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## Education for democracy

John Dudley Gibbs Medley

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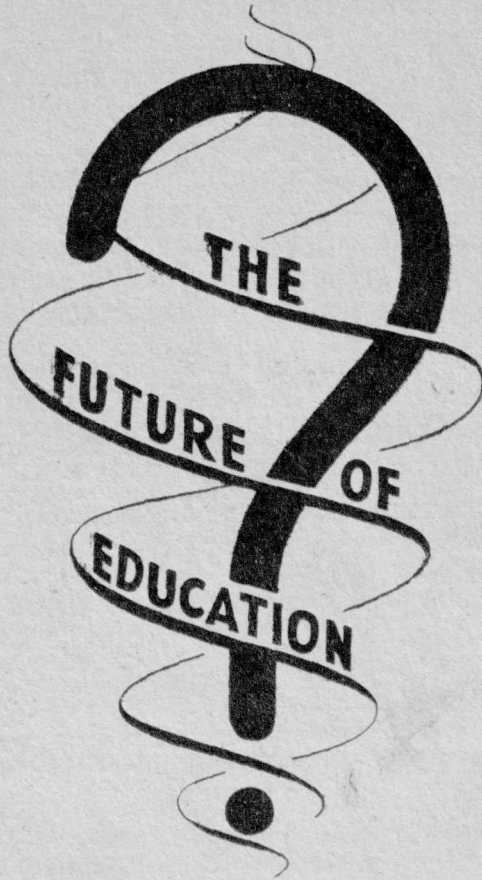
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AUSTRALIAN COUNCIL FOR EDUCATIONAL RESEARCH



No. 1

EDUCATION FOR DEMOCRACY



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(NO. 1)

MEDLEY

PRICE—

—SIXPENCE

## THE AUSTRALIAN COUNCIL FOR EDUCATIONAL RESEARCH

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# EDUCATION FOR DEMOCRACY

THE FUTURE OF EDUCATION

No. 1

EDUCATION FOR  
DEMOCRACY

BY

J. D. G. MEDLEY, M.A.

VICE-CHANCELLOR, THE UNIVERSITY OF MELBOURNE

AUSTRALIAN COUNCIL FOR EDUCATIONAL  
RESEARCH

1943

## FOREWORD

RECENTLY events have caused much reflection to be given to the behaviour of mankind. A good deal of that reflection has perhaps been directed to the process of education, seeing in that process the hope for a better world, for more consideration for each other, for more readiness to co-operate with each other in purposes more worthy of mankind.

I think I may say that it was this kind of motive which led the Australian Council for Educational Research to take stock of the state of education, and to review in a series of pamphlets the possibilities of education for ensuring a sound democracy, all the members of which would be capable, when necessary, of subordinating their own interest to the general good.

In this view, education will be regarded as the nurture of desirable personality in the members of the community; it seeks to have persons who will behave justly and decorously in social relations. Of course, education will do more. It will, also, aim at imparting knowledge and at training in skill, since satisfactory citizens must be well-informed and competent in some profession, trade, or art. But it will be agreed, perhaps, that education must not restrict itself to knowledge and skill, since knowledge and skill, as we see in the present conflict, so readily become instruments for evil, causing the sad dis-

comfiture of persons and the grave disruption of societies. Even the power to think clearly, which is by some regarded as the pride of education, may be suborned in the same way as knowledge and skill.

True education, then, wants first of all proper persons, and it tries to rear them. In this it often fails; and that failure is perhaps most clearly seen in much of man's behaviour to his fellow-man. And it seems always to have been so. The contemplation of the course of man's history arouses in one conflicting feelings of hope and depression; for the beholder is bewildered by the sharp contrasts in his conduct, by his alternating generosity and selfishness, courage and cowardice, kindness and cruelty, humility and arrogance, intelligence and stupidity, knowledge and ignorance, skill and incompetence. Education is concerned to cultivate the generosity, the courage, the kindness, the humility, the intelligence; to impart the knowledge; and to train the competence.

I feel it is right to say that organized education has had most success with the imparting of knowledge and the training for competence in one's calling. Those were perhaps its strong points. It did not, I feel, always concern itself sufficiently with the question of the kinds of persons to whom it imparted the knowledge and the competence: it did in part attend to the nurture of persons; but tended on the whole to become preoccupied with the teaching of subjects. Instruction received more attention than did education. One cannot help feeling that the kind of education which, while ensuring the possession of

knowledge and competence, could also guarantee co-operation in human relations, on the one hand, and unprejudiced thinking, on the other, would be the best means of attaining to the ideal society in which respect for the feelings of others and action dictated by the truth were to go hand in hand.

It must be admitted that, in the nurture of desirable personal qualities, the school has not always had the support of the family: the family has only too often adversely bent the twig so that, later, the school has found itself unable favourably to incline the bough. The facts of juvenile delinquency reveal clearly enough how the family of low morale may produce distorted personalities who disturb society by their negativism and misdemeanours. If all families are to be fit for their task, education for parenthood will need to receive more attention than heretofore.

Another major hope for the future is that education will lead each pupil into the joy of finding his *métier*. One could almost make the desired new society by that means alone, so satisfying is it to enter upon the calling, or activity, for which one has native aptitude. Therein lies the key to permanent adjustment, and to the permanent happiness which attends the security of permanent adjustment. Vocational guidance, universally applied by competent persons, should soon relieve the greater part of human discontent, for it would remove that sense of frustration which is the vexation of the spirit. Even before the pupil is to leave school, the natural aptitudes might



be served by the introduction into the curriculum of more activities and a freer choice of subjects of study. There will assuredly be a quick and favourable reaction in the pupil who has the good fortune to enjoy such reasonable treatment.

It is in the spirit of a certain humility about deficiencies in the past and of a qualified hope for the future that the Australian Council for Educational Research has decided to publish the following series of pamphlets, dealing with various aspects of education and called collectively, *The Future of Education*. It is fitting, perhaps, that the introductory number will be of a general nature entitled, *Education for Democracy*, prepared by the Vice-Chancellor of the University of Melbourne and Vice-President of the Council. One hopes that the pamphlets, all of which will be written by men and women expert in their respective fields, may prove a useful contribution to reconstruction and to the future of education.

H. TASMAN LOVELL,  
President.

*April, 1943.*

## EDUCATION FOR DEMOCRACY

THIS is a short pamphlet on Education. Its brevity will, I hope, commend it to the general public and arouse real interest in the series of which it is the first—a series designed to emphasize the vital importance at the present time of devising a real plan of education for the future. Those who are sufficiently interested in the subject to criticize our existing institutions and their products are apt to content themselves with blaming politicians because they do not spend enough money on education. That is merely waste of time. The attitude of the politician is merely the reflection of a disastrous lack of public interest in an all important matter. It is to arouse that interest that this series has been designed, in the belief that without it no long-term plans of reconstruction are worth the paper they are written on.

My general thesis is that if we are serious about the need of planning for a better world after the war—and if we are not we may as well resign ourselves to the prospect of intolerable lives—the first thing to start thinking about is education. I shall develop it by giving you two definitions of two familiar words and will then state four general propositions, each one of which I shall discuss shortly. My two definitions are as follow:

A democracy is a system of society in which a large majority of citizens are not only qualified in

mind and body to play a significant part in the common business of the community, but actually have opportunities of doing so. The infrequent recording of a casual vote in an atmosphere of artificial excitement does not fulfil that condition.

Education is the process by means of which boys and girls do or do not become citizens so qualified. There is at present a great gulf fixed between its theory and its practice. The education of the future must not only talk as if it created good citizens: it must actually do so.

My four general propositions are as follow:

1. Any system of society—call it what you will—is no better and no worse than the system of education which it fosters.

2. We are resolved that our system of society will after the war become a 'democratic' one.

3. The possibility of a 'democratic' society in the modern world is dependent upon two things above all—(a) the provision of a genuine equality of opportunity for all citizens, which, if the phrase is to have any real significance, can only mean equality of educational opportunity throughout life, and (b) the provision of adequate facilities for learning the difficult lesson of co-operation not only at school, but throughout life.

4. A 'democratic' society is therefore impossible which does not insist upon a broad system of education both of mind and body—a system not only designed to secure these things, but fostered so that it actually does secure them. It must be content with

nothing less than the full achievement of its realizable ideals.

(1) It is clear, I think, that as far as the achievement of its proper end is concerned the education of the last 25 years must be viewed with despondency. Is any one of you even reasonably satisfied with things as they are? Can any one of you believe that our spiritual life, our political life, our social life is the reflection of a community which is worthy of the tremendous task confronting it? We are all complaining at the moment about each other's 'morale.' If that means anything, it means lack of belief in things that really matter. Our enemies have this—though their view of what matters is not ours—and it is their greatest strength. We lack it and it is our greatest weakness. They have used their system of education as a direct preparation for the environment both material and spiritual in which they expected the coming generation to live and intended that they should live: we use our system of education as an introduction to the days that are no more and are content to leave it at that—either because we are too timid of giving offence if we think honestly about the future or because we are too lazy to look beyond the easy answer to complaint that reform costs too much and cannot be considered. Timidity and laziness are the products of bad education, and false economy is their perfectly legitimate and indeed inevitable offspring. We can no longer afford not to tackle the problem of our system of education, which cannot escape its fair share—the largest share—of the blame

for our defects as a community. Both England and America have had the courage to do so during the last 25 years. They have been game to experiment, to use the method of trial and error, to make fools of themselves now and then and to count money as well spent on education as on other social services. They have a long way to go still, but they are on the main road. We are still looking for the sign-posts, and are likely to welcome the fact that they have been removed for the duration of the war as an excuse for further inaction. But all talk about a better world is moonshine until we start building it from the bottom. The better world will be no better than its system of education, and that system must be devised to accord with our conceptions of its betterment.

(2) If my definition of a democratic society be accepted, it is clear that we have never been a democracy. It is clearer still that after the war we shall be even less of a democracy than we were before it. There are still those amongst us who believe that peace will lead the way back to the old world without perceiving that their view is a contradiction in terms. Such ideas can only lead to an indefinite prolongation of catastrophe. We must, I suggest, face the fact that the war has imposed upon us a social revolution which had already been embraced by the totalitarian states. Peace must bring with it, if it is to be effective, an advance to a society based far more upon communal and less upon individual effort than has been the case in the past. Our future framework

must inevitably retain for good many of the features which are now being imposed upon it by the actions of government. The enormous complications of a society based upon the machine, immeasurably and for good intensified not only by the present dislocations of war, but by the impetus to invention which is always the product of war, will only be capable of solution by a government which can abandon the leisurely and wasteful techniques of our so-called democracy of the past. If all we can do is to think of getting back to the good old days, we are hopelessly lost. What we must do is to realize now that the only difference between civilized societies in the future will be a difference not of social and administrative machinery, but of spirit—a difference between societies inspired by the spirit of man and those inspired by the spirit of the machine. It will be no use crying like children after spilt democracy. We must lift up our eyes to a new order and see that it is one of our own making. If we resolve that it must be a democratic one, we must start here and now to make our people fit to have it, for if they are not fit it will not come to them.

(3) A democratic society must in the future be dependent for its existence upon the effective presence of two things—equality of educational opportunity and provision of practical lessons in co-operation. Both are of vital importance and must be generally discussed.

There are common sense limits to the betterment of the world. I neither envisage nor desire a world

in which some people are not stupider than others or in which merit does not bring a recognition and a success that is denied to failure. But I can envisage and do desire a world in which all are provided with full opportunity of developing their allotted powers of mind and body. Look at the avoidable wastage due to bad nutrition, bad housing and blank ignorance of ordinary facts. We are not a physically fit people. Look at the mental wastage due in part to these things and also to overcrowded classes, inadequate school buildings, incomplete provision for the education of the under-privileged and a dozen other factors. We are not a mentally fit people. And all these things can be mended in a real world; it is not just idealistic talk to say so. And all these things must be mended if our new democracy is to have a chance of existence. Isn't it merely common sense to insist that a state which expects its citizens to play their part in its business as well as their business should see to it that they are physically and mentally capable of doing so? And how can the state do this except by compelling them to become and to remain as fit as they can be both in body and mind? That is the only way to afford equality of opportunity and the only way to make our democracy possible. The effective creation of such equality would involve the following essentials:

(a) More attention to the problem of nutrition on scientific principles, as the necessary foundation of physical fitness. There is no excuse for malnutrition in Australia, but it is rife everywhere—in expensive

flats as well as in industrial and country districts. We are merely playing with physical fitness at present. It must be tackled as a major national and educational problem.

(b) More attention to the problems of housing—both domestic and educational. Much is being done, I know, but there are still 10,000 homes in Victoria which are classified as sub-standard and unfit for healthy habitation. There are still school buildings which would make the most hard-bitten archangel weep. I hope that in the public works programme for post-war reconstruction school buildings will have a very prominent place.

I have mentioned the problems of nutrition and housing here, for they with their allied necessities of physical fitness, provision of playgrounds, welfare centres, etc., etc., must form an integral part of any educational programme which is conceived as the essential pre-requisite for sane reconstruction. Our concern must be with an education which embraces all factors which involve the training of citizens and that means nowadays not only the parent, the teacher and the minister of religion: it must include the experts on diet and environment: the mighty engines of the press, the radio and the cinema: the psychologist, the artist, the musician and the craftsman. He would be a purblind educator who ignored the fact that the infant mind must nowadays often be introduced to the magic of the world by an American crooner and take its maiden voyage in the realms of gold via the fairyland of a B class station.



(c) More attention to the fact that inefficient schools can no longer be tolerated. There exist to-day far too many private schools which do not provide adequate education in any sense and exist precariously on a basis of snobbery for the benefit of those who do not wish to send their children to a State school and cannot afford to pay the fees of a recognized public school. This kind of individualism must cease. All education is a matter of public concern.

At the opposite end of the scale come the great church schools which have played so illustrious a part in the educational history of Australia. Some reformers would no doubt favour the abolition of systems parallel to that wholly provided by the State. I would not myself support them provided a larger measure of interrelation between the systems than exists at present can be contrived. Whether these schools can continue to exist without State subsidy and what form such a subsidy, if granted, should take, is a most important question which I do no more than refer to here as part of any programme that may be considered.

(d) More attention to the fact that the State cannot afford to allow any citizen to drop out of the educational process before he has received all the education of which he is capable. The present leaving age is 14. I am not in favour of its indiscriminate raising to more at any rate than 15. There are considerable numbers of children who have by that time finished with all the formal school education that is

likely to be of use to them. But economic and other factors do under present conditions push out many children at 14 who ought to continue. It must be the business of the State to see to it that they do continue—to High school, Technical school and, if desirable, University and to provide all necessary fees and living expenses. This is so obvious a corollary of any sane educational plan for the future that I need not elaborate it at this stage. But it should be mentioned that any such plan would of necessity involve a much more serious attention to the study of psychological tests of intelligence and aptitude than we have been inclined to pay in the past. It should be perfectly possible to select by such tests at the age of 14/15 and rely on the results with a large measure of confidence.

(e) More attention to the fact that you cannot expect an ordinary person with no particular gifts—and they do exist in large quantities and will under any system of education—to become a co-operative citizen unless you help him to. To leave school at 14, just as the adult mind begins to awaken, and to plunge into full-time daily employment, is to make the learning of citizenship a haphazard affair which too often comes to nothing. My own view is that the State should prohibit employment for more than half-time—say 20 hours a week—until the age of 19, and that there should be a compulsory continuation of their education for the other 20 hours for all who leave school before that age—partly technical, vocational and physical and partly of a general

character designed to teach these maturing minds something of the duties of citizenship on a basis adapted to their standard of intelligence. The present position is unsatisfactory. Voluntary classes for tired children in the evening and day classes for which employers may or may not be prepared to allow the necessary time are far from adequate. I believe that some such scheme as this would be better than any general raising of the leaving age to fantastic heights. Many children have exhausted the possibilities of full-time school at 14 and are bored by the processes of formal teaching, however excellent. A dose of real life may well whet their appetite for more knowledge.

(f) More attention to the fact that the business of any educational system is not only to provide the means of making a living and the passing of examinations to qualify for that. That is training, not education. Nor is it its sole remaining business to provide 'culture' or the cultivation of individual tastes and talents to fill out leisure time—important though this is. In a Utopian world of unimaginable peace and plenty it may be that graceful lotus eating would be the proper goal of the educator. But in the hard practical world of the next generation emphasis on the basic virtues of citizenship must overshadow all else. Nothing else in fact matters.

Now all these virtues must be deliberately fostered. We have all too much evidence surrounding us that they do not imperceptibly creep in somehow as a by-product of school life. Talking about them

will not suffice: they must be taught, and taught in such a way that no child graduates into the ordinary occupations of adult life without a mental background that will qualify him for its responsibilities. I believe this to be the basic educational problem of the future. To discuss it adequately would involve entering into questions of machinery and curricula which, if the general principles be accepted, must form the subject of a separate survey. But quite briefly my own view is as follows. There should be at school leaving age—say 15 (plus)—a leaving certificate examination based on five main divisions—English, elementary mathematics, social science, general science and one other containing a wide variety of options. After it there should be retained in the educational system at the expense of the State wherever necessary all those who have any possibility of benefiting from higher education and they should undergo a two years' course of the kind which the Americans describe as 'orientation' or 'foundational'—(say) 50 per cent. general subjects of a background character, 40 per cent. preliminary specialist or technical training and 10 per cent. physical, including if possible a period or periods in a labour camp engaged in manual work of national importance. At the end of this course—aged 18—those who have had all the higher education of which they are capable should be ruthlessly turned into the world, irrespective of their own desires or their economic position. If such trappings of an outworn age are still of any value, let them have a degree as evidence that they have undergone

a college education. If that education has been well and truly laid, they will be worthier of an academic hood than many who wear it now. Such an 'intermediate' course needs many pre-requisites: more and better teachers, more and better buildings and equipment, fewer and better examinations, a changed public opinion about expenditure on education. But it is not a chimerical idea: it is to some extent being done in America and the results are patent. The average American has a self respect, an alertness of mind and a belief in the virtue of hard work which many Australians would do well to note.

We are left then with a limited number of those who have reached the top rung of the ladder. They will go on to a university or an institute of technology which will consist of full-time students only, bound for the professions—using that word in the widest possible sense—and for research. Their ordinary course there will (save perhaps in the case of medicine) not exceed three years and will normally consist of studies basic to their own chosen career. It should not be in my view the business of a university to provide technical degrees. (An engineering student, for example, should at the end of three basic years become a Bachelor of Engineering. His further experience should be gained in his actual calling and his specialist degrees studied and acquired at an institute of technology.) There must of course be increasing specialization as the process of education draws near its end, but it is my belief that a realistic overhaul of the content of all our

professional courses would make possible both a reduction in their length and an increase in their 'humanity.' But I daresay nobody will agree with me.

I am aware that this picture of the university of the future is not commonly accepted. We tend to imagine it as increasing in size illimitably, adding building to building, chair to chair and student to student (each more part-time than the last) and in some mysterious way becoming better in the process. There could be no more fatal conception. No recovery is possible from elephantiasis of the faculties. A University if it stands for anything stands for quality and its only *raison d'être* in the future must be to seek quality and ensure it much more efficiently than has been possible in the past. It can only do this if its lower levels are sorted out and its work restricted to its proper sphere. What exactly that sphere should be *vis-a-vis* institutions of higher technical education is a problem of which there is no foregone solution. But this much can be stated with confidence. In our democratic society of the future the mutual distrust which too often exists to-day between the exponents of 'professional' and 'technical' education must be finally resolved. There is no real meaning in their differentiation. A student in Medicine or Law is undergoing a 'technical' education, more complicated in content no doubt, but just as utilitarian and practical as a student in wool-classing or welding. All education in fact should consist of a final period of specialized tech-

nical training superimposed upon a common basis of humane studies, and the idea that a technical education is in some way socially inferior to other kinds must disappear into the limbo of things best forgotten. Both tradition and convenience will continue to necessitate that certain branches of specialized training will be carried on in universities which, side by side with that training, emphasize the value of 'pure' knowledge and research as an essential accompaniment to any form of social progress. But the university of the future cannot arrogate to itself any monopoly of the educational stratosphere, and the sooner the problem of its proper relationship to the highest forms of what is at present called technical education is faced in a realistic manner, the better for all concerned.

(g) More attention to the fact that no society of the future can exist which is afraid of the production of an élite. Given real equality of educational opportunity, the most raucous advocate of a meaningless democracy could not reasonably object to such a statement. There would, no doubt, be criticism from people who believe that their own salvation lies in a grim retention of the 'middling standard.' But a fear of quality can only have fatal results in the modern world. Our equality of opportunity must welcome those whose merit takes them to the top and must take full advantage of them. If our education has been right, they will not abuse their chances.

We are often told by those who talk that it is the business of a university to train the leaders of the

community and that unfortunate institution is often criticized by the political and commercial world because it does not in fact produce leaders with any noticeable success. Under present circumstances it is impossible that it could do so. Leaders, in so far as they can be 'produced,' are not the result of hectic specialization from infancy nor is the output of them likely to be considerable on a casual part-time basis. The right leaders of our future society can only come as the natural product of an educated élite. If we are frightened as 'democrats' by that idea, we are bound headlong for Fascism. If we are not, the best contribution that universities can make towards 'reconstruction research' is to start by reconstructing themselves in close collaboration with institutions of technical education. Between them they hold our better future in their hands.

(h) More attention to the fact that it is the business of a system of education to provide a coherent ethical background for those whom it produces. In what is in effect a non-Christian community (in the sense that the teaching of the majority of those educated is not specifically based upon Christian doctrine) it is easy to take refuge in a vague idea that vocational training with a bit of 'culture' on the side and a little 'civics' round the corner is all that you can reasonably expect of your education. That is very poor equipment with which to face the vast occasions of our times—

"Shabby equipment always deteriorating  
In the general mess of imprecision of feeling."



It is in our conception of citizenship that we must find the foundations of our secular ethic and it is obvious that its main lesson must be the responsibility of every citizen for the community at large. The fact that this lesson has been poorly taught and abominably learnt is a sufficient condemnation of our system and I may perhaps be forgiven for adding that I see no noticeable difference in this respect between the products of church and secular schools. For evidence of the power of such an ethic we need look no further than our enemies. For evidence of the effect of its absence we need look no further than ourselves. To those who may object that the whole conception ethically is second rate and therefore inadmissible I would recommend a scrutiny of the facts. It is possible here and now to see the outline of the inevitable structure of our future society sufficiently to realize that without some such ethic, taught, learnt, and practised, whether or no it is based on strictly 'religious' foundations, there can be no tolerable living. For myself, whatever my personal views may be, I can contemplate without misgiving a way of secular life based upon the idea of individuals as links in the long process that will, if rightly directed, lead the human race to a future no less unimaginably splendid than that which is offered by the churches. But that is to enter upon questions with which this pamphlet cannot deal.

So much for some of the implications of a real equality of opportunity. It is easy to criticize the whole idea on the grounds that there will be no

difference in fact between the society I have outlined and a totalitarian state. The difference can only be one of spirit—the spirit of man as opposed to that of the machine—and that difference can only be maintained by seeing to it that education in citizenship does not stop short with the school. It must continue throughout life. And with that we come to my second pre-requisite for any future democracy. Means must be devised of giving practical expression to the spirit which our education is designed to foster, and I am increasingly certain that it is in the type of organization which is known as the community centre that the solution of the problem of adult participation in the business of society must lie. It is useless talking about co-operation at school level and taking no steps to ensure that the means exist to continue the lesson in adult life. And this is where the community centre comes in as a vital factor in the reconstruction of a better world. We have to start from the bottom, to persuade people that co-operation is not just a politician's or a social reformer's phrase, but something that is owed by every citizen and owed in the first place to those in his own locality.

Ideally the community centre should be based upon the school. That adults should as a rule cease all interest in education the moment their own is completed is one of the tragedies of our times: that children should as a rule be brought up to regard the school as something quite apart from ordinary life is another. The child should be brought up in the belief that his 'school' days are merely an introduc-

tion to the continuing process of his education: the adult should regard a lively and active interest in the welfare of the educational institutions of his locality as a real duty. The physical juxtaposition of school and community centre is much the best solution of these problems. But it is an ideal solution and we must often be content with less, though in the Tasmanian area schools—the most significant educational development in Australia—a shining example is being given to all education departments. We can say, however, here and now that the establishment of a community centre in every district both urban and rural must be one of the leading aims of any reconstruction programme and that unless rapid progress is made towards that end it is idle to talk of a better democratic society. Goals cannot be reached without the machinery to attain them. A belief that talk is enough, that making speeches will itself produce results is a characteristic of democracy that has done us immeasurable harm. Let us cut the cackle and come to the community centres.

A centre may take many forms—no rigid rule can be laid down—but common to all of them must be an organization that reflects the fact that it is a voluntary association of neighbours, democratically organized within a geographical area that constitutes a natural community and designed to provide for that community the services which the neighbourhood requires. Those services have no limit: their extent depends upon the enthusiasm and the citizenship of the administration and the population of the

locality. They should at least include provision for infant welfare, kindergarten, young people's clubs, both educational and recreational, designed particularly for the 14/21 age group, thoroughly adequate facilities for physical fitness and a live centre for adult education based upon a good library. These things exist already to some extent in many forms and in many places and in many varying degrees of efficiency. The fact that they are scattered makes it easy to forget that they are community services. Some are provided by voluntary effort: some by local authorities. This diversity of origin makes it easy to forget that it is your business and my business as co-operative citizens to see that they flourish. One common centre in which the whole neighbourhood can take a pride is the only proper solution.

We have all become accustomed to a world of great distances and large areas in which we could move about with speed and freedom, and we have lost much of that loyalty to our neighbourhood that our fathers used to have. We have now to put up with a very different world which has become much smaller. Its restrictions are very irritating, but much good will come out of them if we can recapture that local loyalty and realize that the health of any big society—like that of all other living things—is based upon the health of its smallest cells. Here is the real contribution to reconstruction that comes within the scope of the ordinary man. Find out for yourself what are the community services

which exist in your neighbourhood. Do you think they are satisfactory? Wouldn't it be much better if they were extended and combined in one centre? Talk to your friends and get them interested. Talk to your local councillors and let them see that you mean business. Make a nuisance of yourself to all the apathetic people about you and try to show them that here is something that they can combine to do. And if, after the war, the world remains as bad as ever, at any rate it won't be your fault.

(4) I come at last to my fourth and last proposition, and I hope it is clear at this stage that only a system of education which does give us what we must have can bring us any permanent salvation. I need only make a few further points in this connection:

(a) As educators we must have and exhibit openly the courage of our convictions. It is, I repeat, possible to-day to do more than guess at the outline of the future structure of society. We must not be deterred by anything from declaring that we intend to educate for such a society. We must not be averse to experiment or to the possibilities of making fools of ourselves. Progress is made by the method of trial and error and the price of making no errors is stagnation. We may not be able to afford experiment on the American scale: but we certainly cannot afford not to experiment. In the modern world it is the business of the educator to look forward and to plan his campaign to fit his view. One suggestion made to me—and one

very well worth considering—is that our programme of immediately post-war development should contain a provision for the compulsory retention at school as a temporary measure of all children up to the age of at least 16. Such a plan would serve the double purpose of affording some relief to the labour market during demobilization and providing material for an important experiment in the teaching of citizenship. I commend it as an idea worth careful discussion.

(b) I need not dilate on the importance of the quality of the teacher in any imaginable new order. The success of our system must continue to depend upon those who teach in it. Their economic status must be improved and their numbers largely increased. The enormously important problem of their training is a matter for a separate survey which will form the subject of a later pamphlet.

(c) I have said little about adult education—all important though it is—but under a better regime its difficulties would largely be resolved into difficulties of administration. Its two chief handicaps at present are the fact that the ordinary product of our system has no appetite for further knowledge when he leaves school and the circumstance that its activities are normally pursued at inconvenient times and in the repellent environment of a public hall or institute. An educational system which leaves its products with insufficient alertness and awareness of the world to want more knowledge is a failure, but it can be mended. And the surroundings of a live community

centre would, it may be hoped, act as an intellectual stimulus to its neighbourhood.

(d) I have said little about the cost of educational reconstruction. It would, of course, be heavy. But I am not primarily concerned with financial considerations. If the price of a better world is better education for all, the first thing to do is to evolve the programme of that education. The second thing to do is to persuade people that they must have it, by instalments if necessary, provided the instalments are consciously directed to the one great end. It may look a hopeless prospect, but, if we lack the courage to contemplate it purposefully, it can only remain hopeless. Better worlds don't grow; they can only be created by those who have the vision to plan them and the courage to proclaim them.

(e) I have said nothing on the problem of reconstruction of our educational machinery. It would be premature to do so until we have decided what we want. I should myself view with extreme foreboding the proposal favoured in some quarters of centralizing all education under Federal control, unless a very large measure of local autonomy was assured. Our system of the future must depend for its success upon the work of unhampered individuals far more than it has in the past, and in no department of our social life can the spirit of the machine do more active and irremediable harm than in education. Decentralize or perish must be our watchword.

(f) It is worth while considering very earnestly the Americans who are now amongst us. They have

convinced me that you can educate men into a genuinely democratic attitude towards their community. They are as different from the Americans with whom I talked in France in 1918 as chalk from cheese. It is at least significant that in the 25 years that have elapsed since the last war they have faced squarely up to the problem of educating a whole community for a modern world, they have gone some way towards the creation of a real equality of educational opportunity and they have not counted the cost. They have, as they are the first to admit, made many mistakes, but they are on the high road. They hold out to us our main hope of a decent world.

This pamphlet, I am fully aware, is vague, Utopian, ill-informed, academic and unsatisfactory. It makes no concrete suggestions for the immediate reconstruction of our education. Those who hold that salvation is best sought through curricula will dismiss it at once. But it does outline some of the fundamental questions which I believe that we should all ask and answer at the present time as an essential prologue to the vital problems which confront us.

The object of succeeding pamphlets will be to provide those answers in greater detail.