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WORKERS' EDUCATIONAL ASSOCIATION - A CRISIS OF IDENTITY?

WEA TIMELINE



1903 Albert Mansbridge establishes an Association to Promote the Higher Education of working Men, bringing together supporters of working class education from the Church, Co-operative Movement, trade unions and the University Extension Movement. (Fig 1)

1904 First WEA Branch opens in Reading



1908 First tutorial classes held by R.H. Tawney, writer and economic historian. (Fig 2) Government begins to fund the WEA.

1919 Number of WEA Branches rise to 219. Former garment worker, Sophie Green is appointed as WEA's first woman tutor organiser.

1920 Workers' Educational Trade Union Committee (WETUC) formed to co-ordinate the provision of industrial & political education to union members.

1924 Government funds WEA Districts to provide adult education classes. Districts are able to act autonomously from the National Association.

1925 TUC fails to bring together other independent working class educational organisations such as WETUC, Ruskin College, the Central Labour College and the National Council of Labour Colleges.



1933 WEA campaigns against cuts in education. Local WEAs run schemes for the unemployed.

1942 WEA and the Labour Movement campaign for a new post war education act to provide free secondary education with free school meals.

1952 Founder of the WEA Albert Mansbridge dies.

1953 WEA publishes report 'Adult Education: Why This Apathy?'

1963 WETUC and NCLC merge to become the TUC Regional Education Service.



1976 Government gives WEA £100,000 to deliver on the 'Russell Priorities'.

1983 Government imposes cuts on the WEA grant.



1992 Further Education Funding Council funds the WEA.

1996 WEA and UNISON deliver Return to Learn Programme. (Fig 5)

1999 WEA build on Return to Learn model and work with the NHS and Learn Direct.



2001 The Learning & Skills Council fund the WEA. (Fig 6)

2004 WEA has deficits of £3.4 million due to financial mismanagement. WEA fails inspection by ALI. Rescue package accepted from the LSC which results in organisational re-structure for the WEA.

2005 WEA begin to recover from financial and management crisis and are re-inspected by ALI. WEA pass inspection.



2008 WEA currently being inspected by OFSTED and await notification of result.

1900 1910 1920 1930 1940 1950 1960 1970 1980 1990 2000 2010 2020

1900 Labour Representation Committee established



1903 End of Boer War. Physical condition of troops highlights the need for better education and health provision for the working classes.

1906 Labour Representation Committee is renamed 'The Labour Party'. Reformist Liberal Government elected which lays the foundation for a welfare state.

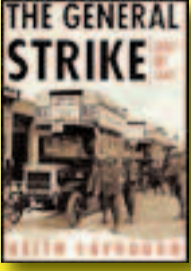
1914 — 1918 World War I



1917 Russian Revolution. This emboldens advocates of revolutionary politics and independent working class education in Britain. WEA assure King George V that the Association is not spreading revolutionary ideas.

1918 The Representation of the People Act extends the vote to some women for the first time.

1919 Government Committee reports favourably on adult education. Funds the WEA for the next 5 years.



1926 General Strike

1929 Wall Street Crash

1921 British Institute of Adult Education established as a branch of the World Association for Adult Education – a forerunner of today's NIACE. This is a forum for adult educators to act as a pressure group

1931 Mass unemployment

1939 — 1945 World War II



1942 Beveridge Report published, outlining plans for the welfare state.

1944 Butler Education Act

1954 Ashby Committee Report on the Organisation and Financing of adult education forces WEA to re-think its role and purpose

1945 Labour Government is elected on a programme of reconstruction and welfare reform

1970 Equal pay Act becomes law



1976 Sex Discrimination Bill enacted

1979 Margaret Thatcher elected on a manifesto of privatisation and reductions in public expenditure.

1988 Education Reform Act introduces the National Curriculum and SATs in schools.

1983 Unemployment in Britain reaches 3 million

1973 Russell Report is published recommending a defined role for the WEA in trade union education and in providing educational opportunities for those socially excluded



1984-85 Miners' Strike which ended in the Miners' defeat and the emasculation of the Trade Union Movement.

1986 National Vocational Qualifications introduced alongside the new GCSE.



1997 Tony Blair elected as the Prime Minister of a Labour Government.

1999 Moser Report published revealing 7.5 Million adults lack basic skills.

2007 All merges with OFSTED to form a single inspectorate of all teaching and learning.

2007 The Basic Skills Agency and NIACE merge.

2006 Leitch Review recommends increased funding of basic skills.

2001 The Learning & Skills Council replaces the Further Education Funding Council and funds all post 16 education and training. Government Skills for Life strategy launched.



2000 Learning and Skills Act established and sets up regional councils, (LSC's)

2000 Establishment of the Adult Learning Inspectorate to inspect standards of all post 16 teaching and learning.

HISTORICAL TIMELINE