterium, the W.E.A. fared poorly. Support from organized labour was impressive during its first year only. The W.E.A. invited all Toronto labour unions, local and national organizations, to affiliate with the Association. In its first year, eleven union locals affiliated and paid fees of between five and twenty dollars. In addition, the Toronto District Labour Council affiliated and contributed one-hundred dollars, bringing the total financial support from organized labour to just over two-hundred dollars.²² The following year, the number of labour bodies affiliated with the W.E.A. was down to six, and by 1923, only one union remained affiliated.²³ This low level of labour participation was a source of some concern for the W.E.A.. Its Annual Report 1923-1924 stated that the Executive Committee "made a very special effort to solve the problem of interesting the Trade Unions in W.E.A. work," and a committee was formed to tour local union halls to promote its programme. In all, fifty-seven union halls were visited, but the results were disappointing: only three unions affiliated with the Association that year.²⁴

The Association fared somewhat better during its first decade when membership figures are used as a measure of its success. The Toronto chapter experienced steady growth in membership until the late 1920s. From 80 students in its first year, its membership grew to 634 by 1927. (See Table 1.1). The W.E.A. had

mixed results when it tried to expand beyond the Toronto area, however. A strong district association was established in Hamilton in 1920, which got off to an auspicious beginning when H.A. Innis led its first class, "Economics".²⁵ By 1922, W.E.A. chapters had been organized in Ottawa, and Brantford and Galt, and a provincial organization, the W.E.A. of Ontario, was formed to reflect this broadened base. The W.E.A. was not successful, however, in establishing a strong provincial association during the 1920s. Ottawa's membership peaked in 1922 at 208, dropped to 51 in 1925, and was defunct two years later. The Brantford and Galt chapter began in 1922 with a combined membership of 48, but this figure was down twenty-five percent two years later. A chapter was formed in Kitchener in 1924, but lasted only one year. In 1927, the W.E.A. of Ontario was formally dissolved, and by the end of the decade, only Toronto and Hamilton had local associations still in operation. The W.E.A. obviously had trouble getting established outside of Toronto during the 1920s. The low level of support from organized labour was a key factor. In addition to the fact that few unions affiliated with the Association during the decade, the W.E.A. also had difficulty in attracting rank and file union members to its classes.

Low labour support led to a situation where the University of Toronto, which financed the W.E.A.'s programme, dominated the affairs of the Association. The control of the W.E.A. was vested in its Executive Council, whose chief officers were elected by members at the W.E.A.'s Annual Meeting. The structure of the

Table 1.1

W.E.A. Annual Membership, Toronto and Ontario

School	Toronto and Ontario					
Year	Toronto	Hamilton	Ottawa	Brantford and Galt	Kitchener	Windsor
1918-19	80	-	-	-	-	-
1919-20	98	-	-	-	-	-
1920-21	132	18	n/a	-	-	-
1921-22	115	n/a	208	-	-	-
1922-23	346	115	195	48	-	-
1923-24	n/a	259	107	n/a	36	-
1924-25	435	250	51	36	-	51
1925-26	406	n/a	n/a	n/a	n/a	n/a
1926-27	634	n/a	-	n/a	-	n/a
1927-28	165	243	-	n/a	-	n/a
1928-29	212	n/a	-	n/a	-	n/a
1929-30	230	195	-	-	-	-

Source: W.E.A. Annual Reports. A hyphen (-) indicates that there is positive evidence that there were no W.E.A. classes in that year; n/a indicates that data is unavailable, and classes may or may not have been conducted.

Executive Council changed frequently in the 1920s, but it always contained representatives from the University, the Trades and Labour Council, and the general membership.²⁶ Ultimately, however, the W.E.A. was dominated by its Tutorial Secretary W.J. Dunlop, who was also the Director of the Department of University Extension. Dunlop was responsible for administering the W.E.A.'s programme, which included supplying tutors for W.E.A. classes, providing classroom space in university buildings, and promoting the Association's activities.

Dunlop apparently had little commitment to the W.E.A.'s programme, and tried to undermine it on several occasions. The W.E.A. was only one part of the university's extension programme, and by the mid-1920s, Dunlop was upset at the popularity of the W.E.A.'s tutorial classes compared to the regular extension lecture programme. In July, 1926, he complained to the

University's President that W.E.A. classes, which had been designed specifically for working people, were in fact attracting students from business, managerial, and professional backgrounds. Dunlop claimed that prospective extension students were attracted to W.E.A. classes because they were inexpensive--two dollars compared to ten dollars for regular extension lectures--and recommended that W.E.A. classes be restricted to "manual workers" only.²⁷

The limited membership data available for the 1920s seems to support Dunlop's claim that the W.E.A. was attracting far more than 'manual workers' to its classes. Less than ten percent of Toronto's 435 members in 1925 were trade unionists.²⁸ While the size of the Toronto chapter's membership was fairly impressive in the mid-1920s compared to other Ontario centres, the chapter was not attracting the type of members that Dunlop deemed appropriate. In 1927, Dunlop attempted to terminate the W.E.A.'s programme. The Department of Extension's official course calendar for the 1927-28 school year stated that the dual fee structure for W.E.A. tutorials and extension lectures was a "disadvantage" for the department, and henceforth, the two programmes would be "merged."²⁹ At the W.E.A.'s 1927 Annual Meeting, Dunlop informed the members that the University of Toronto's facilities were no longer available to the Association, and that if they desired to continue the W.E.A.'s programme, it would have to be done elsewhere. This decree prompted the W.E.A.'s Secretary-Treasurer to resign in protest.³⁰

In retrospect, this episode turned out to be a blessing in disguise for the Association. Its new Secretary-Treasurer, Drummond Wren, was a farsighted and hardworking individual who would dominate the W.E.A.'s affairs for the next twenty years. His talents were quickly revealed when he arranged to have W.E.A. classes conducted at various Toronto public libraries for the 1927-28 session, and hired university graduates to lead the classes.³¹ The W.E.A.'s programme was seriously reduced that year; the number of courses offered was halved, and the membership declined almost seventy-five percent.

At the end of the decade, a working relationship was re-established with Dunlop when the W.E.A. agreed to limit its membership as much as was practical to trade unionists. However, Dunlop's influence within the W.E.A. began to wane after 1930. He had been allowed to dominate its affairs during the 1920s almost by default. Weak financial and moral support from organized labour, gave Dunlop, who held the purse strings of the W.E.A., the upper hand in the administration of the its activities.

This situation changed considerably during Wren's tenure as Secretary-Treasurer. One of his biggest contributions to the W.E.A. was his successful pursuit of alternative sources of financing, which gave the Association an increasing degree of autonomy from the dictates of the University's Director of Extension. While outside financing eventually led to strained relations between Dunlop and the W.E.A., it enabled the

Association to set its own agenda for workers' education, one that took the form of a programme of more practical educational and informational services than had been the case during the 1920s.

The first major step towards greater autonomy for the W.E.A. was taken by Wren when he applied to the Carnegie Corporation for an educational grant in 1929. The application was approved, and at the beginning of 1930, the Association received a \$5,000 grant from the Corporation, which enabled Wren to assume the position of Secretary-Treasurer in a full-time capacity.³² As the only full time W.E.A. employee, Wren guided the Association during his long tenure with the assistance of dedicated working-class activists such as George Sangster, Jimmie Cunningham, and Bill Dunn.³³ The W.E.A.'s first major undertaking during the Depression was an aggressive promotional campaign. In 1930, 10,000 copies of a small, four-page promotional newspaper, The Link, were distributed through union halls. In addition to The Link, some 38,000 pieces of promotional literature--mostly leaflets and letters--were also distributed around the city before the start of the 1930-31 school year.³⁴ This promotional campaign continued for several years. Upwards of 50,000 booklets, flyers, letters, and posters were distributed annually, and in addition, the Association placed advertisements in Toronto newspapers, and was given air time by a local radio station to promote its activities. In 1934, a Speakers' Committee was established to tour Toronto trade-union halls to drum up support

for the Association.³⁵

The result of these efforts was a surge in the W.E.A.'s membership, and an expansion in the scope of its activities during the 1930s. Membership in Toronto rose from a low of 165 in 1927-28 to almost 900 in 1935-36, and it stayed at about this level until the end of the decade. Outside of Toronto, the rise in membership was just as impressive. By 1934-35, over 900 students were enrolled in W.E.A. classes in nineteen Ontario cities and towns. Three years later, the W.E.A. was truly a national organization. Aside from the Toronto chapter, over 1700 students were enrolled in W.E.A. classes and study groups in 36 district associations in seven provinces. (See Table 1.2). In 1936, the W.E.A. of Ontario was formally dissolved, and the W.E.A. of Canada was incorporated in its place.³⁶ Toronto was the headquarters of the national association, and most officers of the Toronto chapter's executive also sat on the board of the national association. However, while the W.E.A. of Toronto's activities are relatively well-documented into the 1940s, the national organization's are not.³⁷

The fate of the Toronto chapter suggests that the Association could not support a strong national enterprise by 1940. The W.E.A. had been sustained by a series of grants from the Carnegie Corporation during the 1930s, but by the end of the decade, these grants were discontinued. The initial 1930 grant was followed by another \$5,000 grant in 1931, and in 1934, the Association received a five-year grant of \$12,500 from the Corporation.

Table 1.2
W.E.A. Annual Membership, Toronto and Canada

School Year	No. of members in Toronto	No. of District Associations	No. of members outside of Toronto
1930-31	322	9	297
1931-32	540	14	370
1932-33	702	15	626
1933-34	718	15	795
1934-35	761	19	916
1935-36	866	22	1146
1936-37	802	29	1392
1937-38	847	37	1708
1938-39	902	n/a	n/a
1939-40	610	n/a	n/a
1940-41	506	n/a	n/a
1941-42	485	n/a	n/a

Source: W.E.A. Annual Reports.

However, this grant was not given directly to the Association; it was paid to the University of Toronto, but earmarked specifically for W.E.A. work. According to Wren, Dunlop attempted to use this financial arrangement to increase his power in the W.E.A..

Dunlop informed Wren that he was now an employee of the Department of Extension, and would in the future take all of his instructions from Dunlop. In addition, Dunlop insisted that all W.E.A. mail be sent directly to his office, and not to the W.E.A.'s headquarters, as had traditionally been the arrangement.³⁸

Wren's response to these dictates would lead him on a course which seriously damaged the W.E.A.'s relationship with the Director of Extension. His first act was to openly defy Dunlop by arranging with W.E.A. correspondents to have all mail sent directly to his home rather than to Dunlop's office.³⁹ He later justified this action, claiming that:⁴⁰

to have accepted such a dictum from the Director of Extension would have meant the complete elimination of the autonomy of the Workers' Educational Association, and would have placed the W.E.A. under the control and direction of a person who, by his own admission on a number of occasions, was not only antagonistic to workers' education, but who also was most unfamiliar with labour's needs and objectives.

Wren soon took additional steps to increase the W.E.A.'s independence from Dunlop. While the Carnegie grant continued to be paid to the W.E.A. via the University, Wren made further applications to the Corporation for grants to finance an expansion in the W.E.A.'s scope of activities. In the mid-1930s, Wren applied for, and received, Carnegie grants for \$6,000 to establish a visual education project, and \$3,000 to develop the W.E.A.'s research department.⁴¹

These and other ventures, which represented attempts by the W.E.A. to set its own agenda for workers' education, further antagonized Dunlop. In 1936, according to Wren, Dunlop attempted to bribe him, offering "unlimited funds" if the following conditions were met: first, he demanded that the W.E.A. Players Group be disbanded. Dunlop was apparently upset by the Group's performance of a play which Dunlop labelled "pure propaganda." Secondly, Dunlop insisted that he be given the right to censor scripts for the W.E.A.'s radio programme. And lastly, he repeated his earlier demand that all W.E.A. mail be sent directly to his office.⁴² Such decrees only strengthened Wren's resolve to gain greater autonomy for the W.E.A.. In 1936, the Association made an unsuccessful application to the provincial Minister of

Education which asked for a direct grant to the W.E.A. for administrative expenses, and for the payment of salaries of W.E.A. tutors.⁴³

The provision of tutors made the W.E.A.'s attempts to distance itself from the Department of Extension a delicate matter. The University had always paid the salaries of faculty members who taught W.E.A. classes, and the Association consistently acknowledged, in its Annual Reports, that quality tutors were indispensable to its programme. A University Committee was formed by the W.E.A. Board in an attempt to thaw relations between it and the Director of Extension. Chaired by H.A. Innis in the late 1930s and early 1940s, and comprised of other faculty members committed to the W.E.A.'s programme, the Committee functioned as a counterbalance to Dunlop's influence with the University's Board of Directors.⁴⁴

However, Dunlop received an opportunity to strike a damaging blow to the Association in 1939 when the University asked him to make a ten-percent reduction in his department's budget. Dunlop used this cutback as an excuse to slash the W.E.A.'s budget from \$8,000 to \$2,000 for the 1939-40 session.⁴⁵ This led to a dramatic reduction in the W.E.A.'s classroom programme, in spite of the fact that many faculty members gave much of their time voluntarily to the W.E.A. for this session.⁴⁶ In 1942, Dunlop discontinued grants to the W.E.A. entirely, effectively ending the W.E.A.'s relationship with the university.⁴⁷

The W.E.A. was left scrambling for funds in 1940. Grants from

the Carnegie Corporation ended in that year. The Corporation's support during the 1930s had been generous, for it exempted the W.E.A. from its usual policy of funding new projects for no more than three years.⁴⁸ Financial contributions from organized labour during this crisis were, compared to the loss of money from the University of Toronto and the Carnegie Corporation, a drop in the bucket. A disappointing total of \$131 was contributed by affiliated unions in 1939-40. In 1940, the Federal Department of Labour donated \$5,000 to the W.E.A.,⁴⁹ and in 1942, a direct appeal to the Premier of Ontario resulted in a \$4,000 annual grant,⁵⁰ but the W.E.A. was forced to rely on fundraising schemes to meet its expenses in the 1940s. About \$8,000 was solicited from private donations, and almost \$20,000 was raised through the innovative "Lifetime Home Draw" in 1944. The latter scheme was a raffle for a prefabricated house built for the W.E.A. and billed as a "model worker's home."⁵¹

These revenues sustained the W.E.A.'s activities but not nearly at the same level as had been attained in the 1930s. During the 1930s, the W.E.A. received almost \$45,000 in total from the Carnegie Corporation, and upwards of \$8,000 annually from the University of Toronto. In addition, membership fees brought in several thousand more dollars during the decade. In the 1940s, its membership reduced, and the Carnegie and University grants discontinued, the W.E.A.'s revenues were cut in half.

In 1949 the discontinuance of the provincial government's grant was a near-fatal blow to the W.E.A.. The circumstances

surrounding the termination of government support are quite fascinating, but are beyond the scope of this paper. Radforth and Sangster give a good account of how Wren and the W.E.A. were 'painted red' during the anti-communist hysteria of the late 1940s, and their article is recommended to the reader interested in this story.⁵²

The W.E.A.'s attempts to steer an autonomous course for itself in the 1930s caused cooperation between it and the University of Toronto to collapse in the early 1940s. The moderate, nationalist goals of the W.E.A.'s founders earned the Association the support of the University of Toronto, which financed and administered the W.E.A.'s programme. During the 1930s, the W.E.A. solicited funds from external agencies to pursue its own agenda for workers' education, a move which was resisted by the Director of University Extension, who saw his influence within the W.E.A. being reduced. A close look at the W.E.A.'s programme in the interwar period reveals a marked evolution in its philosophy of workers' education, and by 1940, the Association barely resembled the organization created in 1918.

NOTES TO CHAPTER 1

1. Radforth and Sangster, "A Link Between Labour and Learning", p.77.
2. Ibid., p.44.
3. Ibid., pp.44-45.
4. Ibid., p.46.
5. J.A. Blyth, English University Adult Education, 1908-1958: The Unique Tradition (Manchester: Manchester University Press, 1983), p.6.
6. Brian Simon, Education and the Labour Movement, 1870-1920 (London: Lawrence and Wishart, 1965), p.307.
7. Blyth, English University Adult Education, pp.4-5.
8. Ibid., pp.13-14.
9. W.E.A. of Toronto, Annual Report 1918-1919, p.3, Workers' Educational Association Papers, MU3990, Archives of Ontario (henceforth AO).
10. W.E.A. of Toronto, Annual Report, 1921-1922, p.4, W.E.A. Papers, MU3990, AO.
11. Quoted in Joseph Levitt, A Vision Beyond Reach: A Century of Images of Canadian Destiny (Ottawa: Deneau, 1982), p.66.
12. Carl Berger, A Sense of Power: Studies in the Idea of Canadian Imperialism, 1867-1914 (Toronto: University of Toronto Press, 1970), p.259.
13. Ibid., p.196.
14. Ibid., p.260.
15. Royal Commission on Industrial Training and Technical Education, Report, Book I (Ottawa: C.H. Parmelie, 1913), p.14.
16. Ibid., p.16.
17. Quoted in Stamp, The Schools of Ontario, p.82.
18. Tomkins, A Common Countenance, p.110.

19. Nancy Sheehan, "National Issues and Curricula Issues: Women and Educational Reform, 1900-1930," in Women and Education: A Canadian Perspective, eds. Jane Gaskell and Arlene Gaskell (Calgary: Detselig, 1987), p.223.

20. Sheehan, "National Issues and Curricula Issues," p.224.

21. Quoted in Ibid., p.48.

22. W.E.A. of Toronto, Annual Report 1918-1919, p.7, W.E.A. Papers, MU3990, AO.

23. W.E.A. of Toronto, Annual Report 1919-1920, p.7; Annual Report 1922-1923, p.4, W.E.A. Papers, MU3990, AO.

24. W.E.A. of Ontario, Annual Report 1923-1924, p.3, Department of Labour Library (henceforth DLL).

25. W.E.A. of Hamilton, "Minutes of Annual Meeting, 1921," W.E.A. Papers, MU3994, AO.

26. In its second year, the W.E.A.'s Executive Council consisted of a President, Vice President, and Secretary-Treasurer (all elected at large); three University-appointed representatives; four union-appointed representatives; and three elected representatives elected by the general membership. By 1926 the Council consisted of a President, a Second and a Third Vice President (all elected at large); a representative from each class and the tutor of each class; three additional University-appointed representatives; and only two union representatives. Thus, the influence of organized labour in the W.E.A. had waned. (W.E.A. of Toronto, Annual Report 1919-20; Minutes of Annual Meeting, 1926; W.E.A. Papers, MU3990, AO).

27. Blyth, A Foundling at Varsity, pp.42-43. Blyth has an extensive discussion of Dunlop's career as Director of the extension department, and of his conflicts with various W.E.A. representatives over the Association's educational programme.

28. W.E.A. of Toronto, Annual Report 1924-1925, appendix, W.E.A. Papers, MU3990, AO.

29. Copy in W.L. Grant Papers, MG30 D59, Vol.11, National Archives of Canada.

30. W.E.A. of Toronto, "Minutes of Annual Meeting, April 25, 1927," W.E.A. Papers, MU3990, AO.

31. W.E.A. of Toronto, Annual Report 1927-1928, p.2, W.E.A. Papers, MU3990, AO.

32. Drummond Wren, "Address to the President and Board

Members of the W.E.A. of Canada," presented 31 March 1951, p. 6. Copy held by the Workers' Educational Association of Canada, Toronto, Ontario (henceforth Wren's Address).

33. See Radforth and Sangster, "A Link Between Labour and Learning," pp.60-61, for brief biographical sketches of these men.

34. W.E.A. of Toronto, Annual Report 1930-1931, W.E.A. Papers, MU3990, AO.

35. See the W.E.A. of Toronto's Annual Reports from 1929-30 through 1935-36 for a full description of these promotional activities, MU3990, MU4002, AO.

36. W.E.A. of Canada, Annual Report 1935-1936, p.13, DLL.

37. Membership figures in the Annual Reports reveal a steady increase until 1938, but the W.E.A. of Canada filed its last Annual Report with the federal Department of Labour in that year. Significant gaps in the Association's archival collection for the 1938 to 1950 period prohibit the compilation of comprehensive membership statistics. See W.E.A. Papers, AO.

38. Wren's Address, p.29.

39. Ibid.

40. Ibid., p.30.

41. Ibid., pp.19, 31.

42. Ibid., pp.8-9.

43. W.E.A. of Canada, Annual Report 1936-1937, p.9, DLL.

44. See the W.E.A. of Toronto's Annual Report 1940-1941 for details of the University Committee, and also Wren's correspondence with Innis; W.E.A. Papers, MU4002, MU4026, AO.

45. W.E.A. of Toronto, Annual Report 1939-1940, p.4, W.E.A. Papers, MU4002, AO.

46. Ibid. See Chapter II for a full description of the decline of the W.E.A.'s classroom programme.

47. Blyth, A Foundling at Varsity, p.83.

48. Wren's Address, p.31.

49. Wren's Address, p.33.

50. Blyth, A Foundling at Varsity, p.83.

51. Wren's Address, p.32.

52. See Radforth and Sangster, "A Link Between Labour and Learning," pp.71-78.

CHAPTER 2

The Association is established to provide an opportunity for the workers to obtain the benefits of University Education, and assist them to acquire the knowledge which is essential to intelligent and effective citizenship. To that end, Political and Economic Science, History, English Literature and other subjects may be taught.

W.E.A. of Ontario, Annual Report 1918-1919.

From the outset, the W.E.A.'s leaders perceived a means/end relationship between curriculum and social goals. Motivated by a desire to integrate the working class into the national political fabric, the Association's founders believed that a programme of what they called "cultural" subjects was the best way to achieve that end. By the 1930s the W.E.A.'s original founders were gone, and the Association's leaders revised the W.E.A.'s curriculum to suit their goals, which were less lofty and more practical than those of their predecessors. Examining the W.E.A.'s evolving curriculum in the interwar period is one way of exploring the corresponding changes in the Association's goals and values.

Since the rise of the 'new-left' in the 1960s, historians have been arguing that the values of educators are impregnated in school curricula. Alison Prentice's study of Ontario schools in the Ryerson years reveals how curriculum was used to instill in young students the virtues of respect, restraint, and deference to authority, by school officials anxious to preserve the status quo.¹

Robert Stamp's study of Ontario's public schools reveals that in the early twentieth century, school administrators wanting to foster imperial sentiment among the province's youth added textbooks with a blatant imperial bias, and extensive Empire Day celebrations, to the curriculum.² In the field of higher education, Paul Axelrod has demonstrated that in the 1930s, Dalhousie University's administrators were "devoted to turning out respectable professionals," and they "moulded" middle-class students through a curriculum that was "steeped in the cultural heritage and intellectual traditions of British North America."³ Like Prentice and Stamp, Axelrod sees a close connection between school curricula and the social values of school administrators.

The W.E.A.'s founders adopted a "cultural" curriculum similar to the one Axelrod describes, but with the aim of turning out respectable working-class citizens. The W.E.A.'s initial classroom programme strongly reflects the influence of the post-W.W.I. New Education reforms. Since the New Education aimed to better integrate students into the social structure, reformers recommended a more varied curriculum which they hoped would develop all of the student's latent abilities: the future needs of society would best be served by the education of "the whole child". During the era of the New Education, the curricula of primary and secondary institutions was greatly expanded; new subjects such as manual training, domestic science, 'nature study', and physical education were added to the curricula, while long-established subjects like art and music were given new prominence.⁴ The educators who

founded the W.E.A. believed that the working class lacked essential components of a well-rounded education. Workers had developed vocational skills while on the job, but these skills needed to be rounded out by a "cultural" education before working people could become responsible and productive citizens. To achieve this end, the W.E.A.'s curriculum during its first decade emphasized liberal-arts subjects.

In the 1930s, the goal of educating workers for citizenship was still on the W.E.A.'s agenda, but it was no longer the primary goal of the Association and the W.E.A.'s curriculum was substantially revised. This chapter will examine the evolution of the W.E.A. of Toronto's curriculum from 1918 through the 1940s to illustrate the corresponding changes in the aims of the Association. In addition, the content of some courses will be examined in an attempt to evaluate the "quality" of the education the W.E.A. offered. Year-to-year changes in the W.E.A.'s curriculum were described in the Association's Annual Reports until the 1940-41 school year. Each Annual Report listed courses offered the previous year, and in some cases, gave brief descriptions of the contents of courses. Various W.E.A. pamphlets and brochures also summarized course contents, and are the best source for information on the W.E.A.'s classroom programme after 1941. W.E.A. Board of Management Minutes help reveal how the yearly programme was chosen, as do the Annual Reports.

"Cultural education", claimed the W.E.A. in 1920, "makes for self improvement and social betterment."⁵ The strong emphasis on

cultural subjects in the W.E.A.'s curriculum in the 1920s reveals an underlying conservatism in the educational philosophy of its founders. Although their advocacy of a greater role for workers in social policy represented somewhat of a departure from traditional thinking, the W.E.A.'s founders nonetheless saw workers' role in conservative terms. They prescribed for their students a curriculum which they hoped would lead workers to appreciate and embrace their culture and institutions, so that all social classes would have some common values from which to appraise national problems.

The nationalist goals of the W.E.A.'s founders infused the Association's curriculum in the 1920s, giving it a strong bias towards Canada's cultural heritage. In its inaugural session, three of the eight courses the W.E.A. offered had politics as their subject matter: one on Canadian political history, another on political philosophy, and the third entitled "The Constitution of English-Speaking Peoples". British and Canadian history courses were given several times in the early 1920s, as were courses in "Civics" and "Civic Administration". "Public Finance" and "Economics" courses explored banking institutions and the theories upon which the Canadian economy was based. "English Literature" quickly became a mainstay in the curriculum, and was offered every year well into the 1940s.⁶ Clearly, all of these subjects were aimed to immerse working people in Canada's cultural and institutional traditions.

The W.E.A.'s liberal-arts curriculum was also reflected the

University of Toronto's influence within the organization. The Provincial University could hardly be expected to support a movement which did not share its educational values. As Brian Simon has shown in his study of the workers' education movement in Britain, the radical, activist bent of one workers' education organization, the Plebs League, caused them to lose the support of Oxford University. When the Plebs League, "predominantly marxist in outlook," seized Ruskin College in 1909 and proclaimed it as the official vehicle through which to advance their cause, Oxford severed all formal ties with the College and the League.⁷ The Dons of Oxford instead supported Albert Mansbridge's W.E.A.. Similarly, the Toronto W.E.A.'s moderate aims and traditional curriculum made for a good relationship with the University of Toronto.

The University's influence is apparent in the quality of education the W.E.A. offered. Classes met once a week for two hours a night, with courses usually spanning twenty weeks. Each class consisted of a one to one and a half-hour lecture, with the remainder of the class devoted to open discussion. The University provided faculty members to conduct W.E.A. classes, and it appears that these professors had high standards for W.E.A. classes. In its inaugural year, "English Literature" students examined the works of Milton, while members of the "English Literature" class the following year studied the "Prose and Poetry of Shakespeare and Dickens" and also received instruction in grammar and composition to aid them in the writing of essays. Students in "Political Philosophy" that same year studied Aristotle's Politics.⁸ A

synopsis given of the "Public Finance" class of 1919-20 further illustrates the challenging scope of W.E.A. courses:⁹

Early history of Money. The slow process by which gold became an exact standard of Value. Experiments in Paper expansion and the theory of Money. Influence of Foreign Trade on Money. Use of Paper Money. The Industrial Revolution and Foreign Trade. Modern Finance--National and International. The coming of the great banks and the machinery of Exchange.

While these descriptions of the "English Literature" and "Public Finance" courses testify to the quality of W.E.A. courses, the W.E.A.'s courses differed from regular university courses in one important respect. No evaluation was made of students' performances, and there were no formal requirements which students had to meet. Students were encouraged, but not pressured, to submit essays. Since students were not being evaluated or graded, W.E.A. classes were conducted in an entirely uncompetitive atmosphere.

The W.E.A.'s curriculum also differed from standard university programmes in that it did not consistently offer students as wide a range of courses. Students had, on average, a choice of eight different subjects between the 1918-19 and 1928-29 school years (Table 2.1). In all, twenty different subjects were offered during this period, but only seven subjects were offered more than five times in this eleven-year span.¹⁰ As Table 2.1 indicates; four subjects were at the core of the W.E.A.'s programme: "Economics", "English", "Psychology", and "Public Speaking" were offered virtually every year. Of the

TABLE 2.1
 W.E.A. of Toronto Programme of Courses, 1918-19 to 1928-29

Subject	Times Offered	Years Offered	Subject	Times Offered	Years Offered
Astronomy	1	1	Journalism	9	6
Biology	1	1	Labour Problems	1	1
Civics	4	4	Metallurgy	1	1
Drama	3	3	Politics	3	3
Economics	21	10	Psychology	16	10
Eng. Comp. & Lit.	18	10	Public Speaking	10	8
Finance	7	6	Rhetoric	3	2
French	3	2	Science	1	1
History	7	6	Sociology	3	3
Hygiene	1	1	Trade Union Law	1	1

N.B.: No data available for 1920-21 year.

Source: W.E.A. Annual Reports.

four, the first three seem quite appropriate in a programme which purports to offer a liberal-arts education. On the surface, "Public Speaking" seems to be a departure from the "cultural" educational programme of the W.E.A., but the course was consistent with the Association's aim to equip students with the tools needed to participate in the affairs of the country. In addition, "Public Speaking" made students better prepared for other W.E.A. courses. Since a portion of all classes were devoted to open discussion, experience in public speaking must have helped some students overcome inhibitions and participate in the discussions. After all, most W.E.A. students had not been in a classroom in years, and some must have found the experience a bit intimidating.

More surprising than the fact that "Public Speaking" was a core subject is that "History" was not one. Enrollment must have been sparse in the several history courses in the early years of

the W.E.A.'s operation, for the course was not offered for three years after the 1924-25 session. When "History" was again offered in 1928-29, only three people enrolled, and the course had to be cancelled. History, it would seem, is central to a cultural education programme, and its failure to attract students distressed W.E.A. officials. Commenting upon the poor turnout for the 1928-29 class, the Annual Report stated: "this was no surprise, as History has always been one of the least desired of our subjects even though we consider it a most interesting and necessary one."¹¹

This statement, and others like it, reveal that the educational goals of the W.E.A. and its students did not always coincide. A lack of enrollment statistics for the the W.E.A.'s first decade of activity makes it impossible to know whether the frequency with which courses were offered reflected the popularity of the courses with students or the desire of W.E.A. officials to encourage students to take courses deemed appropriate for them. The fate of the "History" course suggests that the W.E.A. was prepared to push certain courses, but at the same time it recognized the futility of giving courses which were not popular.

Although the general nature of the curriculum was established by the W.E.A.'s founders, a combination of factors helped determine the curriculum each year. The availability of appropriate tutors was one major consideration. As Director of the Department of Extension, W.J. Dunlop decided which faculty

members would be available for W.E.A. work.¹² Student enrollment also influenced yearly curriculum; course registration forms stated that, "whenever a sufficient number of students apply for a subject, a competent tutor will be appointed".¹³ In its early years, the W.E.A. was apparently cautious about expanding its programme: the Annual Report 1921-22 made it clear that the previous year's programme would be repeated unless student demand justified expansion.¹⁴ By the late 1920s, the W.E.A.'s Annual Meeting, held in Toronto's Labour Temple about a month before classes were to begin, became a forum where members made their preferences known to the Association. At the end of each school year, the Board of Management, appointed by the Executive Council, drew up a preliminary programme which was placed before the membership at the Annual Meeting and debated by members.¹⁵ Membership input resulted in the addition of a "Finance" class to the 1928-29 programme.¹⁶

This interplay between W.E.A. members and officers suggests that the Association was still trying to find its niche as an educational organization. Although its leaders had definite educational aims, they nevertheless recognized that some flexibility in curriculum was necessary to attract workers to the organization. One course, "Metallurgy", offered three times in the late 1920s and early 1930s, represented a departure from the liberal-arts curriculum, but the W.E.A. offered this course with some misgivings. The Annual Report 1928-1929 stated that the W.E.A. was reluctant to offer this course, "as this appeared to

be a subject of a technical nature," but as there was a demand for the course, the Association relented: "this has been a departure, strictly speaking, from the cultural nature of our classes [but] it seems to be a necessary one."¹⁷ The first Metallurgy course was given the year after the Director of the Department of Extension issued his command that W.E.A. classes not be held on the University of Toronto's campus, a directive that seriously depleted the organization's membership. Offering courses in Metallurgy probably sprung from the conviction that establishing a firm membership base was of paramount importance during this crisis.

The W.E.A.'s repudiation of the belief, in the mid-1930s, that general membership meetings should help determine course selection, reveals the emergence of a mature and self-confident organization. Student input was still encouraged on registration forms; but after noting that annual meetings often turned into noisy debates over what subjects a workers' educational association should provide, the Annual Report 1934-1935 stated that the curriculum would, in the future, be determined by the elected officers of the Association. It may not be democratic, the Report continued, but "we are concerned with the furtherance of our work and we should follow whatever course is most likely to arrive at that objective."¹⁸ As that objective was gradually elaborated in the 1930s, it became clear that the goal of the 1920s--providing working people with an education that would make them patriotic citizens--was gradually giving way to a

programme which aimed to provide a more practical service to working people.

The Great Depression provided the context for the revised goals of the W.E.A. in the 1930s. The inability of governments of the day to resolve the economic crisis and its attendant social problems led many Canadians to re-evaluate prevailing economic and social orthodoxies. Social criticism was led by two organizations founded in the 1930s, the Canadian Commonwealth Federation and the League for Social Reconstruction. Although some members of the L.S.R. taught W.E.A. classes--most notably Frank Underhill who led a "History" class in the late 1930s¹⁹--the Association did not formally align itself with either of these political movements; not once did the W.E.A.'s Annual Reports attempt to persuade its members to support particular political movements or parties.

The W.E.A. did, however, shift away from its conservative philosophy of the 1920s which held that education made working people more valuable citizens towards a philosophy which held that education should benefit workers in a more immediate and practical sense. While national well-being remained of great value to the W.E.A., the Depression convinced it that national recovery, while important, should not be bought at the price of further hardships for working people. As the decade progressed, the W.E.A. increasingly linked the value of education to immediate social betterment, and especially to an improved standard of living for working people.

A declaration of educational principles, made in 1936, reveals that the W.E.A. remained fully cognizant of the power of education to affect social development, but was now determined to use that power on behalf of its clientele:²⁰

In the final analysis the worth of workers' education may be judged by the service its beneficiaries contribute to the community's good. Educational policy is always and everywhere social policy, is it not? A view of education is still sometimes advanced which implies that thought and action belong to different spheres, and that an educational association which appeals, not merely to intellectual curiosity, but to practical interests and social enthusiasm forfeits its claim to the title. No suggestion could be more remote from fact.... Workers' education, if it is to be alive and vigorous, cannot concern itself merely with mental gymnastics.

The economic crisis spurred the W.E.A. to undertake a campaign to give its students the tools needed to improve conditions in the working-class community. This campaign is only partly reflected in the number and type of classes offered by the organization in the 1930s. As Chapter Four demonstrates, actions outside the classroom became an increasingly important facet of the Association's activities; so much so that the number and range of courses offered declined rapidly after the 1938-39 session (see Table 2.2). However, an examination of the W.E.A.'s curriculum during the 1930s reveals that the classroom became a forum where students explored issues which affected them, and considered practical ways of coping with common problems. "Economics", "English", "Psychology", and "Public Speaking" remained at the core of the W.E.A.'s programme: each was offered at least once every year during the thirties (see Table 2.3).

Table 2.2
W.E.A. of Toronto--Size and Scope of Annual Classroom Programme

School Year	Total Number of Courses	Number of Different Subjects		Total Number of Courses	Number of Different Subjects
1918-19	8	6	1933-34	13	9
1919-20	6	6	1934-35	19	12
1920-21	n/a	n/a	1935-36	18	14
1921-22	7	7	1936-37	16	12
1922-23	12	6	1937-38	19	12
1923-24	14	8	1938-39	25	13
1924-25	16	10	1939-40	16	13
1925-26	9	9	1940-41	14	13
1926-27	16	11	1941-42 1	14	10
1927-28	9	6	1942-43 1	12	10
1928-29	13	8	1943-44 2	7	6
1929-30	8	7	1944-45 1	5	5
1930-31	10	9	1945-46 1	12	11
1931-32	17	10	1946-47 2	6	6
1932-33	15	*			

Source: W.E.A. Annual Reports.

n/a= not available

* Four course titles unknown.

1 Source is W.E.A. brochure: courses may not have been given (MU3999, AO).

2 Source is Attendance Sheets: may not be the complete programme for that year (MU3998, MU3999, AO).

TABLE 2.3
W.E.A. of Toronto Programme of Courses, 1929-30 to 1938-39

Subject	Times Offered	Years Offered	Subject	Times Offered	Years Offered
Art	5	5	Math	2	2
Chemistry	1	1	Metallurgy	2	2
Co-Operation	1	1	Music	2	2
Crafts	3	3	Philosophy	5	5
Current Events	11	7	Physiology	2	2
Economics I	12	8	Political Science	5	5
Economics II	6	5	Psychology I	12	8
Economics III	5	5	Psychology II	7	7
Eng. Comp. & Grammar	24	10	Psychology III	3	3
Eurythmics	1	1	Public Speaking I	12	10
Finance	1	1	Public Speaking II	5	5
History	6	5	Science	7	7
Household Economics	1	1	Sociology	4	4
Hygiene	2	2	Trade Unionism	2	2
Labour Problems	4	4			

Source: W.E.A. Annual Reports.

More importantly, second-year courses were given in all four subjects, and, in the cases of "Economics" and "Psychology", third-year courses as well. These developments reflect both the maturity of the W.E.A. as an educational organization, and its desire to probe, in greater depth, the theoretical underpinnings of these subjects.

"Economics" was apparently the subject deemed most worthy of in-depth study; more advanced-level courses were offered in "Economics" than any other subject. Moreover, almost one-third of the books in the W.E.A.'s twelve-hundred volume library concerned economic subjects in 1937.²¹ In addition, the Annual Report 1935-1936 urged the W.E.A.'s expanding network of district associations "to direct their efforts towards the formation of classes in Economics that might continue for a three-year period."²²

The Association was undoubtedly encouraged by the success of the Toronto chapter's first attempt to offer a third-year "Economics" course. As stated in the Annual Report 1935-1936, second and third year "Economics" students were given a series of tests:²³

similar to university term examinations in second and third years. These tests have proven conclusively the worth of our classes, if we will accede that tests or examinations prove anything at all... as the results showed that as great or greater a percentage of our working people in these classes obtained the equivalent to honours than do others who enjoy the privilege of attending universities for more lengthy periods during the year.

Aside from its reiteration of the dubious value of formal

evaluation procedures, this passage is notable in that it provides us with virtually the only direct comparison of W.E.A. and regular university students. The Toronto chapter's Annual Report of the same year gives further insight into the quality of the advanced "Economics" courses, and furthermore, illustrates how the study of economics was designed to give students the basis for critically understanding contemporary social and economic developments.

Students in "Economics II"--economic theory--were asked to submit essays which included the following elements: a definition of money and the quantitative theory of money; a description of the Canadian banking system; and an explanation of the influence that discoveries of gold has on price levels.²⁴ Students in the third year "Economics" class--economics and social theory--were given a more demanding assignment which quite explicitly was designed to provoke discussion about contemporary issues. Students were asked to submit essays which "explain the social philosophy of anyone of the following and show its relevance to the contemporaneous social background and problems--Plato, Jesus, Dante, Sir Thomas More, St. Augustine, Luther, Calvin, Voltaire."²⁵ Alternatively, they could write about "Marx's debt to Hegel and others that were enumerated...[and] show how in each case Marx differed from these several others."²⁶ Clearly, students were expected to do some deep thinking, and to develop new perspectives from which to evaluate current events.

While the advanced "Economics" courses were designed to give

students a theoretical basis for understanding contemporary issues, students in the advanced "Public Speaking" courses were asked to examine some practical means of coping with current problems. "Public Speaking II", in 1938-39, consisted of a mock parliament composed of parties which represented the major labour unions. Bills such as "A Minimum Wage Act", a "Labour Board Act", and "A Trade Union Act" were debated and voted upon in an attempt to uncover how the leading labour unions would respond to concrete proposals aimed at increasing working people's security.²⁷

A number of first year courses offered by the W.E.A. in the 1930s also explored problems facing working people. One notable development during the Depression was a "Current Events" course, which was offered for the first time in the 1930-31 school year. After the four core subjects, "Current Events" was the most frequently-given course in the W.E.A.'s programme: eleven courses were given between 1930 and 1939. The appearance of the "Labour Problems" course in the W.E.A.'s programme likewise suggests that the Association was attempting to probe issues relevant to working people. In the 1940s, "Labour Problems" became the fourth most offered course, and this development, along with the fact that the W.E.A. gave courses in consumer "Co-operation", "Trade Unionism", and "Labour Law" in the late thirties and early 1940s shows that the W.E.A. was urging its members to understand how issues affected workers as a group, and to look for solutions which called for a collective response.

As Table 2.3 reveals, the number of courses designed to explore and attempt to deal with current issues was a relatively minor--albeit notable--part of the W.E.A.'s classroom programme during the Depression. "Cultural" subjects such as "English", "Psychology", "Philosophy", and "History" remained important components of the programme. In part, the prominence of liberal-arts courses in the W.E.A.'s curriculum in the 1930s was due to the fact that the organization was using forums other than the classroom to provide practical educational services, and so the curriculum alone does not fully reflect the W.E.A.'s aims. However, the persistence of the liberal-arts curriculum suggests that the goals of the W.E.A.'s founders remained part of the W.E.A.'s philosophy throughout this period. The W.E.A. never repudiated its intention of providing workers with the education needed to assume a more prominent role in national affairs; however, the W.E.A.'s activities during the 1930s suggests that the Association believed that this role in national affairs was dependent upon a strong and united working class.

Offering liberal-arts courses such as "Art" and "Music" also helped achieve another of the Association's goals during the 1930s: to provide activities of a recreational nature for workers and especially for the unemployed. As early as 1931, the W.E.A. recognized that widespread "enforced leisure" would lead to a greater interest in its programme.²⁸ Membership fees were waived for unemployed men and women who wanted to attend W.E.A. classes,²⁹ and special courses in the arts and crafts were

created specifically for the unemployed. Arthur Lismer and his staff at the Ontario Art Gallery conducted several of these courses during the 1930s, donating their time and materials for free.³⁰ Recreational activities should be interpreted as part of the W.E.A.'s aim to provide services of practical benefit to its members. Such activities offered members an opportunity to escape what was for many the disheartening realities of daily life.

The W.E.A.'s programme of courses for the 1940s reveals that recreational courses dominated the curriculum during this decade (Table 2.4). "Dance" courses, in fact, surpassed "Economics" courses in terms of the total number of courses offered and the number of years the courses were given. "Dance" and "Music" courses combined surpassed any other single subject on these counts. The decline of academic subjects is further revealed by the absence--except for one advanced "Psychology" course--of second and third-year courses in the curriculum of the 1940s. A steady decline in the number and range of total courses offered is also evident.

The funding crisis of 1939 loomed large in the waning of the W.E.A.'s classroom programme, as did the severing of formal ties with the University of Toronto in 1942. Some University professors continued to teach W.E.A. classes, but overall, the credentials of the Association's tutors declined during the 1940s.³¹ The partnership of the University and the W.E.A. had been responsible for the rise of a workers' education movement

TABLE 2.4
 W.E.A. of Toronto Programme of Courses, 1939-40 to 1946-47

Subject	Times Offered	Years Offered	Subject	Times Offered	Years Offered
Camera Club	1	1	Philosophy	3	3
Current Events	4	4	Photography	1	1
Dance	7	6	Political Science	7	6
Economics	6	5	Psychology I	8	7
Eng. Comp & Grammar	11	8	Psychology II	1	1
Gymnasium	1	1	Public Speaking	10	8
History	5	5	Russian Language	1	1
Interior Decorating	1	1	Science	3	3
Journalism	1	1	Sociology	6	6
Labour Law, Problems	9	7	Theatre	1	1
Music	5	5	Trade Unionism	1	1

Source: W.E.A. of Toronto Annual Reports, Attendance Sheets and Brochures (MU3998, MU3999, MU4002, AO).

which, at its peak, saw almost one-thousand Toronto students enrolled in an impressive variety of evening classes. However, the end of this partnership does not sufficiently account for the demise of the W.E.A.'s classroom programme. In the early 1930s, the W.E.A. began pursuing alternative forms of educational activity, and by the end of that decade, the evening-class programme had assumed less importance in the W.E.A.'s overall campaign.

The expansion of the scope of its classroom curriculum in the early 1930s reveals just how far the W.E.A. had progressed since 1918. The Association's curriculum during its first decade reflects the goals of its national-minded educators. The curriculum was characterized by a heavy emphasis on courses designed to initiate workers into their cultural heritage. This educational strategy reveals the influence of New Education reforms, which were based on the notion that developing all of a

student's latent faculties best prepares the student for integration into the social structure. During the Depression, the W.E.A.'s curriculum was broadened to include more practical courses, a reflection of the Association's goal to use its programme to give its students the tools needed to cope with and hopefully resolve hardships imposed by the economic recession.

How did Toronto workers react to the W.E.A.'s initiatives during the 1930s? Many historians argue that examining curriculum to reveal the goals of educators gives us a one-sided perspective of the educational process that needs to be balanced by an analysis of how students responded to the services that were made available to them. This approach offers a means of measuring the success of the educators' aims, and by exploring students' experiences with the W.E.A., we gain insight into their educational ambitions.

NOTES TO CHAPTER 2

1. Prentice, The School Promoters.
2. Stamp, The Schools of Ontario, pp.82-112; see also Stamp's "Empire Day in the Schools of Ontario: The Training of Young Imperialists," Journal of Canadian Studies 8, 3 (August, 1973): 32-42.
3. Axelrod, "Moulding the Middle Class."
4. Tomkins, A Common Countenance, p.115.
5. W.E.A. of Toronto, Annual Report 1919-1920, p.3, W.E.A. Papers, MU3990, AO.
6. W.E.A. of Toronto, Annual Reports, W.E.A. Papers, MU3990, MU4002, AO.
7. Simon, Education and the Labour Movement, pp.310-324.
8. W.E.A. of Toronto, Annual Report 1918-1919, p.4; Annual Report 1919-1920, p.5; W.E.A. Papers, MU3990, AO.
9. W.E.A. of Toronto, Annual Report 1919-1920, p.4, W.E.A. Papers, MU3990, AO.
10. These observations are subject to the qualification that data is available for only eleven of these twelve years. Data for the 1920-21 school year is unavailable.
11. W.E.A. of Ontario, Annual Report 1918-1919, p.8, DLL.
12. Blyth, A Foundling at Varsity, p.30.
13. Various registration forms in W.E.A. Papers, MU3997, AO.
14. W.E.A. of Toronto, Annual Report 1921-1922, p.4, W.E.A. Papers, MU3990, AO.
15. See, for example, Board of Management Minutes, June 24, 1928, and May 29, 1929; W.E.A. Papers, MU3990, AO.
16. W.E.A. of Ontario, Annual Report 1928-1929, p.4, DLL.
17. W.E.A. of Toronto, Annual Report 1928-1929, p.8, W.E.A.

Papers, MU3990, AO.

18. W.E.A. of Canada, Annual Report 1934-1935, p.13, DLL.

19. W.E.A. of Toronto, Annual Report 1938-1939, p.6, W.E.A. Papers, MU4002, AO.

20. W.E.A. of Canada, Annual Report 1935-1936, p.5, DLL.

21. W.E.A. of Canada, Annual Report 1936-1937, p.11, DLL.

22. W.E.A. of Canada, Annual Report 1935-1936, p.4, DLL.

23. W.E.A. of Canada, Annual Report 1935-1936, p.5, DLL.

24. W.E.A. of Toronto, Annual Report 1935-1936, p.7, W.E.A. Papers, MU4002, AO.

25. Ibid. p.8.

26. Ibid.

27. W.E.A. of Toronto, Annual Report 1938-1939, p.3, W.E.A. Papers, MU4002, AO.

28. W.E.A. of Ontario, Annual Report 1930-1931, p.11, DLL.

29. See, for an example of this, Attendance Sheets for 1934-35, Hamilton & District W.E.A., W.E.A. Papers, MU3994, AO.

30. See, for example, W.E.A. of Toronto, Annual Report 1933-1934, p.5, W.E.A. Papers, MU4002, AO.

31. The credentials--university degrees--of W.E.A. tutors were invariably stated in Annual Reports and brochures. See W.E.A. Papers, MU3999, MU4002, AO.

CHAPTER 3

Educational historians have recently been demonstrating the fruitfulness of exploring what motivated young adults to attend Canadian universities. Studies of Mount Allison University in the late nineteenth-century, Queen's University at the turn of the century, and Dalhousie University in the 1930s, have led to a re-evaluation of the conventional view that university students were a homogeneous mass with common origins and aims.¹ Research into the family backgrounds of university students has shown that a variety of factors including religion, ethnicity, economic class, and geographic origin influenced students' career ambitions and thus their decision to enroll in particular institutions and programmes.

An analysis of the W.E.A.'s enrollment statistics and membership composition offers a fascinating opportunity to explore an aspect of Toronto's working-class culture; it enables us to determine which elements of the working-class wanted to further their education, and what subjects they found most appealing. Ian Radforth and Joan Sangster's article on the W.E.A. stops short of thoroughly analysing enrollment statistics and the composition of the Association's membership.² Taken further, such an analysis illuminates the educational interests of Toronto's working people, and how these interests changed over the course of the 1930s.

Comparing male and female participation in the W.E.A.'s

programme is possibly the most interesting aspect of this analysis, since recent studies of Canadian women in the 1930s have emphasized the influence maternalist propaganda had on women, coercing them to remain in their "proper sphere". Veronica Strong-Boag argues that social pressure for distinct gender roles was reflected in the schooling patterns of males and females: "female students took different subjects ...and graduated in different numbers at every educational level." W.E.A. enrollment data offers a means of comparing the educational choices of women and men; the Association placed no restrictions on enrollment, and men and women freely chose their own courses of study.

The principal source for this analysis is the W.E.A.'s Annual Reports. Beginning in 1929-30 and ending in 1938-39, the Annual Reports gave the number of students enrolled in every course offered. This ten-year period, which saw the W.E.A.'s classroom programme peak, will be the focus of this investigation. Although the total number of students enrolled in each course was consistently given, the Annual Reports occasionally failed to give enrollment by gender in some courses. This gap in the enrollment data creates some methodological problems for the researcher, which are fully discussed in Appendix I. The Annual Reports also provided information on the occupational structure of the membership. However, the way this information was reported varied from year-to-year, and this also creates methodological problems. Appendix II contains a discussion of

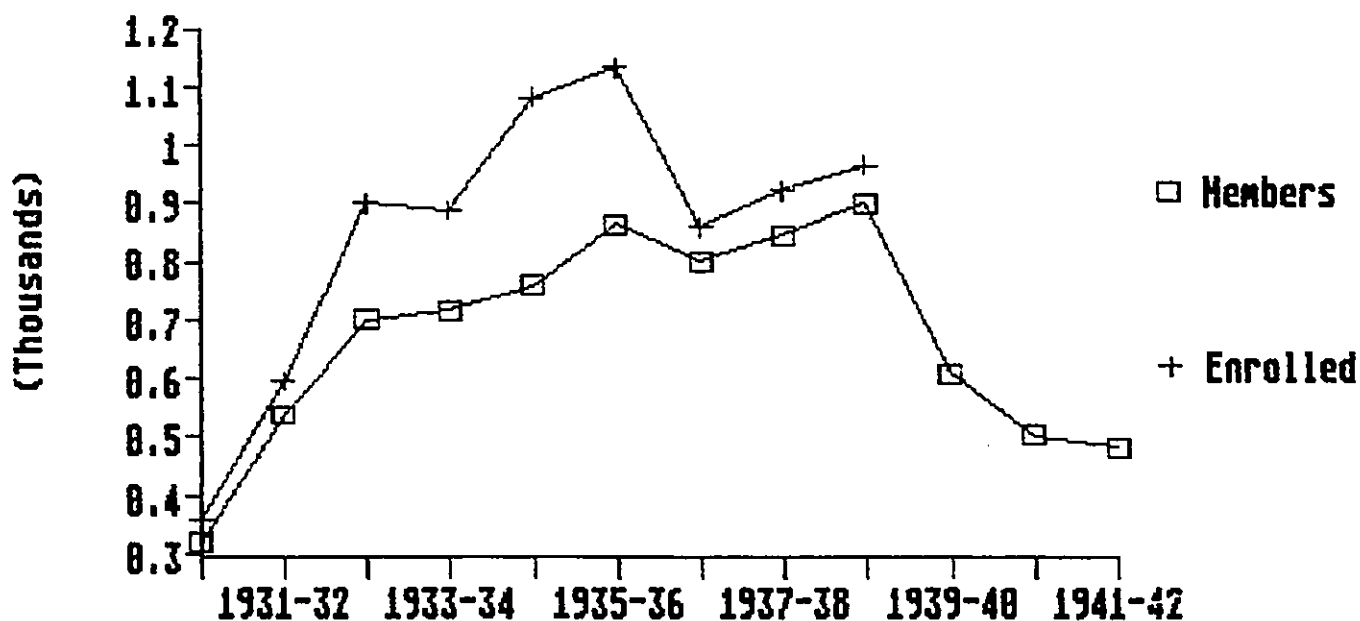
how these problems were resolved.

A partial membership list for the 1937-38 school year, which gave the courses taken and occupations of 323 members whose last names began with "A" through "L"—the remaining pages of the list are missing—gives us some insight into who took what type of course. The list also provides an opportunity to compare the participation, in the W.E.A.'s programme, of married and single women. Appendix II also discusses the strengths and weaknesses of this source.

As we saw in Chapters I and II, the W.E.A. of Toronto's membership peaked in 1938-39 at 902 members, and the number of courses given by the W.E.A. also peaked during this school year at 25. Both of these statistics suggest that this year was the high point of the W.E.A.'s classroom programme. However, an analysis of enrollment in W.E.A. courses suggests alternatively that student participation in the programme actually peaked three years earlier, during the 1935-36 school year. Fig.3.1 contrasts yearly enrollment in all courses with annual membership, and from this graph it is apparent that the number enrolled peaked in the middle of the decade, with 1083 students enrolled in 1934-35 and 1134 enrolled the following year. Annual membership, by contrast, hovered between eight and nine hundred between 1936 and 1939, and dropped sharply in the 1940s.

The difference between the total number enrolled and the total number of members was due to students registering in more than one course annually. The average number of courses taken

**Fig.3.1: Toronto Membership,
Student Enrollment**



Source: W.E.A. Annual Reports

annually per student can be regarded as a good indication of the popularity of the W.E.A.'s programme among Toronto workers. In all likelihood, the tendency to take more than one course per session reflected the enthusiasm students had for the education provided by the W.E.A.. In 1934-35, when students had 12 different subjects to choose from (18 courses in all), they enrolled in an average of 1.42 courses each. Yet in 1938-39, when students had a choice of 14 subjects and 25 courses, they enrolled in only 1.07 courses each. (Fig. 3.2).

Fig.3.2

Average Number of Courses Taken Annually

<u>Year</u>	<u>No. Courses per Student</u>
1929-30	1.09
1930-31	1.12
1931-32	1.11
1932-33	1.28
1933-34	1.24
1934-35	1.42
1935-36	1.31
1936-37	1.07
1937-38	1.09
1938-39	1.07

Source: W.E.A. Annual Reports.

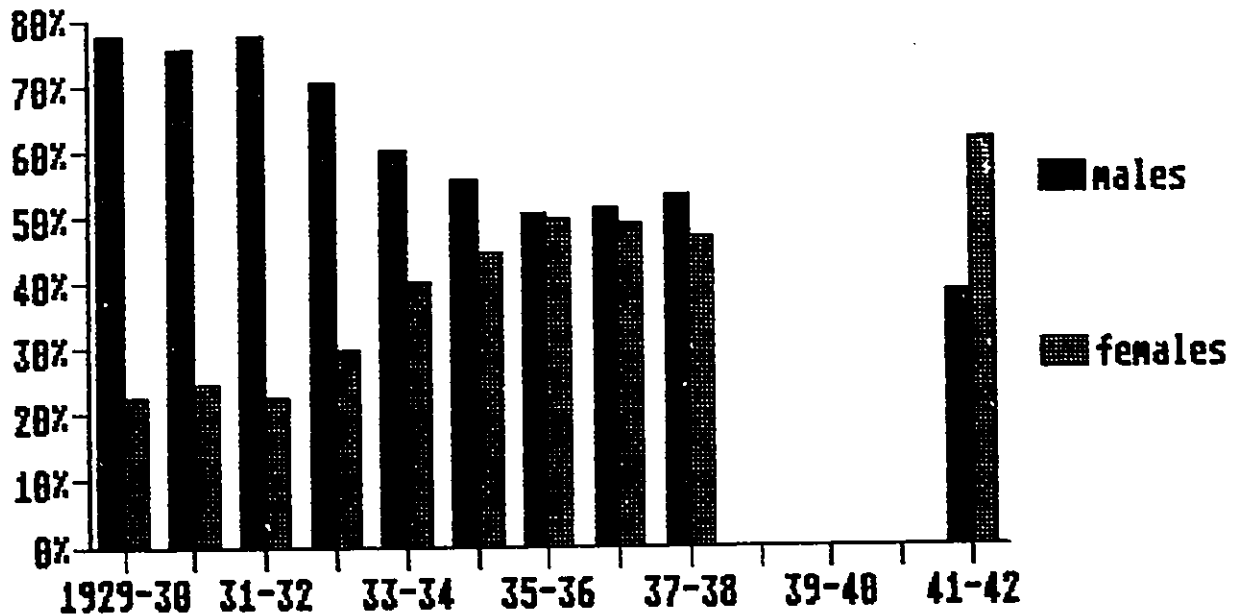
This downward trend in the number of courses taken annually after 1934-35 was not a reflection of the fact that W.E.A. students had more time to devote to studies at the height of the Depression due to unemployment. This can be determined by isolating the number of courses taken by unemployed members in the middle of the decade. The 1935-36 Annual Report reveals that of the 75 unemployed members in that year, only 11 took two courses and one took three courses.⁴ Eliminating the unemployed members from the average for the 1935-36 year reveals that the remaining 791 employed members enrolled in a total of 1046 courses, or 1.32 each. This average is almost identical to that of the entire membership (1.31). The unemployed members in that year took on average slightly fewer courses than employed members, and so they were not responsible for the high average of courses taken per member.

Fig.3.2 indicates that there was a declining interest in the

W.E.A.'s programme after 1935. However, while this may be true for the membership as a whole, a different pattern emerges when membership is analysed by the gender of students. What Figures 3.1 and 3.2 do not reveal is the steady growth of female participation in the W.E.A.'s programme, and a declining interest among men. This trend is evident in Fig.3.3. From a low of 52 female students in the 1929-30 school year, female membership grew rapidly to 428 by 1935-36 and remained at about that level until at least 1937-38. Male membership peaked earlier, in 1932-33 at 494, and varied by not more than 76 through the 1937-38 school year. Although data on the gender of W.E.A. students is not available for the three school years after that, a membership list for 1941-42 reveals that the W.E.A. student body had been transformed from being male-dominated to one which had a majority of women. Only 186 members were male in 1941-42 (the lowest total since the 1920's) while women accounted for 299 members. Combined membership in 1941-42 was down compared to the late 1930s, but the decline was largely due to a drop in male membership; the relative importance of women in the W.E.A. had increased dramatically.

Declining male participation in the W.E.A.'s programme is also evident using our second indicator, the average number of courses taken per student annually. In 1934-35, men took an average of 1.47 courses each, but by 1937-38 this average dropped to under 1.0, indicating that several men retained their membership, but did not enroll in any courses. There was a drop

Fig.3.3: Membership by Gender
1929-1942



Source: Annual Reports, Membership Lists

Fig.3.4
Average Number of Courses Taken Annually, by Gender

Year	No. Courses per Male	No. Courses per Female
1929-30	1.16	0.85
1930-31	1.13	1.11
1931-32	1.09	1.17
1933-34	1.35	1.08
1934-35	1.47	1.36
1937-38 1	0.95	1.23

1: Estimated, using method described in footnote no.6.

Source: W.E.A. Annual Reports.

over the same period in the number of courses taken annually by women, but it was not nearly as great as for men. Women took, on

average, 1.36 courses each in 1934-35, and 1.25 in 1937-38 (Fig. 3.4).

The occupational structure of the W.E.A.'s membership shifted in tandem with the transition from a male to a female student body. While the methods used by the W.E.A. to report the occupations of its members impedes thorough analysis (see Appendix II), it is evident that the Association was attracting a different type of blue-collar worker at the beginning of the 1930s than at the end of the decade. Fig.3.5 compares the occupational structure of the W.E.A. in the 1931-32 and 1937-38 school years to the Toronto workforce at large in 1931. As this table reveals, fewer than 10% of W.E.A. members were employed in clerical occupations, both near the beginning and end of the decade. But the W.E.A. was not seriously under-represented by clerical workers compared to the Toronto workforce in 1931, which was 14% clerical. Workers employed in the building and construction trades were the most over-represented group in 1931-32; their proportion of the W.E.A.'s membership was over three times their proportion of the Toronto workforce. By 1937-38, their numbers were significantly reduced, as workers in the manufacturing sector now dominated the W.E.A.'s membership. Looking within the manufacturing sector, the increase in members from this sector was due to a sharp rise in the proportion of members from the various needle trades--workers in the textile, clothing, and leather industries--most of whom appear to have been women. The growth in the number of female W.E.A. students

is also reflected in the increase in the proportion of members from the warehouse, storage and trade (which includes retail-sales clerks), and service sectors. "Housewives" were included in the service category by the W.E.A., while they were excluded altogether by the Census-takers.

Fig.3.5
Occupational Structure of the W.E.A.'s Membership

Census Category	Toronto 1931 %	W.E.A. 1931-32 %	W.E.A. 1937-38 %
Manufacturing			
Total	20	30	45
(Printing Trades)		(14)	(8)
(Metal Trades)		(12)	(11)
(Needle Trades)		(4)	(21)
Building & Construction	7	22	7
Transportation & Communication	8	13	6
Warehousing, Storage, Trade	16	8	14
Service	23	3	7
Clerical	14	9	10
Other	13	15	10

N.E.:The occupational categories are from the 1931 Census of Canada, as are the statistics for the Toronto workforce.

Source: W.E.A. of Toronto, Annual reports; Census of Canada, Report, Vol.VI, 1931.

Why did participation in the W.E.A.'s programme decline among men, and stabilize among women after the mid-1930's? Probably

the best way to approach this question is to analyse enrollment patterns in individual subjects over the 1929-30 to 1938-39 period. Fig.3.6 gives a compilation of enrollment statistics over this ten-year period, showing the combined, male, and female enrollments in each subject, and giving these numbers as percentages of the combined, male, and female enrollments in all

Fig.3.6

Most Popular Subjects by Combined, Male Female Enrollment, 1929-39

Subject	Enr. Combined	%	Enr. Male	% of Male Enr.	Enr. Female	% of Fem. Enr.
Psychology	1622	20.8	675	15.4	724	24.9
Economics	1175	15.1	837	19.2	303	10.4
Public Speaking	847	10.9	690	15.8	157	5.4
Composition	634	8.1	365	8.4	270	9.3
Current Events	590	7.6	362	8.3	228	7.8
History	526	6.8	362	8.3	164	5.6
Literature	439	5.6	151	3.5	288	9.9
Science	285	3.7	166	3.8	119	4.1
Art	246	3.2	125	2.9	121	4.2
Philosophy	243	3.1	109	2.5	134	4.6
Political Science	189	2.4	69	1.6	23	0.8
Sociology	150	1.9	88	2.0	62	2.1
Crafts	139	1.8	n/a	n/a	n/a	n/a
Hygiene	124	1.6	0	0.0	124	4.3
Labour Problems	109	1.4	101	2.3	8	0.3
Physiology	93	1.2	19	0.4	74	2.5
Music	74	1.0	37	0.8	37	1.3
Metallurgy	66	0.8	66	1.5	0	0.0
Trade Unionism	65	0.8	44	1.0	21	0.7
Eurythmics	50	0.6	11	0.3	39	1.3
Math	45	0.6	30	0.7	n/a	n/a
Chemistry	27	0.3	25	0.6	2	0.1
Civics	17	0.2	17	0.4	0	0.0
Finance	16	0.2	15	0.3	1	0.0
Household Ec.	12	0.2	0	0.0	12	0.4
Co-operation	6	0.1	6	0.1	0	0.0
Totals (1929-39)	7789	100.0	4370	100.1	2911	100.0

n/a-not available

Source: W.E.A. Annual Reports.

subjects. Fig.3.6 is thus a gauge of the overall popularity of these subjects during the ten-year period.

Although no classification system can be totally satisfactory, all of the subjects the W.E.A. offered can be grouped according to the practical value of the education the students received. Several W.E.A. subjects were designed to help students develop particular skills. "Public Speaking" and "Composition & Grammar" (hereafter called simply "Composition") courses taught students "how to" improve their oral and written skills. Students in the "Trade Unionism" course learned "how to" organize and conduct union meetings. The "Crafts" courses taught students "how to" fashion objects with their hands. "Hygiene" and "Household Economics" courses (for women only) gave homemakers what were then considered practical tips. The "Co-Operation course" ("how to" organize co-op movements) also falls into this category.

Another category of W.E.A. subjects were designed to probe specific, topical issues. "Current Events" and "Labour Problems" obviously fall into this category. "Economics" and "History" (for reasons to be explained later) have also been included here. Lastly, there is a carry-over category of what can be called "general-interest" subjects. These run the range of familiar university-type courses, but unlike "Economics" and "History"--also university courses--their relevance to specific, topical issues is not as apparent.

Looking within each of these subject classifications, the majority of men taking subjects which taught particular skills

were enrolled in "Public Speaking" courses, while the majority of women were enrolled in "Composition" courses. The proportion of male enrollment in "Public Speaking" was about three times that of women, while roughly equal proportions were enrolled in "Composition". "Public Speaking" was the most popular course among men in 1929-30, and ranged between second and fourth most popular annually throughout the 1930's. The proportion of male members enrolled in "Public Speaking" declined in the second half of the decade. While between 17 and 27% of male members enrolled in "Public Speaking" annually until 1934-35, no more than 12% enrolled annually after that. Female enrollments in "Public Speaking" were likewise higher at the beginning of the decade than at the end.

An advanced-level "Public Speaking" course was offered several times in the 1930s, and we can examine enrollment patterns in this course to help round out our perspective of its popularity among the student body. Enrollment in advanced-level courses indicates a desire among students for a more thorough understanding of a subject than could be gained from first-year courses, and, as such, is a measure of the intensity with which students pursued a particular subject. Advanced-level enrollment in "Public Speaking" must be viewed in context: the statistic is meaningful only when compared to enrollment in other advanced-level courses. Fig.3.7 compares enrollment levels in all of the W.E.A.'s second and third-year courses, and from this table, it is apparent that a slightly smaller proportion of men and women

enrolled in "Public Speaking" went on to the second-year level compared to the rate of advanced study in other subjects. The difference was greatest for women; just over 20% of women enrolled in "Public Speaking" were in the second-year course, compared to almost 25% of men.

Fig3.7

Enrollment in Second and Third-Year Courses, 1929-39

Subject	Enr. Combined	%	Enr. Male	% of Male Enr.	Enr. Female	% of Female Enr.
Composition	634		365		270	
1st year	604	95.3	338	92.6	266	98.5
2nd year	31	4.9	27	7.4	4	1.5
Economics 1	1175		837		303	
1st year	722	61.4	491	58.7	196	64.7
2nd year	289	24.6	216	25.8	73	24.1
3rd year	164	14.0	130	15.5	34	11.2
Psychology 2	1622		675		724	
1st year	1126	69.4	451	66.8	507	70.0
2nd year	398	24.5	176	26.1	167	23.1
3rd year	98	6.0	48	7.1	50	6.9
Public Speaking	847		690		157	
1st year	645	76.2	520	75.4	125	79.6
2nd year	202	23.8	170	24.6	32	20.4

1: No data on gender of 35 1st-year "Math" students.

2: No data on gender of 168 1st-year and 55 2nd-year "Psychology" students.

Source: W.E.A. Annual Reports.

Attendance statistics give us another means of gauging the popularity of "Public Speaking". Comparing first and second-term attendance rates indicates whether or not students'

interest in a subject was sustained for the duration of the course. Like the rate of participation in advanced-level courses, attendance statistics must be viewed in context. Fig.3.8 compares first and second-term attendance in all W.E.A. courses for which attendance statistics were provided. "Public Speaking" had a significant decline in second-term attendance compared to other courses, down to 53% from 74% in the first term.

Fig.3.8
Rate of Attendance, 1929-39

<u>Course</u>	<u>Attendance 1st Term (%)</u>	<u>Attendance 2nd Term (%)</u>	<u>No. of courses Sampled</u>
Science	82	72	3
Economics	82	70	8
Current Events	82	60	3
Psychology	78	71	8
Metallurgy	78	59	2
Literature	77	67	5
Philosophy	75	75	2
Art	75	66	2
Public Speaking	74	53	6
Composition	73	58	6
Labour Problems	72	54	2

Source: W.E.A. Annual Reports.

Low second-term attendance, lower rates of participation in the second-year course, and declining enrollment towards the end of the 1930s, all suggest that as the decade progressed, the popularity of "Public Speaking" waned. The same conclusion applies to the "Composition" course. Enrollment patterns in "Composition" followed a somewhat similar pattern as enrollment

in "Public Speaking": a greater proportion of both male and female members were enrolled in composition near the beginning of the decade than at the end. The high enrollment among women in "Composition" in 1937-38 is the exception to this pattern, but this sharp reversal of a downward trend in female enrollment was due to exceptional circumstances. A special class was arranged that year for 80 members of the International Ladies Garment Workers Union. The following year, combined enrollment in "Composition" dropped to 40 members, the lowest number since 1929-30. A second-year "Composition" course was offered just once, in 1933-34, but only 31 members enrolled, and student demand apparently was never great enough that the course was offered again. Attendance statistics for "Composition" courses, like those for "Public Speaking", reveal a sharp drop in the rate of second-term attendance; it was down to 58% from 73% in the first term. (Fig.3.8).

It is revealing that men dominated "Public Speaking" courses, while roughly equal proportions of men and women enrolled in "Composition" courses. This suggests that men more than women foresaw a greater role for themselves in public-oriented forums, such as trade-union meetings. This is not surprising, yet 21% of female members in 1931-32 did enroll in "Public Speaking". No more than 10% of the annual female membership enrolled in "Public Speaking" after that. Perhaps this was a reflection of what Strong-Boag and others see as the pervasive influence of maternalist propaganda which encouraged women to retreat within

their "proper sphere" during the Depression. There is some indication that social pressures to maintain traditional gender roles influenced the W.E.A.'s female students, but the evidence is contradictory. In 1931-32, less than 10% of female members enrolled in "Household Economics", but three years later over 22% of female members enrolled in a similar course, "Hygiene". This increase in female enrollment in a course obviously aimed at homemakers suggests that the W.E.A.'s female members were succumbing to social pressures. Yet, paradoxically, in 1937-38, nearly equal proportions of male and female members enrolled in subjects which were generally male spheres: "Public Speaking" and "Trade Unionism". In light of this contradictory evidence, it is best to conclude that some, but by no means all, female students may have been influenced by the maternalist propaganda campaign.

Looking at enrollment in all subjects which taught particular skills combined, only once before 1935-36 was less than 33% of the combined membership enrolled in these subjects, but by 1938-39 it dropped to an all-time low of 11%. Fig.3.9, which displays enrollment patterns in the three subject categories over time, reveals that the decline in enrollment was largely due to a drop in male enrollment in these subjects. While at least 30% of the annual male membership enrolled until 1934-35, the proportion was closer to 20% after that, and was likely much less in 1938-39. Perhaps the high proportion of male students enrolled in this type of subject earlier in the decade indicates that amidst the high unemployment of the time, many tried to develop oral and

written skills in an attempt to retrain themselves for new jobs, but as the recession diminished, fewer men saw the need to do this. Female enrollment patterns in subjects which taught particular skills were erratic, and thus difficult to explain. About 40% of female members enrolled annually in these subjects three times in the 1930s, but less than 10% of female members enrolled annually twice during the decade.

FIG. 3.9
Popularity of Courses by Subject Category

Year	TOTAL			MALES			FEMALES		
	P	G	T	P	G	T	P	G	T
1929-30	35.2	54.8	18.7	36.0	59.1	20.8	32.7	40.4	11.5
1930-31	35.0	37.1	40.7	35.0	37.1	40.7	24.0	65.8	21.5
1931-32	33.1	24.5	51.4	33.1	24.5	51.4	40.1	63.1	13.9
1932-33 1	34.1	52.8	24.6	39.0	25.5	24.9	22.2	71.1	24.0
1933-34	21.8	56.1	45.9	30.2	49.6	54.9	9.1	66.3	32.6
1934-35 2	37.4	61.6	35.6	35.9	55.4	48.6	39.2	69.2	19.3
1935-36 3	27.4	55.6	48.7	20.5	46.6	57.6	20.3	66.3	39.7
1936-37 4	22.0	54.9	30.2	16.8	(49)	34.6	7.2	(60)	25.4
1937-38 5	29.9	54.1	23.7	22.2	(47)	25.3	38.8	(62)	21.9
1938-39 6	11.1	54.9	41.0						

P-Particular Skills; G-General; T-Topical

N.B.: See footnote no.5 for an explanation of numbers in boldface and parentheses.

- 1: No data on gender of 96 "Political Science" students. Three course titles are unknown, and are not included in any category.
- 2: One course title is unknown, and is not included in any category.
- 3: No data on gender of 60 "Crafts" students.
- 4: No data on gender of 218 "Psychology" and 79 "Crafts" students.
- 5: No data on gender of 15 "Math" and 35 "Psychology" students.
- 6: No data on gender of entire membership.

Source: W.E.A. Annual Reports.

Enrollment patterns in subjects which taught particular skills indicates that by the end of the 1930s, only a small minority of W.E.A. students were apparently motivated by a desire to develop skills which might be useful at work, home, union meetings, or for leisure activities. The 1937-38 membership list, which gave the courses taken and occupations of about 40% of that year's membership, offers a chance to see if students enrolled in W.E.A. classes to gain skills which might improve their employment prospects. "Composition & Grammar" was, on the face of it, the course most likely to impart work-related skills, and if students enrolled in it for this reason, one would expect to find that several "Composition" students were engaged in white-collar occupations where good writing skills might lead to a promotion. Yet, although 18% of students in the entire sample were white-collar workers, only 10% of "Composition" students in the sample were white-collar: the majority of white collar workers apparently did not join the W.E.A. to gain job-related skills. Interestingly, none of the "Composition" students were unskilled workers, a group which might see "Composition" as offering a means to escape low-paying jobs. Most male students were skilled tradesmen, while two-thirds of female students were in manufacturing jobs, and another one-quarter were housewives. It seems unlikely that the majority of this group of students expected that the "Composition" course would open up improved employment opportunities for them.

Declining male enrollment, as the 1930s progressed, and low

second-term attendance rates in the skill-developing courses, indicates that as men became familiar with what these courses had to offer, they began to abandon them in favour of other subjects in the W.E.A.'s programme. But what did the remaining courses in the W.E.A.'s programme have to offer Toronto workers?

"Topical" subjects gave students the opportunity to examine, under the guidance of university professors, the causes and effects of contemporary problems. "Economics" and "History" have been included in the topical subject category since their content clearly reflected events in the 1930s. Interest in "Economics" was directly linked to the Depression; enrollment in "Economics" peaked in the mid-1930s and declined substantially after that. Six "History" courses were offered during the 1930s. Three of these (offered in the mid-1930s), focussed exclusively on economic history. The other three "History" courses also dealt with topical issues: "Modern Trends in Industry" offered in 1936-37, and "Current "History'" and "Fascism: Its Origin and Development", both offered in 1938-39. Like enrollment in "Economics" courses, enrollment in "Economic History" courses peaked in the mid-1930s at the height of the Depression.

"Economics" was by far the most popular course among men in the 1929-39 period, accounting for 19% of all male enrollments, almost twice the proportion of female enrollments in "Economics". Additional male interest in this subject is indicated by high enrollment in "Economic History". Combined, male enrollment in "Economics" and Economic "History" courses peaked between 1933-34

and 1935-36 at over 43% of male membership annually. Male enrollment in economic subjects then declined to 21% of male membership in 1937-38. Membership statistics by gender are not available for post-Depression 1938-39, but combined male and female enrollment in "Economics" was down to 12%, the lowest total of the decade. Female enrollment in economic subjects followed a pattern similar to male enrollment, though involving a smaller proportion of female members. From a low of 6% of female membership at the beginning of the 1930's, enrollment grew to about 20% annually from 1933-34 to 1935-36, then dropped to about 14% after that.

Enrollment in advanced-level "Economics" courses supports the conclusion that students had an intense interest in the subject, and that interest was greater among men. (Fig.3.7). Compared to other W.E.A. courses which were offered at the advanced level, a higher proportion of "Economics" students went on to the second and third-year courses. In second-year "Economics", almost the same proportion of each gender enrolled (25.8% of men and 24.1% of women), but at the third-year level the gap began to widen (15.5% to 11.2%). This pattern is not too surprising; economics was by far the most popular subject among men, and one expects this popularity to lead to an intense level of study for many students. Attendance statistics offer additional evidence that Toronto workers enthusiastically pursued the study of "Economics" during the Depression. "Economics" had the highest rate of first-term attendance, 82%, and one of the highest second-term

rates, 70%. (Fig.3.8).

While enrollment and attendance patterns in economic subjects suggests that Toronto workers wanted to explore the roots of the Depression, enrollment in "Current Events" and related "History" courses reveals that near the end of the 1930s, students also had a strong interest in the growing European crisis. Prior to 1938-39, combined enrollment in "Current Events" was no higher than 17% of annual membership, but over 28% of the combined membership enrolled in "Current Events" and related "History" courses the year before World-War II began, making current-events the most popular subject overall that year. Attendance statistics were not compiled for W.E.A. courses in 1938-39, and therefore cannot be used to verify the popularity of current-events subjects offered that year. However, attendance statistics for "Current Events" courses offered around the mid-1930s confirm that interest in the subject was not great at that time; first-term attendance was relatively low, at 72%, and declined significantly in the second-term to 60%. (Fig.3.8).

The 1937-38 membership list gives us an indication of who was attracted to the study of current events. The number of students in the sample is small: only 17 students--one-third of the total enrolled in "Current Events" that year--are accounted for in the sample. Yet the sample is nevertheless revealing, for it shows that an even number of female blue and white-collar workers, and housewives took the course: women from across the occupational spectrum had an interest in current events. A narrower range of

men's occupations are represented in the sample: no male white-collar or unskilled workers took "Current Events". All of the men enrolled except one--a "driver"--were skilled tradesmen employed in various industries, indicating that a near-homogeneous class of men took the course.

"Labour Problems", the last subject in this category, had almost no appeal to women. Only 6 women enrolled the first year it was offered, one woman in each of the next two years, and none the fourth and last time it was offered in 1932-33. Male enrollment also dropped over the four years the course was offered, from a high of 37 in 1929-30 to half that number, 19 in 1932-33. Almost 19% of the combined membership enrolled in this course the first time it was offered, in 1929-30, but less than 7% of the combined membership enrolled annually after that. The low interest shown in Labour Problems reflects declining trade union membership throughout the Canadian workforce; the proportion of the workforce that was unionized reached historical lows in the early 1930s, and W.E.A. members were apparently quite indifferent about studying labour's problems at that time. Later in the decade, a related "History" course was offered by the W.E.A., but this too failed to attract much interest: less than 4% of the combined membership enrolled in the "Modern Trends in Industry" course in 1936-37.

Enrollment patterns in topical subjects evidently reveal a strong desire among members to study both the Depression, and, at the end of the decade, events unfolding in Europe. The W.E.A.

thus performed an important function in its students' lives. It allowed students to channel their interest in contemporary issues into a sustained programme of study. W.E.A. classes allowed students to share and compare their views with friends, strangers, and experts in particular fields, and in the process, develop critical skills which would otherwise have been denied them.

Interestingly, while the proportion of female enrollments in topical subjects was approaching male enrollments by the end of the decade, (Fig.3.9), female enrollment in "Current Events" in 1938-39 was only 25, compared to 135 men, while female enrollment in the two topical "History" courses offered that year was nearly equal to male enrollment; 51 women and 53 men enrolled.

Why did women shun "Current Events" in 1938-39 in favour of the topical "History" courses? One possible explanation is that women may have preferred university-type courses like "History" more than non-university courses such as "Current Events", even though the subject matter in both courses was similar. Female enrollment in the general subject category--comprised exclusively of university-type courses--was much higher than female enrollment in the other two subject categories. Fig.3.10 is a summary of enrollment in the three subject categories over the entire 1929-30 to 1938-39 period, giving enrollment in the three categories as a percentage of all enrollments. This table reveals that compared to men, women overwhelmingly preferred courses in the general category. A slightly greater percentage

of men than women enrolled in subjects which taught particular skills, and roughly equal proportions of men took topical and general subjects. Women, however, enrolled in these latter two categories in greatly imbalanced proportions. Only 24% of female enrollments were in topical subjects, while 56% of female enrollments were in general subjects.

Fig.3.10

Popularity of Courses By Subject Category, 1929-39

<u>Subject Category</u>	<u>Enr. Combined</u>	<u>%</u>	<u>Enr. Male</u>	<u>% of Male Enr.</u>	<u>Enr. Female</u>	<u>% of Female Enr.</u>
particular skills	1827	23.5	1105	25.3	584	20.1
topical	2400	30.9	1662	38.1	703	24.1
general	3562	45.6	1603	36.7	1624	55.8

Source: W.E.A. Annual Reports.

Looking at subjects within the general category, "Psychology" was by far the single-most popular W.E.A. subject, accounting for over one-fifth of total enrollments in this period. It was clearly the most popular course among women: at least one-quarter of all female enrollments in the 1930s were in "Psychology", while it was the third most popular course among men, accounting for 15% of all male enrollments. The pattern of enrollment by gender in "Psychology" changed during the 1930s, with an increasing proportion of men and a decreasing proportion of women enrolled in the course towards the end of the decade. While no more than 14% of the male membership enrolled in

"Psychology" before 1933-34, from 1934-35 onward, this percentage stayed above 21%. While at least 30% and as many as 44% of female members enrolled in "Psychology" annually between the 1930-31 and 1933-34 school years, no more than 29% enrolled after that. However, the drop in female enrollment was not too sharp—it never fell below 25% of annual membership—and thus combined enrollment in "Psychology" gradually rose through the decade. Attendance statistics confirm the popularity of "Psychology": of all the courses for which attendance statistics are available, "Psychology" shows the least drop in second-term attendance, declining to 71% from 78% in the first term. (Fig.3.8)

Enrollment in advanced-level "Psychology" courses reveals an interesting difference in male and female participation in the W.E.A.'s programme. While "Psychology" was easily the most popular subject among female students, a greater proportion of male "Psychology" students took second and third-year courses. The difference in male and female enrollment was not great: 26.1% to 23.1% in second-year, and 7.1% to 6.9% in third-year "Psychology" courses. (Fig.3.7) But the statistics are telling; whereas men were enrolled in greater proportions at advanced levels in courses which men dominated—"Economics" and "Public Speaking"—the opposite was not the case for the course which women dominated—"Psychology".

"Literature", the second most popular subject overall in the general category, was the third most popular course among women in the 1930s, and was responsible for 10% of all female

enrollments. It was more popular among women at the beginning of the 1930's than at the end. Whereas between 14 and 33% of the female membership enrolled in "Literature" annually during the first three years of this period, between 7 and 12% enrolled annually during the last three years. "Literature" consistently ranked near last annually in terms of male popularity. Only once were more than 5% of male members enrolled in the course. Attendance rates for "Literature" do not reveal anything conclusive: the decline in second-term attendance was near the average for all courses. (Fig.3.8)

Of the remaining general subjects, besides "Political Science" only "Science" was offered enough times to exhibit an enrollment pattern over time, and the pattern was a relatively stable one. Between 4% and 9% of the annual combined membership enrolled, between 3% and 11% of the annual male membership, and between 5% and 7% of annual female membership. Attendance rates for "Science" were also quite stable: the course had the highest rate of first-term attendance, and the second-highest rate of second-term attendance. (Fig.3.8).

Perhaps "Political Science" should have been included in the topical instead of the general category. Of all the general courses, it was the one most likely to address current issues. This notion is lent credence by the fact that the greatest enrollment in "Political Science" occurred during the fall of 1932, just weeks after the inaugural meeting in Calgary of the group who went on to found the Canadian Commonwealth Federation

the following year. However, this was also the first time the W.E.A. offered "Political Science" in the 1930s, so perhaps high enrollment was due to pent-up demand. Enrollment in "Political Science" apparently did not reflect other political events in the 1930s which might have interested Toronto workers, such as the 1934 Ontario and 1935 national elections. Enrollment in "Political Science" steadily declined after 1932-33 and the course was permanently dropped from the W.E.A.'s programme five years later when only one person enrolled. If "Political Science" is misclassified, it is nevertheless of minor statistical importance, as it accounted for only 2.4% of all enrollments during the 1929-30 to 1938-39 period.

The possible misclassification of "Political Science" barely affects the enrollment pattern produced by this classification scheme as shown in Fig.3.10. This enrollment pattern reveals some clear differences in enrollment by gender, the most outstanding one being the high proportion of female enrollments in what we have called "general" subjects. Another gender variation we have noted is the greater proportion of men enrolling in advanced-level courses. Both of these findings seem to support Strong-Boag's claim that in the 1930s, men and women had significantly different educational careers.

However, these differences were narrowing as the decade progressed. By the late 1930s, when women and men joined the W.E.A. in near-equal numbers, enrollment patterns by gender were not as varied as they were earlier in the decade when men

dominated the membership. This narrowing of the gender gap was partly due to the way men perceived the W.E.A.'s programme; until the middle of the 1930s, many men believed that the Association offered them an opportunity to develop various skills (besides critical ones), but by the end of the decade far fewer men held this belief. Female members' perception of the Association changed also over the course of the decade; as the number of female members increased, a greater proportion of women relied on the W.E.A. to help them understand contemporary issues, just as men always had.

At the end of the 1930s, female enrollment in advanced-level courses indicates that women were, by this time, as eager as men to engage in intensive study in second and third-year courses. In 1938-39, more women than men enrolled in both second-year courses offered, "Economics II" and "Psychology II". Men out-enrolled women in the two third-year courses offered in those subjects that year, but not by much; over 40% of students in both classes were women. High female enrollment rates in advanced-level "Economics" courses is especially revealing; before 1935-36, less than one-quarter of students in second and third-year "Economics" courses were female.

While enrollment statistics indicate that female participation in the W.E.A.'s programme increased as the 1930s progressed, a comparison of enrollment of married and single women reveals that single women were most responsible for increasing female participation. The 1937-38 membership list permits this

comparison, as 76% of women on this list indicated their marital status. (The marital status of men was not indicated on this list.) Almost two-thirds (64%) of this group was single. Another indication that single women participated more strongly in the W.E.A.'s programme is the average number of courses taken by them: single women took 1.18 courses each compared to 1.09 each for married women. A final indication of greater participation by unmarried women is their numbers in advanced-level courses. Fig.3.11 compares the proportion of married and unmarried women in the two courses offered at the second and third-year levels in 1937-38, "Economics" and "Psychology". Compared to the proportion of married and single women in the entire sample, the proportion of single women increased in second-year courses, and again in third-year courses.

Fig.3.11

Enrollment of Married and Single Women in Advanced-Level Courses

<u>Course</u>	<u>Married (%)</u>	<u>Single(%)</u>
All Courses	36	64
Economics I	41	59
Economics II	25	75
Economics III	0	100
Psychology I	46	54
Psychology II	31	69
Psychology III	20	80

Source: W.E.A. 1937-38 Membership List.

Stronger participation in the W.E.A.'s programme by single women might have been due to the fact that they had more leisure time to devote to studies than married women. If this is true, it gives us an indication of how all women would have participated in the W.E.A.'s programme if they had the opportunity. Male and female membership statistics suggest that there was a two or three-year lag in female participation in the programme. Since promotion was largely carried out in union halls—which, as the authors of Canadian Women: A History claim, "were primarily male clubs" during the 1920s and 1930s—it probably took longer for word of the W.E.A.'s activities to reach women.⁶ As women became apprised of the Association's programme, their participation became so great that they eventually dominated the W.E.A.'s membership.

The feminization of the W.E.A.'s membership is surprising, as recent studies have demonstrated that the number of Canadian women in post-secondary institutions declined during the 1930s.⁷ Veronica Strong-Boag's study suggests that the domestic values and anti-feminism that characterized the decade were responsible for declining female enrollment. Parents were less willing to spend the money to send their daughters to university since higher education was seen by many as neither suitable nor necessary for young women.⁸ Campus sexism discouraged female students: for example, at Dalhousie University, scholarships were created exclusively for men, while the University of Toronto's History Club was restricted to men.⁹

Students' motives for enrolling in W.E.A. courses can only be inferred from behavioural evidence, and they were undoubtedly multi-faceted. Women were likely attracted to the W.E.A.'s programme by the opportunity to take inexpensive, university-type courses in an entirely non-sexist environment. The W.E.A.'s promotional literature consistently stated that all of the Association's activities were open to working-class women and men. In addition, by acknowledging "housewife" to be a legitimate occupation, the W.E.A. appealed to married women not in the paid workforce: the Association gave housewives a rare vehicle to participate as full-fledged members of a working-class organization. The W.E.A. also gave women the chance to learn from other women. Since labour unions largely excluded women--or assigned them subordinate roles in the "women's auxiliaries"--working women had few occasions to develop the solidarity that leads to class--and feminist--consciousness. Wayne Roberts argues, in Honest Womanhood, that low rates of female unionization in early twentieth-century were in part due to the fragmentation of the female workforce: women working as domestic servants, and as seamstresses out of their homes, for example, were physically isolated from each other and had few opportunities to meet and discuss issues which affected them as a class.¹⁰ The heavy concentration of women in one W.E.A. course--"Psychology"--suggests that part of the attraction of the W.E.A.'s programme for women was the opportunity to engender a sense of solidarity.

All W.E.A. students must have welcomed the opportunity to explore contemporary issues in the impartial atmosphere of W.E.A. classrooms, and undoubtedly benefitted from the range of each other's experiences and perspectives in classroom discussions. The students from the 1937-38 membership sample enrolled in the first-year "Psychology" course were a heterogeneous group: twenty different occupations were listed by the forty female students, while the twenty-one men enrolled in this course listed eighteen different occupations. A similar range of working-class occupations was evident in most courses offered that year: "skilled" and "unskilled" white and blue-collar workers sat alongside each other twenty times a session in the common pursuit of knowledge. This suggests that the W.E.A. helped contribute to a sense of community among Toronto's working people by uniting diverse elements of that community.

Impressive levels of participation by both women and men in the W.E.A.'s programme in the 1930s suggests that there was a keen desire among Toronto's working people to acquire the university education that was denied them earlier in their lives, when economic circumstances dictated that they enter the workforce instead of continuing their educational careers. The W.E.A. offered these people a unique opportunity to follow university courses under the guidance of qualified professors, in classes held at a university campus. W.E.A. students sharpened their critical faculties, developed particular skills, and became more knowledgeable about contemporary social issues. In the

process, they became the "good citizens" that the W.E.A.'s founders hoped the Association would produce: a better-educated working class which was more knowledgeable and concerned about the issues confronting the nation.

NOTES TO CHAPTER 3

1. John Reid, "The Education of Women at Mount Allison, 1854-1914," Acadiensis 12,2 (Spring, 1983): 3-33; Chad Gaffield, Lynne Marks, and Susan Laskin, "Student Populations and Graduate Careers: Queen's University, 1895-1900," in Paul Axelrod and John Reid, ed. Youth, University, and Society: Essays in the Social History of Higher Education (Kingston, Montreal: McGill-Queen's University Press, 1989); Paul Axelrod, "Moulding the Middle Class: Student Life at Dalhousie University in the 1930s," Acadiensis 15, 1 (Autumn, 1985): 84-122.

2. Ian Radforth and Joan Sangster, "A Link Between Labour and Learning." The authors' discussion of the popularity of various W.E.A. courses is apparently confined to the 1927-28 school year only (p.55). Their analysis of the composition of the Association's membership, which they admit was based on "unscientific" sampling procedures, covered all of Ontario in the mid-1930s (p.64, footnote).

3. Strong-Boag, The New Day Recalled, p.3.

4. W.E.A. of Toronto, Annual Report 1935-1936, p.9.

5. Gaps in the available data make direct comparisons misleading for some years. An attempt to overcome the limitations these gaps impose has been made in Fig.3.9, by indicating in boldface those numbers which are problematic because of missing data. In all cases, numbers in boldface are less than they would be if the data were available. In addition, four crucial numbers, indicated by parentheses, have been estimated. The number of male and female students in the three courses in the general category for which enrollment by gender was not given were estimated by multiplying the combined enrollment in each of these courses by the male/female ratio in these courses, (given as a percentage), for the entire ten-year period

6. Prentice, et.al., Canadian Women: A History, p.230.

7. Ibid., p.241; Strong-Boag, The New Day Recalled, p.24.

8. Strong-Boag, The New Day Recalled, p.24.

9. Ibid., pp.25-26.

10. Wayne Roberts, Honest Womanhood: Feminism, Femininity, and Class Consciousness Among Toronto Working Women, 1893-1914 (Toronto: New Hogtown Press, 1976)._-

CHAPTER 4

The classroom was far from being the sole focus for the W.E.A.'s educational activities in the 1930s. In the early part of the decade, the Association began using alternative venues to supplement its classroom programme, and by the early 1940s, the W.E.A. had developed a variety of methods to provide working people with educational material. These developments included the formation of correspondence study courses, the inauguration of a research and publishing bureau, and the establishment of a Summer School for workers. In addition, the Association sponsored numerous public forums and debates, and convened several "Labour Institutes" for organized labour. To reach an even wider audience, the W.E.A. used the radio and film media for educational purposes.

Like its classroom curriculum, the type of programmes the W.E.A. developed for use outside the classroom reflects the Association's educational goals and values. Examining the W.E.A.'s non-classroom programmes reveals that in the 1930s and 1940s, the Association aimed to provide educational services that working people could put to practical use. Unlike curriculum, however, these types of "alternative" educational activities have received little attention from Canadian historians, who have focused almost exclusively upon formal education institutions. As Michael Welton has argued, even the extensive revisionism of the New Left failed to widen the scope of educational

historiography. Welton says that "in this sense, revisionism was reactionary: the school was still on centre stage, only the moral of the play had changed."¹ In Knowledge for the People, a recent book on adult education edited by Welton, several contributors reveal that throughout this century, a variety of organizations have provided educational services to adult Canadians in a non-classroom setting. The W.E.A. was not a pioneer in the use of correspondence courses, movies, and radio broadcasts to educate Canadian adults; the Association was creative, however, in combining various educational methods in its overall programme.²

What distinguished the W.E.A.'s non-classroom programme from other adult education ventures was a number of educational and informational services designed specifically for organized labour. The W.E.A. published a number of high-quality studies of contemporary labour issues, but in the 1930s, the Association constantly complained that organized labour was not using its services. Reviewing the W.E.A.'s largely unsuccessful attempts to get Canada's major unions to unite in joint educational ventures illuminates labour's internal rivalries in the 1930s. Irving Abella's study, Nationalism, Communism, and Canadian Labour, gives a blow-by-blow account of just how divided organized labour was during the Depression. By the late 1930s, the T.L.C., A.C.C.L., and C.I.O. unions were fighting pitched battles for the allegiance of workers.³ Into this melee strode the W.E.A. preaching a gospel of labour unity—ultimately a far sighted philosophy, but at the time, an unpopular and unlikely

proposition. As we shall see, the W.E.A.'s attempts to get labour groups to cooperate in its educational programme illustrates the divisions which wrought the organized labour movement.

Some aspects of the W.E.A.'s non-classroom programme are much better documented than others. The Annual Reports of the W.E.A. of Canada are the main source of information on the 'study circle' programme and the W.E.A.'s Summer School, but the national organization apparently stopped issuing Annual Reports after 1938, and the fate of the study circles is largely unknown. Drummond Wren's resignation speech sheds some light on all aspects of the W.E.A.'s programme and is thus a valuable source. The origins of the W.E.A.'s research bureau and radio broadcast programme are well documented in the Annual Reports. The bureau's publications, transcripts from the broadcasts, and proceedings from several Labour Institutes give the greatest insight into these aspects of the W.E.A.'s programme. Documentation of the W.E.A.'s public forums and lectures is fairly weak, consisting entirely of brief promotional pamphlets, but nevertheless valuable. Finally, the Canadian Labour Congress' archival collection helps illuminate how the W.E.A. was seen by the labour movement.

The development of its multi-faceted programme is the best indication of the W.E.A.'s evolution from an academically-oriented institution to one which saw the potential value of education in more practical results. While the W.E.A. never repudiated the worth of its 'cultural' programme, by the mid-

1930s it recognized that "when we consider the academic nature of our regular class work, it is readily understood that their appeal will be, and has been, to a minority group of workers."⁴ The Toronto W.E.A.'s classroom programme, at its peak in the mid-1930s, attracted less than one-thousand students. The desire to reach a wider audience and make its work more relevant to the average worker, to bring its work "closer to the needs of labour" led the W.E.A., in the 1930s, to develop an ambitious non-classroom programme whose beneficiaries numbered in the thousands.⁵

Some of these ventures were aimed at workers outside of Toronto. The widening of its focus was responsible for the growth of the W.E.A. into a national organization by the late 1930s. This expansion reveals the maturity of developments which originated in the Toronto W.E.A. movement; the success of the Toronto classroom programme established a base from which the W.E.A. progressed and evolved.

The development of a cross-Canada network of "study circles" illustrates this progression best. The study circle programme had its origin in a two-week course in Economics which the W.E.A. held for farmers at the University of Toronto campus in November, 1934. The decision to hold this session revealed a growing awareness among W.E.A. officials that the class-based nature of their organization gave them a mandate to expand beyond urban centres. As this argument was stated in the Annual Report 1933-1934: "the average farmer in Ontario has, without a doubt, the

same status in society as the industrial worker, which quite properly brings him under the auspices of the Workers' Educational Association."⁶ W.E.A. organizers discussed with the forty farmers enrolled in the November course the feasibility of bringing W.E.A. classes to the countryside. The response of the students was encouraging, and in January, 1936, the W.E.A. launched its "Agricola Study Club" programme.⁷ One of the Association's Economics tutors prepared eleven bulletins which were sent to Agricola Study Clubs on a weekly basis. In addition, the W.E.A. arranged its first educational broadcast, as the Canadian Radio Corporation provided limited air time to broadcast some Agricola lectures. One-hundred and thirty-five students were enrolled in this first course, two-thirds of them belonging to clubs, and the rest following the material on an individual basis.⁸

A questionnaire sent by the W.E.A. to its first study circle members at the conclusion of their course elicited an enthusiastic response, and, noting the success of study clubs at St. Francis Xavier University in Nova Scotia, and in Europe, the W.E.A. determined that study circles "should play an important part in our future."⁹ For the 1936-37 school year, in addition to the rural clubs in Ontario, study circles were established in twenty rural and urban centres across the country, from Moncton to Victoria. A total of four-hundred and twenty-nine students were enrolled in four different courses: "Consumers' Cooperation", "Agricultural Economics", "Political Science", and

"Economics".¹⁰ By the next session, over 700 students enrolled in seven different courses. The most popular of these were three courses in "Cooperation" with 429 students, and "Trade Unionism" with 131 students.¹¹

The popularity of these courses were among the achievements which led the W.E.A. to boast, in 1938, that they had "bridged the gap between academic workers' education and education of a practical nature designed to meet the problems with which labour is confronted."¹² The nature of the three "Cooperation" courses seemed to justify this claim. The first outlined the history of cooperative ventures, the second gave a more concrete explanation of how the cooperative society should be organized, while the third course was more practical yet: it gave detailed instructions on how to form a credit union.¹³ Drummond Wren claimed that the W.E.A. was largely responsible for the development of the credit union movement in Halifax, and that as many as ten-thousand people were eventually enrolled in study clubs using W.E.A. material.¹⁴ This figure has been cited in two different studies of the W.E.A., but no harder evidence apparently exists to support this claim, and the fate of the study circle programme is unknown.¹⁵ However, some evidence does indicate that W.E.A. bulletins used by study clubs were quite widely circulated. Dozens of letters from individuals across the country requesting W.E.A. bulletins survive in the Association's records.¹⁶ In addition, the W.E.A.'s research bureau reported that over three-thousand bulletins and pamphlets were being sold

annually between 1938 and 1941, although it is not known what proportion of these were being used by study circle members.¹⁷

The study circle programme was made possible by the most important of the W.E.A.'s non-classroom activities: the development of an in-house research and publication bureau in the 1930s. The bureau produced and made available to individuals, study clubs, and labour unions, bulletins that focussed primarily on the legal, political, and economic status of organized labour and working people in Canadian society. Located in Toronto, and employing the talents of University of Toronto law and economics professors, the W.E.A.'s research bureau produced high quality bulletins and pamphlets, and as such performed an outstanding service to working people in the 1930s and 40s.

In 1933 the W.E.A. authorized two of its tutors, University of Toronto law professors F.C. Auld and J. Finkelman, to prepare bulletins on the legal status of unions in Canada. The result was four twenty-page bulletins titled "Trade Unions and the Law," which comprised a detailed historical survey of federal and provincial legislation, and legal decisions which affected the rights of labour in Canada.¹⁸ Copies of the bulletins were sent out to numerous labour bodies and, encouraged by their positive response, the W.E.A. proposed establishing a Labour Research Institute to investigate and report upon "labour legal problems in Canada."¹⁹ Realizing that such a step represented a departure from the traditional agenda of the W.E.A., the Association justified this venture by claiming it was in a unique position to

provide such a service to labour:²⁰

While to some such a project might not appear to be the proper field for the Workers' Educational Association, the Workers' Educational Association is in a position, through its affiliation with university departments and its close connection with the most able professors, to undertake such work. As it has and would have no biases or prejudices, it can be looked upon as a purely educational and informational service.

Fully conscious of the advantageous position which its association with the university placed it, the W.E.A., through the rest of the decade and into the 1940s, strived to establish a service which labour could put to practical use.

By 1935 the structure was in place to provide such a service. Two bodies, the Labour Research Institute (LRI), and the Industrial Law Research Council (ILRC) were established to undertake and coordinate the W.E.A.'s research and publishing activities. The ILRC researched and wrote the bulletins. Composed of University of Toronto Faculty of Law professors Auld and Finkelman, Bora Laskin (at the time a law student), and Department of Economics professors--including H.A. Innis and L.T. Morgan--the ILRC turned over its reports to the LRI, which functioned as a type of clearing house, making available to all interested bodies the ILRC bulletins. Labour organizations were invited to join the LRI and pay modest membership fees which would be used to fund further research.²¹ The W.E.A. saw the usefulness of its research to lie in its ability to furnish labour with precise, authoritative information on the legal status of unions in Canada. This was seen as a means to the

ultimate end of improving the status of labour, for, as the Association stated, "only when we know what the law really is will it be possible for those most concerned to acquire a knowledge of what reforms are desirable and proceed towards their accomplishment."²² Once again, the W.E.A. was emphasizing the practical benefits to be had from workers' education.

In the late 1930s and early 1940s, the LRI closely monitored all proposed legislation affecting organized labour, and working people generally, in Canada. In its first year, the LRI published bulletins on "The Industrial Standards Act of 1935", "The Minimum Wage Act", the 1935 "Limitation of Hours of Work Act", and Quebec's "Collective Labour Agreements Extension Act".²³ In the late 1930s and early 1940s, the Institute reprinted several hundred pages of House of Commons Debates on legislation which would affect working people such as "An Act to Amend the Lords' Day Act" and "An Act to Amend the Criminal Code", which sought legislative protection for labour union members.²⁴ Each of these last-named publications featured commentary following the reprinted debates, usually by Laskin, on precisely how the proposed legislation would affect labour and working people. In addition, Laskin wrote bulletins on notable labour legislation in the United States such as the Wagner Act.²⁵

Besides dispensing advice to labour organizations, the LRI prepared bulletins for the study circles and for a general audience of working people. By 1938, the Institute produced over seventy bulletins for use by seven different study circle

courses. Some of these bulletins covered traditional W.E.A. subjects such as "Psychology", "Political Science", and "Economics", and it is likely that these were written by tutors of W.E.A. classes in Toronto. However, other bulletins reflected the shift towards practical education the W.E.A. underwent in the 1930s. Students in the popular "Cooperation" study circle course followed John Perrold's "Credit Union" bulletins.²⁶ Like the credit union bulletins, the bulletins used by the "Trade Unionism" course addressed some extremely practical issues: students were advised "how to" obtain collective bargaining rights and use the bargaining committee effectively, and were instructed on the "intelligent use" of strikes as a bargaining tactic. In addition, this series of ten five-thousand word bulletins weighed the relative merits of "industrial vs. trade union strength," giving a very balanced discussion about the strengths and weaknesses of craft and industrial unionism.²⁷

Perhaps this last-mentioned topic helps explain the cool response which the LRI received from the organized labour movement. The W.E.A.'s Annual Report 1936-1937 expressed extreme disappointment at labour's indifference towards the LRI:²⁸

It is unfortunate that Labour in Canada has not to any great extent realized the value of this Institute to the Labour movement. It is almost unbelievable that the significance of the services such an Institute can render, and is rendering, is not readily grasped and advantage taken of them throughout the Dominion.

Three years later, the LRI reported that while the number of

union locals affiliated with the Institute had risen to forty-three (up from eighteen in 1937), attempts to get union's national headquarters to make financial contributions to the LRI had failed to receive a reply.²⁹ Extremely frank discussions on the pros and cons of industrial and craft unionism, such as the "Trade Union Function" bulletins contained, no doubt raised the ire of union leaders who were enmeshed in a heated battle for membership in the late 1930s. Years later, in a remarkable resignation speech occasioned by the purge of open-minded labour leaders during the 'red scare' of the early 1950s, Drummond Wren attacked the selfish motives of union leaders who saw the W.E.A.'s attempts to promote open discussions on labour issues as damaging to their own interests:³⁰

So long as the W.E.A. was providing only evening classes dealing in general terms, although from a labour point of view, with such subjects as economic and labour history among others, the labour movement was able to give it lip service and cooperation by having its members advised of what classes were being conducted so that they might participate in them. But just as soon as the W.E.A. began to take an active part in teaching trade unionists about trade unionism, labour law and collective bargaining, there developed on the part of a few labour officials a resentment against what was termed an "outside" organization daring to interfere with the labour movement which, in their opinion, had to be dependent upon them for instruction and advice so far as labour affairs were concerned. I have no hesitation in saying that the W.E.A. has not lost the confidence of the labour movement, but it has been so successful with the rank and file of the labour movement as to have brought upon itself the opposition of a handful of top officials of the movement.

The LRI's relationship with organized labour seems to bear out Wren's contentions: while union locals lent the Institute their

support, central union leaders remained aloof.

The LRI was not the only educational venture which the W.E.A. saw as a means of bringing organized labour together in a cooperative effort. It made several attempts in the 1930s and 1940s to unite craft and industrial unions behind educational projects, but, more often than not, these efforts were thwarted by union partisanship. The W.E.A.'s evening classes always had a mixture of craft and industrial unionists, and non-unionists, but this supports Wren's contention that the W.E.A. had the support of the rank and file and not union executives.

The Association's attempts to attract union representatives to its annual Summer School provide another example of the cool relationship between the W.E.A. and union leaders. Inaugurated in 1932 in borrowed quarters at Pickering College in Newmarket, the Summer School was not conceived solely as a vehicle through which to unite labour, although this was always an auxiliary goal. Like most W.E.A. programmes, the Summer School was designed to stimulate interest in workers' education, and to develop leaders for the movement.³¹ The School offered a combined educational and recreational programme, alternating outdoor activities with courses in "Economics", "Psychology", "Labour Law", and other familiar W.E.A. subjects.³²

During the first few years of its operation, the Summer School attracted about 100 students, about half of whom stayed for most of the ten-day programme.³³ The Summer School enjoyed its greatest success in 1937 when over 140 students attended and took

part in a variety of activities which included an "Art" class and lectures and discussions on labour history and labour law.³⁴ An impressive array of University of Toronto faculty members participated in the Summer Schools, including Laskin (who attended several), Auld and Finkelman from the Law Faculty, and Innis, Morgan, and H.R. Kemp from the Economics Department.³⁵ In 1942, the W.E.A. purchased a permanent home for its Summer School in Port Hope, and spent several thousand dollars renovating what it hoped would become its own "Labour College" fashioned after Ruskin College in England.³⁶

The W.E.A. received little support for its Summer School from organized labour however. Union delegates were invited to a three-day conference on "Collective Bargaining" in 1936, but as the Annual Report for that year stated: "very few of the unions took advantage of this opportunity to send members to this conference ...[and] we have failed to have present those for whom the lectures and discussions would have been of great practical value."³⁷ Its hope of establishing a viable labour college was undermined, in the W.E.A.'s view, by low union participation. The Association anticipated that the College would be made available to all labour unions, to either conduct educational programmes in conjunction with the W.E.A., or to do so on their own, with minimal assistance from the Association.³⁸ This suggests that the W.E.A. was not trying to meddle with union policies, and was willing to remain in the background if that was what it would take to gain union support for the College.

Despite its efforts, the W.E.A.'s general secretary reported that "there has been no consistent response from labour" to the W.E.A.'s invitations.³⁹ Some United Auto Workers and United Electrical Workers (both C.C.L. unions) locals did participate, but the U.A.W. stopped using the College's facilities when its international education department withdrew its support from the College in the late 1940s. The U.E.W. discontinued its use of the school shortly afterwards.⁴⁰

The W.E.A. was even less successful in attracting T.L.C. unions to its College. After failing to enlist the support of the Council throughout most of the 1940s, an all-out effort was made to interest the T.L.C. in the school's facilities in 1949, but despite "every effort and every compromise" the W.E.A. succeeded in enticing only two T.L.C. delegates to attend the session set aside for them.⁴¹

The unwillingness of organized labour to participate in the W.E.A.'s Labour College was a typical example of the responses the W.E.A. got to its attempts to promote labour unity through joint educational ventures. The W.E.A.'s efforts to get unions to cooperate in its educational radio broadcasts provide an additional example. The year following the W.E.A.'s first venture into educational broadcasts as part of the Agricola Study Circle course, the Association embarked on a much more ambitious programme when twelve weekly half-hour radio shows were broadcast coast-to-coast on the C.R.C. (later the C.B.C.) network. The first series, called the "History, Function, Principles, and the

Laws of Labour Organization," broadcast material produced by the W.E.A.'s research bureau. LRI researchers Laskin, Finkelman, and Morgan each gave lectures on several broadcasts. The show's format comprised a fifteen-minute lecture which was followed by questions from the studio audience. These questions appear to have been quite well staged: on the first broadcast, a protagonist, skeptical of the value of trade unionism, was gradually enlightened by Professor Morgan's convincing defence of collective bargaining.⁴²

The W.E.A. reported receiving numerous favourable responses to the series, but several listeners complained that the material discussed was "somewhat abstract", and the Association resolved that, "to retain the interest of a large listening audience, all material should be related to concrete cases."⁴³ The format for the second series, "Labour Relations and Labour Problems", was accordingly modified. Instead of a lecture and discussion format, the series was presented as a "chat" show, with representatives from the W.E.A., unions, employers and businessmen discussing various issues under the headings: "labour and employer relations", "labour and farmer relations", and "labour's internal relations". The last-named topic included a discussion of the differences between A.F.L. and C.I.O. unionism.⁴⁴ The third year of the W.E.A. broadcasts over the national network featured, on one show, a lively discussion among rank and file members from various labour organizations on the question: "Can Labour Groups Cooperate Among Themselves?"⁴⁵

The fate of the W.E.A.'s experiment in educational broadcasts suggests that this last question warranted a negative reply. In 1942, Wren was appointed to the C.B.C.'s advisory committee on "talks" programmes, and enlisted the support of union leaders for the network's National Labour Forum series, which grew out of the W.E.A. broadcasts. A joint board comprising C.B.C., W.E.A., T.L.C., and C.C.L. representatives was established to set the agenda for the series, but the cooperation was short-lived. A listener's letter read during a November, 1942 broadcast criticized the government's wartime manpower policy, leading C.D. Howe, the Minister of Munitions and Supply, to write to the C.B.C. that such criticism were "wholly derogatory to Canada's war effort."⁴⁶ In the aftermath of this controversy, the C.B.C. assumed control over the show's editorial content, and the W.E.A. soon withdrew entirely from the National Labour Forum series.⁴⁷ Wren claimed that C.W. Millard, the National Director of the United Steelworkers' Union, used the controversy as an opportunity to oust the W.E.A. from the Labour Forum broadcasts. In January, 1943, before the W.E.A. quit the series, Millard wrote to the C.B.C.'s Director of the 'Talks' Department with an offer to assist the National Labour Forum and provide all educational material from the union's own research department.⁴⁸ In a letter to Pat Conroy, the C.C.L.'s Secretary Treasurer, Wren claimed that "the last thing we expected was that a high ranking labour official would immediately support the C.B.C. against the W.E.A. but also offer to supplant this Educational Association in

the midst of the dispute."⁴⁹ Wren later claimed that rank and file members from both unions from across the country had actively supported the programme, but the self-interest of union leaders was responsible for "such an important vehicle for labour's good [being] lost and destroyed."⁵⁰

The W.E.A.'s experiment in "visual education", while more successful in enlisting the cooperation of the rival unions, was also undermined by self-interested unions. Always on the lookout for new means to stimulate interest in workers' education, the W.E.A. convinced the Carnegie Corporation to donate six-thousand dollars to establish its visual education programme in 1938. The Carnegie grant enabled the W.E.A. to purchase several filmslides and slide projectors. The only filmslides available came from outside the country, and, recognizing the limited appeal of these to Canadian workers, the W.E.A. created a Visual Education Committee to create slide shows more directly relevant to Canadian workers. Several filmslides were created over the next few years by the Committee which, like other W.E.A. projects, relied mainly on LRI material. The filmslides, between twenty-five and thirty-five frames each, covered what were by now standard W.E.A. subjects: current events, economic and social history, and labour organization.⁵¹

The visual education programme had a two-fold aim: education, and promotion of W.E.A. activities. In W.E.A. classrooms and at public forums, filmslides were used as visual aids, supplementing the usual activities. Promotion was attained through the

establishment of a travelling circuit which visited union halls, presenting slide shows and distributing brochures advertising W.E.A. programmes.⁵²

In the early 1940s, the visual education project expanded to include the use of 16mm moving film projectors. Impressed with the National Film Board's documentary film work, Wren approached its commissioner, John Grierson, with a proposal to make N.F.B. projectors and films available to the W.E.A.'s travelling circuit.⁵³ The N.F.B., in the midst of a rural "travelling theatre" programme, was looking to expand into urban areas, and Grierson made Wren an executive of the newly-formed Trade Union Film Circuit (T.U.F.C.). According to Juliet Pollard's study of Grierson's role as N.F.B. head during the war, Wren played a "key role" in the circuit by getting T.L.C. and C.C.L. executives to cooperate on the project.⁵⁴ Pollard also claims that the W.E.A.'s research bureau played a major role in the T.U.F.C.: the filmmakers relied mainly on LRI material which they "translated into film subjects."⁵⁵ Surviving scripts indicate that at least a dozen films were produced on topics that included the history of major automakers in Canada, several films on labour organization and union techniques, and several which examined economic issues and the distribution of wealth in Canada.⁵⁶

The cooperation between the two major unions and the W.E.A. proved to be more enduring in the case of the T.U.F.C.. Yet, it was the inflexibility of one T.L.C. local which led to the collapse of the project. The Projectionists Union insisted that

one of their members be present for all screenings conducted by the film circuit, whether admission was being charged or not. Despite Wren's attempts to work out an arrangement for volunteers to man the projectors at union halls where films were being shown without charge, the union remained adamant. At a T.L.C. convention in Windsor in April, 1946, the union rejected all compromises, and this led to the N.F.B.'s bowing out of the project.⁵⁷ Once again, a hardline stance from organized labour undermined attempts to establish harmony in the workers' education movement.

Nevertheless, the W.E.A. persevered in its attempts to unite organized labour behind the movement. During the war, it held a number of "Labour Institutes" to analyse government policy affecting working people and organized labour. In the Institutes, the W.E.A. finally found a forum at which high-level officials from all major unions could meet--if only for one day sessions--and discuss issues which affected them.

The first W.E.A. Labour Institute was held in Toronto in September, 1941, to discuss the federal government's controversial P.C.7440 legislation which set ceilings on wages in war industries. Over two-hundred delegates from all major unions attended the one-day seminar, which examined a number of aspects of the legislation.⁵⁸ In all, seven Labour Institutes were held in Toronto between 1941 and 1945 to examine the impact on labour of a wide range of war-related issues, such as labour cooperation in the war effort and labour productivity in war industries.⁵⁹

Usually, the Institutes focussed on specific legislative proposals such as the federal governments health insurance plan, its post-war reconstruction schemes, and its labour regulations.⁶⁰ The Institute on "Health Insurance" was attended by sixty T.L.C. delegates, forty-one C.C.L. delegates, and ten delegates from the fledgling C.I.O., which gives a good indication of the broad-based support which the Labour Institutes received from Canada's major unions.

Perhaps the W.E.A. was able to get organized labour to cooperate in holding these Institutes because they were informational sessions which examined specific issues, whereas LRI publications, the W.E.A.'s radio series, and its Summer School often took a critical and philosophic look at the labour movement. The agenda for the first Labour Institute reads like a fact-finding session. The topics covered included: "what labour got under P.C.7440; inflation, its causes and effects; prices and price control in Canada; corporate profits and taxation." ⁶¹ By avoiding more controversial topics, the W.E.A. ensured that its Labour Institutes would not alienate particular labour groups.

The W.E.A.'s attempts to court the support of organized labour did not come at the expense of other programmes aimed at the general working-class public. Beginning in 1939, as its classroom programme was declining, the W.E.A. inaugurated several series of public lectures and forums in an effort to keep working people informed of fast-breaking international and national developments.

These public forums ranged from casual, mixed social and educational events, to more formal sessions. The Sunday evening "Firesides", which ran from 1939 to 1946, were billed as "two hours of real relaxation."⁶² The Firesides combined social activities such as musical and theatrical performances, and movie screenings, with addresses from guest lecturers, and general discussions on current events.⁶³ The "Round Table Lecture Series", begun in 1942, consisted of eight weekly lectures by various guest speakers on a wide range of labour, farmer, political and economic issues under the heading: "Problems of National and International Interest." The following year's series focussed on Russian culture, politics, economic development, and history.⁶⁴

The most substantial of these public events was the Friday Forum series, which ran from 1942 to 1948. It began as a ten-week series of W.E.A.-sponsored lectures given by the University of Toronto's Department of Economics on "Industrial Relations in Wartime."⁶⁵ By the 1943-44 session, the Friday Forums had expanded to twenty weekly lectures. The focus for this series was "Problems of Reconstruction," both internationally and nationally. Experts in this field were invited to speak at the Forums, including Leonard Marsh who spoke on his vision of a social security system in Canada.⁶⁶ In the immediate post-war era, Friday Forums continued to inform working people about international and national issues, such as the United Nations, the Marshall Plan, full employment, and Dominion-Provincial

relations.⁶⁷

By the late 1940s, the W.E.A.'s educational programme was in retreat on all fronts. The number of classes was declining annually, the Labour College had failed to attract the labour unions for whom it was intended, and the W.E.A.'s radio and film ventures were long over. The W.E.A. of Toronto's Annual Reports, which boasted of the Association's accomplishments and outlined its goals for the future, were apparently no longer issued after 1941. The Labour Research Institute had been disbanded in the mid-1940s, and though the W.E.A. continued to produce research bulletins, the quality of these had seriously declined. Wren sent a copy of a bulletin on "Labour Legislation" to the C.C.L. in 1946, and asked whether the union would financially assist the production of future bulletins. In a private memorandum, Eugene Forsey, the C.C.L.'s Research Director, said that the bulletin was worthless, for it failed to mention "various important statements on government policy, or lack of policy, notably, on housing."⁶⁸ In a blunt reply to Wren's proposal, the C.C.L.'s Secretary Treasurer said that while there is a need for such an information service, "this has to be done with considerable skill if it is to be of any value."⁶⁹

There is no evidence to indicate that the C.C.L. was critical of the research bulletins produced by University of Toronto members through the LRI. In the 1930s and early 1940s, the Institute's detailed research into labour law, union organization, credit union techniques, government legislation and

numerous other topics relevant to organized labour and working people was of the highest quality. The establishment of the LRI was perhaps the W.E.A.'s greatest accomplishment; it enabled the Association to develop its study circle network, Summer School, experiments in radio and visual education, and Labour Institutes. Modifying existing programmes and launching original ones, the W.E.A. was at the forefront of innovations in pedagogy. Radforth and Sangster claim that "the Association's pioneering efforts in the use of film and radio and in labour research served as models for the labour movement in later years."⁷⁰ The irony of this statement is that many of the W.E.A.'s programmes were not actively supported by organized labour when most of these programmes were being developed in the late 1930s and early 1940s. Embroiled in territorial disputes, union leaders apparently had little inclination to assist any group which they could not control. Yet the W.E.A. struggled on. Continually rebuked by the elite of the labour movement, the W.E.A. never wavered from its commitment to working men and women.

NOTES TO CHAPTER 4

1. Welton, "Reclaiming Our Past," p.7.

2. See Lotz and Welton's "Knowledge for the People," for a description of the development of correspondence 'study clubs' in New Brunswick. Juliet Pollard's study, "Propaganda for Democracy: John Grierson and Adult Education During the Second-World War," in Knowledge For the People: The Struggle for Adult Learning in English-Speaking Canada, ed. Michael Welton (Toronto: OISE Press, 1987), explores the early educational use of motion pictures. For the history of adult educational radio broadcasts, see Ron Farris' The Passionate Educators: Voluntary Associations and the Struggle for Control of Educational Broadcasting in Canada, 1919-1952 (Toronto: Peter Martin Associates, 1975). Gordon Selman's study of the University of British Columbia's Extension Department reveals that by 1940, radio, film, and study clubs were part of the Department's programme. The W.E.A. had chapters in Vancouver and Victoria at that time, and it would be interesting to discover if there was any communication between the W.E.A. and the U.B.C.. See Selman, Fifty Years of Extension Services by the University of British Columbia.

3. Abella, Nationalism, Communism, and Canadian Labour.

4. W.E.A. of Canada, Annual Report 1936-1937, p.7, DLL.

5. Ibid.

6. W.E.A. of Ontario, Annual Report 1933-1934, p.11, DLL.

7. W.E.A. of Ontario, Annual Report 1934-1935, p.9, DLL.

8. W.E.A. of Canada, Annual Report 1935-1936, pp. 10-11, DLL.

9. Ibid., p.12.

10. W.E.A. of Canada, Annual Report 1936-1937, p.4, DLL.

11. W.E.A. of Canada Annual Report 1937-1938, p.4, DLL.

12. Ibid., p.1.

13. Ibid., p.4.

14. Wren's Address, p.22.

15. Radforth and Sangster, "A Link Between Labour and Learning," p.63; W.E.A. of Canada, Challenge and Innovation, p.16.
16. W.E.A. Papers, MU4035, AO.
17. Labour Research Institute, Annual Report 1938-1939, p.2; Annual Report 1940-1941, p.1; DLL.
18. F.C. Auld and J. Finkelman, Trade Unions and the Law (Toronto: W.E.A. of Canada, 1933), DLL.
19. W.E.A. of Toronto, Annual Report 1933-34, p.9, W.E.A. Papers, MU4002, AO.
20. Ibid., p.10.
21. W.E.A. of Ontario, Annual Report 1934-1935, p.9, DLL.
22. Ibid.
23. W.E.A. of Canada, Annual Report 1935-1936, p.7, DLL.
24. Labour Research Institute, Bill no. 7, 1939, 'An Act to Amend the Lord's Day Act'; Bill no. 5, 1939, 'An Act to Amend the Criminal Code'; and Bill no. 96, 1941, 'An Act to Amend the Industrial Disputes Act'; (Toronto: W.E.A. of Toronto, n.d.).
25. Bora Laskin, The Wagner Act and Collective Bargaining (Toronto: W.E.A. of Canada, n.d.), DLL.
26. John Perrold, Credit Union (Toronto: W.E.A. of Canada, n.d.), DLL.
27. Labour Research Institute, Trade Union Function (Toronto: W.E.A. of Canada, n.d.), DLL.
28. W.E.A. of Canada, Annual Report 1936-1937, p.16, DLL.
29. Labour Research Institute, Annual Report 1939-1940, pp. 3-5, DLL.
30. Wren's Address, p.41.
31. W.E.A. of Ontario, Annual Report 1934-1935, p.8, DLL.
32. W.E.A. of Canada, Annual Report 1935-1936, p.4, DLL.
33. Ibid., p.8; W.E.A. of Ontario, Annual Report 1934-1935, p.8, DLL.
34. W.E.A. of Canada, Annual Report 1936-1937, pp. 14-15, DLL.

35. Ibid.; Wren's Address, p.11.
36. Wren's Address, p.12.
37. W.E.A. of Canada, Annual Report 1935-1936, p.9, DLL.
38. Wren's Address, p.12.
39. Ibid., p.13.
40. Ibid.
41. Ibid.
42. W.E.A. of Canada, History, Function, Principles, and the Law of Labour Organization: A Series of Twelve Half-Hour Broadcasts, Wednesday evenings, November 3rd, 1937 to January 19, 1938 (Toronto: W.E.A. of Canada, 1937-38), DLL.
43. W.E.A. of Canada, Annual Report 1937-1938, p.9, DLL.
44. W.E.A. of Canada, Labour Relations and Labour Problems: A Series of Ten Half-Hour Broadcasts, Wednesday evenings at 9 p.m. E.S.T., December 28th, 1938 to March 8th, 1939 (Toronto: W.E.A. of Canada, 1938-39), DLL.
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46. Copy of letter from Howe to the C.B.C., Dec. 4, 1942, C.L.C. Papers, MG28, I103, vol.242, National Archives of Canada (hereafter NAC).
47. Wren's Address, p.17.
48. Copy of letter from Millard to C.B.C. Talks Department, Jan. 15, 1943, C.L.C. Papers, MG28 I103, vol.242, NAC.
49. Letter from Wren to Conroy, Jan. 20, 1943, C.L.C. Papers, MG28 I103, vol.242, NAC.
50. Wren's Address, p.18.
51. Ibid., p.19.
52. Ibid.
53. Ibid., p.20.
54. Pollard, "Propaganda for Democracy," p.141.

55. Ibid.

56. The following scripts survive in whole or in part in the W.E.A. Papers, MU4035, AO: "The History of Canadian Economic Development"; "The Growth of the Financial Class in Canada"; "The Story of Chrysler"; "The Rise of the General Motors Empire"; "The Story of Ford"; "Labour Organizes"; "Individual vs. Collective Bargaining"; "The Distribution of Wealth in Canada"; "Canada Fights for Life"; "The Cotton Industry"; "Inflation"; and "Parliamentary Law".

57. Wren' Address, p.21.

58. W.E.A. of Canada, Summary of the Proceedings of the Labour Institute on P.C.7440, September, 1941 (Toronto: W.E.A. of Canada, 1941), W.E.A. Papers, MU4000, AO.

59. W.E.A. of Canada, Programme of the Labour Institute on Canada's Wartime Labour Policy, November, 1941 (Toronto: W.E.A. of Canada, 1941), W.E.A. Papers, MU4000, AO.

60. W.E.A. of Canada, Summary of the Proceedings of the Labour Institute on Health Insurance, April, 1944 (Toronto: W.E.A. of Canada, 1944); W.E.A. of Canada, Summary of the Proceedings of the Labour Institute on Full Employment and Conversion, October, 1944 (Toronto: W.E.A. of Canada, 1944); W.E.A. Papers, MU4000, AO. W.E.A. of Canada, Summary of the Proceedings of the Labour Institute on P.C.1003-The Wartime Labour Relations Regulations, 1945 (Toronto: W.E.A. of Canada, 1945), DLL.

61. W.E.A. of Canada, Summary of the Proceedings of the Labour Institute on P.C.7440, September, 1941, p.1, W.E.A. Papers, MU4000, AO.

62. W.E.A. of Canada, "Outline of Studies, 1945-46," W.E.A. Papers, MU4042, AO.

63. See, for example, Ibid., and W.E.A. of Canada, "Outline of Studies, 1943-44," W.E.A. Papers, MU4003, AO.

64. W.E.A. brochures, W.E.A. Papers, MU4002, AO.

65. Ibid.

66. W.E.A. of Canada, "Programme of Activities, 1943-44," W.E.A. Papers, MU4003, AO.

67. W.E.A. of Canada, "Outline of Studies 1945-46," W.E.A. Papers, MU4042, AO; W.E.A. brochure, W.E.A. Papers, MU3998, AO.

68. Memorandum, Forsey to Norman Dowd, Apr. 23, 1946, C.L.C.

Papers, MG28 I103, vol.242, NAC.

69. Copy of letter, Dowd to Wren, April 24, 1946, C.L.C. Papers, MG28 I103, vol.242, NAC.

70. Radforth and Sangster, "A Link Between Labour and Learning," p.78.

CONCLUSION

Like most educational innovations of the interwar period, the Workers' Educational Association was created to help solve the nation's many social and economic problems. The historians John Thompson and Allan Seager call the turbulent 1920s and 1930s Canada's "decades of discord," and it is in this context that the experiences of the W.E.A. must be situated. Thompson and Seager argue that "the previous quarter century had seen the 'nation transformed' by industrialization, urbanization, immigration, and westward expansion," which "created regional, ethnic, and class divisions that political structures were unable to bridge."¹ Feeble political solutions met with "a cacophony of dissentient voices...[that] shouted other answers into the void," as a multitude of special-interest groups advanced numerous, often irreconcilable visions of Canada's destiny.² In the country's industrial heartland, the consolidation of capital in the 1920s left labour defeated and fragmented; when jobs got scarce in the '1930s, gender further divided the working class, as women encountered a conspiracy to get them out of the paid workforce. Thus, issues of class and gender were at the forefront of public debate.

The questions of the interwar years were frequently ambiguous, but often centred around what roles working-class men and women would play in Canada's future. Education was a major component of most answers. The philosophy of the New Education, which

dominated educational thought in this era, held that schools could contribute to national well-being by training young men and women for their respective roles in industry and the home. During the transitional "decades of discord", social leaders believed education to be both a stabilizing and modernizing force in Canada.

Yet, this study of the W.E.A. has demonstrated that education loomed extremely large not only in elite ambition and public debate, but also in popular experience. The W.E.A.'s programme during its first decade reflects the aim of social leaders to promote "good citizenship" among working people. The Association's "cultural" curriculum was designed to foster an appreciation and respect for the nation's heritage, its political and economic institutions. The lukewarm response this programme received from working people and organized labour suggests that the intense confrontations between the ruling and working classes that occurred around the war's end still cleaved Canadian society: working people apparently suspected the motives of the upper-class educators who founded the W.E.A.. But when the W.E.A. began to actively promote working-class issues during the Depression, working-men and women showed a deep interest in the Association's "cultural" curriculum, as heavy enrollment in "Economics", "Psychology", "History", and "Literature", and other courses reveals. The popularity of these subjects in the 1930s suggests that there had been a demand for this type of education the previous decade too; but working men and women only began

enrolling heavily in the W.E.A.'s courses after the Association became, in the minds of working people, a "trustworthy" organization.

It should be emphasized, however, that the aims of the W.E.A. and its intended clientele did not always converge. This is most apparent in the Association's largely unsuccessful attempts to get labour unions to cooperate in joint educational projects. All of these projects--the Labour Research Institute, the Summer School, and the radio and film programmes--endeavored to promote labour unity but were undermined by union factionalism. Major labour unions were apparently too preoccupied with battling each other to put aside their differences to cooperate in mutually-beneficial ventures. The W.E.A.'s attempts to promote class-consciousness among its students was also only partially successful. While each of the courses in the W.E.A.'s programme undoubtedly contributed to class consciousness by bringing together diverse members of the working class, three courses which were most explicitly designed to address working-class issues were among the least popular in the W.E.A.'s programme: "Labour Problems", "Trade Unionism", and "Consumer Cooperation" failed to attract many students in the 1930s. The W.E.A.'s ambition to solidify Toronto's working-class movement was thus not widely shared by either its students or the city's union leaders. The working class may still have harboured doubts about the W.E.A.'s objectives because of the Association's close connection with the University of Toronto. In addition, union

membership rose rapidly in Canada after the mid-1930s, and many W.E.A. members must have felt that union halls were a more suitable place to discuss labour problems and other class-based issues.

However, since union halls were primarily "male clubs" during the interwar years, the W.E.A. played an important role in women's experiences in this period. Strong-Boag and other scholars claim that girls and women were subjected to intense social pressure to remain in their "proper sphere" during the interwar period, and thus this era did not represent the "new day" that conservatives had feared and that feminists had aspired to during the suffrage campaign.³ Strong-Boag argues that labour unions conspired in the campaign to get women out of the paid workforce and into the home:⁴

too frequently, male-run unions distrusted female workers as dangerous, low-paid competitors and weak members. Union's unwillingness to promote female leaders, and their persistent indifference or hostility to issues that touched women workers most directly, most notably equal pay for equal work, helped ensure that many individual women would look elsewhere for solutions to problems in the workforce.

The W.E.A did not aggressively promote women's issues--such a campaign might well have undermined its ability to earn the much-sought after support of organized labour. The W.E.A. did, however, encourage the full participation of women in all aspects of its programme, and this included giving a prominent role to a woman in its 1937-38 radio broadcasts; establishing an annual scholarship in 1938 to send one of its members to the Bryn Mawr Summer School for Women; and awarding its first scholarship to

the Summer School for Office Workers in Chicago to a woman, also in 1938.⁵ These were laudable initiatives by the W.E.A., and were indicative of its commitment to equal educational opportunity for working-class women and men.

This commitment was recognized by women: the W.E.A.'s enrollment and membership statistics reveal that female participation steadily increased throughout the 1930s, and by the early 1940s, women accounted for over 60% of the W.E.A.'s membership. When female and male membership was nearly equal in the late 1930s, there was no significant difference in the number of women and men enrolled in most courses, including advanced-level courses: enrollment statistics indicate that the W.E.A.'s female and male students had similar educational interests.

The "New Day Recalled" thesis argues that widespread anti-feminism led to limited opportunities for women, and influenced women's educational ambitions and interests to the extent that these were markedly different than men's. This thesis does not, therefore, adequately characterize the experiences of working-class women who enrolled in W.E.A. courses. In the early and mid-1930s, the W.E.A. did offer three "women's" courses (two in "Hygiene", and one in "Household Economics"), but these courses accounted for less than 5% of all female enrollments in the 1930s. The vast majority of the Association's female students were attracted to the Association by the prospect of pursuing their educational ambitions in an environment which placed no constraints on their ambitions. This suggests, however, that

Strong-Boag's thesis does characterize Canadian society in the interwar period. The W.E.A.'s non-discriminatory programme was an exception to the general rule of working-class and educational organizations which usually created "special" programmes for females. The W.E.A. offered women the chance to be treated like full and equal members of an educational and working class organization. The steady feminization of the W.E.A.'s membership suggests that this was a rare and much-desired opportunity for women. For thousands of female W.E.A. students, these was indeed a "new day" in the 1930s.

The non-sexist philosophy which earned the W.E.A. the strong support of working-class was a corollary of the Association's commitment to unbiased education on behalf of the working-class as a whole: the W.E.A. never allowed itself to be used to promote the interests of any particular group or organization. While this commitment is an admirable one, it played a major part in the W.E.A.'s most conspicuous failures in the late 1930s and early 1940s. These failures sprung from the fact that the W.E.A. did not have the human or financial resources to sustain its ambitious educational programme on its own, and the Association entered into partnerships with several organizations which ultimately controlled the fate of many W.E.A. projects. The W.E.A. believed idealistically--or perhaps naively--that its commitment to an extensive and impartial workers' education programme was shared by its partners.

Cooperation with the University of Toronto's Department of

Extension, which provided and paid for W.E.A. tutors, was crucial to the success of the W.E.A.'s classroom programme. But when the W.E.A. expanded from its classroom base in the mid-1930s, some of its activities were not endorsed by the Department of Extension, and relations between the two organizations gradually worsened. In 1942, the W.E.A. lost this valuable ally, and its classroom programme suffered immeasurably as a result. That same year, the W.E.A. began a partnership with the C.B.C. and major labour unions that led to the National Labour Forum broadcasts, but it was short-lived. The W.E.A. withdrew from the programme when the C.B.C., with the assistance of one union, monopolized control over the content of the broadcasts. Naturally, the W.E.A. did not have the facilities to conduct national radio broadcasts on its own, and though it pioneered labour-education broadcasts, it was no longer in the field after 1942. The W.E.A.'s Labour Research Institute was more successful, but it did not reach its full potential, and eventually expired because of insufficient contributions from organized labour. The W.E.A. constantly urged labour unions to become members of the LRI, but the Association was disappointed by meager financial contributions from major unions. Some unions were undoubtedly reluctant to support an organization that occasionally published unbiased discussions of the strengths and weaknesses of the different types of unionism practiced in Canada. The major unions were fighting each other over jurisdiction in the late 1930s, and for these battles, propaganda, not education, was the ammunition they wanted.

The W.E.A. should have anticipated that each of these collaborative educational projects had limited prospects for success. The Provincial University was not likely to support for long an organization whose activities it could no longer control, and whose ideological orientation was becoming difficult to predict. The state-owned C.B.C. could not allow itself to become a platform for far-ranging discussions which might lead to criticism of the government's wartime manpower policies. Labour unions were unlikely to assist financially a research institute whose non-partisan publications might well reveal some potentially damaging information about a particular union. In all of these collaborative projects the W.E.A.'s intentions were good--it aimed to provide a practical educational service for working-people--but its strategy depended on the cooperation of organizations which had other interests to consider.

Although the W.E.A.'s collaborative projects ended unsuccessfully for the Association, many of its educational experiments ultimately proved to be enduring and popular. "Labour Forum" survives to this day on the C.B.C.'s television network, using a format remarkably similar to the one the W.E.A. established. The Association was one of the first organizations (aside from universities) to broadcast lectures as part of a home study programme. Adult education programmes are now commonplace on the Ontario government's two public television stations. Using filmstrips as part of an education programme was such a novelty in the late-1930s that the W.E.A. had to produce its own

films. Today, films and a variety of visual aids are popular pedagogical tools.

Since adult education has only recently emerged as a field of historical investigation in Canada, it is not yet known how widespread radio and film education programmes were in the interwar years. However, the W.E.A. was one of the organizations that popularized these programmes. As historians probe further into the origins of currently-used educational techniques, they may well find that it was organizations like the W.E.A. that introduced many educational innovations. Chad Gaffield suggests that for this reason, "an understanding of schools which operated outside the established systems would be an important contribution to a general appreciation of the history of education."⁶ Gaffield claims that such schools may be warning signals for educational change. For example, he points out that commercially-run computer schools operated for ten years in the private sector before public schools incorporated computer courses into their curriculum. In this sense, private education institutions, especially smaller ones, are likely more at liberty to innovate than heavily-bureaucratized public-school systems. In addition, young organizations like the W.E.A. have more incentive to innovate: as they strive to gain a foothold in the adult education market, they use all the means at their disposal to attract students.

The field of adult education is a crowded one today, as every urban centre in Canada has numerous private and publicly-funded

organizations offering an enormous range of specialized services. The Workers' Educational Association exists to this day as a small educational "brokerage" organization in Toronto. When it was founded, however, the W.E.A. was one of just a handful of organizations providing an educational service to working-class adults. During its first twenty-five years, the W.E.A. launched several experimental programmes in an attempt to define an agenda for workers' education. Like any innovator, the Association experienced setbacks as well as milestones. Perhaps the W.E.A.'s far-ranging programme for workers' education was ultimately unworkable. During an era when the working-class was divided by gender and union rivalry while still struggling to present a solid front against the ruling classes, the W.E.A. endeavored to promote harmony within the working class and between all classes. The W.E.A.'s primary objective, said Wren at the end of his long career with the Association, was to "equip working men and women [with the] rights to which they are entitled in our present day society, and to assume a responsibility equivalent to the rights acquired." Yet Wren refused to accept that this objective might conflict with the interests of some groups whose support the W.E.A. needed, and he saw no contradiction in believing that: "it is obvious, therefore, that there is no substitute for a proper workers' educational association, growing out of the needs of workers, controlled by them, and co-operating with the highest educational authorities."^e

NOTES TO CONCLUSION

1. Thompson and Seager, Decades of Discord, p.330.
2. Ibid., p.331.
3. Strong-Boag, The New Day Recalled, p.2; Prentice, et.al., Canadian Women: A History, pp.218-244.
4. Strong-Boag, The New Day Recalled, p.69.
5. W.E.A. of Canada, Annual Report 1937-1938, p.13, DLL.
6. Gaffield, "Back to School," p.178.
7. Wren's Address, p.9.
8. Ibid., p.53.

APPENDIX I

For the analysis of the popularity of courses by gender, two different indices of popularity have been used. Figures 3.6, 3.7, and 3.10 use combined, male, and female enrollment in each course as a percentage of combined, male, and female enrollments in all courses as the index (referred to in the text as "enrollment as a percentage of total enrollments"). Fig. 3.9 uses combined, male, and female enrollments as a percentage of combined, male, and female membership as the index (referred to in the text as "enrollment as a percentage of membership"). While these two indices run the risk of being confused, it was deemed necessary to employ the two because of gaps in the enrollment data provided by the W.E.A. in their Annual Reports.

Fig. 5.1 (below) gives a summary of all available membership and enrollment data. The only complete column in this table is the combined number of members, which is available for every year in this period. The number of male and female members is available except for the three years after the 1937-38 school year. The combined number enrolled in all courses is complete for ten years: this information was provided for every course offered until 1939-40. However, enrollment by gender was not provided for several courses. For this reason, the number of males and females enrolled amounts--for five of these ten years--to less than the total enrolled indicated.

It is because of gaps in enrollment-by-gender data that the

two different indices of popularity have been employed. Fig.3.6 is intended to reveal which subjects taught by the W.E.A. were most popular overall among men and women over the longest possible period. For this reason, enrollment as a percentage of total enrollment was the index chosen, for this enables the 1938-39 year to be included. If the other index had been used, 1938-39 would be excluded, since membership by gender is not known for this year. This means, however, that the percentages of men and women enrolled in each subject, as indicated by Fig.3.6, is slightly exaggerated. The courses for which enrollment-by-gender data is unavailable are necessarily excluded from the total male and female enrolled figure which is used to calculate the proportion of men and women taking each subject. (These courses are: "Crafts", 1935-36 and 1936-37, total enrolled 139; "Math", 1938-39, enrolled 15; "Political Science", 1932-33, enrolled 96; and "Psychology", 1936-37 and 1937-38, total enrolled 233; for a total of 508 enrollments of unknown gender). However, this missing data does not undermine the intent of Fig.3.6--to show the relative popularity of subjects by gender--since the effect of the missing enrollment data can be predicted with reasonable accuracy. "Psychology" would surpass "Public Speaking" as the second-most popular course among men, but would remain the most popular course among women. The 1932-33 "Political Science" course was probably--like the other "Political Science" courses--male dominated, and would surpass "Philosophy", "Labour Problems", and probably "Art" in the male ranking, while for

women, "Political Science" would probably surpass "Physiology". The rankings of "Math" and "Economics" would remain unchanged, but the ranking of "Crafts" is left unknown.

Fig.3.9 is used to reveal how the popularity of subject categories changed over time, and thus a fixed standard--annual membership--is needed to compare annual enrollment to so that a year-by-year comparison is possible. Using this method, we cannot know, for example, what proportion of the male and female membership enrolled in "Political Science" in 1932-33, but we do know what proportion of the male and female membership enrolled in all other subjects that year. Only those courses for which enrollment-by-gender data is missing are affected by this index of popularity. The major drawback to this index is that the 1938-39 school year cannot be analysed, since membership by gender is not known for that year.

Fig.5.1
Membership, Student Enrollment, 1929-42

Year	Total			Total		
	Members	Males	Females	Enrolled	Males	Females
1929-30	230	178	52	250	206	44
1930-31	322	243	79	362	274	88
1931-32	540	418	122	599	456	143
1932-33	702	494	208	902	556	250
1933-34	718	430	288	890	579	311
1934-35	761	424	337	1083	624	459
1935-36	866	438	428	1134	546	528
1936-37	802	412	390	861	320	273
1937-38	847	450	397	923	405	467
1938-39	902	n/a	n/a	966	548	383
1939-40	610	n/a	n/a	n/a	n/a	n/a
1940-41	506	n/a	n/a	n/a	n/a	n/a
1941-42	485	186	299	n/a	n/a	n/a

n/a-not available

Source: W.E.A. Annual Reports, Membership Lists

Method For Calculating Attendance

Attendance statistics were provided for several courses in W.E.A. Annual Reports during the 1930s. Usually, attendance was given as a percentage of the total possible attendance for the course. Total possible attendance was calculated by multiplying the number of students enrolled in a course by the number of classes in a term (10). Actual attendance (the total number of classes attended by each student) was divided by total possible attendance to get the percentage. In some cases, attendance was given not as a percentage, but as the average number of students who attended each class.

To compile the rate of attendance by course over the ten-year period, the two measures of attendance were converted to the actual number of registrants for each course. Then the actual number of registrants for each course over the ten-year period were added together and divided by the total number of students in each course for which attendance statistics are available. So, if attendance was given as a percentage, the percentage was multiplied by the number of students enrolled in the course, and multiplied again by ten. If attendance was given as an average, the average was simply multiplied by ten. Then the total number of attendees for (for example) "Economics" over the ten-year period were added together, and divided by the total enrolled in "Economics" courses which provided attendance statistics, thus giving the rate of attendance in "Economics" as a percentage of total possible attendance.

APPENDIX 2

An analysis of the occupational composition of the W.E.A.'s membership is complicated by the imprecise methods used by W.E.A. officials to report this information, and weakened by their failure to provide separate listings of male and female members' occupations. The most satisfactory classification scheme allowed by the W.E.A. data is one which Michael Katz has called a "structural" classification, which groups workers according to the economic sector in which they were employed.¹ The sectorial categories used in this analysis are the same used in the 1931 Census of Canada Report, since the purpose of the analysis is to compare the composition of the W.E.A.'s membership to the composition of the Toronto workforce at large. Even so, two of the Census categories--"Warehousing and Storage" and "Trade"--had to be combined in Fig.3.5 because the W.E.A. Annual Reports grouped retail-sales clerks, shippers, and stockkeepers together. Katz also claims that the structural analysis must be supplemented by a hierarchical classification which ranks occupations according to wealth and status.² Primarily used in mobility studies, hierarchical classification is inapplicable here, because often, the W.E.A. grouped together all workers in particular economic sectors. For example, the 1931-32 Annual Report grouped together all "streetrailway and railroad" workers, and there is no way of knowing if this group included engineers,

operators, or labourers, all of whom occupy different places in the occupational hierarchy.

It is possible to classify the occupations from the 1937-38 membership list, since the individual occupations of each of the 323 members is given. But after considering the strengths and weaknesses of various classification schemes, it was decided to forego classification altogether. The membership list was primarily used here to compare the enrollment patterns of married and single women, for which purpose occupation is irrelevant. But the list was also used to examine who took various courses, and the most interesting discovery made was the heterogeneous composition of most courses: carpenters and painters, printers and composers, sat alongside stenographers and secretaries in the Economics course, for example. These subtle occupational distinctions are blurred by the abstractions required by classification schemes. Carpenters and painters would be grouped together under the classification system Hershberg and others developed for the Philadelphia Social History Project, or under the system Katz used for his study of Hamilton. All but the most complicated classification schemes would likewise group together printers and composers, and secretaries and stenographers. The small size of the membership-list sample enables the researcher to examine the actual composition of individual W.E.A. classes, which, as it turns out, is more revealing than would be the case if classification were employed.

NOTES TO APPENDIX 2

1. Michael Katz, "Occupational Classification in History," Journal of Interdisciplinary History, III, I (Summer, 1972), p.65.

2. Ibid., p.66. In a joint article, Katz, Theodore Hershberg and others recommend this five-division hierarchical classification scheme for the study of late-nineteenth North American cities:

1. Professionals and high white collar;
2. Proprietors and low white collar;
3. Skilled artisans;
4. Unskilled, but with specified occupation (eg. teamster)
5. Unskilled, unspecified occupation (eg. labourer)

Theodore Hershberg, et.al., "Occupation and Ethnicity in Five Nineteenth-Century Cities: A Collaborative Inquiry," Historical Methods Newsletter, 7,3 (June, 1974), p.179.

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