grants for adult education amounting to almost three million dollars over ten years.

When the Experimental College ended in 1932, Meiklejohn asked the Carnegie Corporation to fund an outside evaluation of the experiment. They refused, saying they did not want to risk repudiation by the University of Wisconsin. (The trustees of the University of Wisconsin had decided in 1927 to refuse gifts from private corporations, and although they reversed this decision in 1930, the foundations were still wary.) In 1937-38 the Carnegie Corporation gave Meiklejohn a grant to expand the work of the San Francisco School of Social Studies.

When Meiklejohn's School of Social Studies was well established (selection 11), he threw himself into national and international promotion of adult education. From 1936 to 1943 he gave speeches around the country as they were arranged for him by the Adult Education Council of Chicago. From 1937 to 1939 he served as a director of the California Association for Adult Education. From 1938 to 1941 he was a vice-president of the American Association for Adult Education, and in May 1942, he was elected president to serve until October 1943. From 1944 through 1950 he served on the Executive Council of the American Association for Adult Education.

As president of this association, Meiklejohn wrote two articles for the *Adult Education Journal:* "Teacher, Teach Thyself" (July 1943) and "For International Citizenship" (January 1943). He developed his ideas about education for world citizenship in several other journals (selection 12) and in 1946 served as a delegate to the founding of the United Nations Educational, Scientific, and Cultural Organization (UNESCO). Meiklejohn realized that if people around the world were to become self-governing groups who appealed to reason rather than resorting to violence, then the magnitude of education that would be necessary was eluding the imagination of almost everyone. He pushed the idea of worldwide adult education as far as he could, but returned from London discouraged that even the delegates to the founding of UNESCO did not understand the quantity and quality of education such a project would require.

After 1950 Meiklejohn no longer served adult education in any direct ways. But one project in adult education that he and Helen always supported was the Highlander Research and Education Center in the Cumberland Mountains of Tennessee. Myles Horton started

Highlander in 1932 "to assist in the defense and expansion of political and economic democracy." Highlander was deeply involved during the 1930s in labor organizing drives and during the 1940s and 1950s in the civil rights movement. Its farm and facilities provided a residential setting where adults from different social, racial, and economic backgrounds could live together and discuss how to act together on the major problems facing them. The Meiklejohns never visited Highlander, but many of their good friends did, and Myles Horton always visited them when he was in Berkeley. In the 1950s the Meiklejohns became sponsors of the Berkeley Friends of Highlander, a committee to publicize Highlander's work and to raise money for its support.

11

Adult Education: A Fresh Start

Progress Report on the San Francisco School of Social Studies

Meiklejohn wrote the following report after the San Francisco School of Social Studies had been operating about six months. More a plan of intentions than a report of results, it was published in The New Republic *80 (August 15, 1934): 14-17. In 1936 Meiklejohn turned over the direction of the school to John Powell, who wrote up the whole story in* Education for Maturity *(New York: Hermitage House, 1949).*

The time has come for the establishing of a new branch of public education in America. It is no longer enough that we teach children. It is not enough that we lead many of our young people through high

school and a few of them through college. Every day makes it clearer that the amount of learning, and the kind of learning, that an American needs for proper living cannot be won in the years before twenty-one. Our scheme of government and of life can succeed only if, in their more mature years, men and women will engage in careful, enthusiastic and guided study of common values, common dangers, common opportunities. In a word, we must have a comprehensive scheme of adult education.

The end to be served by this new teaching will not be vocational. We Americans are already well able to train ourselves for jobs. There is no need for a fresh start along that line. On the other hand, the purpose is very badly described as that of "fitting people for the new leisure." That notion has in it too much of individual irresponsibility, too much of mere escape from obligations—from significant loyalties and endeavors—to serve as a basis for a national movement in popular teaching. The primary aim of adult education goes far deeper than either of these relatively superficial glimpses of meaning. That aim is the creation of an active and enlightened public mind. The deepest question in American life today is not economic or political; it is educational. It is the question of the thinking power of a democracy. Can our people understand and direct their own living or must someone else do their thinking, make their decisions, for them? As a democracy we are pledged to try the first of these two programs. And to make that attempt successful is the aim of adult education. At this point we do need a fresh start.

It should be noted in passing that the program here suggested is not that of the indoctrination of Americanism. We need the practice of democracy rather than the preaching of it. And the practice of democracy in teaching is one of "free inquiry." It seeks to create and develop the will and the capacity for independent judgment. It regards its own beliefs as open to study, to criticism, to revision. To fall short of such self-criticism is to betray the deepest principles of our American life. There is among us no treason so black as that which would, by methods of insinuation or of violence, "impose" democratic principles, keep them safe from hostile opinions. We cannot teach democracy unless we trust it in action, practice it in our teaching.

It need hardly be said that the task of creating a national system of adult education is a very difficult one. In terms of quantity, the difficulties are obvious enough. Into the field in which newspapers,

churches, libraries, theatres, lecture platforms, books and magazines, art museums, radio centers, concert halls, are already at work, teachers must go. And they must go in sufficient numbers and with sufficient clarity of purpose to criticize and modify these other agencies as well as to cooperate with them. Theirs will be the primary responsibility for making vivid and attractive the studying activity in which every good American should be engaged. To do that will be, in sheer quantity, an enormous undertaking.

But the qualitative difficulties are even greater. How shall a people that has not built up the habits of study be led into the forming of those habits? Who shall be the teachers? What "materials" shall be used? What "methods" shall be followed? Here is a teaching problem as difficult as it is important. A democracy must arouse and sustain the creative intelligence upon the postulating of which its whole scheme of government and of living rests, with whose success or failure its own existence stands or falls. How shall it be done?

As we face so overwhelming a task we may find some encouragement in the success of like ventures in at least two other countries. In Denmark, we are told, the Folk Schools have had a powerful influence in making for that country a mind of its own. They have brought many people together into the sense of common interests, common conditions, a common destiny to be studied and so mastered. And, in a more limited range, democratic living has, in like manner, been created by the tutorial classes of England. In those classes "intellectuals" and "workers" have helped each other. Their teaching influence has gone through and through the working class of an industrial society and has, perhaps more than any other single factor, raised it up into self-conscious, intelligent participation in English life and English administration. At both these points in the struggle for democracy, adult education has won outstanding victories. They tell us that our own task, difficult though it is, is not an impossible one.

In America, many adult teaching agencies have been, for longer or shorter times, at work. Lyceums, chautauquas, evening schools, extension classes, correspondence courses, public libraries, have established themselves among us. And recently, chiefly through private initiative, there has sprung up a great variety of teaching enterprises. But the most striking feature of these activities, when taken as a group, is their planlessness. In them, our teaching policy has risen very little above the level of giving to each student such subjects as

will appeal to his own immediate personal interest.

It is true that such organizations as the American Association for Adult Education and the Workers' Education Bureau have given valuable assistance and suggestion. Powerful minds, such as those of [Joseph Kinmout] Hart and [Eduard Christian] Lindeman, have struggled for coherence. And yet the fact remains that our adult teaching is a vast conglomeration of classes in labor tactics, typewriting, history, dancing, economics, painting, etc., which are bound together by no dominating ideas or purposes. And the time has now come when such "elective" incoherence simply will not do. We Americans have a very definite piece of adult teaching to do. We have common problems which must be thought about. Unless we can be aroused out of our distractions, out of our ignorance, into the attempt at understanding, our venture in democracy must come to a speedy and disastrous end. Can we do what needs to be done? Can we train ourselves to think about our problems? Can we create and sustain a national system of adult education?

It is a commonplace of educational theory that teaching method must vary with the nature of the human purpose that is sought and with the conditions that, from within and from without, are playing upon the minds of the pupils. Just as Denmark found her way of teaching and England her own quite different procedure, so we must find ours, one to fit ourselves and our intentions. It is the purpose of this paper to suggest that we are now beginning to see what, in its essentials, the American method may be.

Ten years ago the American Library Association appointed a commission to investigate how our popular reading might, by proper guidance, be made more serious and valuable. The same motive found expression in the "Great Books" course at Columbia and again in the similar venture carried on at Chicago by President Hutchins and Professor Adler. It was the dominating idea in the course of study of the Experimental College at Wisconsin. Basic to all these enterprises was a principle which, though constantly ignored, is as old as teaching itself. It seems to me to be the soundest idea that we can find for use in the field of Adult Education in America, *viz.*, that the best external help in learning to think about human problems is to get into living contact with the ablest men who have thought about these problems. One learns to play well by playing with the best players. Americans would learn to study if they would read properly the great books.

During the past academic year, the San Francisco School of Social Studies has been trying to plan and conduct a scheme of teaching on the basis of this principle. A small faculty of college rank has been conducting twenty classes with about three hundred pupils. As the outcome of their experiences a fairly definite scheme begins to emerge.

The first task of the teachers has been that of selecting the books in which the best minds of our civilization have expressed themselves upon our common problems in ways suitable for popular reading. In the nature of the case, most of our technical, scholarly books will not serve the purpose. But the "Dialogues" of Plato, the Bible, the Constitution, the writings of Emerson, Whitman, Adam Smith, Karl Marx, Emily Dickinson, Dreiser, Jeffers, Dewey, Veblen, Tawney, Brandeis, Turner, Beard, Lenin, Bourne, Mumford, Dos Passos, these and a host of others in poetry and prose, tell us of the attempts of our intellectual leaders to solve the human problems that we in America now face. Out of these a course of study may be made.

The second task of the faculty has been to furnish guidance in the study of the books selected. To this end groups have been formed with six and fifteen as the lower and upper limits of membership. At weekly meetings the books have been discussed chapter by chapter, all the members being pledged to careful reading of the assignment in advance. The reading time of a single book has ranged from five or six to twelve weeks.

In the guiding of the discussion, the teachers have tried to avoid two opposing evils. On the one hand, they have not "lectured," have not undertaken to explain the books, to tell the pupils what they mean. Lecturing, here as elsewhere, would invite the student to passivity rather than to activity; it would inform or excite or stimulate or amuse rather than challenge to the enterprise of independent reading and judgment. The purpose is to develop in the student the power to do his own reading and to discuss it with his friends. On the other hand we have not been willing to devote the meetings to mere "discussion." To do that, to encourage people to strive for victory with respect to opinions they have not really tried to verify or understand, is to help in the fixing of prejudices rather than to train the capacity for thinking. It is true that the books are read for the sake of the ideas they advance and that the reading is justified only as it leads the reader to better thinking, to better ideas of his own. But the first step

in that process is an honest, painstaking attempt to understand what an idea means when presented by another mind—in this case, by a mind far superior to one's own. In the field of study, independence is essential. But, in the proper uses of the terms, honesty, humility and accuracy are essential as well.

With respect to more external arrangements the attempt has been made to construct the simplest possible scheme, with a minimum of overhead both in expense and administration. No fees have been charged, the expenses being met by the subscriptions of a group of private citizens. No credits have been required for admission and no credits given at the end of the course. Student groups have been formed in two ways. First, existing organizations in the city, such as labor unions, churches, teachers' associations, women's clubs, political organizations, have been invited to form groups from their own membership. Second, individuals applying at the school office have been formed into groups by the teachers. The groups have varied much with respect to homogeneity and the effects of this difference are being carefully watched by the teachers. The student age has ranged from eighteen to sixty-five. Practically every type of occupation has been represented and every type of political and social attitude. Previous education has ranged from grammar school to professional and graduate university training. For the most part, meetings have been held in rooms furnished by the students or by their organizations. Attendance has been amazingly regular and the preparatory work seriously done. Twice as many students applied as could be taken by the present teaching force, and the number of applicants is constantly increasing. So far as can be judged by student activity and enthusiasm, the work of the school has fully justified itself.

One further feature of the plan remains to be mentioned. In the minds of the teachers the separate books are not regarded as separate and unrelated fields of reading. If they are to do their work they must be so related that, taken together, they give the elements of a coherent and unified study of community life as a whole. What we would like to develop in the city is the sense that there are certain central problems with which every mind should be dealing, certain leaders of intellectual activity with whom every intelligent American should have acquaintance. We need, in our American cities, what might be called a common culture of ideas, of interests, of problems, of values. We need to be brought together into unity of interest and

understanding so that we may have the materials, the methods, the acquaintance with ideas that would make possible for us the experience of genuine thinking together. We are at the present time a curiously multifarious, unrelated collection of individuals who do not know each other. And we are rendered ineffectual in our common living by the lack of any common thinking. Such a school as I have been describing dreams of planting here and there throughout the city groups of persons who may begin to remedy that evil. In such a city as San Francisco there should be hundreds of such groups at work, and they should be linked together in active cooperation. In every other American city there should be like associations, reading the same books, thinking about the same problems, grappling with the same ideas. And to this there should be added some central organization in the different states and in the nation as a whole which would keep the separate activities in acquaintance with one another, would unite them in generous cooperation. If that could be brought about it would do for us what the folk schools have done for Denmark, what the tutorial classes have done for the workers of England. It would have in it the beginnings of the making of an American mind. To say these things is of course to speak of dreams rather than of present achievements. But such dreams define the direction in which our efforts may go. As such they may be of value in the planning and creating of a democratic America.

12

Education as a Factor in Post-War Reconstruction

Once Meiklejohn had stated his general theory of education in Education Between Two Worlds, *he wrote article after article expounding the consequences of his theory even amid the realities of a world at war. The following article*