PEOPLE'S COLLEGES

for RESIDENTIAL ADULT EDUCATION

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Foreword by
SIR RICHARD LIVINGSTONE

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FOREWORD

By Sir Richard Livingstone

OUR national education in the past might be taken as an example of human inability or unwillingness to think. During more than 70 years we have been content to provide no education for three-quarters of our population after the age of 14—repeating meanwhile mechanically, the truth on which we never acted, that education is a life-long process. We have never made it so. In consequence our excellent elementary schooling has been half wasted, for we have never built on the foundation which it lays. We are now planning a system under which everyone will be kept in touch with education till 18, through whole-time or part-time study. That is a great advance. But it is not enough. Life is only beginning at 18. It is after this age that, for many people, interest awakens in the deeper things of politics, morals, religion, history and literature. It is after this age that we grow increasingly fitted to think about them, as we gain that knowledge of life and the world which makes thought fruitful. In any case we need to learn and think long after we have left school or university ; growing knowledge and thought should continually remould our life and that of the country. But this is impossible if education ends at 18 or 21, and if, as adults, we have no opportunity of systematic study. The Scandinavian countries have realized this, and provided some 200 Adult Education Colleges for their 16,000,000 inhabitants. We ought not to be behind them.

The following pages put the case for Residential Adult Education, indicate its possibilities and suggest a practical plan for bringing it within the reach of every citizen.

PEOPLE'S COLLEGES

for

Residential Adult Education

Education and Democracy

THE future of democracy depends upon education. That is not merely a picturesque exaggeration ; it is a statement of fact. The democratic way of life, to which we in Britain aspire, can be lived only by a highly educated people, because, unlike any form of authoritarianism, it demands the active, intelligent, independent, self-reliant, and *trained* co-operation of every member of the community.

We are an intelligent people. We are not well educated. We are not capable at present of managing our affairs in fully democratic fashion, however much we might desire to do so. We have neither the knowledge nor the skill.

It is essential to our survival as a nation that we equip ourselves for full democratic living. No partial or ineffective democracy can hope to compete with the terrible challenge of the totalitarian ideology and régimes ; can hope, even were there no external threat, to cope with the complex social problems of modern civilization. If Britain is to survive, we must be armed with an efficiency adequate to maintain the democratic values and the democratic order of society.

Nor is it merely a question of survival. In the post-war world Great Britain must give a strong and inspiring lead. The oppressed and subjugated peoples of the continent—and farther afield—are to-day looking to us for leadership as never before in all history. We cannot evade that obligation.

To be able to give that lead we must first, as a people, determine the direction in which we are to go, decide the

purpose of our society, and set our own house in order. To do that we must learn how. To set our house in order is not merely a matter of effecting a number of social reforms. It goes much deeper than that. It is a matter of training ourselves to mastery of the conduct of our lives and of society. In short, of educating ourselves.

Of course, it must be the right kind of education. It is widely recognized that our existing educational order is both inadequate and undemocratic. It gives opportunity to the few, but denies it to the many. Over three-quarters of our children leave school at 14, at an age when they are still physically and mentally immature, and before they can possibly be trained for the responsibilities of adulthood. They are thrown into the full life of society before they have had time to acquire any real experience of life, to have learned anything of the art of living in society. *And there is no legal obligation on anyone—parent, employer, or public authority—to see that they get any further education of any sort.* Few of them do. For the most, education ceases at 14.

"To cease education at 14 is as unnatural as to die at 14." Thus Sir Richard Livingstone.* No comment could be more apt.

That is to be altered. The age up to which children must remain in school is to be raised, and a system of part-time education for the juvenile in employment is to be instituted. The education of the young, whole or part-time, is to be extended to the age of 18. But that is not enough. It is indeed but a beginning. Education is a lifelong process. There is no age at which one automatically ceases to be able to learn. Human capacity is capable of development so long as life and health remain.

Education, rightly conceived, should be a continuous process. Primary education lays the foundation for and should lead up to secondary education. And secondary education in its turn lays the foundation for and should lead to adult education. Secondary education should not be regarded as a final stage. It is only a preparation. There are many forms of educational activity, including the most

* *The Future in Education.* Cambridge University Press. 3s. 6d.

important studies, which cannot profitably be undertaken in childhood or youth. They require a maturity of mind and an experience of life only achieved in adulthood. And—most relevant to the present situation—they can, and must, be undertaken even by those who have not had a formal secondary education. Lack of secondary education is not, and must not be thought of as, a disqualification for adult education.

The raising of the school age and the provision of day continuation schools for adolescents are urgent measures. Only when these and other reforms are effected, and when equal and adequate opportunity for the development of capacity is offered to all children, can we be said to be giving our young people a proper preparation for the responsibilities of adult life. But that will in no way diminish the necessity for adult education. On the contrary, it will increase it. The better and fuller the preparation given during childhood and youth, the greater will be the need (and the demand) for the continuance of the educational process during the years of adult life.

In the forthcoming reconstruction of our educational system we must plan for adult education as comprehensively and as carefully as we plan for the education of children and young people. Adult education must be no longer regarded, as it has been in the past, as a small and unimportant offshoot of a process which to all intents and purposes comes to an end during the years of adolescence. Adult education, in the widest variety of subjects and media, must be made available to all who desire and are capable of profiting by it. That means, potentially, to the entire adult population.

And it must be made available quickly. Time is precious ; we cannot afford to wait for the necessarily delayed results of reform of the education of the young. Education for the adult is urgent.

Existing Provision of Adult Education

The existing provision of facilities for adult education which is recognized and grant-aided out of public money

under the Adult Education Regulations of the Board of Education is of two types :—

1. *Non-residential*, as developed, almost entirely in evening classes, by the Extra-Mural Departments of the Universities, the Workers' Educational Association, the Educational Settlements Association, Adult Schools, and other agencies. In 1938, there were about half a million adults taking advantage of such facilities—out of a potential field for recruitment of at least 18,000,000.
2. *Residential*, as developed in a small number of colleges which have been promoted—and were for many years entirely financed—by public-spirited men and women who realized the need for more extended and continuous adult education than could be obtained in evening classes. In 1938 there were eight such colleges in England and Wales, and one in Scotland. Of these, five had been recognized and become grant-aided by the Board of Education, one by the Ministry of Agriculture, and one by the Department of Education for Scotland. The other two had not applied for official recognition, and so were not in receipt of any public money. The number of students in residence at the recognized colleges was under 300.

Advantages of Residential Education

Clearly, both these types of adult education are capable of very great expansion, and particularly the latter. But, it may be asked, why residential education ?

The limitations of evening study are well known to all who have undertaken it. The student comes often to his class tired in body and mind after a strenuous day's work ; and unless the teacher is engaged full time in adult education work (which is rarely the case) he too suffers from the same handicap. Any of a number of accidents—illness, pressure of domestic duties, overtime, public engagements, bad weather, or even a breakdown in a transport service—may prevent attendance, and thus break the continuity of the course, and deprive the student of a part of the benefit. In any case, however regular attendance may be, education in evening classes is education by teaspoonfuls ; one small

dose of an hour or two a week. Consequently, to master effectively a serious course of study takes years.

All these and many other disadvantages are overcome in residential education, which has in addition special advantages all its own. Study can be carried on uninterruptedly, in congenial and agreeable surroundings, undisturbed by vocational, domestic or other preoccupations. The student can give his full time and attention to his study. He has the leisure to examine his particular subject in relation to allied subjects, and thus to achieve a sense of proportion and perspective. Further, and this is one of the greatest benefits to be derived from residential education, study is pursued in community. The student is all the time in company with and sharing the experience of other students, with different outlooks, drawn from the most diverse occupations and strata of society, coming from different parts of the country (it may be even from different countries), of different political persuasions and religious beliefs, yet all united in pursuit of a common aim. The value of the stimulus thus afforded can hardly be exaggerated.

Such a period of living together develops among students a strong sense of solidarity and intimate fellowship, fosters habits of intelligent co-operation which are indispensable for good citizenship, and over and above the value of the knowledge acquired or the skill learned, can provide an invaluable training in democratic living under conditions which enable it to be most easily and fully assimilated.

Moreover, the recuperative and re-creative effect of a period of withdrawal from the wear and tear, the stress and strain of everyday life and employment can hardly be over-estimated. We have hardly begun to visualize in this country what an immensely profitable national investment—in the economic sense as well as in the intellectual and the spiritual—it would be if we instituted a system of periodic release of workers, of all grades, from their employment in order that they might refresh body and mind through the medium of an ordered course of educational activity.

The benefits of such release have been amply demonstrated in other countries. The Scandinavian peoples have

developed the idea of People's Colleges for residential adult education to a very high level. Before the war there were in Denmark, a country with a population of only 3,500,000, 60 colleges ; in Sweden (population 6,000,000) there were 59 ; in Norway (3,000,000), 32 ; and in Finland (3,500,000), 53.

The Danish People's High School is the best known of these national institutions. Of this Sir Richard Livingstone has written* that " it has transformed the country economically, given it a spiritual unity, and produced perhaps the only educated democracy in the world ". Before the People's High School was established, Denmark was " a poverty-stricken country lacking in energy or enterprise . . . its transformation into one of the most progressive and prosperous democracies of Europe was largely the work of the education given in these schools ".†

We cannot, of course, import lock, stock and barrel a system created in and for another country. But there are many thinkers who believe that in the interests of the national prosperity and well-being we too must build up, in our own characteristic way, a nation-wide system of residential colleges for adult education applicable to our own specific needs.

Karl Mannheim, one of the most distinguished sociologists of our time, says in his latest book‡ :—

> It will become more and more a question whether something corresponding to the monastic seclusion, some form of complete or temporary withdrawal from the affairs of the world, will not be one of the great remedies for the dehumanizing effects of a civilization of busybodies.

Dr. Mannheim was thinking primarily of seclusion for the purpose of religious experience. But he added :—

> . . . there will be more secular orders into which the active politician and business man can withdraw for a while for contemplation, and so make contact with those who are

* *The Future in Education.*

† *Ibid.*

‡ *Diagnosis of Our Time.* By Karl Mannheim. Kegan Paul, Trench, Trübner & Co. 10s. 6d.

less involved in the struggle for existence. The man of the world will then have the task of translating that inspiration into the language of contemporary thought and practice.

H. C. Dent, in a recently published book,* has written :—

> Men and women must have in future the opportunity to apply themselves uninterruptedly for a sufficiently long period of time to exploration of a selected field of knowledge, mastery of a desired skill, or enjoyment of a worthwhile form of recreation. *Only thus can they be enabled to meet the ever more exacting conditions of life in a modern industrialized society.*

He gives three main reasons for this belief :—

> The time factor will grow increasingly important. The days of leisurely accumulation of encyclopædic knowledge, and of slow development of a professional standard of skill by amateur methods are almost at an end. . . .
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> The nervous strain of modern life cannot be ignored ; and it will not grow less. The year before the war saw a general acceptance of the principle of " holidays with pay " . . . the near future will have to see the acceptance of the principle of the " sabbatical term " for all workers. It will be imperative in the interests of both the individual and the community.
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> The nearer we approach to full democracy the more numerous and the more responsible will grow the common obligations of citizenship. The periodic withdrawal of the worker from the " daily round and common task " that he may examine thoughtfully and objectively the nature of the society in the governance of which he takes so active a part will become more and more a necessity if muddle and mismanagement are to be avoided.

The Trades Union Congress, in a memorandum on education after the war,† has said :—

> Room must be found in the adult education scheme also for residential institutions, (which) have a real part to play

* *A New Order in English Education.* By H. C. Dent. University of London Press. 3s. 6d.

† T.U.C. Memorandum on Education after the War. Published by the T.U.C., Smith Square, London, W.1.

in adult education. . . . the most serious consideration ought to be given to the possibility of instituting in this country a system of short-term residential courses for adult students lasting from, say, three to six months. . . . Widely available, (this) would help to build up a social consciousness amongst the young citizens of the country, and might well be the means of establishing a permanent interest in adult education amongst a much wider section of the community than is touched by the provision hitherto made. The Government should give a lead to employers to release workers for this kind of short course, with an assurance of reinstatement on their return.

Looking at the matter from the business point of view, a group of distinguished industrialists and educationists which met at Nuffield College in September 1942 declared* that :—

> Industry needs, from top to bottom and in every part . . . the continual refreshment of new ideas. Its leading executives, no less than its managerial and technical personnel and the general body of workers engaged in it, need to be kept continually fresh in mind by mixing and meeting with others who can bring to them the invigorating air of different experiences and a different way of approach . . . adult education, as it is understood to-day, does not cover nearly the whole of what we have in mind. It does not cover the need for making regular and systematic provision of " refresher " courses for managers and technicians . . . the need of those already in high executive positions to broaden and deepen their outlook by contact with what is best in contemporary cultural and scientific thought.

And, they add, " No success in recruiting a skilled and intelligent body of men for the higher posts will avail us unless at the same time everything possible is done to achieve the best possible quality in the 'rank and file.' " They, too, must have their " refresher " courses. And almost all such courses must, in the nature of things, be residential.

* *Industry and Education : A Statement.* Oxford University Press. 1s.

The brief and constantly interrupted contacts of even daily meetings are not enough.

The Select Committee on National Expenditure, in its 16th report (session 1941-2) proposed that a Civil Service College should be established, in order to provide theoretical and practical training and refresher courses for picked Civil Servants after a few years' service, not only because of the increasing complexity of the problems of the life and business of the community, but because " the great majority of Civil Servants are recruited at an early age before they have been brought into contact with the complicated realities of the outside world, and without any practical training for the work which lies before them ". What is true of the great majority of Civil Servants in relation to the " complicated realities of the outside world " is equally—and even more—true of the far greater number of young men and women who are compelled to become wage earners at an early age, before their education, in any real sense, has much more than begun. The demands of the industrial world lay heavy burdens upon them, burdens which it is only too clear that many of them are incapable of sustaining, and add many and difficult personal problems to their intellectual difficulties. If they are to become useful, happy, purposeful and *active* citizens, they too must have such full opportunity of education and training in adulthood as will fit them to meet effectively the important and urgent issues—personal, civic and vocational—which constantly confront them.

It will be seen from the above that the idea of residential adult education is already accepted in principle, not merely by the theorist and thinker, but by hard-headed men and women of affairs. It is a matter now of putting principle into practice. That would not be so difficult as at first sight might appear.

Building on Experience

To establish a national system of People's Colleges for residential adult education in this country would be in no sense a leap in the dark. Small as have been the experiments so far conducted, in relation to the total population, they have

been sufficient to demonstrate the potentialities of full-time study in residence, and to indicate the latent demand there is for it.

The oldest college—Ruskin College, at Oxford—was opened in 1899. Before the first Great War Woodbrooke College (1903) and Fircroft College (1909) were established in Birmingham, the former at Selly Oak, the latter at Bournville. Directly after the war three more colleges were set up : the Co-operative College (1919) at Manchester, the Hillcroft College for Women (1920) at Surbiton in Surrey, and the Catholic Workers' College (1921) at Oxford. Since then three more colleges have been opened : the Avoncroft College for Agricultural Workers (1925) at Bromsgrove in Worcestershire, Coleg Harlech (1927) at Harlech in Wales, and Newbattle Abbey College (1937) at Dalkeith in Scotland. Of these, Ruskin, Fircroft, Hillcroft, the Catholic Workers, and Coleg Harlech have been recognized by the Board of Education, Avoncroft by the Ministry of Agriculture, and Newbattle Abbey by the Scottish Education Department. These seven colleges have received grants from public money and their work is open to official inspection.

The nine colleges offer a considerable variety of provision and courses. Ruskin, Woodbrooke, the Co-operative College, the Catholic Workers' College and Newbattle Abbey cater for men and women. Fircroft, Avoncroft and Coleg Harlech (except in summer schools) take men only, Hillcroft takes women only. Fircroft specializes in one-year courses for men from industry, commerce, and public and social services, Avoncroft in one-year courses for agricultural and rural workers. The Co-operative College has courses in social and co-operative subjects for general students, and courses for co-operative officials. Courses vary in length from a few weeks to two years. Coleg Harlech used to run* six weeks' courses, mainly for unemployed men, term studentships for advanced students, and one-year courses for men students from adult educational classes. Woodbrooke

* Only Woodbrooke and Hillcroft are at present functioning in their normal capacity : the other colleges are in use for war purposes.

had courses varying in length from one term to two years, Newbattle Abbey ran short courses of varying length in addition to its one-year courses. The courses at Ruskin were of one or two years' duration, those at Hillcroft are for one year, at the Catholic Workers' College for two years.

Though they are all on the small side, the colleges vary considerably in size : the Catholic Workers' College has accommodation for about 10 students only, Woodbrooke for 50. The others take between 30 and 40 students. All the colleges stand in their own grounds and have gardens. Some have playing fields. The accommodation includes study-bedrooms—in some cases single, but mostly for two or more students—lecture rooms, a library, common room, dining room, and in some instances crafts room and gymnasium. Avoncroft has a laboratory for natural science, and farm and horticultural equipment.

The students have been drawn in the main from tutorial classes, classes held under the local education authorities, the extra-mural departments of the universities, the Workers' Educational Association, and Educational Settlements. They have come from the widest range of occupations, from coal mining, textiles, engineering, shipbuilding, clerical work, the distributive trades, transport, and agriculture.

There is here a rich field of experience upon which to draw. But, it may be asked, why, after more than 40 years, are there still only nine colleges for residential adult education in Great Britain ? Does not this suggest that the demand would always remain small, and that it would be unwise to make any great attempt at expansion ? All the evidence points the other way. The reasons why the colleges have remained few in number and the overt demand has not been greater can be summarized in a single phrase : lack of opportunity and means.

The idea of residential adult education was, before the present war, quite unfamiliar to the minds of the British people, and there have never been available sufficient financial resources to make the idea widely known and to keep it constantly before the public mind. The colleges were founded privately, and until 1919 had to subsist entirely

on private means and voluntary effort. Even since 1919 grants from public funds have been relatively small. The average annual cost per student for board-residence and tuition in one of the officially recognized colleges is between £135 and £165 ; the average income from public funds, central and local, has been between £25 and £48. Scholarships and bursaries have not been a regular provision from local education authorities ; they have been few in number, insufficiently publicized, and generally inadequate in amount. This in times which have been increasingly difficult for any institution relying in whole or in large part upon funds raised by voluntary effort.

Moreover—and this has been an even more effective deterrent to expansion—far from there having been any recognized and accepted national scheme for the release of potential students from their employment to take up courses of study, employers generally have been reluctant in the extreme to make such a concession. The great majority of the students have had to resign from their posts, run the risk of not being reinstated—or even of being unable to find any employment on their return to occupational life—and use their savings to pay the college fees. In the nature of things the average worker cannot afford to forgo his earnings for twelve months or more. It is hardly an exaggeration to say that almost every enrolment has been an act of courage and faith.

In spite of these handicaps men and women from all sorts of industries and occupations have somehow managed each year to come to the colleges. It is their almost universal testimony that they have found the residential type of adult education the most effective and satisfying means of meeting their need of and desire for education. They have spoken in the warmest and most sincere terms of the literally immense help to them of their stay, of the invaluable opportunity it has given them of gaining a more informed and intelligent grasp of the duties and privileges of citizenship, and of preparing themselves to meet the future with a better sense of proportion and a higher standard of values. They have, too, almost unanimously stressed the fact that they

represented only the merest fraction of the men and women who would avail themselves of such education if the ways and means for it could be found.

Wartime Developments

During the present war there has been an enormous amount of residential adult education. True, it has been for the most part of a kind very different from that practised in the colleges described above ; it has been for specialized purposes and immediate ends, and so must rank rather as training than as education in the true sense of the word. But during the past three and a half years literally millions of men and women have become accustomed to the idea of going away from home and into residential institutions for the purpose of development of capacity, that is, for educational activity.

Looked at in the broadest sense, the period of training in camp or barracks which all enlisted in H.M. Forces must undergo is a form of residential adult education. But even if this be excluded, many thousands of serving soldiers and auxiliaries have been sent from their units to special courses involving residence in a community collected for a common educational purpose from a wide area and representing a genuine cross-section of the Forces population. As is well known, for the Royal Air Force these courses have often meant residence abroad—an idea that might well be tried out for peaceful ends after hostilities cease. The R.A.F. and the Royal Navy are to-day sending men to the universities for six-month courses, during which they live and study as ordinary undergraduates ; and it is noteworthy that about half these airmen and sailors are taking courses in humane subjects—history, economics, philosophy—which can serve no immediately utilitarian or vocational end.

Thousands of men and women who have volunteered for or been directed into industrial work have passed through Ministry of Labour training centres, where they have taken courses to equip them for new occupations. Here again, the idea of residence abroad has been accepted ; workers from India have been brought to Britain for training in

skilled crafts, and have returned home to impart their skill to fellow workers. The Ministry of Food has been sending young members of its staff to Cambridge to learn statistics, and the L.N.E.R. has recently opened a residential training school in Hertfordshire for newly joined clerks.

In connection with the Service of Youth established by the Government in 1939, many thousands of men and women have taken part in residential courses for youth leadership varying in length from a couple of days to 13 weeks ; and there are now two one-year youth service courses in operation at English universities. Numerous residential courses for social workers in other spheres have taken place—some, it is important to note in passing, specifically to give foreign nationals now resident in this country the opportunity to meet their British colleagues and to study British institutions and methods. Similar residential courses have been arranged for foreign students (over and above their normal university courses) and members of the Dominion and Allied Forces. Finally, many professional and voluntary associations have during the war begun or extended the idea of the residential conference for the discussion of matters of private or public interest.

This very great growth of the practice of residential adult education must not be allowed to wither and die. If public money can be spent and leave of absence from employment granted in the interests of wartime efficiency, why not also for peacetime efficiency? The general acceptance of the idea and the valuable experience gained must be translated into terms of education for the purposes of peace, which will be no less imperative and urgent than those of war. We have a unique opportunity for the establishment after the war of a nation-wide scheme of People's Colleges for Residential Adult Education. In the national interest, that opportunity must not be lost.

The Scheme Proposed

Pre-war and wartime experience suggest that after the war residential adult education should be developed along three main lines :—

(*a*) An advanced type such as has been provided by the colleges described above. The courses would be of not less than six months' duration, and might last for as long as two years. The tuition would be very largely individual, and much of the time would be spent in small discussion and study groups.

(*b*) An intermediate type, in which the courses would last for from three to five months. Here there would be somewhat less individual teaching, but equal encouragement of discussion and study in small groups.

(*c*) Short courses lasting from a week to a month. These would be promoted for a variety of purposes. They would serve as an essential link between leisure-time education and the longer types of residential courses. They could offer an introduction to subjects demanding sustained study, and thus give students the opportunity of deciding by experience whether they really desired or had the aptitude to pursue any particular subject further. They could—and very often would—be "refresher" courses to enable the busy worker to re-establish his knowledge or bring it up to date.

Hitherto, such provision as has been made for residential adult education in this country has been (except during the war years) in the main of type (*a*). The existing colleges have always had in view a working class intelligentzia, capable of fairly advanced work, and prepared to undertake a sustained course of exacting study and of very considerable length—a course comparable in duration almost with that of a university and in many cases carrying study to an equally high level.

There is room for more colleges giving advanced education; there are undoubtedly very many more men and women capable of profiting from it than have hitherto had the opportunity to do so. But this type of college will be attained only by the intellectual élite, who will always remain a relatively small proportion of the total population. The danger of conceiving the residential adult education of the future—or indeed all types of adult education—exclusively in terms of advanced study must at all costs be avoided.

Our conception must be broad and generous, our provision capable of meeting the needs of all kinds and levels of ability.

There will be need for considerably larger provision of the intermediate type of college. How considerable this may have to be it is as yet impossible to foresee. It depends upon many factors : the quality of the education given in the future to the young, the willingness of industry and commerce to release workers for extended periods, and the readiness of students to undertake courses of this length. It might be that ultimately there would have to be more type (*b*) colleges than any other.

But the immediate need would be for a great many type (*c*) colleges. As the war years have demonstrated beyond question, large numbers of people are keenly interested in politics and current affairs—national and international—economics, sociology, philosophy, psychology, religion, history, music, the arts and crafts, science, and many branches of technological proficiency. But they are capable of assimilating them only if they are presented in more popular and less academic fashion than that normally (and properly) conceived by the universities and university trained teachers.

It is this novel but not new-fangled provision which should be particularly pressed for. It will call for much that is new in organization, administration, and teaching techniques. But here again there is much to work upon. The experience of the war years should be of the utmost value. Striking advances, not yet widely known, have already been made in the organization and administration of such short courses, in framing the content of their curricula, and in methods of presentation both by instructors and through the media of the film, the radio, and other mechanical, visual and aural aids.

Over and above the fact that they will meet the needs of those who do not desire and have not aptitude for prolonged continuous study, the short term colleges have a special advantage of a different kind. They do not involve that temporary disorganization of normal domestic and working

life which residence at a college providing a longer course must necessarily do. The courses they would offer could be taken if desired during a holiday period, and in any case would mean only a brief interruption of everyday life. This would doubtless appeal particularly to the busy man or woman in need of a " refresher " course.

Freedom and Variety

It would be essential to the success of the People's Colleges for residential adult education that there should be the utmost freedom, within broad limits, for experiment in organization, courses of study and methods of teaching and learning. This freedom should not be confined to the staff but extended to the students as well. It must never be forgotten that these are responsible adults. The organization and discipline of the school would be quite inappropriate. The entire body of those gathered together in a college should be regarded, and should regard themselves, as a society in miniature, which will depend for its health, its vigour and its dynamic upon the active participation in its governance and running of all its members. The daily life should be in all its aspects a conscious practice in democratic living.

The subjects taken should be studied primarily for their intrinsic interest, and not with a mind concentrated wholly or mainly on their practical, or still less their monetary, value. While it is impossible to separate absolutely the purely cultural from the utilitarian aspect of any field of knowledge—however abstract—or of skill it should be the aim of the college to seek to secure the development of the whole personality, to help through the medium of selected studies pursued in an atmosphere of common endeavour to produce happy, purposeful human beings and good citizens of a democratic society.

Skill unaccompanied by wisdom can, as present events have shown all too clearly, be bent to terrifying purposes. It can be the gravest menace to civilization. It should be the fundamental aim of the People's Colleges for residential adult education to discover and illuminate the

purpose and the ideals of a democratic civilization. Consequently, save in those colleges established for the giving of strictly vocational courses (there must be some of these, and it would seem better for every reason that they should be run as separate institutions, staffed and equipped for their specialized purposes), wherever subjects utilitarian in value are taken, it should be with the object of integrating that value into the fabric of purposeful and cultured living.

The overriding aim of the People's Colleges for residential adult education is to enable ordinary men and women to become better men and women, better citizens of a democracy. This aim demands above all the study of society in all its aspects, and of the values upon which the social order is based. The main subjects contributing to that study are current affairs (national and international), politics, economics, sociology, psychology, philosophy, religion ; history, geography, literature ; music and the arts ; handicrafts ; and science.

As Sir Richard Livingstone emphasizes in his book *The Future in Education* (which cannot be too earnestly studied by all concerned for the future of the British people), these subjects are, with one or two exceptions, beyond the capacity of the young, because—save on the most elementary level—they cannot be understood without experience of life. It is the gravest defect of our existing educational set-up that it has almost wholly ignored this fact. We have been attempting the hopeless feat of trying to run a complex society and to manage even more complex international affairs with minds the cultivation of which ceased in adolescence. The present chaos is the result. It is of the utmost urgency, and a condition of our survival, that as grown men and women, with minds matured and made receptive by experience of the facts of life in society we sit down to study the principles of social organization, the aims, ideals, purposes, techniques and resources of civilization.

Staff, Buildings, and Equipment

To turn to practical consideration of ways and means. The first question the critic is sure to ask about any scheme

for expansion of educational facilities is : Can we afford it ? The answer in this case is categoric : We cannot afford not to do it. Unless we achieve mastery in the handling of our lives and our affairs our civilization is doomed. We cannot achieve that mastery unless we study to achieve it, and that study can neither be made during the years of childhood and adolescence, nor confined to the leisure hours of adulthood. The establishment of a national system of adult education, with residential adult education as its central bastion, is an absolute necessity. It is not an expense, but an investment—and in gilt-edge securities at that.

No exact estimate of the cost is practicable at this juncture ; there are too many imponderable factors involved. But it is clear that we must be prepared to think in large figures. There would be increased expenditure for leisure time classes, and very much increased expenditure on technical education, public libraries, art galleries, civic theatres, the dissemination of good music, and educative exhibitions of many kinds. To give some slight indication of the possible cost of residential education, it may be suggested that a reasonable estimate of the total annual expenditure of a single college in occupation the whole year round would be in the neighbourhood of £6,000 to £8,000. A thousand colleges—that is, one for approximately 20,000 of the adult population—could thus be provided at a total cost of well under £10,000,000 a year.

Even were a much lower figure than this taken for the first few years, it is clear that residential adult education could not be financed by private effort. Nor is it right that it should be. If there is to be national provision, the cost of this should be met out of public funds. Should this arouse in some minds the fear of State control and bureaucratic administration, it is well to remind ourselves of the old Greek dictum—no less true to-day than 3,000 years ago—that " the State comes into existence for the sake of life, it exists for the sake of the good of life ". The question of the effective management of affairs by the people as a whole is much too large a one to be discussed here, but it is one which must be tackled by any people calling itself a democracy.

We have got to eliminate the unnatural divorce that has arisen between " the State " and " the people "; and which finds expression in the habit of referring to the Government as " they ". The Government are " we ".

The fruits of victory in battle against Nazism will be largely wasted unless we are prepared afterwards to undertake a *positive* defence by the building of a sound foundation and superstructure for the ideals of freedom and democratic civilization. It is in that light that adult education should be regarded.

Moreover, it should not be forgotten that the returns from this investment will not be delayed. The education of the young is a long-term investment. If a child's education is begun at the age of 5 (it should be begun earlier), at the very least ten years must elapse before anything in the nature of a return can be expected, and for some years afterwards the returns—judged by any standard—will be slight. But a substantial return may be expected from even a few months of adult education received in such favourable conditions as residential education should afford. It is impossible to exaggerate the renewed vigour, initiative, enterprise and inspiration with which a man or a woman is able to return to employment, to the handling of public affairs, and to domestic life after the mental and spiritual re-creation and refreshment afforded in even a brief course at a residential college.

Such re-creation will be peculiarly necessary after the termination of the present war, when following years of strain and unremitting toil bodies and minds alike will be weary and bereft of vigour. There is bound to be a general feeling of lassitude, a general tendency to inertia, a general lack of sense of direction and grip. At this juncture, provided plans be laid in advance, the People's Colleges for Residential Adult Education might make an invaluable contribution. Membership for a while of a well organized educational community would be one of the finest and most effective means of rebuilding the foundations of personal life, which must in so many instances have been, if not shattered, at least severely shaken by the disruptive influences of war.

Very many men and women will sorely need a breathing space in which to recover from the unsettling experiences through which they have passed. Many will find it difficult, without help and guidance, to re-assume a personal responsibility for the direction of their lives. Many of the younger men and women emerging from the Forces or the war industries will indeed never have had to be responsible for themselves in the full sense of the word. Many others, especially among those who have had long periods of service abroad, will be out of touch with affairs and with current trends of thought in Britain. For all such a period during which, in skilled and sympathetic hands, they may quietly re-orient themselves would be invaluable. The benefit to society as a whole would be equally great : many men and women who might otherwise have drifted aimlessly or deteriorated seriously in the ensuing years would re-enter civilian life vigorous, alert and purposeful citizens.

Further, not only will a very large proportion of the nation have received no more than an elementary education ; in the case of many young people even this education will have been an interrupted one, or one carried on in unfavourable conditions. For them there will be the need to repair the gaps and make good the deficiencies of this earlier educational period.

The question will doubtless be asked : Would suitable staff be obtainable in sufficient numbers ? This is a very important question. A great deal of skill and highly specialized experience are necessary to run residential communities so as to ensure to students the maximum benefit from community life, especially if it continues over a fairly considerable period, as the demobilization courses would many of them have to do. In this connection it should be noted that six months' residence is, especially for grown-ups, a very different matter from a stay of a week or a fortnight.

There are not too many people with the necessary experience to take charge of a residential community ; but there are more than might at first glance be imagined. There are the staffs and ex-staff members of the existing colleges ; there are the men and women who during the war

have been in charge of residential courses and adult schools, both military and civil ; not a few hotel managers and boarding-house keepers would do the administrative side excellently, while among the demobilized men and women themselves would be found numbers of suitable candidates for posts on the staff. Given good appointment boards the task of staffing the colleges need not prove insuperable. Selection for key posts should, however, be begun now.

As regards staffing in general, it should be pointed out that thousands of men and women with no previous experience of adult education have been engaged as instructors in many and varied fields during the war and that many of them have proved highly successful. There is here a huge pool from which to recruit, and given sufficiently attractive conditions of service there should be little difficulty in securing a large number of suitable candidates.

A point that should be considered for the future—though it can hardly do much to help the immediate problem —is that there are many capable and qualified men and women in other branches of the education service who, say after a period of teaching children, should in their own interests and the interests of those with whom they deal, be transferred to a different sphere. When, as so often happens, men or women realize that the teaching of children has ceased to be their first and vital interest in life, that their minds have become too mature for intimate sympathetic contact with the minds of children or adolescents, they should no longer be compelled to remain with children. As things are, economic consideration usually forces them to do so. Such men and women might well be invaluable in adult education, and arrangements should be made whereby without economic or other loss they could, if they so desired, be transferred to it.

If the proposal for demobilization courses were carried into effect, it would undoubtedly increase a second difficulty that is bound to be exercising the critic's mind—that of the provision of buildings and equipment. The existing nine colleges plainly could not meet more than the merest fraction of the potential demand. An extensive building

scheme would appear to be necessary—at a time when numerous extensive building schemes, all of undoubted urgency, will be clamouring for priority.

There is no doubt that a considerable amount of new building would be required. Provided we are prepared to make full use of the new building techniques, which have been markedly advanced during the war, this no more than the staffing need be so very formidable a proposition. The use of pre-fabricated buildings would ease the problem greatly. The units for these can be turned out rapidly in great numbers, and once the units are on the site the erection of the building is a matter of days only. Nor need the use of pre-fabricated materials involve, as some people imagine, a mass produced or standardized effect. On the contrary, pre-fabricated buildings can be made as much works of art as any others. What is required is that a number of able architects should sit down now to design a reasonably large variety of units. By selection among these highly distinctive buildings could be created.

But there are other sources of supply which might be drawn upon. The Marquis of Zetland, Chairman of the National Trust, in a recent letter to *The Times*, made the happy suggestion that owners of large country houses who found themselves no longer able to bear the expense of maintenance might gift them to the National Trust and in so doing indicate assent to their use as People's Colleges. The suggestion is as gracious as it is happy. The country houses of Great Britain, standing in their fine grounds and extensive parks, are among its most beautiful and historic features. They could be used to no better purpose than the enrichment of the quality of the British people.

But however generous the response might be to this appeal, it could not possibly meet more than a fraction of the needs ; and in any case it has to be pointed out that such houses, designed for private occupation, are often difficult to transform into community residences. Should the immediate demand for colleges be considerable—and it would be imprudent to plan on any other assumption—even with the fullest use of pre-fabricated materials, a certain amount of

improvisation would be almost inevitable. Ordnance hostels and military hutments spring at once to the mind as offering temporary accommodation. It would have, of course, to be understood that such provision would be only temporary. The education of the adult for better living and finer citizenship is a noble ideal ; it cannot adequately or even effectively be carried out save in noble surroundings. The People's Colleges must be buildings of which the people can be proud.

What should the ideal college be like ? In the first place, it should stand in its own grounds, which should be sufficiently ample to include large gardens, orchards, and playing fields. Assuming that a type (*a*) college (for more advanced work) were planned to accommodate about 60 students—the number experience would seem to suggest as most desirable—a site of 10 to 12 acres would not be unduly large. For colleges of types (*b*) and (*c*) the numbers of students could be somewhat larger, say 80 in (*b*) and up to 150 in (*c*). For these colleges sites of from 15 to 20 acres would be appropriate.

In the past the founders of residential colleges for adults have been compelled to consider how to provide at the least possible expense a reasonable modicum of comfort and amenity. Cheapness has had to be a prime virtue. It is not suggested that in the future we should go in for unnecessary splendour or luxury ; but the scheme should assuredly not be spoiled by saving of the proverbial ha'porth of tar.

Fine architecture, ample space, artistic furniture and fittings should be insisted upon. The building, of whatever design, would consist in the main of four main blocks : teaching, living, dining and recreational, and domestic. The teaching block would include one large room or hall, capable of seating the entire student body and staff. This should be equipped with a modern stage, sound-film apparatus, and radio. Other distinctive features would be a library, well stocked with carefully selected books and periodicals, and furnished as a room to live and work in ; a miniature art gallery in which would be found, filed for the most part, reproductions or photographs of the world's

masterpieces ; and a music room, the acoustics of which should be of the most modern pattern. Grouped round these main apartments there would be smaller rooms for tutorial and discussion groups, all comfortably furnished and made to look as little like classrooms as possible. If the college had science laboratories, craft rooms or technological workshops, these would form a separate block, which might also include the gymnasium.

Much thought should be expended on the living quarters. For unmarried students comfortable rooms, on the model of those for undergraduates at Oxford or Cambridge, should be provided. But there must also be married quarters : if a married man is to take a residential course of even three months, it is unreasonable to expect him to be separated from his family for the whole of that period, and for him to be rushing home at week-ends would be to break the continuity of the course, disturb concentration, and diminish the recuperative effect.

The ideal would be, of course, for man and wife to be taking courses (not necessarily the same) together ; and there is no reason why this should not frequently be the case. All the more then would it be desirable that to a considerable extent the married quarters should be designed on the service flat basis, though it would be an essential part of the residential scheme as a whole that all should share in parts of the domestic work. Provision would have to be made also for children, especially young children. Older ones might conceivably go into a camp boarding school while their parents were away (a period of boarding school life for all children is widely advocated to-day), but it is likely that the long-term and intermediate colleges would include a nursery school and possibly a primary school also. This would greatly add to their value as genuine community centres and would ensure that continuity of home life which is so essential to democratic living.

For the dining and recreational, and the domestic blocks plentiful models exist in already established institutions of many kinds ; but even here creative thought could add many improvements. Recreational facilities in particular