

KIRSI AHONEN

**Sharing the Treasure  
of Knowledge  
Nineteenth-Century Nordic  
Adult Education Initiatives  
and Their Outcomes**



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ACADEMIC DISSERTATION

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<i>Responsible supervisor and Custos</i>	Docent Mervi Kaarninen Tampere University Finland	
<i>Supervisor</i>	Docent Minna Harjula Tampere University Finland	
<i>Pre-examiners</i>	Docent Arto Nevala University of Eastern Finland Finland	Docent Heli Valtonen University of Jyväskylä Finland
<i>Opponent</i>	Associate Professor Jan Löffström University of Turku Finland	

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I had my first encounter with the notion of adult education as a student more than thirty years ago at a time when it was not such a widespread term in Finnish public discussion as it became some years later. As a research assistant of Professor Marjatta Hietala's urban history project my task was to collect archive material on various municipal activities, including adult education, and finally also to write an article. I can still remember the encouraging atmosphere and the excitement of being involved in research work. In the aftermath of the early 1990s recession the notion of adult education became a recurrent topic as these activities expanded, leading also to my employment at the Open University of the University of Helsinki. In addition to my exposure to the history of adult education, the opportunity to work together with supportive colleagues in a novel adult education organization developing its mode of operation contributed to my choice of dissertation topic.

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In Helsinki, 17 February 2022

*Kirsi Ahonen*

# ABSTRACT

This study explores three adult education initiatives originating in Sweden and Finland during the latter half of the nineteenth century. Their significance is analysed by scrutinizing the initiators and their ideas, the processes whereby the ideas became established practices, the nature of these practices or institutions and their role in the local community at the end of the nineteenth and at the beginning of the twentieth century. These analyses shed light on why the adult education at issue became important and what changes in social patterns of education the new practices brought about.

The study focuses on the formative period of adult education prior to the era of governmental adult education policies. This period was characterized by private and local initiatives and thus the setting of the study is the local level, the Swedish city of Gothenburg and the Finnish city of Tampere. The new practices of adult education are regarded as social innovations and explored from the perspective of the innovation process, extending from the ideas, motives and models to the outcomes. The emergence and formation of the activities are examined in the social, political and cultural context of the period and the approach of the study is comparative. The sources consist of various archive materials, reports, newspapers and other publications.

These three initiatives represented liberal adult education offering general, non-vocational education. Free Academy in Gothenburg was an adult education plan introduced in 1864. It was never implemented as envisaged but ultimately resulted in a practice whereby Gothenburg University College committed itself to organizing public lectures. The idea of Free Academy and the lecturing activities have not earlier been discussed in terms of adult education. The Gothenburg Workers' Institute was founded in 1883 to cater for workers' education in the form of popular scientific lectures and the initiative for the Tampere Workers' Institute was taken at the beginning of the 1890s. Although the workers' institutes are well-known institutions of adult education, very little scholarly research has been conducted on them, on the Swedish institutes in particular.

Promoting the education of adults implied changes in contemporary thinking. It was recognized that children and adolescents were not the only ones needing education just as it was recognized that those outside the education system or those to whom this system had little to offer also needed

education. In addition, the initiators raised an embryonic idea of continuing or lifelong education.

Thus, the plans for Free Academy and the workers' institutes were not developed solely to compensate for the inadequacies of the education system but also to create entirely new educational practices and offer something the existing institutions could not.

The initiatives originated in a period of transition and exemplified different aspects of modernization: the changing role of the citizen, the emerging questions of women's and workers' rights, the pursuit of religious freedom and the increasing importance of knowledge in the lives of individuals and society. The initiators attempted to meet the needs of expanding urban societies by means of education although the needs met and the solutions offered differed according to social class. Reasons arising from such transitions, different in each case, motivated the initiators but they also had more particular interests and expectations. Their motives and goals shaped their ideas and influenced their choices of models for their plans.

This study also reveals how the processes whereby the adult education practices emerged and became institutionalized reflect the attitudes towards the initiatives and the esteem in which they were held. The outcomes were not self-evident as there were also other models, the plans and new institutions faced challenges and the original ideas were adapted to suit local conditions. The initiatives taken by private citizens to create institutions in their home towns and the essential role of local funding and other support indicate the significance of the action on local level for the formation of early adult education.

The new practices influenced the social patterns of education by increasing educational opportunities and by extending the sphere of influence of education. They offered opportunities for more regular study, albeit not producing any qualifications, and attracted considerable numbers of townspeople. They extended the sphere of education to people who had short earlier schooling and offered further education to people who had previously lacked the opportunities for the kind of education the new institutions now offered. Women were both a target and an actual audience. Participants were not only adults; the workers' institutes with their evening courses also attracted young people in an adult-like position with regard to schooling due to their daily work. The ability of the educational institutions aimed at workers to reach their target group has sometimes been questioned but it is obvious that the Gothenburg and Tampere Workers' Institutes succeeded in this. The plan



for Free Academy and the subsequent lecturing activities show that not all early adult education was intended for workers and the common people as in this case the target group was the local bourgeoisie.

As regards the effects of adult education, the case of the Tampere Workers' Institute reveals that it contributed to active citizenship by preparing its students to act in civic society and in local government. Drawing on the ideas of human and social capital, the resources the institute could generate for them can be divided into knowledge and skills resources on the one hand, and social resources on the other. The former could be accumulated by attending lectures and practically oriented courses, the latter with the help of planned teaching arrangements but also as a by-product of educational and social activities.

# TIIVISTELMÄ

Tutkin väitöskirjassani kolmea 1800-luvun loppupuolella Ruotsissa ja Suomessa tehtyä aloitetta aikuiskasvatuksen toteuttamiseksi. Tutkin hankkeiden merkitystä tarkastelemalla aloitteentekijöitä, heidän ideoitaan, uusien instituutioiden perustamis- ja vakiintumisprosesseja sekä instituutioiden luonnetta ja asemaa paikallisyhteisössä 1800-luvun lopulla ja 1900-luvun alussa. Tarkastelu valottaa, miksi kyseessä ollut aikuiskasvatus nousi tärkeäksi ja millaisia muutoksia se sai aikaan kasvatuksen sosiaalisissa käytännöissä.

Aikakauden aikuiskasvatuskäytännöt muotoutuivat yksityisten ja paikallisten aloitteiden pohjalta ilman valtiollisen aikuiskoulutuspolitiikan vaikutusta. Kohteena onkin paikallistaso, Göteborgin ja Tampereen kaupungit. Tutkin uusia aikuiskasvatuksen käytäntöjä sosiaalisina innovaatioina ja hankkeita innovaatioprosesseina, jotka ulottuvat ideoista, motiiveista ja esikuvista lopputuloksiin. Tarkastelen uusien käytäntöjen syntyä ja muotoutumista aikakauden yhteiskunnallisessa, poliittisessa ja kulttuurisessa kontekstissa, ja lähestymistapa on vertaileva. Lähdemateriaalina on käytetty arkistokokoelmia, toimintakertomuksia, sanomalehtiä ja muita aikalaisjulkaisuja.

Hankkeet olivat luonteeltaan vapaata sivistystyötä, tarkoituksenaan yleisivistävän ei-ammattillisen opetuksen tarjoaminen. Göteborgin vapaa akatemia oli vuonna 1864 esitelty suunnitelma, joka ei koskaan toteutunut tarkoitettussa muodossa. Yhtenä sen tuloksena oli kuitenkin käytäntö, jossa Göteborgin korkeakoulu otti tehtäväkseen järjestää yleisölle avoimia akateemisia luentoja. Vapaan akatemian ideaa ja luentotoimintaa ei ole aikaisemmin tarkasteltu aikuiskasvatuksen näkökulmasta. Göteborgin työväenopisto perustettiin vuonna 1883 huolehtimaan työväenopetuksesta kansantajuisten tieteellisten luentojen avulla ja aloite Tampereen työväenopiston perustamiseksi tehtiin ensimmäisen kerran 1890-luvun alussa. Vaikka työväenopistot ovat tunnettuja aikuiskasvatuksen instituutioita, niiden historiasta on tehty vain vähän tieteellistä tutkimusta. Tämä koskee etenkin Ruotsia.

Toiminta aikuisten opetuksen aikaansaamiseksi merkitsi muutoksia ajattelutavoissa. Ymmärrettiin että muutkin kuin lapset ja nuoret tarvitsivat opetusta samoin kuin ymmärrettiin, että sitä tarvitsivat myös ne, jotka olivat jääneet koulutusjärjestelmän ulkopuolelle tai ne, joille järjestelmä tarjosi vain vähän mahdollisuuksia. Sen lisäksi aikuiskasvatusaloitteiden tekijät muotoilivat elinikäisen tai jatkuvan oppimisen ajatuksen idun. Näin ollen vapaan akatemian

ja työväenopistojen suunnitelmia ei kehitelty pelkästään paikkaamaan koulujärjestelmän puutteita vaan myös luomaan täysin uudenlaisia käytäntöjä ja tarjoamaan sellaista, mihin olemassa olleet oppilaitokset eivät pystyneet.

Hankkeet saivat alkunsa murrosaikana ja liittyivät modernisaation erilaisiin puoliin: kansalaisen roolin muutokseen, naisten ja työläisten oikeuksien nousemiseen ajankohtaisiksi kysymyksiksi, uskonnonvapauden tavoitteluun sekä tiedon merkityksen kasvamiseen yksilöiden ja yhteiskunnan elämässä. Aloitteiden tekijät pyrkivät vastaamaan kasvavien kaupunkiyhteiskuntien tarpeisiin sivistyksen keinoin; tarpeet ja ratkaisut tosin vaihtelivat sen mukaan mihin yhteiskuntaluokkaan kiinnitettiin huomiota. Murroksesta nousevat syyt, erilaisia kussakin hankkeessa, saivat heidät toimimaan mutta lisäksi heillä oli myös omia erityisiä motiivejaan ja odotuksiaan. Nämä motiivit ja päämäärät muokkasivat heidän ideoitaan ja vaikuttivat siihen, mistä malleja haettiin suunnitelmille.

Prosessit, joiden myötä uudet aikuiskasvatuksen käytännöt saivat alkunsa ja institutionalisoituivat, heijastavat aikalaisten asenteita uusia ideoita kohtaan. Lopputulokset eivät olleet itsestään selviä, sillä vaihtoehtoisia malleja oli olemassa, suunnitelmat ja uudet käytännöt kohtasivat vaikeuksia ja alkuperäisiä ideoita muokattiin paikallisiin oloihin sopiviksi. Yksityisten kansalaisten aloitteellisuus sivistyslaitosten perustamiseksi omissa kotikaupungeissaan samoin kuin kaupunkien tarjoama rahoitus ja muu tuki kertovat paikallisen toiminnan merkityksestä aikuiskasvatuksen muotoutumisen varhaisvaiheessa.

Uudet toiminnan muodot vaikuttivat kasvatuksen sosiaalisiin käytäntöihin lisäämällä mahdollisuuksia sivistyksen hankkimiseen ja laajentamalla sivistystyön vaikutuspiiriä. Ne tarjosivat tilaisuuden aikaisempaa säännöllisempään osallistumiseen, vaikka eivät tuottaneetkaan muodollisia pätevyksiä, sekä houkuttelivat piiriinsä huomattavia määriä kaupunkilaisia. Ne myös toivat sivistyksen ja opetuksen piiriin ihmisiä, joilla oli vain lyhyt pohjakoulutus, ja tarjosivat täydentävää opetusta niille, joiden ei ollut aikaisemmin mahdollista hankkia uusien instituutioiden tarjoaman tiedon ja taidon kaltaista oppia. Naiset olivat tärkeä kohderyhmä ja muodostivat myös tosiasiasa merkittävän osan yleisöstä. Osallistujat eivät olleet pelkästään aikuisia, sillä työväenopistojen iltakurssit vetivät puoleensa myös työssä käyvää nuorisoa, jonka asema opiskelun kannalta oli samanlainen kuin aikuisten. Työläisille suunnattujen oppilaitosten kyky saavuttaa kohderyhmänsä on joskus kyseenalaistettu, mutta sekä Göteborgin että Tampereen työväenopistot onnistuivat siinä. Suunnitelma Göteborgin vapaasta akatemiasta osoittaa, että varhaisen aikuiskasvatuksen

kohderyhmä ei aina ollut työväestö tai rahvas, sillä sen opetus oli suunnattu kaupungin porvaristolle.

Tampereen työväenopiston tapaus osoittaa, että sen tarjoamalla opetuksella oli vaikutuksia aktiivisen kansalaisuuden edistämiseen, sillä se osaltaan valmensi opiskelijoitaan kansalaisyhteiskunnassa ja kunnallispolitiikassa ja -hallinnossa toimimiseen. Inhimillisen ja sosiaalisen pääoman käsitteiden pohjalta jaoin opiston mahdollistamat resurssit tieto- ja taitoresursseihin sekä sosiaalisiin resursseihin. Edellisiä karttui luennoista ja käytännöllistä opetusta tarjonneista kurseista; jälkimmäisiä muodostui osittain suunniteltujen opetusjärjestelyjen avulla mutta myös opiskelun sivutuotteena sekä opiston piirissä vietetystä seuraelämästä.

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# LIST OF ABBREVIATIONS

DsU	Departementsserien, Utbildningsdepartementet (Reports of the Swedish Ministry of Education)
GAF	Göteborgs arbetareförening (Gothenburg Workers' Association)
GAI	Göteborgs arbetareinstitut (Gothenburg Workers' Institute)
GH	Göteborgs högskola (Gothenburg University College)
GHT	Göteborgs Handels- och Sjöfartstidning (Gothenburg newspaper)
GSH	Göteborgs stadsfullmäktiges handlingar (Printed documents of Gothenburg city council)
HKVPAK	Helsingin kaupunginvaltuuston painetut asiakirjat (Printed documents of Helsinki city council)
KA	Kansallisarkisto (National Archives of Finland)
KM	Komiteanmietintö (Committee reports, Finland)
KTk	Kertomukset Tampereen kaupungin kunnallishallinnosta (Annual municipal reports of Tampere)
RAG	Riksarkivet i Göteborg (Regional State Archives, Gothenburg)
RegA	Regionarkivet för Västra Götalandsregionen och Göteborgs stad (Regional Archives of Västra Götaland Area and Gothenburg City)
SCB	Statistiska centralbyrån (Statistics Sweden)
SOU	Statens offentliga utredningar (Government official reports, Sweden)
STV	Suomen tilastollinen vuosikirja (Statistical Yearbook of Finland)
SVT	Suomen virallinen tilasto (Official Statistics of Finland)
TKA	Tampereen kaupunginarkisto (Tampere City Archives)
TTO	Tampereen työväenopisto (Tampere Workers' Institute)
TTY	Tampereen työväenyhdistys (Tampere Workers' Association)



# 1. INTRODUCTION: EXPLORING THE EMERGENCE, FORMATION AND SIGNIFICANCE OF EARLY ADULT EDUCATION

## 1.1. Aim of the Study

This study explores three adult education initiatives originating in Sweden and Finland during the latter half of the nineteenth century. Their significance is analysed by focusing on the initiators and their ideas, the processes whereby the ideas became established practices, the nature of these practices or institutions and their role in the local community.

Adult education has developed into a visible part of Swedish and Finnish societies, extending from the actual sphere of schooling to civic society, working life and social policies. During the last decades of the twentieth century in particular, the field expanded considerably as the scope of activities diversified and the number of students increased exponentially. The extent of this phenomenon is exemplified by the fact that at the beginning of the 2010s, half of the Finnish and Swedish adult population participated in education and training yearly, including popular or liberal, vocational, academic and secondary level school education. This actually means that the number of adults involved in educational activities exceeded that of children and young people in comprehensive schools and secondary education.<sup>1</sup> There is, of course, a difference between youth and adult education as school is the main occupation of the young for years, whereas the majority of adult students take part in short courses alongside their work but such a comparison still reveals how studying has also become a feature of adult life.

1. In Sweden, where the statistics classify adult and younger students in secondary education as separate groups, the number of children and young people in comprehensive and secondary schools in 2010 was 1.3 million, while there were 3.5 million adults participating in various educational activities. Skolverket, Elevstatistik, Grundskolan 2010, Gymnasieskolan 2010, <https://www.skolverket.se/skolutveckling/statistik/sok-statistik-om-forskola-skola-och-vuxenutbildning?sok=SokA>, accessed 1 February 2022; Statistiska centralbyrån, Tema: utbildning. Vuxnas lärande, [http://share.scb.se/ov9993/data/publikationer/statistik/\\_publikationer/aa9998\\_2010a01\\_br\\_a40br1201.pdf](http://share.scb.se/ov9993/data/publikationer/statistik/_publikationer/aa9998_2010a01_br_a40br1201.pdf), accessed 1 February 2022; SVT, Aikuiskoulutukseen osallistuminen 2012, [http://tilastokeskus.fi/til/aku/2012/01/aku\\_2012\\_01\\_2013-06-13\\_kat\\_001\\_fi.html](http://tilastokeskus.fi/til/aku/2012/01/aku_2012_01_2013-06-13_kat_001_fi.html), accessed 1 February 2022.

The strong position of adult education in these countries is partly due to the intensified governmental involvement, which started in Sweden in the 1960s and in Finland in the following decade. This brought adult education from the margins of education policies to the centre through guidelines and by increasing public funding.<sup>2</sup> Such measures enabled the further expansion of activities which, in many cases, had been developed since the nineteenth century and were already in the process of expanding from the mid-twentieth century onwards.<sup>3</sup> This formative period prior to the era of systematic governmental adult education policies is the focus of the present study.

The early attempts in adult education emerged on local level and were fostered either by individual citizens, associations or municipalities. Some of these became established institutions while others remained short-lived experiments or mere plans. Moreover, some activities have been invisible in the discussion on adult education, partly because these initiatives were taken outside the sphere that has conventionally been viewed as adult education. Thus the history of adult education in Sweden and in Finland, as in many other countries, consists of well-known cases and of untold stories, and this also holds true for the study at hand.

For this study as well, the setting is the local level. Adult education initiatives and their outcomes are explored in two urban centres, the Swedish city of Gothenburg and the Finnish city of Tampere. The first case covers a plan for academic adult education in Gothenburg, portraying an institution with the name of Free Academy, as well as the subsequent practices of public lecturing. The two other cases are about the workers' institutes in Gothenburg and Tampere. While the workers' institutes are well-known representatives of the field, Free Academy and the public lectures have not been discussed in the context of Swedish adult education. These examples also make visible the social dimensions of adult education, since Free Academy and the public lectures were originally intended for the bourgeoisie whereas the workers' institutes, as the name suggests, were meant for working-class people. The study concentrates primarily on liberal adult education<sup>4</sup>, that is, general non-vocational education, which offered knowledge and skills for the purposes of

2. Rubenson 1992, 319–323; Rubenson 1994, 367–371; *KM 1985:36*, 21–23; Autio 1993, 321–325; Autio 1997, 179–182.
3. Ahonen 2011, 442, Table 17; Sihvonen and Tuomisto 2012, 290, Table 6; Ahonen 2012, 251–254; Rubenson 1992, 319–320; Abrahamsson 1992, 12–13.
4. The Swedish term is *folkbildning* and the Finnish *vapaa (kansan)sivistystyö*. The English term popular (adult) education is also used to refer to this kind of education.

self-improvement and civic life but other forms – vocational adult education in particular – are also touched upon.

All education is connected with society in various ways but given the many roles and responsibilities grown-ups have in it, the linkage is particularly strong and direct in the case of adult education. While children are the future actors in society, adults are the present ones. The subject matter of this study is not the philosophy or pedagogy of adult education but the birth and growth of adult education activities in the social and cultural context of the period.

This study aims to shed light on why the adult education at issue became important and what expectations were attached to it by discussing the ideas and intentions of the initiators. The study also explores how the ideas were met with, how the practices or institutions in question emerged, what choices were made and how the ideas were transformed during and after these processes. Furthermore, it analyses the outcomes of the processes by discussing the status of the institutions in the respective surrounding localities, their sphere of influence, the nature of instruction and the effects of educational activities. Therefore, the focus is on pioneering individuals and their ideas, on institutions in their local surroundings and on the students, albeit mostly collectively.

The research questions are developed further in the following pages of the introductory chapter, where I outline the framework and settings of the study and introduce my approaches and methods of analysis, also justifying the choices I have made. First, I contemplate the three issues forming the frame for this study: the concept of adult education with regard to its use in a historical context, the image of Nordic adult education and the place of workers' institutes and public university lectures therein as well as the local perspective with towns as the actual locations of adult education. Next, I move on to the approaches: using the innovation process as an analytical framework, discussing the phenomena from a comparative perspective and exploring the effects of adult education in terms of resources. After that, I review earlier research related to the topic and describe my source materials and methods. The chapter concludes with a summary of the research questions and an outline of the structure of the study.

## 1.2. Framework

### 1.2.1. Concepts 'Adult Education', 'Adult' and 'School Age'

The concept 'adult education' is employed to refer to the educational activities explored in this study although it is a problematic term for several reasons and thus requires some reflection. The first issue arises out of the use of the English language, where the term has different meanings or connotations, depending partly on the user's country of origin. In Britain, adult education was for long understood as a synonym for liberal adult education, while vocational education was excluded entirely from its sphere and, still today, the term often seems to have this connotation. In contrast to British usage, in the United States the term has been more inclusive.<sup>5</sup> During the last decades of the twentieth century, new dimensions emerged in its meaning with attempts to formulate definitions in a global context. The most influential is obviously the broad definition proposed in 1976 by UNESCO, according to which adult education 'denotes the entire body of organized educational processes, whatever the content, level and method, whether formal or otherwise'.<sup>6</sup>

The history of British adult education also occupies a special place in the scholarly discussion as an esteemed tradition, which has become well-known in other countries through the literature written in English and thus accessible to large circles of scholars.<sup>7</sup> Since this may have influenced the understanding what the term covers, the British connotation of adult education referring to liberal adult education must be kept in mind and the way it is used often requires specification. Peter Jarvis, a British scholar of adult education, tried to solve the problem by suggesting that, instead of 'adult education', the expression 'the education of adults' should be employed when a term with broader coverage is needed.<sup>8</sup>

The second issue concerning the term adult education is related to its anachronistic nature. Throughout period of this study its Finnish or Swedish equivalents were not used in those languages. The Finnish equivalent of adult education (*aikuiskasvatus*) first appeared in the 1940s and initially its usage was narrow, as in Britain, excluding vocational education. In Sweden, the term *vuxenundervisning* (teaching of adults) appeared in the 1950s but referred to

5. Titmus 1996, 10; Jarvis 2004, 44–46; Ironside 1989, 17; Rubenson 2011, 4.

6. Ironside 1989, 15.

7. On the esteem of British liberal adult education, see e.g. *SOU 1946:68*, 233, 235.

8. Olesen 2011, 256; Jarvis 2004, 46.

pedagogy.<sup>9</sup> It was only in the 1960s in Sweden and in the early 1970s in Finland that the concept of adult education established itself as an umbrella term for all education and training offered to adults,<sup>10</sup> covering liberal, vocational and school education.<sup>11</sup> Before that, activities were called by their specific names such as folk high schools, workers' institutes, study circles, vocational courses or public university lectures. In this way, these activities were perceived in terms of their function, target group or method of teaching, not from the perspective of students' adulthood.<sup>12</sup> The only more extensive concept in both languages was the equivalent of popular education<sup>13</sup>, which referred to general, liberal or civic education and, especially earlier, to education aimed at grown-up peasants and urban workers.<sup>14</sup> The term popular education nevertheless differed from adult education because it referred to the social origins of students whereas the structuring principle of the term adult education was more neutrally age or phase of life.<sup>15</sup>

The lack of a general concept reflects the diffuse nature of the field and the fact that no connection was seen to exist between the different forms of adult education and training. Adult education as an umbrella term appeared in parallel with the developments resulting in defining different activities targeted at adults as a distinct sector of education and in formulating policies concerning this sector. In Sweden this took place in the 1960s and led to major reforms starting in 1967, of which the establishment of the system of municipal adult education was the most significant, consisting of competence-giving secondary and vocational schooling.<sup>16</sup> In Finland, a government committee was set in 1971 to draw up a proposal for the comprehensive development of adult education. Planned reforms were postponed until the 1980s, when a series of improvements concerning funding and education offered was implemented but such a major system reform as the Swedish municipal adult education was

9. Huuhka 1991, 127, 129–131; Tuomisto J. 1991, 31, 56; Nerman 1955; Husén 1958.
10. The terms that became established were *vuxenutbildning* in Sweden and  *aikuiskasvatus* and  *aikuiskoulutus* in Finland. The terms *vuxenutbildning* and  *aikuiskoulutus* actually refer to the schooling of adults.
11. *DsU 1985:10*, 21, 139–140; *KM 1971:A29*, 7–8, 19B (Diagram 1); *KM 1975:28*; 11–13, 29–32, 71ff; Tuomisto J. 1991, 63–66.
12. Cf. Ironside 1989, 13–15.
13. *Folkbildning* in Swedish, *kansansivistys* in Finnish.
14. Gustavsson 1991, 35–36; Gustavsson 2013, 37–38; Tuomisto J. 1991, 37. Yrjö-Koskinen used in the 1860s the Finnish expression *rahvaan sivistys* (the education of the common people). Koskinen 1868 and 1869.
15. Huuhka 1991, 125–126.
16. *DsU 1985:10*, 28–37; Rubenson 1989, 117–125; Rubenson 1994, 369–375.

not pursued.<sup>17</sup> Although the field of adult education in terms of concepts and policies came to be understood as an entity, in practice the diffuse nature of activities did not vanish and different sectors were still developed separately. Moreover, the Swedish reform of 1991 actually discontinued adult education as a comprehensive policy area.<sup>18</sup>

Why is it still useful to employ such an anachronistic concept in a historical study? It is acknowledged that the task of the historian is to act as an interpreter making past ideas and phenomena more comprehensible to present-day readers and in this it is not necessary or even beneficial to confine oneself to the concepts and expressions used by the actors of the past. Modern terminology is also often required in explaining concepts no longer used or concepts with altered meanings.<sup>19</sup>

Thus it is reasonable to refer to Nordic nineteenth-century popular education by the term adult education because it makes visible the distinction between the education of adults and of children, emphasizing that this education was offered to grown-up common people, not to their children. The term adult education also helps to perceive links between phenomena which in their own time were considered separate and thus find new perspectives for analysing them. When attention is focused on adulthood in spite of the functions, socially defined target groups or methods of teaching, this, for example, raises a question about the relation between liberal and vocational education aimed at grown-up workers, discussed in Chapters 3 and 4. Another example is liberal adult education, intended for different social classes and called by different names. Whereas lectures organized for workers were called popular or workers' education (Chapters 3 and 4), a bourgeois audience attended popular scientific or public university lectures (Chapter 2). Such links help in viewing the activities in question in a broader educational, cultural and social context.

Taking adulthood as the starting point for the enquiry also broadens our understanding about the range of adult education in history. It makes visible activities previously ignored in historiography since the institutions and the content of teaching, not the students, caught the attention. This is exemplified by the public lectures organized at Gothenburg University College from the end of the nineteenth century onwards, explored in Chapter 2. Another

17. *KM 1971:A29*; *KM 1975:28*; *KM 1984:10*, 149–159; Autio 1993, 321–326; Autio 1997, 179–188.

18. Rubenson 1994, 378–380; Rubenson et al. 1999, 20, 23–25.

19. Hyrkkänen 2002, 198; Sihvola 2000.

example is the education utilized by adult workers in both Finland and Sweden at vocational evening schools, attracting mature students to evening classes together with younger ones at the end of the nineteenth and at the beginning of the twentieth century. Towards the mid-twentieth century, these schools were actually transformed into providers of adult education in both countries.<sup>20</sup>

Even though the term adult education was not used during the period this study covers, it was clear that some educational activities were specifically aimed at people who had reached adulthood. Severi Nyman, the director of the Tampere Workers' Institute, wrote in 1899: 'A few decades ago, in the early days of our popular education in a proper sense, it was understood to include the elementary school for children only. That was considered sufficient popular education.' However, public opinion on the matter was changing and a 'wider audience had begun to realize the importance of the education of young adults'.<sup>21</sup> This remark referred both to new educational practices and to public discussion in the Diet and municipal councils as well as in associations and newspapers. In these discussions, expressions like 'adults', 'mature people', 'those who had passed school age' or 'grown-up workers' appeared.<sup>22</sup>

Therefore, the third issue concerning the concept of adult education focuses on the meaning of adulthood. If the use of the term adult education itself requires some reflection in a historical study, so also do concepts like 'adult', 'grown-up' or 'school age' since their meanings differ from later meanings, especially as regards the question of how the borderline between young age and adulthood was defined.<sup>23</sup> In this way, the deliberate use of the modern concept unknown in the nineteenth-century sources can actually keep a scholar alert to the differences between historical and present-day contexts.<sup>24</sup>

The meaning of adulthood in the past can be approached from various angles. An evident starting point is the legal definition of adulthood but in this, however, the status of young men and women was not equal. Young men both in Sweden and Finland reached majority at the age of twenty-one, whereas this age limit applied to Swedish women from 1884 and to Finnish women from 1898. Married women nevertheless remained under the guardianship of the

20. Ahonen 2011, 431; Ahonen 2009, 99–102; *SCB 1984*:2, 35; Nilsson A. 2013, 25–26.

21. Nyman 1899, 49. See also *Tampereen Sanomat*, 'Työväenopisto Tampereelle' 9 March 1898.

22. Ahonen 2011, 430–434.

23. Neither is the definition of adulthood in modern discussion straightforward as it can be approached from several angles like age, social roles and psychological development. Titmus 1996, 11; Jarvis 2002, 4; Jarvis 2004, 44–46; Koski and Moore 2001, 374–376.

24. Cf. Sihvola 2000, 117.

husband in Sweden until the 1920s and in Finland until 1930.<sup>25</sup> The legislation on marriage also treated women and men differently: for example, in Sweden women were allowed to marry at the age of fifteen until 1892, after which the age limit was set at seventeen whereas men had to be twenty-one years old.<sup>26</sup>

The meaning of adulthood in social terms was also different among different groups and the school leaving age shows this well. The vast majority of young people left formal education long before they had reached the general statutory age of maturity, not forgetting those who had never managed to enter school. For the children of workers and farmers, school age usually ended with the completion of elementary school at thirteen or fourteen at the latest and, therefore, school age was often understood to match with the years at elementary school. By contrast, boys from upper classes might often continue at secondary school until they were nearing twenty and even after that in other schools or at university (see Figures 1 and 2).

The school age can also be considered from the viewpoint of learning a skill. If young workers continued their schooling after elementary school, they usually went to vocational evening school alongside their daily labour. This extended their school attendance by a few years. The Finnish trade legislation actually presumed that apprentices and young workers would attend evening school until they reached the age of majority but because Finland—like Sweden—lacked compulsory vocational school attendance, such legislation had no significance in practice. Moreover, a Finnish vocational school committee admitted in 1912 that it was not realistic to expect young workers to attend evening schools until they were twenty-one but considered eighteen years to be a more appropriate age limit. Generally, both in Finland and in Sweden, the age of apprentice and other vocational education was understood to extend from fourteen to eighteen years.<sup>27</sup> Similarly, the Finnish legislation from 1889 regarded industrial workers as adults when they reached the age of eighteen. Employees between fifteen and eighteen years were defined as young workers, whose terms and conditions of work did not greatly differ from those of adult workers except in the case of night work. The category of children covered employees who were under fifteen years and their work was regulated more strictly.<sup>28</sup>

25. From 1863, for Swedish unmarried women the age of legal majority was 25. Pylkkänen 1992, 106–107; Inger 1997, 199, 203–204; Hafström 1967, 45, 86, 91.

26. However, it was possible to gain a dispensation. Hafström 1967, 26; Inger 1997, 141–142.

27. Ahonen 2011, 433; Nilsson A. 2008, 74–75, 96.

28. *Suomen Asetuskokoelma 1889* No. 18, articles 7–15, 25.



<p><b>ELEMENTARY SCHOOL</b> (<i>folkskola</i>)</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Compulsory education and the obligation to establish one elementary school in every parish 1842</li> <li>• For boys and girls</li> <li>• Starting age 7 from 1878</li> <li>• Duration 6 years from 1878, 7 years from 1936</li> <li>• Partial attendance typical in rural areas in the 19th century</li> <li>• Its first forms established themselves as the base for secondary school during the first decades of the 20th century</li> <li>• The highest level of education for the majority</li> <li>• Municipal but under the church administration until the beginning of the 20th century</li> </ul>	<p><b>SECONDARY SCHOOL</b> (<i>läroverk</i>)</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• For boys only until 1928; mixed lower secondary schools from 1905</li> <li>• Primary education at private preparatory schools until the early 20th century</li> <li>• Starting age 8; from 1869 starting age 9 years</li> <li>• Duration 9 years, after which a final (or matriculation) examination (<i>studentexamen</i>)</li> <li>• Classical line and natural sciences line from the 1850s; students of the latter could not pass the <i>studentexamen</i></li> <li>• Divided into lower and upper secondary school in 1905 (<i>realskola, gymnasium</i>); a final examination for realskola was introduced</li> <li>• State institutions but under the church administration until the beginning of the 20th century</li> </ul>	<p><b>GIRLS' SCHOOL</b> (<i>flickskola/ bögre flickskola</i>)</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Primary education at private preparatory schools until the early 20th century</li> <li>• 6 compulsory and 2 voluntary forms from 1866</li> <li>• Curriculum differed from that of boys' secondary schools</li> <li>• No counterpart for the <i>studentexamen</i></li> <li>• Private institutions</li> </ul>
<p><b>LOWER TECHNICAL EDUCATION</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Training at work; theoretical instruction at evening schools</li> <li>• Vocational day schools from the 1920s (<i>verkstadsskola</i>)</li> </ul>	<p><b>OTHER EDUCATIONAL INSTITUTIONS</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Technical and commercial schools and institutes</li> <li>• Agricultural and forestry schools</li> <li>• Schools of home economics</li> <li>• Teachers' training colleges (<i>lärare/ lärarinneseminarium</i>)</li> <li>• Polytechnics and commercial colleges from the late 19th century</li> </ul>	<p><b>UNIVERSITY</b> (<i>universitet/ högskola</i>)</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• The <i>studentexamen</i> an entrance requirement</li> <li>• Opened gradually to women from the 1870s</li> <li>• Opened to those who had not studied Latin in 1891</li> </ul>

**Figure 1. Outline of the Swedish education system from the mid-19<sup>th</sup> to the early 20<sup>th</sup> century.**

Sources: Richardson 2004; Nilsson L. 1981; Nilsson A. 2008.

#### ELEMENTARY SCHOOL (*kansakoulu, folkskola*)

- The acts of 1866 and 1898: the building of the school network
- For boys and girls
- Language of instruction Finnish or Swedish
- 6-year school in towns, starting age usually 7 years; in practice the duration typically 4 years
- 4-year school in rural areas, starting age from 10 to 12 years, from 1893 starting age from 9 to 12 years (primary education at parish ambulatory schools)
- Non-attendance or partial attendance typical in rural areas
- Compulsory education 1921
- At first the school of the common people; its lower forms established themselves as the base for secondary school by the 1950s
- The highest level of education for the majority
- Municipal institution but rural primary schools run by the church

#### SECONDARY SCHOOL (*oppikoulu, läroverk*)

- From 1872 three types: for boys 8-year lyceum leading to university or lower secondary school preparing for practical fields (2 to 4 years, complementary to elementary school); 4-year girls' school
- From 1885 the duration of the girls' school 5 years and its curriculum closer to lyceum; did not lead to university entrance
- Language of instruction Finnish or Swedish
- Primary education usually at private preparatory schools until the 20th century
- Starting age for boys from 9 to 13 years, for girls 11 years until 1920
- At the end of lyceum a final (or matriculation) examination (*ylioppilastutkinto, studentexamen*)
- Mixed schools from the 1880s; girls had to apply for a dispensation to take the matriculation examination until 1901
- State or private institutions

#### LOWER TECHNICAL AND COMMERCIAL EDUCATION

- Training at work; theoretical instruction at evening schools
- Vocational day schools from the turn of the 20th century (*valmistava ammattikoulu*)

#### OTHER EDUCATIONAL INSTITUTIONS

- Technical, commercial, agricultural and forestry schools and institutes; schools of home economics
- Teachers' training college (*opettajaseminaari, lärareseminarium*)
- Polytechnic (*Teknillinen korkeakoulu*) and commercial colleges from the beginning of the 20th century

#### UNIVERSITY

(*yliopisto, universitet*)

- Matriculation examination required for the entry
- Women's right to study in 1901, before that with special dispensation

**Figure 2. Outline of the Finnish education system from the 1860s to the early 20<sup>th</sup> century.**

Sources: Leino-Kaukiainen and Heikkinen 2011; Heikkinen 2011; Tuomaala 2011; Hyyrö 2011; Rahikainen 2011; Halila 1949a, Halila 1949b; Kaarninen M. 1995; Strömberg 2011; Kiuasmaa 1982; Kaarninen M. and Kaarninen P. 2002.

Accordingly, for long in the twentieth century due to shorter elementary schooling, the majority of young people were not schoolgirls or schoolboys. They were young workers earning their living, or if not employed, they usually took part in household duties, as did young girls at home or rural young people on farms.<sup>29</sup> In this sense they were regarded as adults by the society in which they lived as UNESCO specified the targets of adult education in its 1976 definition.<sup>30</sup> Their opportunities for further education did not essentially differ from those of more mature workers. Therefore, the activities which today are called adult education did not always concern adults only but also those young people who had to seek education and instruction from institutions or practices located outside or on the margins of the school system. Yet it was not only working-class young people who were outsiders in the sense that their opportunities for further education could not usually be found in the frame of the education system. Until the late nineteenth century, young girls and women from upper classes had no opportunity to study at universities and were therefore looking for other options. In Sweden, university admission was also long denied those young men, who had not studied Latin at secondary school.<sup>31</sup> For these reasons, an attempt to determine the adult education of the past with the help a modern definition referring to education taking place after compulsory or initial schooling is not relevant; social conditions and prevailing practices must also be considered.<sup>32</sup>

### 1.2.2. The Image of Nordic Adult Education

What makes the history of Finnish and Swedish adult education, or more broadly, of Nordic adult education, an interesting subject of research? From a contemporary perspective, Nordic achievement in the field has a good reputation and has long attracted attention outside the region as well. The interest in Nordic practices became evident already in the context of the first UNESCO international conference on adult education in 1949 as Denmark, Finland, Norway and Sweden were requested to present their contributions and experiences at this meeting.<sup>33</sup> Later, the Nordic countries have distinguished themselves in international comparative surveys particularly with their remarkably high levels of participation, indicating that adult education is a

29. Rahikainen 2003, 162–166.

30. Ironside 1989, 15.

31. See Chapter 2.

32. On the definitions, see Ironside 1989, 15.

33. Lund 1952.

widespread and well-established phenomenon in these countries. In the 1990s, the Nordic rates of participation were the highest in the world, ranging from 56 per cent of the Finnish adult population to 47 per cent of the Norwegian. The Nordic average of 53 per cent was far above the average of the OECD countries, which was 32 per cent.<sup>34</sup> The figures from the 2000s show that this trend continued.<sup>35</sup>

Looking from outside, the Nordic countries at the turn of the twenty-first century seem to have formed a homogenous group not only in terms of the visibility of adult education in society but also considering the ideas, policies and practices related to it. This has led to the question whether there exists a specific Nordic model with a common approach and ways of planning and implementing adult education and adult education policies. A comparative study from 2001 nevertheless concluded that, instead of a ‘Nordic model’, the question is rather about distinctive Nordic patterns of adult education. Apart from the high participation rate, these include a fairly large number of hours spent in adult education, less severe inequality than elsewhere in participation between those with short and long formal schooling, a high share of public financing and suppliers and, in addition, a high share of personal-interest education. The strong role of the public sector has been related to the organization of Nordic societies with their distinct type of tax-funded welfare states.<sup>36</sup>

Similarly, scholars have discussed welfare state itself and the entire education system of these countries in the frame of a Nordic model, pointing out that there are common structures but also peculiarities, which are often highlighted.<sup>37</sup> Such an entanglement of similarities and dissimilarities suggests that the meaning of something being Nordic is not self-evident despite the many common features in the history, culture and societies of the Nordic countries but rather a construct referring to different contexts and time-points.<sup>38</sup>

Therefore, when looking at history, do the common patterns found in Nordic adult education at the turn of the millennium justify or even make it possible to speak of a specific Nordic tradition in adult education? Outside the Nordic countries, such a tradition could probably easily be associated with

34. Blomqvist and Tuijnman 2001, 28–29, 55–56, Annex C, Table 2.1. p. 141.

35. Rubenson 2007, 52; Rubenson 2013, 20.

36. Jónasson and Tuijnman 2001, 126–128. See also Rubenson 2007, 51–55.

37. Antikainen and Rinne 2012, 442–443, 464–469, 476–477; Kettunen 2006, 233, 237–248.

38. Jalava 2013, 249–259; Larsson S., Jalava and Haapala 2017, 10–12.

folk high schools<sup>39</sup> and N.S.F. Grundtvig, the nineteenth-century Danish clergyman, philosopher and teacher, whose ideas inspired their establishment. Grundtvig focused on the importance of self-improvement and emphasized that the students should be taught with the help of the ‘living word’, as opposed to the contemporary secondary school teaching dominated by books and the Latin language. The first folk high schools were founded in Denmark in the 1840s and the example of this residential institute was followed in other Nordic countries in the following decades. The early folk high schools aimed especially at the general and civic education of young adults, mainly the sons and daughters of landowning peasants, whose political status on national and local level had strengthened in the course of the nineteenth century in the Nordic countries. The idea of folk high school spread to other European countries, and even to North America and Japan, for which reason it probably became the best-known form of Nordic adult education. Scholars living outside the Nordic region have also been interested in the history of this institution.<sup>40</sup>

From a Nordic perspective, it is evident that the history of adult education encompasses much more than folk high schools and this is why the question whether there is something that could be called a common tradition is, of course, complicated. Moreover, the lack of comparative historical research on Nordic developments makes it difficult to assess the question more thoroughly. The joint publication prepared for the UNESCO 1949 conference nonetheless offers a cross section of the mid-twentieth-century Nordic situation with a historical perspective, suggesting at least two interesting things. First, and not so surprisingly, it shows that a diverse provision of adult education by different kinds of organizers had developed in the four Nordic countries described in the book by the end of the 1940s. In addition to the folk high schools, the educational offerings included popular scientific lectures arranged by lecturing societies or student associations; evening schools, folk academies and workers’ institutes providing general, practical, musical and artistic instruction; and study circles on various topics organized by different educational associations. Second, a more thought-provoking fact is that the book clearly indicates what kind of a conception of adult education prevailed in the Nordic countries at that time. Despite institutional differences and even the divergent methods used in similar institutions located in different countries, there was a common

39. *Folkehøjskole* in Danish, *folkbögskola* in Swedish and *kansanopisto* in Finnish.

40. Gustavsson 2013, 37–38, 40; Lundh Nilsson and Nilsson 2010, 9–10; Bagley and Rust 2013, 192–195; Sawano 2013, 242–243. Studies written outside the Nordic countries are exemplified by Erica Simon’s work *Réveil national et culture populaire en Scandinavie: la genèse de la højskole nordique 1844–1878* from 1960.

image of adult education, revealing what was considered important. All four representatives of Nordic countries identified adult education with popular (or liberal) adult education and this applied both to the end of the 1940s and to earlier history.<sup>41</sup>

However, the special place of popular adult education in the discussion on Nordic adult education is not only a historical feature. Although vocational adult education in the form of job training for the unemployed, continuing professional education and staff development is acknowledged as a part of the field, popular adult education is readily highlighted as the characteristic of present Nordic adult education. It is also referred to as a factor explaining the success of adult education in reaching large segments of the population. Above all, the perspective of popular adult education is still often predominant when the history of adult education is explored. The identification of popular adult education with adult education in general has made the former a keyhole through which earlier developments have been viewed, narrowing the picture of adult education activities in the past.<sup>42</sup>

The prestigious position of popular adult education in the Nordic countries is partly due to its link with the democratic developments in these societies. On the one hand, this is revealed by the fact that popular education was aimed at the *people*<sup>43</sup>. The most important thing here is the extension of the sphere of education from the elite to the uneducated masses. On the other hand, parts of popular education emerged in the sphere of the labour, the temperance and the free church movements, where it originally served the functions and aims of these movements. Consequently, the common people did not merely become the target of educational activities conducted by the educated class but the affiliation with the popular movements contributed to the developments whereby the common people themselves could take responsibility for the organization and determine the content according to their needs and interests.<sup>44</sup>

A well-known example of this kind of popular adult education carried out by the participants themselves is the study circle, which originated in Sweden in the early years of the twentieth century within the temperance

41. Lund 1952.

42. The historiography of adult education is discussed in Chapter 1.3.4. On the identification of popular education with adult education, see e.g. *SOU:1946:68*, 232–233, 240–243; Tuomisto J. 1991, 60–63; Korsgaard 2002.

43. *Folk* in Swedish, Danish and Norwegian, *kansa* in Finnish.

44. Korsgaard 2002, 8–12; Gustavsson 1991, 35–36, 65; Laginder et al. 2013, 3–4. On the nuances related to the concept people (*folk*), see also Tuomisto J. 1991, 37; Gustavsson 2013, 37–38.

movement. The study circle became the most characteristic form of adult education conducted by the Swedish educational associations emerging within social movements and nongovernmental organizations. Study circles evolved into an established part of Swedish education and culture, even to the extent that Olof Palme, as Minister of Education, characterized Sweden as ‘a study circle democracy’. The very idea of the study circle consists of the equality, active participation and initiative of group members shown by the fact they themselves can choose the subject matter and books to be studied and discuss them under the direction of one group member.<sup>45</sup>

The picture of popular education has nevertheless been more heterogeneous in the Nordic countries, including not only folk high schools and study circles.<sup>46</sup> In spite of the heterogeneity, the feature that unites different forms of popular adult education is the principle of voluntariness and freedom. Voluntariness means that people choose to study on their own initiative; freedom means in the first place that the organizers, whether students themselves or professional adult educators, can freely decide the content and methods of education.<sup>47</sup>

What is then the relation between the image of Nordic adult education interpreted as popular adult education and the examples discussed in this study? The workers’ institutes are representatives of popular adult education but their roles developed in different ways. In Sweden much of their work was later in the twentieth century replaced by the educational associations and their study circles, whereas in Finland the workers’ institutes became the mainstream of popular/liberal adult education. Thus, the position of the Swedish workers’ institutes during most of the twentieth century was somewhat marginal in the image where popular adult education was dominated by the educational associations and folk high schools. At the same time, workers’ institutes also exemplify the heterogeneous nature of popular adult education. The plan for Free Academy and the popular scientific lectures in Gothenburg had points of contact with popular adult education but they were nevertheless intended for the upper classes. Although the significance of the Swedish lecturing movement of the late nineteenth and early twentieth centuries has been recognized as a part of popular adult education, the public university lectures

45. Korsgaard 2002, 12; Rubenson 2013, 17; Gustavsson 1991, 153ff; Gustavsson 2013, 38–39.

46. Laginder et al. 2013, 8.

47. Rubenson 2013, 18–19; Sihvonen and Tuomisto 2012, 273.

arranged in Gothenburg did not quite fit into that frame.<sup>48</sup> Therefore, both the Swedish cases did not belong to what has been regarded as the nucleus of popular/liberal adult education in this country. Moreover, to broaden the perspective outlined by liberal adult education, I also discuss the workers' institutes, the Tampere institute in particular, with reference to other adult education intended for working people. On the outlines of early Swedish and Finnish adult education, see Figure 3.

In spite of the difficulty of assessing whether there is a specific Nordic tradition in adult education and of the fact that my examples are confined to Sweden and Finland, I have defined them as Nordic and not only because of their geographical location in the Nordic region. From the perspective of the late nineteenth century, when these initiatives were launched, to define them as Swedish or Finnish is likewise not self-evident since the institutions of adult education were in the process of formation and thus there were no national traditions, not to mention national adult education policies. In such conditions, educational ideas and practices appearing in the Nordic region formed an important—albeit not the only—frame of reference, where the initiators and others involved operated and discussed these projects.

### 1.2.3. Towns as Milieus and Promoters of Adult Education

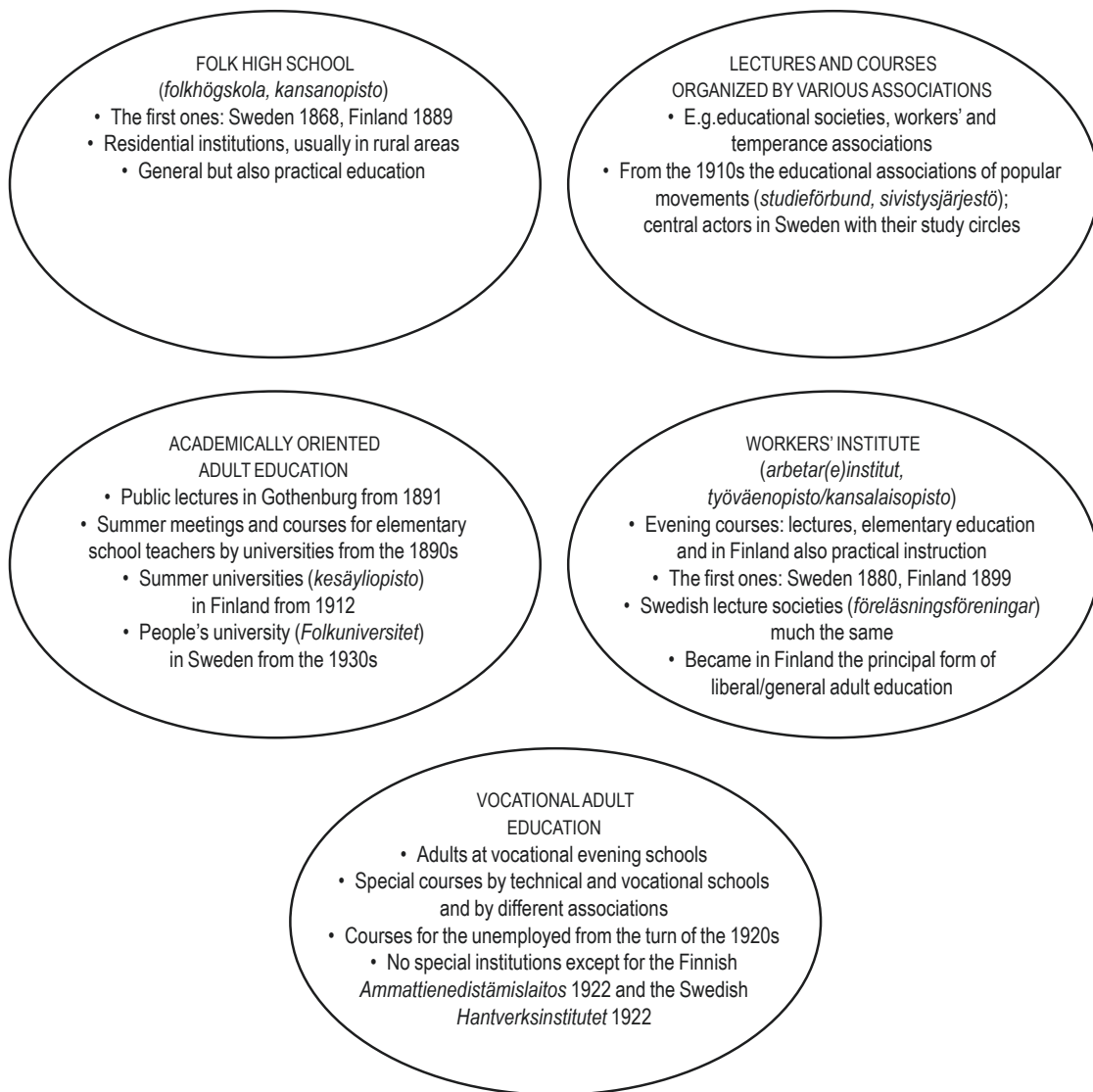
Approaching adult education from a local point of view is logical because, during the period this study covers, the emphasis of enterprise lay at the local level. If anything that could be called governmental adult education policies existed in Sweden and Finland, the nature of these measures differed substantially from later ones. Not that the governments were totally absent, but their role was rather passive and their involvement restricted to granting subsidies to existing activities initiated at the local level by private citizens, associations and sometimes municipal organs. The Swedish government started to subsidize popular scientific lectures aimed at working-class people already in 1885, when the Stockholm and Gothenburg Workers' Institutes were among the institutions receiving support.<sup>49</sup> In Finland, the governmental subsidy to workers' institutes was granted for the first time in 1912 but was initially exceptional, becoming statutory in 1927.<sup>50</sup>

48. On the lecturing activities, see e.g. Arvidson 2002; Törnqvist 1996; Leander 1978, 304ff.

49. *SOU 1924:5*, 114; Jonsson 1933, 45; Bolin 1930, 67–68.

50. Huuhka 1990, 107–111, 196–198.





**Figure 3. Adult education institutions and practices in Sweden and Finland before the mid-20<sup>th</sup> century.**

Sources: Karjalainen 1970; Pellinen 2001; Ahonen 2009; SOU 1924:5; Richardson 2004; Andersson 1980; Leander 1978; Wallerius 1988; Söderberg 1965; SCB 1984:2.

Such small-scale governmental involvement was not a solely Finnish or Swedish phenomenon. Throughout the nineteenth century, and even later, the main educational concern of European governments was to organize universal schooling for children. Only during the latter half of the twentieth century did central governments in Western Europe gradually become more interested in adult education and start to consider it as an important field requiring development and funding on a permanent basis. The consequence was that the initiative as well as the control of activities began to shift from local to central government.<sup>51</sup>

From the vantage point of historical research, the fact that new practices in adult education were advocated by people acting in a particular milieu makes a local case study the most appropriate and usually the only possible way to identify factors and mechanisms related to the emergence of such activities. Even if the governmental perspective is possible, such studies produce a different kind of information, for instance of policymaking and of the general goals of education. Since educational activities took place on a local level, case studies have the advantage of tracing the outcomes of intentions in terms of the actual practices and content of education. Thus case studies enable a more profound analysis and a more nuanced picture of the activities. Moreover, studies conducted from the governmental perspective omit the target group for whom education was designed. The more detailed information about students can only be accessed through the local institutions, if at all. As regards assessing the significance of adult education activities more generally, a local perspective makes it possible to situate them in the context of the cultural, educational and social life of communities. Ideally, local and central approaches of course complement each other when exploring the relation between central and local governments and the interplay of local and national developments.<sup>52</sup>

In this study, the local level refers to towns or cities and the focus is on adult education carried out in urban settings. Towns as population centres have been natural sites for schools, other educational institutions and cultural life in general. Yet Sweden and Finland were agrarian countries, where in 1910 the respective proportions of rural population were 75 per cent and 85 per cent.<sup>53</sup> Adult education also extended to rural communities, of which residential folk high schools were the most famous example. In addition, popular scientific

51. Titmus 1980, 136–138.

52. On the significance of local perspective, cf. Olsson B. 1994, 18–19.

53. Fritz 1996, 31; Rasila 1982, 139.

lectures and later study circles were organized outside urban centres but these activities were essentially temporary and small-scale because of the lack of organizing power, money and available teachers.<sup>54</sup> The wider variety of institutions and activities found in towns makes them more interesting objects of study and offers more opportunities to view adult education in the context of local educational and cultural practices.

Towns have not merely been arenas for adult education but also actors in the field. The opportunities of Swedish and Finnish local authorities to contribute to the formation of adult education rested on the principles of municipal self-government, which had a common earlier history because until 1809 Finland had been a part of Sweden. In both countries, municipal administration was modernized later in the nineteenth century along similar lines even though Finland was at that time an autonomous part of imperial Russia. These reforms were implemented in Sweden in 1862 and in Finland in 1875. The functions of municipalities were defined in a way enabling them to extend their fields of operation on their own initiative. The number of duties imposed by central government was small at the end of the nineteenth century but it was possible to authorize municipalities to maintain, for instance, certain schools, however, without obliging them to do so. Moreover, the fairly independent role of local authorities also enabled them to establish totally new practices or even institutions, grant subsidies to private bodies operating in their area or experiment with new kinds of courses or methods in the existing municipal institutions.<sup>55</sup> Due to such liberties, towns not only became settings for adult education carried out by various actors but also promoters of adult education, either as organizers or financial supporters. Although plans and goals formulated at the municipal level were not compiled and turned into explicit policy documents, it is still possible to trace municipal adult education policies by investigating the role of municipalities in maintaining or subsidizing institutions and practices.

I have chosen as the settings of my study urban centres holding a significant position in their respective countries. In terms of population, Gothenburg was the second city of Sweden whereas from the turn of the twentieth century Tampere occupied third place in Finland.<sup>56</sup> It is still noteworthy that throughout the nineteenth and twentieth centuries Gothenburg was

54. *SOU 1946:68*, 17–20, 132–133; Karjalainen 1970, 55–68, 75–82.

55. Kuusanmäki 1983, 52–53, 56, 98–99; Hellspong and Löfgren 1972, 52; Attman 1963, 327–328, 339–341.

56. *Suomen kaupunkilaitoksen historia, Tilasto-osa* 1985, 12–17.

definitely a larger urban centre than Tampere. In 1870, Gothenburg had a population of 56,000 while Tampere was a small community with approximately 7,000 inhabitants. During the latter half of the nineteenth century, both experienced a rapid growth resulting by 1900 in respective populations of 131,000 and 34,000. At that time, Gothenburg was the fourth largest city in the Nordic countries.<sup>57</sup> By 1930, Gothenburg had developed into a city of 243,000 inhabitants while Tampere had a population of 55,000, approximately the same as that of Gothenburg sixty years earlier.<sup>58</sup> Although not a big city from an international perspective, in an agrarian country it was nevertheless a notable population centre. It was a typical industrial city while the economic life of Gothenburg was more diverse. As a seaport, Gothenburg was one of the major maritime hubs in Sweden and, around the turn of the twentieth century, it was the leading Swedish commercial centre.<sup>59</sup> The characteristics of these cities are discussed in relevant respects in the following chapters.

### 1.3. Approaches

#### 1.3.1. From Ideas to Outcomes: The Perspective of the Innovation Process

The first Nordic workers' institute was established in Stockholm in 1880 and it soon became a model discussed and emulated in Sweden as well as in the neighbouring countries. The diffusion of such institutes had actually been a conscious aim of its founder, Anton Nyström. He had regarded the Stockholm institute as the central institution serving as a model for other (presumably Swedish) towns in organizing workers' education.<sup>60</sup> A decade later, the secretary of the Tampere Workers' Association, Kaarlo Renström, expressed a wish that similar institutes be founded in Finland. To emphasize the value of this new institution, he quoted 'an eminent scientist', who had stated that the workers' institute was an invention comparable to any scientific achievement.<sup>61</sup> From a modern perspective, the workers' institute was not only an invention but can be considered an innovation, since it was a new solution

57. Fritz 1996, 23–34; Rasila 1984, 205–208.

58. Olsson K. 1996, 51; Jutikkala 1979, 35.

59. Rasila 1984 passim; Fritz 1996, 265ff.

60. Nyström 1880b, 24.

61. TKA, TTY Db:1 Vuosikertomus 1892, 5 (Renström). The scientist was Professor Hugo Gylden, a Finnish-born astronomer in the service of the Royal Scientific Academy in Stockholm and also the inspector of the Stockholm Workers' Institute. *Svea folkkalender 1897*, 250–256, <http://runeberg.org/svea/1897/0272.html>, accessed 1 February 2022; Bolin 1930, 29.

reflecting changes in both educational thought and practices and an invention that had also been implemented.<sup>62</sup>

The above comment from the late nineteenth century shows interestingly that contemporaries conceptualized the distinction between inventions in science and in social practices and regarded scientific inventions as the standard type although an educational invention such as the workers' institute was nonetheless esteemed. In modern discussion, the workers' institute can be considered a social innovation, distinguishable from innovations in science, technology and business. These are the types of innovations that have commonly attracted attention, although, for example, studies on the diffusion of educational innovations were already carried out in the 1920s and 1930s.<sup>63</sup> However, what makes the workers' institute a social innovation is not just its occurrence in the sphere of society, or civic society, but the fact that it also aimed at meeting social challenges and had effects changing social roles and practices. Being social both in their ends and ways of working has been regarded as the distinctive feature of social innovations.<sup>64</sup> Examples of other nineteenth and early twentieth-century social innovations include co-operatives, building societies, trade unions and new childcare models.<sup>65</sup>

Viewing the new practices of adult education as social innovations also suggests that models describing innovation processes can be utilized as a heuristic tool when exploring the emergence of these practices, the processes leading to their institutionalization and their significance in general.<sup>66</sup> This study draws very loosely on three such models. The starting points have been the seminal study by Everett M. Rogers addressing innovations and their diffusion together with another early innovation study by Matthew B. Miles,

62. Rogers 1983, 138.

63. Rogers 2003, 61.

64. According to Murray et al. (2010, 3, 6), social innovations are new ideas (products, services and models) that simultaneously meet social needs and create new social relationships and collaborations. Social innovation can also be defined as new social practices resulting from changes in regulations, social norms and shared mental frames, in which case the focus is on the sources of innovation or on the social structures producing innovations. Heiskala and Hämäläinen 2007, 3; Heiskala 2007, 55–59. For other definitions, see e.g. Ruuskanen 2004, 34–38; The Young Foundation 2012, 8–16, <https://youngfoundation.org/wp-content/uploads/2012/12/TEPSIE.D1.1.Report.DefiningSocialInnovation.Part-1-defining-social-innovation.pdf>, accessed 1 February 2022; Nicholls et al. 2015, 2–6.

65. Mulgan 2006, 145. A booklet called *100 social innovations from Finland* (Taipale 2007) lists such educational practices as non-formal adult education, public libraries and publicly supported extra-curricular music schools for children and adolescents.

66. Ahonen 2009. Innovation process as a tool of analysis has also been employed by Vatanen (2002) in her study on Finnish public libraries to explain their development and in particular the adoption of American influences.

focusing expressly on education. These have been complemented with a more recent model structuring the process of social innovations. My intention is not, of course, to apply constructs created for the purposes of social sciences as such in a historical study. The models nevertheless provide a framework for exploring the generation and adoption of adult education ideas by directing attention to the fact that these developments consist of several factors, phases and choices and by suggesting key elements for exploration. Even though social sciences models strive to understand the essence of innovation processes in order to offer support for the creation and diffusion of future innovations, they are often based on follow-up studies of earlier attempts and are in this sense historical.<sup>67</sup> Thus these models may also be useful for the actual historical research by offering insights into exploring the mechanisms through which new practices emerged and became established.

Rogers was primarily interested in the diffusion of innovations but also paid attention to the innovation process in a broader sense, extending from the recognition of a need or a problem requiring a solution to the development of this solution and finally to the consequences of an innovation. He called this larger sequence involving six stages the innovation-development process. Diffusion and adoption constituted one of the stages and formed a process of its own (the innovation-decision process), which was further divided into steps such as receiving the knowledge about an innovation, the decision to adopt or reject it and its implementation.<sup>68</sup> Miles drew on Rogers' conceptualizations but condensed the steps occurring before the adoption of an innovation into four.<sup>69</sup> In addition to the above processes, Rogers identified four main elements of diffusion: the innovation itself and its attributes, channels through which knowledge of innovations is received, the time needed for diffusion and the social system in which it occurs.<sup>70</sup> Miles likewise highlighted elements such the characteristics of an innovation itself and the context in which it occurred but added innovators and the eventual fate of an innovation to his list of essential factors.<sup>71</sup> As regards the process of social innovations, the six-stage

67. Rogers 2003, 102–104, 161–163.

68. His innovation-development process consists of the following stages: (1) the recognition of a need or problem, (2) research, (3) development, (4) commercialization, (5) diffusion and adoption of the innovation by users and (6) consequences. The steps of diffusion and adoption of an innovation (innovation-decision process) are (1) knowledge of an innovation, (2) forming an attitude towards it, (3) a decision to adopt or reject it, (4) implementation of the new idea and (5) confirmation of this decision. Rogers 2003, 136–157, 169–192.

69. These stages are design, awareness-interest, evaluation and trial. Miles 1964a, 18–20.

70. Rogers 2003, 11–38.

71. Miles 1964a, 40–43; Miles 1964b.

model proposed by Murray and associates does not in essence differ totally from Rogers's model although the process is constructed considering the specific goals of social innovations and the ways in which they are generated, for example, omitting the commercialization of an innovation. This model comprises the steps of prompts, proposals and ideas, prototyping and pilots, becoming everyday practice, diffusion and systemic change as the ultimate goal of a social innovation.<sup>72</sup> The stages identified in these models are not necessarily expected to occur in the given order and some of them may also be omitted. The stages can also be understood as overlapping phases.<sup>73</sup>

These models look at the innovation process from different angles. In Rogers' model, the larger process related to the generation of innovations is constructed from the viewpoint of the producers of the innovation whereas the innovation-decision process concentrates on adopters. The process of social innovation by Murray and associates considers the progression from the perspective of the generators of innovations but the viewpoint of implementation is also present to some extent. In the present study, the perspective of implementation is central because the motives for creating new practices and institutions of adult education arose initially from the desire to improve the local conditions and not from the intention to build a model to be followed elsewhere. In this, Anton Nyström was an exception. Nonetheless, it is difficult to separate these two perspectives since entirely new ideas were rare, just like the adoption of practices as such. Usually the advocates of a novel practice were situated somewhere between these two extremes, representing both innovators and adopters, or in Rogers' terms, re-inventors.<sup>74</sup>

On the basis of these constructs it is possible to distinguish some elements to be used in formulating the research questions for my study. The social, cultural and political context prompting the initiatives for adult education forms the starting point, including the nature of the education system and the scope of educational opportunities. Initiators, their motives and aims constitute another target. What backgrounds did they have and what were their connections with the political, social and cultural movements of the time?<sup>75</sup> Innovations—ideas and practices—themselves are naturally essential, just like the underlying changes in thinking concerning the education of adults.

72. Murray et al. 2010, 11ff.

73. Rogers 2003, 138; Murray et al. 2010, 12.

74. Rogers 2003, 180–181.

75. Hake has emphasized the importance of studying the people involved in innovative and cross-cultural processes of adult education and their relation to social and political movements. Hake 1996, 131–132; Hake 2000, 19–21.

Existing innovations can be regarded as models influencing initiators and, therefore, the origins of educational ideas, or the frame of reference from which inspiration was sought, is one object of this study.<sup>76</sup> Furthermore, the adoption of practices, the manner in which ideas were transformed and the choices that were made are important aspects of the process, also impacting on the outcomes. The question of what ultimately happened to the ideas and innovations must also be posed. They may not have been implemented at all, or they may have been postponed to a later point of time, and even if they were realized, how long did these practices or institutions survive? Miles refers to the fate of innovations, which suggests to the idea that innovations have a life cycle, a concept employed later.<sup>77</sup> Finally, there is the crucial question of what changes in social relationships and roles the institutions and practices brought about. The above aspects are discussed in the following chapters to varying extents as, due to the sources available, it is not always possible to address all of them.

Accordingly, this study can be characterized as both a microhistory of three innovations in adult education and a grassroots history of the ideas related to them, exploring the attitudes expressed by men of practical life rather than theorists of education. The initiators, their ideas and motives are discussed extensively in this study since expectations also form one aspect of the significance of adult education. As the introduction of a new kind of educational activity was a solution to some defect or challenge, it is important to explore why education in particular was believed to constitute the answer and what kind of expectations of social change existed. A thorough examination of the beginnings also helps to understand why the adult education in question became topical at that moment and why certain ideas were considered worth struggling for.

Unlike research falling into the category of the history of ideas, the aim of this study is not only to discuss thoughts and ideas but also their consequences, drawing on innovation theory. These theories concern both the processes whereby the plans were implemented and whereby the practices became institutionalized and also the actual outcomes of those processes, all of which shed light on the status and role of adult education. Scrutinizing the processes consisting of proposals, discussions and choices helps to ascertain

76. In her study on the diffusion of innovations in urban services, Hietala (1987) has drawn attention to the frames of reference and to the channels through which knowledge of innovations was received.

77. McGowan and Westley 2015, 52–53.



how the ideas were received and reveals that the actual outcomes were not the only conceivable ones but that there were often unrealized alternatives. When the nature of the resulting practices and institutions is explored, the emphasis is on the early stages since temporal proximity makes them a more relevant subject of analysis from the perspective of the intentions of the founders. However, the outcomes are also discussed in a longer time perspective, inspired by the life cycle idea, albeit in a more general way as it has not been possible to examine longer periods in such detail.

### 1.3.2. Comparative Approach

When developments in two cities, or two countries, are explored, a comparative starting point is inherent even though more systematic comparisons throughout the study have not been possible due to the asymmetry in the source materials. Yet even fewer systematic comparisons are beneficial since they broaden horizons in a study focusing on individuals, institutions and local practices. The increased number of processes taking place in different milieus makes it possible to attempt a more diverse picture of ideas, attitudes and practices related to adult education.

A general reason for conducting comparative studies is to detect differences and similarities, with the purpose of defining features that may have been specific to each case as well as those suggesting more general patterns.<sup>78</sup> Another reason often emphasized is heuristic, referring to the idea that comparison helps to direct attention to little-known aspects or to observe characteristics which, while evident in one society, are not so readily identifiable in another.<sup>79</sup> Such an advantage is exemplified in the present study in the case of Free Academy and the public lectures in Gothenburg. These had not been earlier discussed in the context of adult education in Sweden but my attention was drawn to them by the structures of Finnish adult education. This did not, however, result from a comparison between nineteenth-century cases but from the awareness of the role the universities have played as organizers of adult education in Finland since the 1970s.<sup>80</sup> Furthermore, a point of comparison external to this study is provided by University Extension, British nineteenth-century university adult education.

78. For example, Kocka 1996, 197–199; Kocka 2003, 40; Pedersen 2004, 89.

79. Kocka 1996, 199; Kocka 2003, 39–40; Cohen 2004, 64; Petruszewicz 2004, 149.

80. On adult education at the University of Tampere, see Kaarninen M. et al. 2000, 43–46.

The emphasis on comparative historical research has in general been on the level of nation-states or, even on the level of cultures understood more broadly. Nation-states, however, are not necessarily the only relevant units of comparison and in the methodological discussion on comparative historical research several scholars have suggested the fruitfulness and desirability of comparisons between smaller units such as regions, cities and institutions.<sup>81</sup> In the field of urban history, there are several examples of how the comparative approach has been employed.<sup>82</sup>

Yet comparisons need not be confined to one level only since local, national and international levels are rarely disconnected from one another. The interconnection of these levels has been one of the points made by the advocates of the idea of *histoire croisée*, an approach highlighting not only the crossings or entanglements of the phenomena that are research objects but also of research procedures. The first aspect refers to the fact that historical phenomena are neither isolated nor static but include varied encounters and transfers of ideas, which influence and shape the parties involved. The second aspect is related to the deliberations of researchers, for example when deciding on the space or levels on which to operate.<sup>83</sup>

In this study, the principal level of comparisons is local, with its actors and institutions. First, the workers' institutes in two cities are scrutinized from a comparative perspective. Second, academically oriented adult education in Gothenburg is considered in relation to the local workers' education. However, even though the early developments of adult education were typically local, they did not take place in a void. There was some interplay between local and government-level actors, hence it is relevant to take into consideration the relation between local cases and national developments. No systematic comparisons are made between the Swedish and Finnish developments on national level although these two societies, bearing many similarities, naturally form the framework for the local cases. Exploring institutions in two countries with a number of similar structures makes comparisons easier but a sufficient

81. Haupt and Kocka 2004, 26–27, 31–32, 36; Green 2004, 46; Cohen 2004, 66; Pedersen 2004, 93.

82. Hietala (1987) compared urban services in several European cities and Niemi (2007) studied public health policies in Birmingham and Gothenburg. In the field of economic history, Nilson (2004) compared the social structure and life styles of entrepreneurs in two Swedish towns.

83. Werner and Zimmermann 2006, 39–44; Haupt and Kocka 2004, 30. The idea of *histoire croisée* emerged as a critique of comparative research, but for instance Kocka and Haupt have stressed that these approaches are not mutually exclusive. Kocka 2003, 44; Haupt and Kocka 2004, 32.

number of distinctions nevertheless makes comparisons interesting. This also offers opportunities to contribute to the construction of the picture of the Swedish and the Finnish adult education traditions.

As regards what is compared, or in which respects comparisons are made, two areas can be distinguished. The first includes the processes whereby adult education practices emerged and became institutionalized as well as the intellectual, political and social contexts in which these developments took place. Since these developments are viewed from the perspective of the innovation process, they include potential transfers and intersections of people and ideas, which need not be limited to links between the actual cases explored. These encounters may have been indirect, for instance in the form of knowledge shared by the initiators or practitioners of adult education.<sup>84</sup> They may also have been asymmetrical in the sense that only one party was acquainted with the practices conducted by the other or where only one party influenced the other. Therefore, such intersections provide one dimension of comparison in the form of models inspiring the people involved and thus these ideas, practices or institutions, in some cases originating in other countries, become external points of comparison.

The second area of comparison includes questions related to the outcomes of the processes such as the status of practices or institutions in the locality, the role of the municipalities, the nature of instruction and the sphere of the institutions' influence in terms of the people who became involved in educational activities. However, the scarcity of source materials has limited the opportunities to make comparisons related to students. Moreover, other educational practices in the locality provide a local point of comparison. These, like models or sources of inspiration, actually form yet another dimension of comparisons in the sense of situating the outcomes in a broader educational context.

The comparative framework enables different ways of addressing the subject matter. It is often possible to structure a comparative study thematically by discussing the objects of a study at the same time but I have chosen to focus on the institutions one at a time, yet referring to the others when relevant. The reason for this is my approach utilizing the perspective of a process, which would have been rather difficult to combine with a thematic structure, especially as the cultural, social and political contexts are essential to the developments. In addition, the asymmetry in the source materials inhibits

84. Cf. Hietala 1987, 38; Niemi 2007, 4.

the use of a thematic structure since it does not allow systematic comparisons throughout the study.

### 1.3.3. Effects of Adult Education in Terms of Active Citizenship, Knowledge and Skills Resources and Social Resources

A natural perspective for assessing the significance of adult education could begin by exploring its effects. However, such a task is not easy even when contemporary people are in question since the effects of initial and later education as well as of formal, non-formal and informal learning of adults are often difficult to distinguish.<sup>85</sup> In addition to this, historical research faces problems caused by scarce source materials, often starting with the absence of information or even statistics on students. Adult courses seldom offered any formal qualifications or certificates, which contributes to the difficulty of conducting macro level analysis. Exploring the effects at micro level also has limitations and, even when student registers, for instance, are available, assessing the effects of studies would be laborious if not impossible because this would entail tracing the subsequent trajectories of students.

I have therefore chosen strategies that could be characterized as inverse or indirect. The first of these is to explore the connection between adult education and political activity in Tampere, which is the only case providing sufficient information on students. In the Nordic countries, popular or liberal adult education has been regarded as a significant basis for the development of a democratic society.<sup>86</sup> This seems to be more like a general impression since, with the exception of the examples of single individuals, there is hardly any historical research on the actual role of liberal adult education in the lives of decision-makers.<sup>87</sup> In addition, since training active citizens has often been

85. Formal learning takes place in educational institutions and leads to certificates; non-formal learning is structured but does not provide certificates and may be organized in associations, in workplaces or in organizations complementing the formal education system; informal learning results from daily activities and is usually nonintentional. Rubenson 2011, 5.

86. E.g. Lund and Ohlsson 1952, 221–223; Korsgaard 2002, 14–15; Rubenson 2007, 59–60.

87. Erickson (1980, 135–137) examined what kind of adult education the Swedish members of parliament acting in 1961–1962 had attended. Examples of Finnish politicians who had utilized popular adult education include Mäina Sillanpää (1866–1952), the first female minister in the country in 1926, and K. A. Fagerholm (1901–1984), prime minister in the 1940s and 1950s as well as a long-serving speaker of the parliament. Sillanpää had attended folk high school courses and Fagerholm a folk high school. Korppi-Tommola 2016, 52; Eduskunta, Entiset kansanedustajat, <https://www.eduskunta.fi/FI/kansanedustajat/Sivut/910355.aspx>, accessed 1 February 2022.

one of the goals of liberal adult education, it is possible that there has been a tendency to regard this goal as an effect. Because of the difficulties in tracing the later activities of large numbers of students, I started from the other end; I collected the information about those serving as city councillors and members of municipal boards in Tampere in the early 1920s and in the latter part of the 1930s and examined how typical it was for them to have studied at the workers' institute.

The other strategy is to elicit the potential effects of adult education, which is done by exploring the content and nature of instruction as well as social activities at the Tampere Workers' Institute. To avoid the danger of regarding goals as effects, the focus is on specific information concerning the actual content of instruction and social activities instead of the aims of educational institutions. The potential effects are viewed from the perspective of resources, which I have divided into knowledge and skills resources and social resources including social relationships, interaction and mutual trust. The discussion on the resources provided by the workers' institute also helps to explain the significance of the connection between political activity and adult education. Naturally, such resources were important not only to those taking part in local politics and governance but to all citizens acting in different spheres of society, for which reason the potential effects discussed are relevant more generally. In this analysis, I draw loosely on theories of human and social capital.

The idea that knowledge and skills constitute human capital comparable to the other forms of capital, has been central in evaluating the significance of education since the works of the economists T. W. Schultz, Gary Becker and Jacob Mincer in the late 1950s and 1960s.<sup>88</sup> The key insight of human capital theory is that knowledge and skills have economic value for individuals and societies and investment in education produces returns. From this perspective, the expenses of education are not considered as mere spending but as investment in the future. Individuals invest in human capital by participating in education and training at different levels and often by paying the investment in the form of the actual costs of education and the foregone earnings. Societies, for their part, can invest in human capital by funding education.<sup>89</sup>

88. Schultz 1963; Becker 1993 (originally published in 1964).

89. Schultz 1963, 38ff; Schultz 1971; Becker 1993, 11–12, 15–21; Schuller 2004, 14–16; OECD 2001, 28–32. In economic history, human capital theory has been utilized to measure how the general level of education has affected economic growth, e.g. Ljungberg and Nilsson (2009) on Swedish long-term developments.

Interestingly, there are several examples of this metaphor appearing long before human capital theory was developed by economists. In the Finnish nineteenth-century discussions on adult education, knowledge was referred to as intellectual capital and skill as a working man's capital. These were of crucial importance not only in improving the conditions of individuals but also of the entire nation since it was believed that a small country could compensate for the lack of material resources for its intellectual resources. The investment-like character of education was also pointed out by the promoters of workers' education, who described knowledge as the harvest from those seeds workers had sown, which could be stocked in 'the treasury' for the future.<sup>90</sup> In Sweden, the significance of popular adult education in terms of capital was emphasized in the 1920s by Carl Cederblad, a driving force in the Swedish lecturing movement.<sup>91</sup>

Because of its origins, human capital theory has focused on the economic advantages of education but the significance of other benefits gained from knowledge, skills and competence has also been recognized, including personal and social well-being.<sup>92</sup> In addition, scholars have pointed out that improved levels of knowledge and skills are not the only outcomes that education generates. The perspective has widened from individuals accumulating their human capital to the social context where this occurs since it is not only the content of education that influences participants but also the social setting of education. Empirical studies have also suggested that the benefits of education cannot be interpreted in terms of individuals only.<sup>93</sup> Thus, increasing attention has been paid to the roles of education and its milieu in the creation of social relationships and civic participation, and in the creation of the abilities contributing to these.<sup>94</sup>

Like knowledge and skills, social relationships can be seen as resources which may benefit individuals, groups and communities in their actions. Analogically with the other forms of capital, such resources have been called social capital, referring to connections between people and exemplified by such features of social organization as trust and the norms of reciprocity inherent in an individual's social networks. Mutually respecting and trusting

90. Ahonen 2011, 434.

91. Arvidson 2002, 73–74, 77.

92. The OECD report of 2001 defines human capital more broadly as 'the knowledge, skills, competencies and attributes embodied in individuals that facilitate the creation of personal, social and economic well-being'. OECD 2001, 18.

93. Schuller 1998, 114; Schuller 2004, 24–33.

94. E.g. Field et al. 2000, 249–252; Schuller et al. 2004; Preston 2003.

relationships are considered beneficial for collective action, enabling a group to pursue its shared goals by combining particular skills and resources more effectively than would otherwise be possible.<sup>95</sup> While human capital is basically an attribute of individuals, social capital is not usually regarded as an asset residing in individuals or other actors but rather in the relations between and among actors. Although not a property of individuals, social capital may be a resource that individuals, and also groups, can draw on.<sup>96</sup>

Adult education is regarded as an activity with potential to create social capital by enabling, extending and maintaining social relationships and networks and by increasing participation in civic life.<sup>97</sup> Although social capital created by education seems often to be a by-product of activities rather than intentional investing in social relationships, education and the education system can also be a vehicle for creating social capital more consciously. For instance, the organizers of education may promote social capital by equipping citizens with communicative competence, that is, with a capacity to converse with each other and to produce information effectively.<sup>98</sup>

In this study, knowledge and skills resources are analysed from the perspective of the non-economic benefits of education whereas social resources are discussed by considering how studies and their social settings could contribute to the formation of relationships and civic participation.<sup>99</sup>

When the outcomes resulting from the plans made for the workers' institutes in Gothenburg and Tampere are examined, the idea of human capital also prompts us to ask who or which bodies invested in adult education. Funding reflects the status and esteem enjoyed by adult education and thus is an indication of what can be called early adult education policy, which otherwise was not explicitly formulated during the period covered by the study.

95. The concept of social capital was promoted by Pierre Bourdieu, James Coleman and Robert Putnam in the late 1980s and early 1990s. Coleman 1988; Putnam 2000, 19–20; Woolcock 1998, 153–167.

96. Coleman 1988, 98, 100–101, 116–118; Putnam 2000, 20. On the private good aspect of social capital, see e.g. Halpern 2005, 22–24.

97. E.g. Balatti and Falk 2002, 289–296; Preston 2003; Field et al. 2000.

98. Cf. Putnam 1993, 170; Szreter 2000, 66–69, 76–77. Another way to view the non-economic benefits of education is related to the so-called capabilities approach, referring to a combination of functionings that individuals need to be able to lead the kinds of lives they value. Sen 2000, 74–76. From this perspective, human and social capital can be regarded as assets which it is possible to mobilize for improving functionings in different domains and ultimately for the well-being of individuals and communities. Bynner and Hammond 2004, 161, 186; Schuller 2004, 12–13.

99. On knowledge and skills resources, cf. Balatti and Falk 2002, 285–286.

### 1.3.4. Earlier Research, Sources and Methods

#### RESEARCH ON THE HISTORY OF ADULT EDUCATION

There is little previous historical research directly linked to the subject matter and period or approaches of my study. The history of adult education in general seems to be a little addressed topic in scholarly research and, even in the European framework, the number of scholars working in the field is small.<sup>100</sup> British adult education may be an exception as the university adult education tradition in particular has drawn the attention of researchers<sup>101</sup> but compilations and overviews with broader scope have also been published<sup>102</sup>. Such works have been helpful in situating the public university lectures of Gothenburg in the broader context of University Extension and, in the case of workers' education, British research has also elucidated the tension between liberal and vocational adult education.<sup>103</sup> Of the studies concerning the history of adult education in other European countries, the work of Barry J. Hake and others on cross-cultural communication in adult education, focusing on individuals and their ideas, has opened up a historical perspective on the issue of the diffusion of educational innovations. Wolfgang Seitter's study on German lecturing activities has also offered insights into workers' education.<sup>104</sup> However, there are no such comparative studies that could have served as inspiration.<sup>105</sup>

Research on the history of Swedish nineteenth and early twentieth-century adult education has concentrated on popular (or liberal) adult education but the emphasis has mainly been on other aspects or forms of education than those examined in my study. As discussed earlier, educational associations with their study circles have a special place in Swedish popular adult education and these have also attracted historians. Bo Andersson and Lars Arvidson in particular have described the general and organizational developments of

100. A session organized in the triennial research conference of the European Society for Research on the Education of Adults (ESREA) in 2013 offered an overview of the situation in five European countries (UK, Finland, France, Hungary and Portugal). ESREA, Network 'History of adult education and training in Europe', <https://esrea.org/networks/history-of-adult-education-and-training-in-europe/>, accessed 1 February 2022.

101. E.g. Goldman 1995; Goldman 1999; Goldman 2000; Blyth 1983; Quinney 1983.

102. E.g. Fieldhouse et al. 1998; Kelly 1970.

103. Merricks 2000; Merricks 2001; Fieldhouse 1998.

104. Friedenthal-Haase et al. 1991; Hake et al. 1996; Hake 2000; Seitter 1990.

105. On the nature of historiography in adult education, see Hake 2011, 14–15.



these activities in a long time frame.<sup>106</sup> Although these mainly fall outside the scope of my study, they have nonetheless been valuable for positioning the workers' institutes in the tradition of Swedish popular adult education. Kerstin Rydbeck has explored popular adult education from the perspective of gender, discussing, for instance, the effects of gender on understanding the nature of education.<sup>107</sup> The history of ideas related to adult education has been another characteristic of the Swedish research and a number of studies have been accomplished either on the educational ideals of social movements, like Bernt Gustavsson's work<sup>108</sup> or on the ideas of pioneering figures<sup>109</sup> in popular adult education.

With the exception of the Stockholm Workers' Institute, Swedish workers' institutes have not been subjects of historical research but the outlines of their developments have been presented in histories or commemorative volumes. This also applies to the Gothenburg Workers' Institute, nor are there any studies on its founder, Edvard Wavrinsky.<sup>110</sup> Moreover, some of the books written about the Stockholm institute and its creator, Anton Nyström, by Sigfrid Leander, one of the later directors of the institute, are not analytical studies but rather histories or essayistic literature.<sup>111</sup> Even though several writers have discussed Nyström's positivist ideology and radical liberalism, they have paid surprisingly little attention to how his philosophical, religious and political ideas actually influenced his views on adult education.<sup>112</sup>

The viewpoint of popular adult education has also dominated in studies and histories of academically oriented adult education, since the latter mainly consisted of popular scientific lectures given by academics.<sup>113</sup> The contribution of universities as institutions has not been a subject of study and the idea about Free Academy in Gothenburg has been treated as a prologue

106. Andersson 1980; Arvidson 1985; Arvidson 1989. There are a number of books and articles about popular adult education which nevertheless cannot be regarded as scholarly works but rather as histories, e.g. Johansson's book on the early history of *Arbetarnas bildningsförbund* and the activities preceding it (Johansson 2002).
107. Rydbeck 2001; Rydbeck 2013.
108. Gustavsson 1991. See also Sundgren P. 2007.
109. Törnqvist 1996 (on Oscar Olsson, 'the father of the study circle'); Arvidson 2002 (on Carl Cederblad, a driving force in popular scientific lecturing).
110. E.g. Jonsson 1933 (Gothenburg); Berrman and Ideström 1983 (Gothenburg, a compilation of documents rather than a history); Edelberg 1935 (Norrköping); *Gefle Arbetareinstitut 75 år*, 1958; Jeppsson 1985 (Lund). Jonsson was the director of the Gothenburg Workers' Institute from 1904 till 1939. Berrman and Ideström 1983, 11.
111. Leander 1955; Leander 1965; Leander 1978; Leander 1980.
112. Nyström's ideas and political actions have been discussed by Frängsmyr 1964; Frängsmyr 1991; Richardson 1963; Andersson 1971; Andersson 1980; Andersson 1982; Lindberg F. 1976.
113. E.g. Liedman 1987; Liedman 1988; Wallerius 1988.

to the later Gothenburg University College<sup>114</sup>, not as a plan for an adult education institution. Neither have the popular scientific lectures organized in Gothenburg been considered from the perspective of adult education.

Local activities have rarely formed the framework for Swedish historical research. An interesting exception is seen in Ronny Ambjörnsson's and Björn Olsson's studies on educational pursuits in the small communities of Holmsund and Umeå. By exploring local associations and people it has been possible to analyse the concrete and practical aspects of education, which have usually not been the subject matter of the Swedish studies on history of adult education.<sup>115</sup> Another exception to the historiography focusing largely on ideologies and educational ideas is the work of Anne Berg and Samuel Edquist, who have examined the public funding of adult education and the control it brought about.<sup>116</sup>

As regards both Sweden and Finland, historical overviews covering a wider range of activities are confined to popular adult education.<sup>117</sup> In general, the Finnish research on the early stages of adult education is more sporadic than its Swedish counterparts, but its subject has also usually been popular or liberal adult education.<sup>118</sup> These works are mainly histories of institutions, of certain forms of adult education or of concepts related to adult education.<sup>119</sup> Some historical studies not explicitly focusing on questions of adult education also touch upon the subject.<sup>120</sup> Of the above histories, the most relevant for my study is Kosti Huuhka's work on the Finnish workers' institute movement, a detailed presentation of nationwide developments in a long time frame. The Tampere Workers' Institute has been the subject of three histories, of which the first one is a short anniversary publication, the second an essayistic book

114. Lindberg and Nilsson 1996a; Sylwan 1916; Weibull 1976; Svensson L. 1987a; Svensson L. 1987b.

115. Olsson B. 1994; Ambjörnsson 1988; Ambjörnsson 1989.

116. Berg and Edquist 2017.

117. Vestlund 2010; Karjalainen 1970. The history of Finnish adult education has also been presented in a report by Pellinen (2001), including vocational adult education.

118. Vocational adult education has been explored e.g. by Tuomisto J. 1986 and Paaskoski 2012.

119. E.g. Huuhka 1990 (workers' institutes); Nyström S. 2014 (Helsinki Workers' Institute); Kalela 1978 (Finnish Workers' Educational Association); Karttunen 1979 (folk high schools); Tuomisto J. 1991 (the concept of adult education). Männikkö (2001, Society for Popular Enlightenment) exemplifies studies with a more specific approach.

120. E.g. Ehrnrooth 1992 (the education of socialist activists and speakers at the beginning of the twentieth century).

containing ample detailed information and the third is based on the earlier works when covering developments prior to the Second World War.<sup>121</sup>

The histories of the educational institutions explored in this study are overviews covering a long time frame and a wide range of activities and it is natural that even the most detailed of these have ignored many questions central to my study. Institutional histories also construct their narratives from the perspective of the known outcome and thus it is difficult to avoid the impression of an inevitable progression to that end. Moreover, as far as the activities are concerned, institutional histories do not cross the borderline between different forms of education, which could be helpful in creating a wider perspective.<sup>122</sup>

Since the number of historical studies on adult education is rather small and many of them are basic research focusing on institutional development or educational ideas, research in other fields has been useful for developing the research questions and approaches of this study, as already discussed above. In the field of historical research, urban history has offered one framework for viewing educational activities on a local level and especially the studies by Marjatta Hietala<sup>123</sup> have inspired me to analyse the role of municipalities in the development of adult education. Studies concerning the history of vocational education have drawn my attention to the wider range of adult education activities not discussed in studies focusing on liberal adult education.<sup>124</sup>

## **SOURCE MATERIALS AND METHODS**

The source materials related to the three initiatives and their outcomes discussed in this study differ from each other in quality and quantity. It has not been possible to carry out basic research like this on any of the cases by using a single archival collection and for this reason I have searched for information in various collections and publications. The sources range from the texts of the initiators, enabling a deeper analysis of their intentions and motives, to documents and materials produced by the educational institutions and municipalities, illuminating the processes whereby the institutions and practices emerged and the nature of these outcomes. Materials like newspapers and biographies have been used to form a more complete picture. Here I introduce the sources in brief, however due to their diverse nature, the details and more

121. *Tampereen työväenopisto 25-vuotias. Tampereen työväenopisto 1899–1924*, 1924; Lammi 1949; Virtanen 1975.

122. Cf. Hake 2011, 14–15.

123. Hietala 1987; Hietala 1992.

124. Heikkinen 1995; Kaarninen M. 1995; Klemelä 1999; Nilsson, L. 1981; Nilsson A. 2008.

specific questions related to them are discussed later in the relevant contexts of the study.

Gothenburg's Free Academy was the initiative of the editor S. A. Hedlund, who used his own newspaper *Goteborgs Handels- och Sjöfartstidning* to introduce the plan and thus these articles have formed the starting point for examining this case. In addition, the printed documents of Gothenburg city council and the collection of Gothenburg University College, located in the Gothenburg branch of the Swedish National Archives and also containing documents left by Hedlund have been consulted. These have also been the basis for studying the public lectures organized at Gothenburg University College, supported by the annual reports and histories of the university college and also by the municipal statistics. Material on the earlier public lectures was collected from the printed documents of the city council and from the history of the Royal Society of Arts and Sciences in Gothenburg.<sup>125</sup>

There are not so many documents about the beginnings of the Gothenburg Workers' Institute but those extant are in the collection of the institute housed in the regional archives of Gothenburg. Since there was hardly any public discussion on the establishment of the institute and as its initiator, Edvard Wavrinsky, appears to have left no material<sup>126</sup> revealing his motives, I investigated his other contemporary activities to find further information about the intellectual background of the institute. This led me to publications related to religious liberalism and, although not containing Wavrinsky's own work, the journal *Sanningsökaren* in particular offered information about the movement where he was active. Anton Nyström's ideas of workers' education have been examined on the basis of his publications and letters written to Wavrinsky, found in the collection of the Gothenburg Workers' Institute. Newspapers published in Gothenburg and elsewhere in Sweden also contain material shedding light on Wavrinsky's and Nyström's activities in the promotion of religious freedom. The nature and status of the institute that resulted from Wavrinsky's initiative was studied with the help of annual reports, minutes of board meetings, lists of students and other documents found in the collection of the institute, and with the histories of the institute.<sup>127</sup> Other local histories have also been useful.

125. Eriksson, Nils 1978.

126. I have not had the opportunity to look at Edvard Wavrinsky's files in the collection of the temperance organization IOGT in the Swedish National Archives in Stockholm (*IOGT-NTO arkin*). The archive catalogue nevertheless suggests that the collection for the most part dates from the time after 1886 when he was working in the IOGT.

127. Jonsson et al. 1923; Jonsson 1933.

In contrast to the developments in Gothenburg, the establishment of the workers' institute in Tampere was a topic of public discussion. Since it was the local workers' association that raised the issue, the document collection on it held in the Tampere City Archives contains not only material on the early stages of the process but also on its own educational activities, which formed the background to the establishment of the workers' institute. The local press also published articles introducing the idea of the workers' institute and workers' education more generally. The newspaper *Tampereen Sanomat* in particular is a valuable source because the most important advocate of the workers' institute at the beginning of the 1890s, the journalist Kaarlo Renström, was a member of its staff. In outlining the attitudes towards workers' education, the proceedings of the Diet, for instance, have also been utilized. Information on the developments of 1897 and 1898 that led to the establishment of the institute is provided by the documents of the city council, local newspapers and the correspondence between the driving force behind the project, Eino Sakari Yrjö-Koskinen, and his father, Senator Yrjö Sakari Yrjö-Koskinen, located in the Finnish National Archives. For studying the activities of Tampere Workers' Institute, annual reports and student registers have been the most valuable sources. The annual reports were published from 1906 onwards and the student registers are part of the collection of the Tampere Workers' Institute, located in Tampere City Archives. The institute's collection also contains the archive of the student organization, active from the 1920s, and this has also been utilized. The histories of the institute as well as other local histories have been an important source of information.

Due to the diverse nature of the source materials, this study is multi-methodological. For the most part the method is qualitative, analysing texts and documents through close reading and contextualizing them in the frame of the cultural, social and political currents of the period.

A quantitative method is used especially when exploring the students of the workers' institutes, which also involves their social and occupational classifications. The classification is discussed in more detail in Chapter 3.3. In order to explore the role of the Tampere Workers' Institute in advancing active citizenship, I collected research data on the basis of the lists containing municipal decision-makers of Tampere (found in annual municipal reports) and of the student registers. The principles for its collection are explained in Appendix 2.

All quotations from the original Swedish and Finnish sources in the text are translated by the author.

## 1.4. Summary of Chapter 1: Research Questions and Structure of the Study

### **RESEARCH QUESTIONS**

This study explores three initiatives for adult education—Free Academy in Gothenburg and the Gothenburg and Tampere Workers’ Institutes—and their outcomes to shed light on why such adult education became important, how the ideas were received and implemented, the status, nature and sphere of influence of the new the institutions and the effects of adult education.

More specific questions related to the initiators and processes whereby the ideas became established are:

- What social, cultural and political circumstances prompted the initiatives?
- What backgrounds, aims and motives did the initiators have?
- What was the essence of the plans and how was education expected to further the aims of the initiators?
- What were the sources of inspiration and what ideological meanings were involved in them?
- What factors contributed to the implementation of the ideas and plans, what choices were made and how were the ideas transformed or adapted?

More specific questions related to the outcomes are:

- What was the status of the institutions in the local community and the role of the municipality in maintaining or subsidizing them?
- What was the nature of the education compared with the intentions of the founders?
- What was the institutions’ sphere of influence in terms of the numbers and backgrounds of students and what changes in social patterns of education did they bring about?
- What effects did adult education have from the perspectives of active citizenship and of creating knowledge and skills resources and social resources?
- What was the fate or life cycle of the educational innovations?

### **STRUCTURE OF THE STUDY**

After the introductory part, the study falls into three chapters, each of them exploring one of the adult education initiatives and its outcome. Each chapter includes a part focusing on the initiators, ideas, sources of inspiration and the processes whereby the educational practices were implemented as well as a part analysing the outcome by addressing the institution’s status, nature and sphere of influence. The chapters are concluded with a brief summary.

Chapter 2, addressing Free Academy in Gothenburg, starts by exploring an idea and a plan concerning academically oriented adult education outlined by S. A. Hedlund in the 1860s, and the extent to which it was implemented, if at all. This idea has usually been regarded as a utopian plan that came to nothing. However, viewed from the perspective of adult education, local adult education activities developing from the 1860s onwards can be considered as one outcome of the idea, the public lectures of Gothenburg University College being another, albeit both on a modest scale. The latter part of the chapter discusses these activities.

Chapters 3 and 4 examine the workers' institutes in Gothenburg and Tampere. The first part of Chapter 3 serves as a common background to both of them, beginning with a brief review of the concept of 'workers' education' and of the educational nature of the liberal or non-socialist workers' associations, which were related to the beginnings of the workers' institutes though in a different way. Chapter 3 continues by exploring the beginnings of the Gothenburg Workers' Institute in the context of the religious liberalism of the 1880s and its founder's, Edvard Wavrinsky's, connection to a religiously liberal movement. Since it is not possible to study these developments without examining the ideas of Anton Nyström, who was the founder of the Stockholm Workers' Institute and Wavrinsky's principal source of inspiration, these are also explored in Chapter 3. Moreover, Nyström's influence also extended to Finland. The latter part of Chapter 3 explores the outcome of this process by addressing the nature of the Gothenburg Workers' Institute and its status in the community from the 1880s until the 1930s. Its instruction and students are discussed with the emphasis on the period covering the end of the nineteenth and the beginning of the twentieth centuries.

Chapter 4 follows how the idea of establishing a workers' institute developed in Tampere during the 1890s, first within the local liberal workers' association and at the end of the decade as a project of the local conservative political force, the Finnish Club. In this chapter, attention is also paid to the educational activities conducted by the workers' association since these formed the background to the institute. As in the case of the Gothenburg Workers' Institute, the outcome of this process is explored by scrutinizing the nature and status of the institute, its instruction and other activities and its students until the end of the 1930s. The instruction offered by the institute is also viewed in relation to other local adult education aimed at workers. The chapter concludes by discussing the significance of the Tampere Workers' Institute as

a promoter of active citizenship and also the knowledge and skills resources and the social resources the institute could generate.

The concluding Chapter 5 discusses these three initiatives and their outcomes by focusing on why adult education became important, how the ideas were shaped by the motives of the initiators, what the processes of establishment reveal about attitudes towards adult education, the nature of the institutions in relation to the ideas and also how the new practices influenced the social patterns of adult education and, in the case of Tampere, active citizenship.



## 2. FREE ACADEMY IN GOTHENBURG: HIGHER ADULT EDUCATION FOR BOURGEOIS WOMEN AND MEN

### 2.1. An Ambitious Adult Education Plan from the 1860s

No such institution as a 'Free Academy'<sup>128</sup> has ever existed in Gothenburg, but this name refers to a nineteenth-century plan for organizing activities which in modern terms would be defined as adult education based on scientific research. Its instruction was targeted at residents of Gothenburg who already had some education, meaning in practice the bourgeoisie. This Free Academy as an institution never materialized in the intended form and it has been regarded as an unrealized plan, belonging to the history of the origins of Gothenburg University College<sup>129</sup>, later University of Gothenburg.<sup>130</sup>

However, Free Academy has particular significance for the history of ideas related to adult education since it raised the question of the greater societal relevance of higher education and the role of universities in serving those people who were not habitual academic students. In addition, it was an early example of discussion on education serving the needs of those already engaged in working life. For these reasons, the term 'adult education' is also relevant in this context even if students of higher education were mainly already adults. The idea of Free Academy definitely played a part in the foundation of Gothenburg University College, opened in 1891, for it sustained the discussion on higher education in Gothenburg for more than twenty years. Yet to look at this idea merely from the perspective of a conventional university is paradoxical because the novel institution was meant to be an antithesis of the contemporary Swedish universities. Since the idea also impacted on the local educational life, it is justified from this perspective to ask whether it still was implemented in some form, exemplifying ideas that transformed radically in the course of their development. Moreover, such examination sheds light on activities that have not previously been discussed in the context of adult education.

128. *Fri akademi*.

129. *Göteborgs högskola*.

130. See the histories of Gothenburg University College by Sylwan (1916) and Lindberg and Nilsson (1996a) as well as the studies by Svensson L. (1987a, 1987b).

### 2.1.1. S.A. Hedlund's Pursuit of Free and Flexible Academic Research and Education

The target group of Free Academy, the bourgeoisie of Gothenburg, was not a homogeneous group but included different strata, of which wealthy merchants and industrialists together with their families constituted a small elite. This group also exercised considerable influence over municipal affairs.<sup>131</sup> The commercial city was known for its economic liberalism supporting free trade and the dismantling of restrictions on economic activity but the so-called Gothenburg liberalism also encompassed a social aspect. 'The spirit of giving' was common among the wealthy businessmen and factory owners, who made bequests and donations to the municipality to be used for the common good. Gothenburg liberalism had its cultural side as well, manifest first and foremost in the local newspaper *Göteborgs Handels- och Sjöfartstidning*, or *Handelstidningen* for short.<sup>132</sup>

Free Academy was a project advocated by Sven Adolf Hedlund (1821–1900), owner and editor of *Handelstidningen*. He was active in both politics and cultural life, Free Academy being only one of his many undertakings. He took part in the local decision-making for almost thirty years by serving on the city council from 1863 and contributed to reforms in fields such as elementary education, poor relief and workers' housing. He was also the driving force behind Gothenburg Museum and other cultural projects. After his death, he was proclaimed 'the personification of Gothenburg's virtuous public spirit'. In these enterprises, his newspaper was an important asset as a vehicle for introducing topical questions, discussing these matters and shaping public opinion. The influence of *Handelstidningen* was not confined to Gothenburg but developed into a nationally authoritative newspaper during a nearly half a century under Hedlund's leadership. Moreover, Hedlund was one of the most enthusiastic proponents of the national representational reform which in 1866 transformed the old estate-based Diet into the two-chamber parliament, the

131. Åberg 1991, 95ff; Fritz 1996, 71–72, 302–306; Attman 1963, 5–7. In Sweden, 'the bourgeoisie' usually lacks derogatory connotation and the middle class often defined itself in this way; 'middle class' became more typical in the 20<sup>th</sup> century. In Swedish society the bourgeoisie also held a position of upper class, partly because the nobility was small in number and these classes had to some extent merged. Frykman and Löfgren 1990, 7–8; Åberg 1991, 232–234.

132. Attman 1963, 293–310; Fritz 1996, 182.

*Riksdag*. He was elected to parliament when it started its work in 1867 and later served three more terms.<sup>133</sup>

Hedlund represented a more radical side of Gothenburg liberalism and directed his efforts to questions like religious freedom, women's rights, school reform, folk high schools, workers' education and universal military conscription. His circle of friends included cultural personalities like the writers Viktor Rydberg and Fredrika Bremer, also a well-known champion of women's rights. Hedlund's father-in-law was Count Torsten Rudenschiöld, a school reformer who advocated similar elementary schooling for all children irrespective of their social backgrounds.<sup>134</sup>

Hedlund introduced the idea of Free Academy in his newspaper in the spring of 1864 and continued to develop it in several contributions during the following two decades.<sup>135</sup> Although these articles were not signed, it is evident that he wrote them himself as *Handelstidningen* had been his organ since 1852, when he became the editor. From the outset, Hedlund was responsible for editorials and original articles while his two partners had other tasks. Even later, as the staff grew in number, he had a reputation for keeping a tight grip on it. Not even Viktor Rydberg, who was employed from 1855 till 1876, ever gained a strong position in the paper, partly because his real interests lay in literature and he also enjoyed considerable freedom to concentrate on his literary work.<sup>136</sup> Moreover, the articles about Free Academy were weighty expressions of opinion and often functioned as editorials, which is why they must have been written by Hedlund himself.

There were obviously other people contributing to the idea during the two decades when Free Academy surfaced in discussion but no one stood out in particular. Later proposals repeated what Hedlund had previously written about Free Academy and were most likely drawn up by him, which is supported by the fact that, in the 1880s, he was the one taking the initiative for

133. *Svenskt biografiskt handlexikon I* (1906), 478, <http://runeberg.org/sbh/a0478.html>, accessed 1 February 2022; *Nordiske familjebok 11* (1909), columns 211–213, <http://runeberg.org/nfbk/0122.html>, accessed 1 February 2022; Fahl 1963, 37–39; Attman 1963, 267–271, 323–324.

134. *Svenskt biografiskt handlexikon I* (1906), 478, <http://runeberg.org/sbh/a0478.html>, accessed 1 February 2022; *Nordiske familjebok 11* (1909), columns 211–213, <http://runeberg.org/nfbk/0122.html>, accessed 1 February 2022; Hedlund 1929, 203–209; Gellerman 1998, 18–20, 29–30, 111; Attman 1963, 293–297; Lindberg and Nilsson 1996a, 13–15.

135. In 1886, Hedlund himself referred to the 1864 article as the one introducing the idea of Free Academy. *GHT*, 'Göteborg', written by the editor, 27 December 1886.

136. Rydberg nevertheless served as the editor in 1867–1869 while Hedlund was a member of parliament. Krantz 1957, 132, 145–150, 262; Gellerman 1998, 57–58.

committees preparing the issue, served as a member on these committees and chaired one of them. It is moreover illustrative that contemporaries referred to the enterprise as ‘Hedlund’s Free Academy’.<sup>137</sup> Since Free Academy was a project taken up every now and then, no single blueprint exists but there are several sketches describing its various characteristics. The most comprehensive and coherent is a commission report from 1886, which nevertheless differs substantially from the original proposal of the 1860s. In 1886, the question about higher education was discussed in the city council in circumstances where improved economic opportunities and competing proposals for higher education had affected the plan. In order to capture the original open-minded nature of the plan, I focus on texts of the 1860s.<sup>138</sup>

Hedlund had at least two ultimate reasons for advocating Free Academy. The first was the fact that there was no university in Gothenburg although it was the second largest city in Sweden, with a flourishing economic and cultural life. In the 1860s, there was likewise no institution of higher education in Stockholm since the two universities in Sweden at that time were located in the small towns of Uppsala and Lund. The second reason was his dissatisfaction with these universities as he considered their structures and practices to be rigid and harmful to scientific and scholarly work. To rectify this, Hedlund outlined an academy with freedom as its guiding principle, consisting of flexible provision of disciplines and of the autonomy of researchers and students. According to him, science by its nature was in a state of constant development, expressing itself in the new disciplines that had emerged in the course of time and in the changing ways in which research was carried out. This natural development was inhibited in institutions with fixed structures and a case in point of such restriction was the system of maintaining permanent professorships. Fixed chairs would only paralyse scientific activity, because an institution based on them could not adjust to the interests of students. When a new discipline had become topical and increasingly important, such an institution was unable to react by including it in the curriculum. Therefore,

137. RAG, GH F IXa:1, ‘Till Göteborgs Högskolas historia’ (undated memoir by S. Wieselgren). S.A. Hedlund’s nephew and biographer, Henrik Hedlund, also regarded Free Academy as his idea. Hedlund 1929, 391.

138. My discussion on Free Academy is based primarily on the articles in *Göteborgs Handels- och Sjöfartstidning* (GHT), ‘Göteborgs fria Akademi’ 24 May 1864, ‘Föreläsningar i Göteborg’ 17 September 1864, ‘Göteborgs fria Akademi’ 15 November 1864, ‘Göteborg d. 29 November’ 29 November 1871 and on a commission report from 1886 (GSH 1886:53). The article of 17 September 1864 contains a report of a commission of which Hedlund was a member, repeating the ideas that he had introduced 24 May 1864. In addition to these, GHT, ‘Göteborg den 9 Maj’ 9 May 1865 and ‘Göteborg den 18 Maj’ 18 May 1865 present Hedlund’s ideas on education system in general.

Free Academy would have no fixed and permanent chairs and professorships would be founded on the availability of capable teachers and on the value students and society placed on different disciplines.<sup>139</sup>

In addition, Hedlund thought that scholarly work suffered even more when the institutions of higher education had the obligation to train civil servants and clergy as the universities did. Tasked with authorizing the practitioners of these professions by awarding them degrees, transformed scholars into mere examiners. As regards students, ideally, they could have studied disciplines chosen by themselves according to their personal interests but academic degrees required studies in specific subjects. Until 1879, university degrees included several compulsory subjects and Latin remained so until the 1890s. Studying for the sake of a degree was not conducive to the free pursuit of knowledge itself, hence Free Academy as an institution would not award degrees. This would also guarantee scholars the freedom to direct their research and teaching freely in the fields in which they were personally interested, or motivated by their 'inner spirit'.<sup>140</sup>

The absence of degrees and permanent chairs has drawn the attention of university historians as the most striking feature of the planned institution. This is quite understandable from the perspective of university history and from the later university college, which has directed the interpretations concerning Free Academy. Seen from this viewpoint, Free Academy has appeared as a manifestation of contemporary criticism of universities.<sup>141</sup>

Hedlund's criticism of the existing universities was not unique and he echoed earlier and contemporary Swedish university debates, which among other things addressed the nature of the degree system and curriculum. In the 1830s one of the critics had been Carl Adolph Agardh, a natural scientist from the University of Lund, who later created an ecclesiastical career ending up a bishop. The focal points of Hedlund's criticism—degrees, examinations and the role of classical languages—had already been raised by Agardh. In his opinion, the best solution regarding the professional education of clergy and civil servants would have been its location outside the universities to allow these to focus on the liberal education (*bildning*) of students. Agardh also blamed frequent compulsory examinations for destroying the Swedish universities. Moreover, he criticized the excessive importance attached to the classics and

139. *GHT*, 'Göteborgs fria Akademi' 24 May 1864.

140. *GHT*, 'Göteborgs fria Akademi' 24 May 1864 and 'Göteborgs fria Akademi' 15 November 1864; Hellqvist 1988, 64, 69.

141. See Lindberg and Nilsson 1996a, 15–20.

the underestimation of natural sciences. Agardh's views were close to those of the German university reformer Wilhelm von Humboldt, implemented at the University of Berlin since the early years of the century. The essential feature of the Humboldtian university ideal was the role of research. While the instruction of students had earlier been regarded as the primary task of professors, research came to form an important part of academic work alongside instruction. In the Humboldtian ideal, research and teaching were inseparable and formed a unity in academic work. Nonetheless, in spite of the similarities in the general outlines, Hedlund did not refer to Agardh or Humboldt when envisioning Free Academy even though it is unlikely that he was unaware of their ideas.<sup>142</sup> It is evident that, at least a few years after having presented the first outlines of Free Academy, Hedlund was familiar with Humboldt's ideas on the unity of research and teaching.<sup>143</sup>

When Hedlund emphasized the importance of research he actually touched upon a feature that was not self-evident within the Swedish universities in the mid-nineteenth century. The principal attention had been on teaching, whereas research had not played any significant role, which reveals the difference between the universities of the early nineteenth century and later universities. However, the subsidiary role of research was a common feature in all European and American universities, except for those in Germany, until the latter part of the nineteenth century. In Sweden, the change started in 1852, when the universities were reformed to bring them closer to the Humboldtian ideals. The role of research was stressed by declaring it to be the primary duty of the professors, in conjunction with teaching, and scientific merits became the main criterion in appointing professors. From this point on, students aspiring to master's and doctor's degrees had to write their theses and dissertations themselves, contrary to the earlier practice, according to which professors had composed these and students had only defended them in an effort to prove their competence in dialectics. The strengthening role of research was also connected with the process of specialization under way in academic disciplines, notably in natural sciences. While it had earlier been customary for

142. Lindberg and Nilsson 1996a, 19. On Agardh and von Humboldt, see Liedman 1993, 82–84, 94–95.

143. RAG, GH F IXb:2, *Über Universitäts-Einrichtungen. Rede bei Antritt des Rectorats der Königlichen Friedrich-Wilhelms-Universität zu Berlin am 15. October 1869, gehalten von Emil du Bois-Reymond. Berlin 1869* (a printed leaflet). On its front page, somebody has written 'S.A. Hedlund'. In this speech the new Rector du Bois-Reymond referred to Humboldt's essential ideas.

one chair to cover a wider spectrum of scientific fields, in the course of the nineteenth century these started to evolve into separate disciplines.<sup>144</sup>

However, Hedlund's criticism was not only directed towards universities but towards the entire system of secondary and university education. The mission of secondary school education consisted partly of preparation for university studies, often culminating in a career as a civil servant, and partly of the provision of general education. In spite of the intention to prepare future civil servants, the vast majority of pupils pursued a career in the practical world of industry and commerce. Secondary schools could obviously not offer the education needed in such careers because many left school without completing it in order to enter working life. The same applied to universities attracting only a minority of secondary school graduates, which, according to Hedlund was less than one tenth in some localities. He considered that secondary schools had also failed in their other task. Instead of being able to provide general education, they had adhered to subjects such as Latin and Greek, which could no longer be counted as the cornerstones of general education but rather as specific skills.<sup>145</sup>

As the universities were focusing on the formal degrees required by civil servants, Hedlund saw that they could not contribute with their instruction to the needs of practical life. Outside the civil service, in private enterprises and even in municipal affairs, university degrees were not very highly regarded. Thus a businessman employed a capable and practical man rather than a learned university graduate. Even in the education of civil servants, universities were not fulfilling their mission because they were not able to give instruction in the specific fields needed in these professions. Hedlund cited as examples customs officials, who received no instruction on customs legislation or bookkeeping, and secondary school teachers, who were not offered any instruction in pedagogy. Apart from this kind of expertise in special fields, civil servants would need real general education, not just instruction in 'the dead languages'. For this reason, Hedlund called for a thorough reform of the Swedish education system so that it could better serve the needs of individuals and society. The aim of education should be to develop balanced individuals and decent and useful citizens for the communities where they lived and acted.<sup>146</sup>

144. Liedman 1993, 95–96; Hellqvist 1988, 69, 75, 91; Ben-David 1977, 23–24, 47.

145. E.g. *GHT*, 'Göteborg den 9 Maj' 9 May 1865 and 'Göteborg den 18 Maj' 18 May 1865.

146. *Ibid.*

Hedlund's opinions on the Swedish universities were founded at least partly on his personal experience as he had studied at the University of Uppsala, graduating in 1845. At first he had planned to study natural sciences but nevertheless chose languages and focused, interestingly, on Sanskrit. He also read other languages including Greek and Icelandic and seems to have been particularly attracted to comparative linguistics, a field that had not yet established itself in Sweden. Shortly after graduating he became a journalist, for which reason he was also well aware of the requirements of practical life.<sup>147</sup>

### 2.1.2. A New Mission for Higher Education: Serving the Community

Hedlund's reasons for outlining Free Academy as the antithesis of the existing universities did not merely arise out of the unsatisfactory conventions related to research and scholarly work. The key to understand the idea of Free Academy actually lies as much outside as inside the universities, in the role that Hedlund envisaged for science in modern society. As he himself put it, 'knowledge should go out into the world and it could not hide any longer inside the walls of either monastic cells or private study chambers'.<sup>148</sup> The ideal community would consist of citizens who, besides their practical tasks, would dedicate themselves to studies either in the fields of science, art or social issues. These intellectual pursuits would benefit individuals as well as the whole community by increasing the level of general education, *bildning*, and promoting character building, occupational skills and abilities in civic life.<sup>149</sup> Thus Hedlund combined two phenomena in a process of emerging or becoming more important in society: adult education, or cultivating the general public, and scientific research.

The societal significance of knowledge and learning was manifested in the target group of Free Academy and the question of who the students were supposed to be formed in Hedlund's opinion the very foundation of the whole idea. From the growing importance of science and knowledge it followed that the results of research should not remain solely in the possession of academics and ordinary university students. In addition to young men studying for the sake of academic degrees and their future careers, knowledge based on research could benefit men already working in practical life and those

147. *Svenskt biografiskt handlexikon I* (1906), 478, <http://runeberg.org/sbh/a0478.html>, accessed 1 February 2022; Hedlund 1929, 57–59, 61–63; Gellerman 1998, 13–16.

148. *GHT*, 'Göteborgs fria Akademi' 24 May 1864.

149. *GHT*, 'Göteborgs fria Akademi' 15 November 1864 and 'Föreläsningar i Göteborg' 17 September 1864; Lindberg and Nilsson 1996a, 17.



not able to enter universities because of the strict entrance requirements. As regards those in the service of practical life, Hedlund estimated that there were several hundred young and youngish men in Gothenburg whose business or profession required them to spend most of their time in offices, shops or workshops but who in their leisure time would be eager to take part in instruction in different scientific fields.<sup>150</sup>

Hedlund believed that, in addition to young men, Free Academy would draw more mature men as well, which suggests that he had in mind some ideal of lifelong learning. He also reverted to this ideal later. In 1865, he emphasized the importance of maintaining the individual's intellectual capacity throughout the life course by quoting an Englishman, Lord Robert Cecil, who had stated that even the most intensive mental efforts during childhood and adolescence are of no use if an individual afterwards falls into intellectual sloth and indifference. Two decades later, Hedlund wrote that general and humanistic education should not be confined to initial school education but should also be catered for in later life. In a well-organized society, people engaged in various occupations should have opportunities for this. As regards the younger and more mature students of Free Academy engaged in practical tasks, he clearly considered them to be part-time students. Sunday afternoons, weekday evenings and even lunchtime could offer them a few hours weekly to study a subject they thought interesting.<sup>151</sup> In the early 1860s, the bourgeoisie of Gothenburg could only find such cultivation in popular scientific lectures occasionally arranged by the Royal Society of Arts and Sciences.<sup>152</sup>

In spite of the reference to shops and workshops, Hedlund obviously did not mean that actual working people with little or no schooling would attend Free Academy but probably referred to managers, engineers and the like. This is suggested by his comment that the target group would be 'somewhat educated' people. Furthermore, Free Academy was meant to expand the popular scientific

150. *GHT*, 'Göteborgs fria Akademi' 15 November 1864.

151. *GHT*, 'Göteborgs fria Akademi' 15 November 1864, 'Göteborg den 30 Januari' 30 January 1865 and 'Göteborg' 9 November 1887. Hedlund uses the word *middagstid*, which means dinner time or the time for the principal meal of the day. In nineteenth-century Sweden these meals, which could also be used for the purposes of business meetings or other social networking, were often served in the afternoon, starting as early as at two p.m. so that businessmen could return to their offices afterwards. Åberg 1991, 140.

152. In Swedish, *Kungliga Vetenskaps- och Vitterhets­sambälle*. Eriksson, Nils 1978, 313–316. An example of earlier educational activities for upper classes had been reading or book societies (*läsesällskap, lukuseura*), operating in both Sweden and Finland from the end of the eighteenth century. These purchased books and newspapers to be circulated among their members but did obviously not arrange reading or discussion groups, thus functioning more like libraries. Mäkinen I. 1997, 48, 156–186; Olsson B. 1994, 49–52.

lectures arranged by the Royal Society of Arts and Sciences, the audience of which consisted of educated people. When these lectures were characterized in retrospect in the 1880s, it was pointed out that they had virtually only benefitted the wealthier townsfolk.<sup>153</sup> Hedlund did not oppose workers' education, quite the reverse. He considered education essential for workers so that they could gain political rights and at the turn of the 1840 and 1850s had actually participated in educational activities aimed at craftsmen. It was just that the wealthy bourgeoisie and working people of the nineteenth century lived in worlds apart. This applied to education as well and was exemplified in Gothenburg by the separate workers' institute established in 1883.<sup>154</sup>

The aspect of educational egalitarianism was not, however, totally lacking from the discussion on higher education in Gothenburg. A few years after Hedlund's first drafts of Free Academy, Sigfrid Wieselgren, a proponent of the traditional university in the debate on the nature of higher education and thus one of Hedlund's adversaries, sketched a university with open entrance. Wieselgren wanted to emphasize that not only free academies but also ordinary universities could admit students without formal qualifications and welcomed shop assistants and working men into the lecture halls. However, Wieselgren did not discuss this question in any detail and did not take account of lacking basic education and other barriers which in practice prevented workers from taking part in higher education.<sup>155</sup> Although workers' opportunities to participate in higher education seem not to have been Hedlund's prime concern, he nevertheless thought that all children should be educated in a similar manner and, more generally, that the foundations of education should be the same for all. In this, he was evidently influenced by his father-in-law, Torsten Rudenschiöld.<sup>156</sup>

Apart from men engaged in practical tasks, Hedlund was particularly concerned about the young women of the bourgeoisie. This is not surprising given that he was the father of four small daughters at the time when he introduced the idea of Free Academy and an eager advocate of women's rights in general.<sup>157</sup> Hedlund highlighted how young women's education usually ended at the age of sixteen or seventeen, which was the age when the

153. *GHT*, 'Föreläsningar i Göteborg' 17 September 1864 and 'Göteborgs fria Akademi' 15 November 1864; *GSH 1883:46*, 1.

154. Gellerman 1998, 18–20, 29. On the social distinctions of Gothenburg, see Fritz 1996, 299–308.

155. *GHT*, 'Hvad vilje vi?' by S-d W 28 November 1871.

156. *GHT*, 'Göteborg den 9 Maj' 9 May 1865; Gellerman 1998, 47.

157. Hedlund's sympathy for women's rights is exemplified by his motion in the parliament on women's municipal suffrage. Gellerman 1998, 172, 211.

education of young men only began in the proper sense if they wanted to continue their studies. While their brothers completed secondary school and possibly went to a practical college or a university, the lives of young women consisted of hobbies such as needlework, reading novels, playing the piano, promenading and going to balls, with the ultimate goal of securing a husband. In this way, a precious period of five to six years was wasted at that point of life when the young mind was the most responsive to education.<sup>158</sup>

Thus an institution like Free Academy would have an important role in serving the needs of women's education, since in the early 1860s the Swedish education system still did not offer girls and young women many options for schooling after primary education (Figure 1). Secondary schools were for boys only but, in larger towns, the daughters of middle- and upper-class families could attend private girls' schools, where the curriculum nevertheless differed from that of secondary schools. In Gothenburg, two such girls' schools functioned in the 1860s. Since the profession of elementary school teacher had opened up to women in the 1850s, three Swedish teachers' training colleges had started to educate female students in 1860 and a separate college for female teachers had been established in Stockholm in 1861. However, the teachers' college in Gothenburg admitted only male students at that time. The beginning of the training of female teachers together with a government committee working in the mid-1860s show the topicality of girls' and women's education.<sup>159</sup> Yet universities opened to women in the following decade only as women were permitted in 1872 to take part in the *studentexamen* (matriculation examination), which was the entrance requirement for universities. The right to take this examination implied a cautious opening of the universities, which initially concerned medical faculties, as has also been the case in many other countries. A year thereafter, other faculties, except for the theological faculty, granted female students the right to study.<sup>160</sup>

Whereas women were totally excluded from the universities because of their gender, there were other obstacles to young men even if their parents could afford university education. By the time Hedlund introduced the idea of Free Academy, the Swedish universities had become stricter in admitting students by attaching more importance than before to formal school qualifications. As the universities themselves had previously tested the maturity

158. *GHT*, 'Göteborgs fria Akademi' 15 November 1864.

159. Richardson 2004, 76, 78–79; Fritz 1996, 314–315; Weibull J. 1968, 70.

160. Weibull J. 1968, 86; Petersson S. 1988, 31. On the differences between countries and universities in admitting women to medical faculties, see Hakosalo 2006, 398–400.

of applicants, the decree of 1862 transferred this testing, the *studentexamen*, to secondary schools. Once the decree came into force, only those who had passed this examination on graduation from secondary school were eligible for admission.<sup>161</sup>

The new type of *studentexamen* was implemented in spring 1864 and, like the question of female education, was obviously among those topical factors prompting Hedlund to present his idea on Free Academy.<sup>162</sup> During the early nineteenth century, the *studentexamen* had not been very strict and universities had admitted students with variable educational backgrounds, including those tutored privately. Until the 1850s it had been possible to enter the university without having passed the *studentexamen*, on condition that this would be done in the near future. Thus university admission had not depended on secondary school education and there had been more flexibility in the transition from school to university.<sup>163</sup>

The inflexibility pertaining to admission to the universities had also become evident in such cases where a student had passed the *studentexamen* but without grades in Latin and Greek. This kind of examination only resulted in a school-leaving certificate and did not qualify the holder to continue his studies at the universities but had nevertheless become popular among young men who, instead of a learned profession, aimed at a practical occupation.<sup>164</sup> The strong position of Latin in the Swedish education system continued until the last decades of the nineteenth century and secondary school pupils studied it for about eight hours a week for something like six years. It was only in 1891 that Latin was removed as an entrance requirement for those intending to study natural sciences at university. In the 1860s, however, Latin and also Greek still held a dominant position and their role also diminished the motivation to complete secondary school as practically oriented pupils did not find the instruction at school useful. As Hedlund pointed out, this often led such pupils to leave school without graduating. This was one of the reasons for Hedlund's constant objection to the role of 'the dead languages'.<sup>165</sup>

Hedlund raised this problem in *Handelstidningen* two weeks before he introduced his plan for Free Academy and although he did not mention such young men in the plan, it is obvious he had them in mind. Men engaged in

161. Weibull J. 1968, 27–28, 36–37; Gierow 1971, 420.

162. On the date of implementing the reform of the *studentexamen*, see Richardson 2004, 69–70.

163. Gierow 1971, 407–420.

164. *GHT*, 'Göteborg den 9 Maj' 9 May 1865.

165. Richardson 2004, 66–68, 104–105; Hellqvist 1988, 63–64.

the tasks of practical life were supposed to constitute an important student category in Hedlund's academy and such men were often those who had left secondary school or those who had passed the *studentexamen* without grades in 'the dead languages', thus debarred from the old universities. As noted, traditional university studies were not particularly attractive even for those eligible to enter university since they were not relevant for the purposes of running a family business or enterprise. A study on entrepreneurs in nineteenth-century Gothenburg confirms Hedlund's perception of the unpopularity of university education by showing that university educated entrepreneurs were exceptional. Instead of university education, about half of the entrepreneurs seem to have had some kind of secondary education, which also included commercial and technical schools.<sup>166</sup>

When in 1864 the *studentexamen* was transferred from the universities to secondary schools, the power and significance of these schools, which Hedlund did not greatly value, increased. When criticizing the Swedish education system in 1865, Hedlund pointed to this new practice and considered it harmful because secondary school pupils had now become totally dependent on their teachers, who both set the requirements and tested the pupils. In contrast to the universities, Free Academy would be open to all regardless of the *studentexamen* or other earlier examinations. Students would not be controlled by the academy but should themselves judge whether their basic knowledge was sufficient to permit them to follow the instruction. In which way these basics had been acquired, was not important.<sup>167</sup>

Consequently, the men of practical life could have benefitted from Free Academy in two ways. On the one hand, it would have opened their way to higher learning as also the way of all people with enquiring minds, regardless of earlier education and the *studentexamen*. On the other hand, it would have enabled them alongside their daily tasks to engage in part-time studies in more relevant subjects than the universities could offer.<sup>168</sup> For such studies, an educational institution located in the home town was, of course, necessary.

The intended students of Free Academy have been characterized as amateurs by one of the histories of Gothenburg University.<sup>169</sup> This is naturally correct in the sense that these students in general were not supposed to devote

166. Åberg 1991, 85–93.

167. *GHT*, 'Göteborg den 9 Maj' 9 May 1865 and 'Göteborg d. 29 November' 29 November 1871; Hellqvist 1988, 68; Weibull J. 1968, 36–37.

168. *GHT*, 'Göteborgs fria Akademi' 15 November 1864 and 'Göteborg d. 29 November' 29 November 1871.

169. Lindberg and Nilsson 1996a, 15, 17.

themselves to scholarly work or even to professions requiring an academic degree.<sup>170</sup> Hedlund himself used the word ‘dilettante’ though in a respectful manner.<sup>171</sup> Yet the depiction of amateur does not quite do justice because it arises from a perspective which considers the role of higher education from inside the academic world and implies that there was a clear distinction between professional and amateur uses of knowledge. In Hedlund’s opinion, people engaged in practical tasks could benefit from theoretical education as much as could future civil servants. Moreover, he seems not to have regarded such a distinction relevant since he emphasized the benefits of knowledge to society as a whole. He did not actually consider the line between academic professionals and academic amateurs to be definite and thought that those active in practical fields could actually enrich scientific work. Dilettantes with higher education could also benefit science by becoming patrons.<sup>172</sup>

### 2.1.3. Knowledge for Purposes of Self-improvement and Practical Life

The pioneering nature of Free Academy was shown not only by its intended target group. Just as its aim was to open higher education to people who were not conventional university students, its curriculum would also have included subjects not offered at the universities of Uppsala and Lund. Hedlund believed that such disciplines, some of which had not established themselves as independent branches of science or as university subjects, would interest those engaged in the tasks of practical life. By contrast, such a traditional university discipline as theology was absent and instruction related to religion was named religious science, referring to a scientific and probably comparative approach.<sup>173</sup>

In one of the first drafts for Free Academy, Hedlund divided its subjects into six groups. First, there were natural sciences including physics, botany, zoology and astronomy. The second group contained fields essential to acting in business and the local community, such as economics, social studies and jurisprudence concerning citizens. The third group consisted of subjects related to humankind more broadly: history, ethnology and geography. Then he mentioned as distinct categories mathematics, art and finally arts and crafts

170. A smaller number of students taking part in more intensive instruction and women trained as doctors would have been an exception. This instruction is discussed in Chapter 2.1.3.

171. *GHT*, ‘Göteborgs fria Akademi’ 15 November 1864.

172. *GHT*, ‘Föreläsningar i Göteborg’ 17 September 1864 and ‘Göteborgs fria Akademi’ 15 November 1864.

173. *GHT*, ‘Göteborgs fria Akademi’ 15 November 1864; Lindberg and Nilsson 1996a, 16–17. On religious science, see below.

combined with industry, by which he evidently referred to technology.<sup>174</sup> An undated draft for the statutes of Free Academy, indubitably written by Hedlund and originating from the 1860s or early 1870s, divided subjects into three groups: science, art and practical life. In this categorization, science not only subsumed those scientific subjects mentioned in the other draft but also religious science and philosophy, linguistics (obviously close to Hedlund because of his language studies), statistics, law more generally, pedagogy, medicine and *bibliognostik*, which probably referred to a science related to books. The art subsumed music, visual arts, drama, literature and gymnastics. Under the heading of practical life were technology, industrial history, the science of commerce and, again, arts and crafts.<sup>175</sup> Thus the curriculum would have included both general theoretical education and more practically oriented subjects, which in fact had a fairly strong emphasis, also considering those classified as art. This reveals that Hedlund's view on education, or *bildning*, had a practical dimension as well.

Hedlund thought that most of these subjects would benefit women as well but, in addition, he raised some fields related to the practical tasks of women, which nevertheless in his view had been neglected in their education. Pedagogy was necessary for becoming a good teacher and lectures on different art forms, including music, would also be valuable for women. Of more a pragmatic nature was food chemistry or, 'kitchen chemistry' as Hedlund called it, which according to him had started to attract attention among prominent scientists. For this reason he suggested a lecture course introducing proper cooking methods from the viewpoint of the nutritious components of food.<sup>176</sup>

As women's education was an important issue for Hedlund, disciplines suitable for women's education seem to have been close to his heart and he addressed them more thoroughly than other subjects. Hedlund's ideas on women's education inspired Fredrika Bremer, who urged Hedlund to put Free Academy into practice and, in particular, to establish a chair for social studies, which she regarded as the most topical discipline.<sup>177</sup>

His chief attention was nevertheless focused on medicine and women's

174. In most cases, Hedlund does not use the exact names of the disciplines but refers, for example, to the sciences concerning the physical laws of nature, animals, stars or the customs of different peoples. *GHT*, 'Göteborgs fria Akademi' 15 November 1864. On the academic disciplines, see e.g. Gierow 1971 and J. Weibull 1968.

175. RAG, GH F IXa:2, 'Stadgar för Göteborgs Fria Akademi' (undated draft). Cf. Sylwan (1916, 4), who attributes to Hedlund a draft bearing a similar title. The draft is located in a file containing material until 1873.

176. *GHT*, 'Göteborgs fria Akademi' 15 November 1864.

177. Hedlund 1929, 415–416.

potential therein. In his opinion, women were just as well suited as men to study and practise medicine, at least some fields of it like children's and women's diseases. Hedlund seems to have thought that medicine as a calling could be compared to that of teachers since both were close to women's sphere of life. He noted that the role of women had already been acknowledged in such duties related to medicine as nursing and childbirth, which were mostly taken care of by women, although too little attention had been paid to the theoretical aspects of these occupations. Hedlund therefore asked why not take a step forward and let a woman with a vocation for practising medicine study it in order to become a doctor. This could be one of the missions of Free Academy, consistent with the open-mindedness of this institution that would have no prejudice against the true inclinations of people. Instruction in medicine was thus aimed at women. Although a medical faculty for women could be developed little by little, Hedlund was not too modest in estimating the significance of this endeavour: it would not only do credit to Gothenburg but also to the whole country, being 'a great deed from the perspective of humanity'.<sup>178</sup>

Hedlund's intention was to promote medical education by contacting Director General Magnus Huss, a professor of medicine and in charge of the Swedish hospitals. Hedlund wrote to Huss but for some reason the letter was undelivered. The contents of the letter are nevertheless interesting since Hedlund described his wish to start two different lines of medical education. The more general form would cover such issues of hygiene and health education that every educated person should be aware of, women in particular. The other form of instruction would be more specific and aimed at prospective nurses and female doctors and it was this latter form Hedlund was especially enthusiastic about, trusting that such education would also attract students from Denmark and Norway. In the letter Hedlund asked Huss's support for the project, apparently confident that the professor would not be opposed to the very idea of women practising as medical doctors.<sup>179</sup> It is probable that Huss had by this point already been involved in discussions concerning female doctors, but in 1865, when the issue of women's right to academic studies was debated in the Diet, he took a rather guarded and conservative stand with regard to medical studies. Yet he did not oppose the idea of women studying medicine but wanted first to investigate the possibility of organizing separate

178. *GHT*, 'Göteborgs fria Akademi' 15 November 1864.

179. *RAG*, GH F IXa:2, Hedlund to Huss 9 September 1864 (draft letter). The letter was addressed to 'Director General' but the addressee appears from a note added to the last page.



courses for female students.<sup>180</sup> However, no education for doctors, female or male, was organized in Gothenburg and Hedlund renewed his proposal to Huss twenty years later.<sup>181</sup>

Like medical education, all Free Academy instruction was scheduled to consist of two different categories serving different kinds of students but Hedlund nevertheless considered these two lines to be equally important. The first type of instruction consisted of popular scientific lectures intended more widely for townspeople. The aim of these lectures was to disseminate research results, arouse a thirst for knowledge and broaden the understanding about the 'great issues of life'. Hedlund emphasized that such popularization of research was not to be equated with superficiality since a real scholar should be able to combine the scholarly thoroughness with popular accessibility. The second category comprised more scientific instruction intended for a smaller number of participants. These would form a somewhat more permanent student body compared with those attending the public lectures. This more demanding teaching should not be confined to the presentation of research results but also introduce the students to the processes and developments of research work. Its aim was partly to provide a more profound understanding of the disciplines in question, partly to encourage people to engage in further self-study. According to Hedlund, students taking part in this kind of instruction actually to some extent resembled conventional university students but were nevertheless engaged in the tasks of practical working life.<sup>182</sup>

Since Free Academy would not have granted degrees, the aim of practically oriented instruction was not to offer formal qualifications for professions. In the case of female doctors, this question nevertheless remains unclear unless Hedlund regarded it as an exception, which is probable. However, many of the subjects were vocationally oriented even if not actually vocational and clearly intended to be useful to those employed in various occupations, which reveals that such subjects would have been in the nature of further or top-up education.<sup>183</sup> In describing an academy for the wealthy residents of Gothenburg, Hedlund introduced a vision of an active lifestyle for male citizens, who would incorporate studying into their daily tasks in local

180. Weibull J. 1968, 70–75.

181. RAG, GH F IXa:2, Huss to Hedlund 15 December 1884.

182. *GHT*, 'Göteborgs fria Akademi' 24 May 1864, 'Göteborgs fria Akademi' 15 November 1864 and 'Föreläsningar i Göteborg' 17 September 1864.

183. Lindberg and Nilsson (1996a, 15) have argued that instruction would not have been vocationally oriented but they have obviously focused on the later proposals for the university college, which had a different emphasis.

business or industry.<sup>184</sup> Women, for their part, could acquire more perspectives for their intellectual, practical or professional lives, including the essential role of mother.<sup>185</sup> Although Hedlund himself was in general open-minded on questions of women's education, the subjects he regarded as useful for women reveal that he was, after all, bound to his age and to the contemporary ideas on women's role in society. Yet his newspaper introduced fairly progressive views on women's education by stressing the importance of skills in bookkeeping and arithmetic in connection with the expectation that industrial occupations would open up to women in the near future.<sup>186</sup>

Moral education in the sense of creating a counterweight to the materialistic views and lifestyle, allegedly characteristic of Gothenburg, has been raised as an essential goal for Free Academy by the historians of Gothenburg University. This has referred to the need to educate the young generation of wealthy families in particular, who were believed to be seduced by the materialistic atmosphere and inclined to pursue pleasure and comforts because they were not obliged to strive for the necessities of life.<sup>187</sup> However, in the texts of the 1860s, the concern about the moral conduct of the young bourgeoisie was not central to Hedlund. Even though he noted that a city with predominantly industrial interests and pursuits needed cultivation, his views about intellectual awakening and refinement were more extensive. It was not only character building and preventing vices that was needed; he stressed the importance of all pursuit of knowledge, including practically oriented, that could contribute to intellectual elevation and combatting the materialism of a merchant city. It was probably an indication of his liberal spirit that he regarded any field of study freely chosen by participants as capable of this. Moreover, it was not only the benefit of individuals Hedlund stressed but also the good of the community.<sup>188</sup>

The moral dimension in the sense of repelling the vices that threatened especially wealthy young men seems to have received more attention at the end of the 1880s, when it had become evident that the institution of higher

184. This was noticed by Lindberg and Nilsson (1996a, 17) but they did not recognize the significance of the idea from the perspective of adult education.

185. *GHT*, 'Göteborgs fria Akademi' 15 November 1864.

186. *GHT*, 'Undervisning i bok- och räkenskapsföring för fruntimmer' 9 June 1864.

187. Lindberg and Nilsson 1996a, 16.

188. *GHT*, 'Föreläsningar i Göteborg' 17 September 1864 and 'Göteborgs fria Akademi' 15 November 1864. The 1886 commission report emphasized more the role of an intellectual counterweight to materialism in a general way but did not actually discuss the moral improvement of the younger bourgeoisie. *GSH 1886:53*, 4, 6.

education in Gothenburg would be a traditional university college.<sup>189</sup> Those students for whom Hedlund had originally planned Free Academy would have been slightly older or, at least because of their employment, more mature than conventional university students. When the decision on an institution similar to the traditional universities had been taken, it was clear that the majority of students would consist of the sons and daughters of the local merchants, industrialists and other wealthy residents. Hedlund, having adjusted to the new situation, promoted the university college to open in the near future with a curriculum consisting of humanities. By emphasizing the moral dimensions of education he most likely wanted to ensure that there would be enough students by convincing the local powers of the usefulness of such education and about its ability to influence the lifestyle of their younger generation.

Therefore, improving the moral condition of the intended target group did not constitute such a central argument in Hedlund's original sketches as it did in the case of the workers' institutes. A second feature diverging from workers' education was the almost total absence of arguments related to the need for civic education although the representation reform was carried through two years after Hedlund introduced his plan. Suffrage in the parliamentary elections was not, however, extended radically beyond the circle of somewhat educated men.<sup>190</sup>

Research had been Hedlund's starting point for the elaborations of Free Academy and he had considered scholars to be its other cornerstone along with students. The role of research was also emphasized in the later descriptions of the plan: Free Academy was characterized, for example, as 'an academy consisting of scholars, with or without the obligation to teach'.<sup>191</sup> Nevertheless, apart from the freedom of research in consequence of the absence of permanent professorships, exams and degrees, Hedlund hardly touched upon the issue. This applies to his texts of the 1860s and 1870s in particular. When he referred to scholarly work, in most cases this was from the viewpoint of the students or the audience, thus highlighting scholars' roles as teachers or writers. According to him, scholars needed to communicate their research results, either by publishing academic studies and other works or by giving

189. *GHT*, 'Göteborgs Högskola' 11 November 1887 (a report on the city council meeting of 10 November 1887). Cf. *GHT*, 'Göteborg' 19 December 1888. The decision to establish Gothenburg University College was taken on 10 November 1887. Lindberg and Nilsson 1996a, 26.

190. Hedenborg and Kvarnström 2006, 188–189.

191. Warburg 1916.

public lectures and more scientific instruction.<sup>192</sup> Similarly, the provision of the disciplines was sketched mainly on the basis of their alleged attraction and utility for students.<sup>193</sup> In these considerations, the question of how the actual research work was going to be carried out in practice remained unclear.

In 1886, when the issue of higher education was under discussion in the city council, the commission report written under Hedlund's chairmanship said only little more about the implementation of scholarly work. Research was at this time considered from the perspective of results and their usefulness rather than from the perspective of the actual scholarly work, which made it, if anything, a question of prestige, image and attractiveness. The report pointed to the more favourable conditions for scholarly work at the planned institution compared with the old universities, where scholars had a heavier burden of setting and marking examinations and awarding degrees. Because of the greater freedom enabling more intensive concentration on research, results were expected to be more outstanding. When it comes to the fields of research, the intention was to select either disciplines that could fulfil local needs or those bridging gaps left by other universities. To publicize the research results, a publication series was planned. This kind of outstanding research was believed to contribute to making Gothenburg an established educational centre and attracting notable scholars, who could benefit the city.<sup>194</sup>

#### 2.1.4. Promoting Free Higher Education in the Spirit of Outstanding Models

Free Academy has been characterized as a creation that in many respects would have been novel and original in Swedish cultural life.<sup>195</sup> At first sight it does indeed give an impression of having been an extraordinary idea in the context of the nineteenth-century educational life, far too modern to have had any prospects of implementation. But how original and exceptional was it ultimately?

Even though Hedlund did not refer to any models or sources of inspiration when he introduced the plan in 1864, he in all probability had some examples in mind. It is unlikely that a journalist and an active cultural force interested in educational issues would not have been aware of similar ideas raised in the Swedish Diet in the 1850s and early 1860s. Count Carl Henrik Anckarsvärd

192. *GHT*, 'Göteborgs fria Akademi' 24 May 1864.

193. *GHT*, 'Göteborgs fria Akademi' 15 November 1864 and 'Göteborg' d. 29 November' 29 November 1871.

194. *GSH 1886:53*, 6, 8–9.

195. Weibull C. 1976, 19.

had suggested then that an institution offering public scientific lectures should be established in Stockholm and, like Hedlund's Free Academy, this would also have been an institution for adult education. While the younger students would have continued their quest for knowledge there, the more mature individuals could have refreshed what they had learned earlier. Anckarsvärd referred to the *Collège de France* in Paris as his source of inspiration, portraying it as 'a kind of scientific academy or university, which did not, however, have faculties and students who should be examined and, even better, no degrees'. He nevertheless emphasized that in spite of these characteristics, the *Collège de France* was an educational institution in the highest sense of the term as its purpose was to enable scientific work, without the obligations of the professors of the conventional universities, and the diffusion of this scientific work.<sup>196</sup>

The *Collège de France* actually had a long history dating back to 1530. Apart from being an educational institution without regular students and without diplomas or degrees, it was a research centre with several professors representing varied disciplines. One of its fundamental principles was that the professorial chairs were not permanent, which is why the field of chairs could be changed to those in more topical disciplines if necessary. Since it was an institution not oriented towards degrees but to the diffusion of research results, its instruction was open to all interested parties.<sup>197</sup>

No such institution as Anckarsvärd suggested was established at that point but in 1862 the Diet allocated funding for arranging public lectures in Stockholm and a significant role in this process was played by Professor Magnus Huss, discussed in the previous chapter. In his argumentation in the Diet, Huss not only referred to the *Collège de France* as an exemplary model but also to *The Royal Institution* in London, which was another academy combining research with education based on science.<sup>198</sup> Founded in 1799, it offered scientists laboratories and other research facilities and served as a forum for informing the general public about science and new technologies. For the latter purpose it arranged lectures and demonstrations.<sup>199</sup>

When the public lectures in Stockholm started in 1863, they were regarded as a promising start to an institution that would follow these famous

196. Bedoire and Thullberg 1978, 16; Leander 1978, 118.

197. *Collège de France*, <https://www.college-de-france.fr/site/histoire-et-archeologie/histoire.htm>, accessed 1 February 2022; Clark 1995, 106.

198. Leander 1978, 122–126.

199. *The Royal Institution*, <https://www.rigb.org/our-history>, accessed 1 February 2022; Lindberg and Nilsson 1996a, 19.

foreign examples by avoiding degrees and diplomas.<sup>200</sup> Although Hedlund must have been aware of these lectures organized in Stockholm, he may have perceived them as merely a start as he recommended in the following year that an institution like Free Academy he had just outlined should be established in Stockholm as well. In Hedlund's opinion, this would be far more beneficial for the capital than relocating the entire University of Uppsala there.<sup>201</sup> Suggestions for transferring the university from the small town of Uppsala into the midst of the political, civic and cultural life of Stockholm, where it could serve larger circles of citizens, had been made from the 1820s and the idea survived into the early 1860s.<sup>202</sup>

The similarity between Free Academy and the ideas of the Danish educational thinker N. F. S. Grundtvig was actually Hedlund's only reference to other institutions before the 1880s. Yet Hedlund only observed the similarity in 1873, after the Norwegian poet Bjørnstjerne Björnson had visited Gothenburg and given lectures on Grundtvig. This had suggested in 1839, before Hedlund had even started his academic studies, that a new kind of university should be established to provide higher learning which did not aim at examinations and degrees and thus not at educating civil servants. Such a university should be a common enterprise of Denmark, Sweden and Norway and Grundtvig had later suggested that Gothenburg would be a suitable location for it. This was only natural because of its central location in the midst of these countries. Hedlund seems to have been genuinely surprised at the existence of an idea so close to his own: "The idea of "a free academy" being free from all compulsory examinations had already been launched by Grundtvig unbeknown to those who later started to advocate it."<sup>203</sup>

The coining of the name Free Academy (*Fri akademi*) was attributed to Viktor Rydberg, who obviously took it from the *Université Libre de Bruxelles* (the Free University of Brussels), but Hedlund did not mention this at all in 1864. The freedom of *Université Libre de Bruxelles* was mainly connected to independence from ecclesiastical and government control and funding and for this reason the historians of Gothenburg University have not regarded it

200. Tunberg 1957, 25.

201. GHT, 'Göteborgs fria Akademi' 24 May 1864.

202. Tunberg 1957, 14–24; Bedoire and Thullberg 1978, 13–14.

203. GHT, 'Hr Bjørnstjerne Björnsons tredje föreläsning' 31 January 1873 and 'Göteborg den 6 Februari' 6 February 1873; Lindberg and Nilsson 1996a, 19–20; Gellerman 1998, 13.

as a model for Free Academy.<sup>204</sup> However, such freedom seems not to have been totally excluded from Hedlund's sketch. First, since Free Academy would have been an enterprise promoting local interests and challenging the state universities, it is difficult to conceive that Hedlund would have welcomed strict government control even though state subsidies usually involved some. Second, the question of religion is interesting since theology was conspicuous by its absence in the planned curriculum of Free Academy and religious instruction was represented by religious science.<sup>205</sup> Although Hedlund did not emphasize it in any way in his newspaper articles and no such hint could be found in the surviving drafts for the academy, the absence of theology could still have been one aspect of freedom he advocated because Hedlund himself, his newspaper and friend Victor Rydberg were well-known of their liberal attitude towards religion. Hedlund's personal religious views were obviously close to Unitarianism, which emphasized the use of reason and rejected the doctrines of the Trinity and of Christ's divinity. What is more, Rydberg published in 1862 a book criticizing the Biblical doctrine of Christ.<sup>206</sup> Religious liberalism is actually a point of contact with the Gothenburg Workers' Institute.

While no sources of inspiration for Free Academy were mentioned in the 1860s, the commission preparing the organization of higher education in Gothenburg under the leadership of Hedlund in 1886 named three institutions it regarded as exemplary, two of which had been highlighted in the discussion on the Stockholm lectures.<sup>207</sup> Although the commission only mentioned these examples without describing them, it is clear which features had attracted Hedlund's attention. One of the exemplary institutions was the *Collège de France*, which did not have regular students, degrees or permanent professorships. The 1886 commission also referred to *The Royal Institution* in London as an example of an institution combining research with science education. The third institution, The Royal Swedish Academy for Science, established in 1739, was different from the two others because it was a scientific society. Also its mission was to promote natural sciences and disseminate research findings both within the scientific community and to the Swedish general

204. *GHT*, 'Göteborg' 27 December 1886 (contains the original article from 24 May 1864 introducing the idea of Free Academy; the information on the name was added to a footnote); Lindberg and Nilsson 1996a, 19.

205. On the curriculum, see the previous chapter.

206. Jansson 2021, 442–443; Sanner 1995, 63. Free Academy was only mentioned in a few of Rydberg's published letters, containing letters to Hedlund as well, and the question of religion did not appear. *Viktor Rydbergs brev I*, 1923, and II, 1925.

207. *GSH 1886:53*, 10.

public. Instead of instruction or lectures, its channel for diffusing research results consisted of publications.<sup>208</sup>

The developments in Stockholm were mentioned in the 1886 commission report, not as an example that should be followed but, quite the contrary, as something to be avoided. In accordance with the proposals of the 1850s and early 1860s, the local forces in Stockholm advocated the establishment of a higher education institution from the mid-1860s in the spirit of the *Collège de France* and *The Royal Institution*. However, the plans soon started to change towards a more conventional university, even if on a smaller scale, and Stockholm University College was founded in 1878. It started its activities in a modest way by arranging only public scientific lectures but the conditions of the municipal subsidy and the attempts to attract enough students led the university college to pursue the right to award degrees.<sup>209</sup> The Gothenburg commission did not envisage such an institution and also expressed the view that the attempts to develop Stockholm University College in the direction of a conventional university had not been successful.<sup>210</sup>

Grundtvig's vision of a Scandinavian university and Anckarsvärd's and Huss's references to the *Collège de France* and *The Royal Institution* prove the existence of ideas about academies combining free research and education open to non-traditional students and that these had already been under discussion in Denmark and Sweden before Hedlund embarked on his Free Academy plan. Moreover, measures had actually been taken to realize such ideas, at least in Stockholm. Neither was the openness of higher education a totally novel feature. As shown, the Swedish practices concerning university admissions had been fairly flexible before the mid-nineteenth century and, in addition, even more open admission had been advocated in the 1820s and 1830s on the grounds that universities were public institutions that should also serve citizens aiming at a career in industry or business.<sup>211</sup> Openness in the sense of reaching a wider audience was connected in some traditional universities abroad to the practice of offering public lectures. At French universities for instance, public lectures tailored to an audience consisting of local notables and their wives constituted an important part of the generally insignificant

208. In Swedish, *Kungliga vetenskapsakademien*. <https://www.kva.se/sv/om-oss/historik>, accessed 1 February 2022.

209. Bedoire and Thullberg 1978, 12, 16–24; Thunberg 1957, 221.

210. *GSH 1886:53*, 5–6.

211. Gierow 1971, 407–420. Similar demands for open entry had also been presented in Finland in the 1820s. Kaarninen M. and Kaarninen P. 2002, 41–43. Bell and Tight (1993, 28–29, 57–58, 75) give examples of nineteenth-century practices increasing the openness of some British universities.



teaching activities in the faculties of arts and sciences until the 1860s or even later.<sup>212</sup> In the neighbouring country, the University of Helsinki had offered public lectures to an educated bourgeois audience from the 1840s.<sup>213</sup>

Hedlund's elaborations were thus not the ideas of a solitary thinker, nor were they so outlandish.<sup>214</sup> When outlining Free Academy in 1864, he probably drew on general ideas pertaining to the freedom of higher education and research and on the famous examples of the *Collège de France* and *The Royal Institution*. His familiarity with foreign cultural institutions is also suggested by the fact that his inspiration for establishing Gothenburg Museum in 1861 came from the new *Victoria and Albert Museum* in London.<sup>215</sup> Yet it is not known how well he knew the activities of these free academies and it is possible that he was above all familiar with the principles on which they were founded since no details were mentioned in the 1886 commission report referring to them. These foreign examples were probably mentioned in that report because by that time competing plans for higher education had emerged and such famous examples manifesting free research and instruction were regarded as a useful support for Free Academy. Moreover, Hedlund and his associates were undeterred by the outward circumstances and sought inspiration from more grandiose institutions to be applied in an enterprise on a smaller scale. According to them, it was useless to slavishly imitate these models but lessons from their virtues and defects should be taken into consideration when establishing Free Academy.<sup>216</sup> Therefore, in the 1880s the reference group of Free Academy seems to have consisted of these famous institutions rather than of the educational clubs found closer to home.

212. Clark 1995, 92–94.

213. Klinge 1989, 698–700.

214. Lindberg and Nilsson (1996a, 30) have argued that the idea of Free Academy had been more eccentric and controversial when it was first introduced in 1860s than later since the Swedish universities were in the process of modernization. However, the openness of the universities had not increased. See Chapter 2.2.4.

215. Gellerman 1998, 188.

216. *GSH 1886:53*, 10–11.

## 2.2. Free Academy – an Unrealized Plan?

### 2.2.1. Popular Scientific Lectures from 1865 to 1891: a Pilot Project Implementing an Academy on a Modest Scale

#### HEDLUND'S PRAGMATIC APPROACH

The histories of Gothenburg University have presented Free Academy as one of the alternative plans for establishing an institution of higher education in the city, along with a conventional university and a school of economics, which emerged as competing proposals in the course of the 1870s and 1880s. In such a context, the plan for Free Academy has appeared somewhat unrealistic or utopian, based on an idealistic view of education that finally had to face reality and go unrealized when the decision to found Gothenburg University College was taken in 1887.<sup>217</sup> From the perspective of adult education, it is nevertheless justified to argue that Free Academy was more than a mere unrealized plan but was indeed put into practice, albeit only partly, in two different ways. Popular scientific lectures organized by bodies called the Lecture Committee (*Föreläsningstyrelsen*) and the Education Fund (*Undervisningsfonden*) from 1865 to 1891 can be considered the first and the public lectures provided by Gothenburg University College from its start in 1891 the second.<sup>218</sup>

The impression that Hedlund's plan was not feasible may also have been due to the fact that, during the two decades Free Academy figured in the discussion on higher education, the funding opportunities improved essentially and the plan itself became somewhat more ambitious.<sup>219</sup> Yet it is evident that in 1864 Hedlund did not envisage any grandiose academy but a modest institution to be founded in the near future with the help of existing establishments and local forces. According to him, 'these simple arrangements would form the basis of Free Academy' or, in other words, they 'were the modest beginnings for what we have taken the liberty of calling Gothenburg Free Academy'. These considerations, however, contained the idea of growth and expansion since Hedlund wrote that 'we wish that these are the seeds from

217. Lindberg and Nilsson 1996a, 13–26, 29–31; Weibull C. 1976, 26–33.

218. Weibull C. (1976, 17) characterized the lectures of the Education Fund as 'a small Free Academy'. Lindberg and Nilsson (1996a, 83) discussed some traces of the spirit of Free Academy within the university college but they only referred briefly to the connection between Hedlund's idea and the public lectures.

219. *GSH 1886:53*. Even though the proposed university college, as the academy was called in 1886, was to be a permanent institution, it still was an institution of modest dimensions. At first it was intended to employ three or four teachers on a permanent basis and a few lecturers on a temporary basis.

which the plant sprouts'.<sup>220</sup> In other words, Hedlund wanted to initiate a pilot project, which could be developed further in the course of time.

Hedlund's approach was pragmatic and his intention was to begin the building of Free Academy by expanding the popular scientific lectures already arranged by the Royal Society of Arts and Sciences.<sup>221</sup> This expansion was planned to take place by creating more established structures for the activity around two existing institutions, the above society and Gothenburg Museum, of which the latter with its collections and curators would have had a more central role. When Hedlund had planned the museum a few years earlier, his aim already then seems to have been to develop it into an institution organizing instruction as he had stressed that the collections would remain lifeless unless explained with the help of 'a living word'. The collections of the museum covered fields such as zoology, botany, geology, mineralogy, mechanics and technology, history, archaeology, ethnography, art and art history as well as pedagogy. To take care of these collections, the museum had employed a few curators, who were required to give lectures at the museum. These curators were supposed to constitute the nucleus of the Free Academy lecturers by giving longer lecture series. The Royal Society of Arts and Sciences would participate in the organization of the lectures and in lecturing through its members. The museum and the society would both take care of the administration of the lecturing activities.<sup>222</sup>

The down-to-earth nature of Hedlund's plan is also revealed by his estimation that lecture series could be started already the following academic year with the contribution of local competent teachers. Such teachers were obviously not academics in a strict sense but secondary school teachers, professionals, experts and writers. Neither did Hedlund propose the erection of a new building but assumed that existing premises could be utilized. The hall of the Gothenburg stock exchange was spacious enough for lectures aimed at a wider audience, whereas more specific instruction could be organized in the auditoria of the museum. The funding of Free Academy would at first be based on private donations and a state subsidy would be applied later for

220. *GHT*, 'Göteborgs fria Akademi' 24 May 1864 and 'Föreläsningar i Göteborg' 17 September 1864.

221. For the lectures, see Eriksson, Nils 1978, 313–316.

222. *GHT*, 'Göteborgs fria Akademi' 24 May 1864 and 'Föreläsningar i Göteborg' 17 September 1864. On the collections, see Eriksson, Nils 1978, 295. In addition to the Museum, an unsigned and undated draft for the statutes of Free Academy also mentions such local institutions as the Gothenburg Theatre, the Chalmers technical school and the commercial college as partners. RAG F IXa:2, 'Stadgar för Göteborgs Fria Akademi' (undated draft), probably by Hedlund. See footnote 175.

organizing lectures. Hedlund's confidence in private funding had in fact some grounds because of the local spirit of giving.<sup>223</sup> In this way, the question about the feasibility of the plan should be viewed from the perspective of the scale and ambitions. Swedish workers' institutes, for instance, started to spread in the 1880s, organizing evening courses in rented premises and usually with no other permanent staff than the director.

These practical proposals for reorganizing the local popular scientific lectures led to a more established activity in two stages.<sup>224</sup> At first a special new body, the Lecture Committee, was founded in 1864 with the sole purpose of organizing these lectures whereas this had earlier been a part of the activities of the scientific society. Hedlund became the secretary of this committee.<sup>225</sup> Instruction started in 1865 and the new arrangement brought more stability to the lectures, the number of which had been decreasing after an upsurge at the turn of the 1860s. The nature of this activity also changed as the earlier single lectures were replaced by series consisting of interrelated topics. Between 1865 and 1874, an average of five lecture series consisting of between two to eight lectures was arranged annually. Like the topics of the single lectures arranged before 1865 by The Royal Society for Arts and Letters, those of the new lecture series ranged from natural sciences to humanities, with a preponderance of the latter.<sup>226</sup> Apart from these popular scientific lectures aimed at a wider audience, more specialized lecture series started at the museum in 1866. These were deemed university-level lectures and were evidently planned to be more demanding than the other lectures. For the most part, these special lectures were given by the museum curators.<sup>227</sup>

The second step towards more established forms of popular scientific lecturing was taken in 1869. The first stage had produced a firmer organizational form and the expansion of the activities whereas the second stage meant increased economic stability. The Lecture Committee had also received some subsidies from the municipality but at this point funding came to be organized through a special fund based on the bequest of a wealthy merchant Sven Rehnström and controlled by the municipality. When the use of the bequest had been discussed in the city council, the advocates of popular scientific

223. *GHT*, 'Göteborgs fria Akademi' 24 May 1864. An entrance fee was planned to the more specialized lectures. 'Föreläsningar i Göteborg' 17 September 1864.

224. Weibull C. 1976, 19.

225. *GHT*, 'Föreläsningar i Göteborg' 17 September 1864; Eriksson, Nils 1978, 317–318, 325; Hedlund 1929, 416.

226. Eriksson, Nils 1978, 320, 322–324 (list of lectures 1842–1874).

227. Eriksson, Nils 1978, 351–352.

lectures had stressed that such funding would make it easier to attract young distinguished scholars to the city to give lectures. The possibility of promoting the establishment of a higher education institution like Free Academy was also mentioned. As a result, the city council founded the Education Fund to promote lecturing and other aims related to higher education, with Hedlund becoming a board member, and in 1876 this new body took over the activities of the Lecture Committee.<sup>228</sup>

These developments reveal in an interesting way the role of the municipality in organizing popular scientific lectures. Funding did not come from taxpayers but from a private donation at the disposal of the city council although, in reality, it had a major influence over the use of such donations as it directed and controlled them. The active role of local government in promoting higher education was not unique to Gothenburg. In Stockholm, too, it was the municipality which in the 1860s started to promote a higher education institution in the spirit of the free academies by organizing fundraising for the purpose.<sup>229</sup>

#### **A SAMPLE OF ACADEMIC LEARNING FOR BOURGEOIS WOMEN AND MEN**

Between 1865 and 1874, when the Lecture Committee organized the activities, at least one third of the lecturers seem to have been professors or university lecturers (*docent*). Some of them were fairly celebrated personalities like Frithiof Holmgren, the pioneer of medical physiological research in Sweden and the first professor of that discipline, or the botanist Nils Johan Andersson, allegedly the first Swedish proponent of Darwinism. At the same time, some of the lecturers were writers, poets and secondary school teachers and, for example, the Norwegian poet Björnsterne Björnson and the Swedish poet and writer O. P. Sturzen-Becker were among the speakers.<sup>230</sup>

Due to the reorganization of the 1870s, the popular scientific lectures organized by the Education Fund became more regular in nature as the lecturers could be contracted for longer periods on fixed salaries although these appointments still were part-time. The first lecturer to be employed was Viktor Rydberg, who taught philosophy and cultural history for five years, delivering at least six lecture series. Even though the appointment was part-time, it still seems to have enabled Rydberg to relinquish his career as a journalist in *Handelstidningen* and to dedicate himself to creative writing.

228. *GSH 1886:53*, 15–16; Sylwan 1916, 4–5; Weibull C. 1976, 16–17.

229. Bedoire and Thullberg 1978, 16–17.

230. Eriksson, Nils 1978, 322–324, 343–345.

Yet it is difficult to assess whether the instruction after the reorganization had a firmer scientific foundation than before although the proportion of academics as lecturers seems to have increased. From 1876 until the opening of the university college in 1891, altogether 20 scholars and other experts gave lectures. Of those ten lecturers appointed during the period 1876–1885, two were professors, four university lecturers and four doctors. Rydberg was actually a doctor *honoris causa* because he had never completed his academic studies begun at the University of Lund.<sup>231</sup>

As to topics, the lectures organized by the Education Fund continued the trend to the more systematic series. About two thirds of the topics were in the humanities and the rest mainly in the natural sciences, technology and economics. The humanities courses during this period provided general education, either by introducing broader perspectives or special questions. Whereas the more general topics typically included lectures on cultural history, nineteenth-century history and the history of German as well as Swedish literature, more specialized lectures introduced certain writers, historical figures or subjects like ‘Anthropology and moral philosophy’. The economics courses covered topics such as the rudiments of economics and the system of banknotes. Lectures on technology were essentially practical in nature, addressing issues like electricity, acoustics and the central heating and ventilation of apartments.<sup>232</sup>

The more regular and systematic nature of the popular scientific lectures was also shown in their arrangement. Lectures had previously been organized whenever the teachers had been available but after 1876 there were two periods reminiscent of semesters from the beginning of October until mid-December and from the beginning of February until the end of May. At least two series were usually delivered concurrently. Lectures were referred to as ‘courses’ and these courses comprised from one to two hours weekly. The lectures were usually repeated: as they were first given in the afternoon, the repetition was offered later in the evening.<sup>233</sup>

Little is known about the attendees, either before or after the activities of the Education Fund began in 1876. Their numbers, however, seem at times to have been surprisingly high. Before the mid-1870s, audiences at popular scientific lectures might easily rise to 300 people and even some of the more

231. *GSH 1886:53*, 16–17 (list of lectures); Sylwan 1916, 5; Weibull C. 1976, 17; *Svenske biografiske handlexikon* II (1906), 394–395, <http://runeberg.org/sbh/b0394.html>, accessed 1 February 2022; *Viktor Rydbergs brev* II 1925, 153, 198, 201.

232. *GSH 1886:53*, 16–18 (lists of lectures and numbers of participants).

233. *GSH 1886:53*, 5, 16–18; Eriksson, Nils 1978, 319; Weibull C. 1976, 17.

specialized lecture series held at the museum might attract one hundred listeners.<sup>234</sup> More precise information is available about the lectures arranged in the 1880s and these figures show that attendance at these lectures was steady, with an annual total of some five hundred regular listeners (Table 1). There was obviously some overlap as some people may have attended more than one lecture series at the same time and, therefore, the actual number of individuals involved was probably somewhat smaller. However, the presence of numerous occasional visitors not recorded in the statistics probably balanced this. In 1882 and 1884, for example, each lecturer had approximately one hundred listeners on average but since all the series in the latter year were offered both in daytime and in the evenings, the average attendance per occasion was half of that.<sup>235</sup>

**Table 1. Popular scientific lectures organized by the Education Fund in Gothenburg in 1882, 1884 and 1885.**

	Lecture series	Attendees	Average of attendees per lecture series
1882	5	512	102
1884	5	561	112
1885	7	477	68

Source: GSH 1886:53, 18.

There is only second-hand information as to what kind of people the listeners actually were. As noted earlier, the audience consisted almost entirely of wealthier townspeople.<sup>236</sup> This is supported by the fact that an admission fee was charged and in 1865 it was four *riksdaler* for a series of six lectures and remained on that level during the following years. Such a sum was probably a prohibitive cost for an industrial worker, whose daily pay around 1870 was less than half of that.<sup>237</sup>

However, an article on the lectures offered at Gothenburg Museum in 1869 painted a different picture of the audience, namely of people unable to afford even membership of the workers' association or with hardly suitable clothing in which to appear. Servants, shop assistants and young factory

234. Weibull C. 1976, 17; Eriksson, Nils 1978, 322, 352.

235. GSH 1886:53, 18.

236. See Chapter 2.1.2.; GSH 1883:46, 1.

237. In 1870, the daily pay for an industrial worker was 1.50 *riksdaler*. Lagerqvist and Nathorst-Böös 1984, 98.

workers were mentioned as examples of those have-nots who scraped together the cost of participating. Yet it is likely such a description was exaggerated or referred to exceptional occasions, when the topics of lectures were more attractive than usual, such as the zoological lectures utilizing the natural historic collections of the museum.<sup>238</sup> Furthermore, emphasizing the participation of working people could have been related to local policy-making as the debate on the use of the Rehnström bequest was going on, including the popular scientific lectures as one of the proposed beneficiaries.<sup>239</sup> Lectures competed with such purposes as market halls and public bath houses, which were considered important in promoting the hygiene and living conditions of the poor.<sup>240</sup>

In the history of adult education, activities directed especially at workers have often failed to attract the intended target group and drawn middle-class people instead.<sup>241</sup> Therefore, joining an audience in principle supposed to consist largely of the bourgeois inhabitants of the city must have been even more difficult for workers than attending classes aimed at them. Apart from admission fees, scanty earlier education was a factor that did not encourage to participate. Although listening to lectures did not require advanced skills in reading and writing, the topics introduced were probably alien to working people, whose learning had been acquired through confirmation classes or, at best, elementary schools dominated by religious instruction.<sup>242</sup> There were also other kinds of barriers. Even if not always clearly expressed, they were still self-evident to contemporaries, arising out of the sharp distinction between social classes. In addition to clothing mentioned in *Handelstidningen*, this distinction was also manifested in such external features as manners, way of speaking and personal hygiene.<sup>243</sup> Thus, even though the popular scientific lectures were in principle open to all, it seems unlikely that they could have attracted large numbers of workers. This is also born out by the fact that a separate workers' institute was deemed necessary at the beginning of the 1880s.

Even though no exact information is available about the backgrounds of the attendees, the proportion of women was nevertheless noted in the contemporary reports. This was obviously related to the popularity of the

238. For the lectures, Eriksson, Nils 1978, 322–324 and on the audience, *ibid.*, 353.

239. On the bequest, see Weibull C. 1976, 16–17.

240. *GHT*, 'Göteborg d. 29 November' 29 November 1871.

241. Cf. e.g. Fieldhouse 1998, 38–39.

242. Eriksson, Nils 1978, 353; Sörensen 1942, 126–134, 360–380; Richardson 1963, 251–252.

243. Frykman and Löfgren 1990, 216–220, 247–248, 269–270.



daytime lectures, which sometimes attracted even more listeners than the evening repetitions—women of the bourgeoisie had the opportunity to attend lectures in the afternoons as well.<sup>244</sup> Although women achieved the right to university studies at the beginning of the 1870s, the numbers of female students in Uppsala and Lund increased slowly.<sup>245</sup> Thus popular scientific lectures presumably offered young women of Gothenburg glimpses of higher education in a more accessible form than actual university studies in another town. Moreover, these lectures provided a common educational setting for women and men in a time when secondary schooling was segregated according to gender. Parallels with such higher adult education enabling women's participation can also be found in Finland at that time. In the 1870s, so-called women's academies functioned for a short period both in Helsinki and Turku<sup>246</sup>. These two enterprises were much alike and were actually planned to enable more systematic studies comprising a two-year course. Six lectures were provided weekly but the young students were not obliged to attend all of them so that they could have enough time for their duties at home. Both of these Finnish academies offered subjects from the humanities to the natural sciences, including hygiene.<sup>247</sup>

Consequently, the popular scientific lectures in Gothenburg were significant not only because they paved the way for the later Gothenburg University College by serving as proof of the interest in higher learning and by contributing to the discussion concerning it but also formed an important practice of adult education of the time.<sup>248</sup> They obviously inspired the local educational and cultural life as they introduced scientific issues and cultural topics to people whose daily tasks were non-academic. The popular scientific lectures also functioned as an information channel diffusing knowledge in a more convenient and accessible form than scholarly books and the role of lectures and the spoken word in general was important in disseminating cultural impulses. Thus the large audiences which the lectures attracted were perhaps not so surprising at a time when there was no mass media other than the press. Still, the press had a significant role in diffusing the ideas and information presented in the lectures. The Gothenburg newspapers reported keenly about

244. *GSH 1886:53*, 5.

245. Weibull J. 1968, 86–88.

246. In Swedish, Åbo.

247. *Wilkama 1938*, 212–218.

248. Of the historiographers of the Gothenburg University College, Sylwan and Weibull have referred to the importance of these lectures. Sylwan, 1916, 6; Weibull C. 1976, 14–17.

these occasions and frequently published accounts of the contents of the lectures.<sup>249</sup>

Given Hedlund's ideals and the nature of popular scientific lecturing, it was natural that the resources such educational activities could create for participants were not degrees or diplomas. However, popular scientific lectures could both familiarize the audience with the rudiments of various sciences and introduce new theories, approaches and findings. In a modernizing society, such lectures could certainly offer knowledge that not even educated people had had access to when at school since new disciplines were being established, science and research became more specialized and technology developed rapidly. Not all the lecturers were scientists or scholars but there were also intellectuals such as writers and poets, who could widen the perspectives on topical cultural phenomena. Moreover, it was not only knowledge and cultural stimulus that people were looking for. The lectures were evidently social events gathering members of the educated bourgeoisie for socializing as well, which could have been important in creating and maintaining social ties. The role of lecturers as performers may also have been important in the nineteenth century cultural milieu. Inspiring lecturers could capture the attention of the audience and provide an entertaining experience along with information, as Viktor Rydberg reported about a lecture given by the physiology professor Fritiof Holmgren in 1867.<sup>250</sup>

Bearing in mind that Hedlund had outlined in 1864 a picture of an adult education institution offering instruction on a scientific basis and not a picture of a conventional university, it is evident that some of these ideas had been realized on a modest scale. The activities organized by the Education Fund have later actually been characterized as 'a small Free Academy'.<sup>251</sup> The commission report of 1886 portrays this kind of development by emphasizing that institutions should be allowed to grow organically from modest beginnings instead of trying to establish them instantly as ready-made.<sup>252</sup> However, this pilot project consisting of popular scientific lectures did not develop towards the more ambitious Free Academy with professors and research activities which Hedlund had envisaged as his ultimate goal.

249. Eriksson, Nils 1978, 316, 322, 386–387.

250. *Viktor Rydbergs brev I* 1923, 93–94.

251. Weibull C. 1976, 17.

252. *GSH 1886:53*, 13.

## 2.2.2. Public Lectures as a Statutory Obligation of Gothenburg University College

Paradoxically, the second outcome of the Free Academy proposal can be found within Gothenburg University College, opened in 1891, although it became a conventional university with full-time students instead of an institution focusing on adult education.

From the 1860s to the 1880s, Hedlund found supporters for his Free Academy plan among the eminent local residents but his views were also challenged.<sup>253</sup> Doubts fell in particular on the idea of part-time students studying for its own sake. The criticism started as early as in 1871, when Sigfrid Wieselgren, later the driving force behind the establishment of the university college, suggested that a conventional university should be established in Gothenburg. According to him, Free Academy would not attract young people in sufficient numbers because there were only a few people in Sweden who could dedicate themselves to studies for their own sake and did not have to care about degrees and future earnings. Therefore, it was not at the general public but at the young people preparing for their future careers at whom higher education in Gothenburg should be targeted. For those men already in working life, studies at an institution like Free Academy would always form a secondary activity, possible only in their leisure time and thus the number of such men could never be very high. About young women Wieselgren did not want to say anything ‘under the prevailing social conditions’, evidently referring to the fact that women’s right to academic studies was at that time under debate.<sup>254</sup>

The issue of higher education became topical in local government in the mid-1880s, when it received considerable economic resources to be used for the purpose, consisting of two bequests by wealthy merchants. A commission was set up with Hedlund as its chairman and it submitted a report in 1886 to the city council, proposing an institution mainly along the lines of Hedlund’s old plan. In this way, Hedlund finally had the opportunity to develop his idea of Free Academy and the existing lecturing activities on a larger scale. Interestingly, Hedlund’s supporters at this point included councillors Julius Lindström and August Wijkander, who had also been involved in the establishment of the Gothenburg Workers’ Institute three years earlier.<sup>255</sup> The report sparked a debate, where competing ideas emerged and the city council set up a new

253. Weibull C. 1976, 23–25, Lindberg and Nilsson 1996a, 21.

254. *GHT*, ‘Hvad vilje vi?’ by S-d W 28 November 1871.

255. See Chapter 3.2.6.

commission to reconsider the question. However, this new commission could not reach agreement on which of the two alternatives to adopt, Free Academy and a school of economics. The driving force behind the project opposing the educational ideals of Free Academy was the editor-in-chief of another local newspaper, *Göteborgs-Posten*, who attacked the idea of studies conducted for their own sake and not leading towards degrees. According to him, such studies would only attract women and this would not benefit society because of their limited sphere of action.<sup>256</sup>

However, neither Free Academy nor a school of economics was established since a new donation, made on condition that it should be used to create a traditional university, decided the competition. Sigfrid Wieselgren played a part in the process in which one of the local industrialists agreed to support this alternative. The institution of higher education the city council founded in 1887 was initially a small academy consisting of one faculty only because the proponents of this plan understood that a university with several faculties was out of question even after this donation.<sup>257</sup>

Hedlund, who for more than two decades had campaigned for Free Academy, accepted the turn and started to advocate the new university college. For him the outcome was better than no higher education institution at all and he thought that the new university college did not necessarily have to exclude students with aims other than examinations and degrees. He even admitted that he might have overestimated the interest in studying for its own sake and thus overestimated the chances of building an educational institution on these grounds only.<sup>258</sup> Moreover, in the 1880s the idea of Free Academy itself had undergone changes that were no doubt intended to make it more acceptable to the Gothenburg decision-makers. The principal target group of the 1864 proposals, men engaged in practical occupations and young women and men excluded from higher education, received in the 1886 commission report only minor attention whereas the teachers and more advanced students of the other local educational institutions were considered the most important potential students. Hedlund's earlier faith in the thirst for knowledge as a motivation for studying had been questioned and more goal-oriented suggestions had gained ground. Similarly, the subjects included in the curriculum were meant to meet the needs of the other educational institutions. These shifts had to do with the

256. *GSH 1886:53; GSH 1887:68*; Sylwan 1916, 10–13; Weibull C. 1976, 18–27; Lindberg and Nilsson 1996a, 20–26.

257. Sylwan 1916, 14–25; Weibull C. 1976, 33–40; Lindberg and Nilsson 1996a, 22–26.

258. *GHT*, 'Göteborgs Högskola' 11 November 1887; Lindberg and Nilsson 1996a, 26.

fact that the significance of formal qualifications was recognized and degrees and examinations were no longer regarded as an evil but as a pragmatic issue, which could be implemented at some point in the future.<sup>259</sup>

Instead of open admission, which had been fundamental to the Free Academy idea, admission to Gothenburg University College required that the *studentexamen* had been passed. Nevertheless, at the end of 1888, when the statutes of the new university college were discussed, Hedlund still tried to retain open admission. He accepted the principle that the *studentexamen* should be a prerequisite for achieving an academic degree, but that it need not necessarily be an entrance requirement, since those who needed it for a degree could pass it later. In this way, people who only wanted to attend single courses would not have been excluded because of lacking the *studentexamen*. Hedlund did not succeed in his attempt to retain open admission; it was nonetheless stipulated in the statutes that exceptions to the admission criteria could be made regarding formal qualifications.<sup>260</sup>

Studies at Gothenburg University College were also organized in a traditional way, considering the demands of young students and their careers. The university college initially only consisted of the humanities section of the philosophical faculty. The philosophical faculty might also have included natural sciences, but the humanities were preferred because teaching and research in these subjects was cheaper to organize and, moreover, the humanities were believed to attract larger numbers of students. Right from the beginning, the university college also requested the right to award degrees, which it received in 1893 and the first students graduated the following year. Before that, those wanting to receive certificates from their studies had travelled to the universities of Uppsala or Lund to be examined there. Thus Gothenburg University College developed into an institution providing education conferring competence on future teachers and civil servants and other professionals. With regard to professors, the chairs were eventually made permanent although this provoked a debate when the statutes were formulated. As a compromise with the former proponents of Free Academy, the appointments were initially made for five-year terms but soon this practice was abandoned because permanent chairs providing more security were believed to attract able teachers to the new institution.<sup>261</sup>

259. *GSH 1886:53*, 4–7, 10; *GHT*, ‘Göteborgs Högskola’ 11 November 1887; Lindberg and Nilsson 1996a, 20–21.

260. *GHT*, ‘Göteborg’ 21 December 1888; Weibull C. 1976, 41.

261. Weibull C. 1976, 41–42; Lindberg and Nilsson 1996a, 26–29, 38.

Regardless of these developments, fragments of the spirit that had inspired Free Academy actually survived and were incorporated into the routines of the university college. Public lectures probably constituted the most visible and immediately discernible trace, becoming a statutory part of the activities right from the start in 1891 and organized until 1954, when the university college became a state university.<sup>262</sup> These lectures formed not only an outward-looking activity intended for the educated general public but an integral part of the mission of the university college since they were also targeted at formally enrolled students. Neither were they any extra or voluntary teaching but were included in the workloads of the academic staff.<sup>263</sup> Yet the process of incorporating the public lectures into the new institution transferred the original idea of higher adult education to a radically different context. Even though the public lectures gained official status, they only formed a part of the educational activities of the university college.

With the traditional university college duly founded, it was not self-evident that the public lectures would enjoy official status among its activities. Yet there were at least two factors that contributed to the developments, both of them revealing how strong a role the notion of Free Academy had played in the local discussion and practices concerning higher education. First, those forces that had advocated Free Academy were still involved in the process of planning the new institution. Even if its funding was based on private donations, the city council nevertheless controlled the funds and had a role both in accepting the statutes and in appointing a part of the board members.<sup>264</sup> As a councillor, Hedlund could still influence the planning process and together with a few of his old supporters he also became a member of the commission preparing the establishment of the future university college. This commission suggested that, in addition to other academic teaching, professors should also be required to give public lectures.<sup>265</sup> Moreover, after the city council had in November 1887 decided to establish a university-like institution, Hedlund had still made one more attempt in *Handelstidningen* to influence public opinion by raising the question of the role of the general public in the university college. Even

262. Some disciplines included in the curriculum during the following decades have also been interpreted as expressions of the spirit of Free Academy. Sociology, economics, ethnology, geography, oceanography, botany and Chinese and Japanese language and culture represented either new fields of study or local interests. Chinese and Japanese were considered important for the local commercial relations. Lindberg and Nilsson 1996a, 81, 56–57, 249.

263. Weibull C. 1976, 43.

264. Weibull C. 1976, 40; Lindberg and Nilsson 1996a, 28.

265. Sylwan 1916, 21–22.

though he admitted that the purpose of the university college was to produce competences and award degrees, he emphasized that it could also benefit those aiming at practically oriented work or already engaged in such occupations.<sup>266</sup>

The obligation of the professors to give public lectures alongside other teaching also came to be included in the statutes in 1889.<sup>267</sup> When the outlines of the educational practices were drafted, public lectures became one of the three forms, the two others being private lectures and tutorials. The notion of private lectures (*enskilda föreläsningar*) was somewhat ambiguous; these must be understood as distinct from public lectures (*offentliga föreläsningar*). The latter notion had already been used by the Royal Society of Arts and Sciences and by the Education Fund with reference to the lectures they had offered the general public.<sup>268</sup> In a draft for the first regulations of the university college, public lectures likewise referred to more popular and open lectures whereas private lectures referred to the instruction given to enrolled students only and a compulsory part of a degree. Private lectures should be more scientific in nature and critical in their approach while public lectures could be more general and serve as impetus for further scientific studies by presenting the latest results in a certain field. It seems that the idea was to organize public lectures systematically by introducing the main branches of a discipline within the limit of a few years.<sup>269</sup> Ignoring the aspect of exclusivity inherent in private lectures, the distinction between public and private lectures seems to have been quite similar to that between popular and more specialized teaching already found in the Free Academy plan.

The part concerning the public lectures was principally approved in the suggested form in the regulations of 1891.<sup>270</sup> In this process again, the influence of the former proponents of Free Academy was obvious. Twenty-five years later one of them, Karl Warburg, a literary historian and professor at the university college, considered the incorporation of the public lectures into the university college to have been a concession to the proponents of Free Academy.<sup>271</sup>

The second factor contributing to the inclusion of the public lectures was the fate of the Education Fund. Already in 1886, before the issue of higher

266. GHT, 'Göteborg' 11 November 1887.

267. RAG, GH F IXa:2, 'Statuter för Göteborgs högskola', Bihag till *Svensk författningssamling* no. 35 1889, item 19.

268. Eriksson, Nils 1978, 313ff; *GSH 1886:53*, 4, 16.

269. RAG, GH F IXa:3, 'Förslag till Ordningsstadga för Göteborgs Högskola', items 16–18.

270. RAG, GH F I:1, 'Ordningsstadga för Göteborgs Högskola 1891', item 14.

271. Warburg 1916.

education turned in the direction of a conventional university, the board of the Education Fund had decided that its assets could be incorporated into the new higher education institution. There was, however, the prerequisite that the popular scientific lectures should continue, which had also been the proposal of the 1886 commission advocating Free Academy. At that point, when the public lectures were planned to form an equally important part of education as the more specialized instruction, this was a natural conclusion since the Education Fund and its activities seemed to become superfluous in the future.<sup>272</sup> After the decision to found a university-like institution, surrendering the funds was perhaps considered a guarantee of the continuation of public lecturing in the spirit of Free Academy. Thus the Lecture Fund provided a kind of judicial ground for the public lectures by obliging the university college to respect its heritage. This incorporation also offered some economic resources, which could not, however, be compared with the notable bequests and donations made by local businessmen directly to the university college.<sup>273</sup>

### 2.2.3. Public Lectures as University Extension and Instruction for Formally Enrolled Students

A third factor obviously made it easier to incorporate the public lectures into the activities of Gothenburg University College. This was their dual function as they at the same time formed the extramural activities of the university college and were on the curriculum of enrolled students.<sup>274</sup>

However, the regulations of 1891 suggested that the public lectures were primarily intended to form a part of the education of enrolled students and, only to a lesser degree, an adult education activity. For example, attending public lectures was described as compulsory for enrolled students, along with attending the private lecture courses and tutorials. In addition, public lectures were defined to be open to all students of the university college and, ‘circumstances permitting’, to those who were not enrolled as students.<sup>275</sup> ‘Circumstances’ must have referred to the size of the lecture halls as they did in later

272. *GSH 1886:77; GSH 1886:53, 2, 6.*

273. *GSH 1886:53, 2.* For the donations, see Vising 1907, 3–4 and Lindberg and Nilsson 1996a, 23, 27.

274. RAG, GH F I:1, ‘Ordningsstadga för Göteborgs Högskola 1891’, items 9 and 14; ‘Ordningsstadga för Göteborgs Högskola 1910’, item 12; ‘Statuter och ordningsstadga för Göteborgs Högskola 1930’, item 14; ‘Statuter och ordningsstadga för Göteborgs Högskola 1944’, item 14. Lindberg and Nilsson (1996a, 81–88) have ignored the role of public lectures in the education of ordinary students.

275. RAG, GH F I:1, ‘Ordningsstadga för Göteborgs Högskola 1891’, items 9 and 14.



regulations. These later regulations nevertheless paid more attention to the general public by stressing that public lectures should be given in a form accessible to a general educated audience although enrolled students seem still to have constituted the primary target group as they were prioritized with regard to entry.<sup>276</sup>

How large a proportion the formally enrolled students finally made up among the audiences at the public lectures is a question that is practically impossible to solve. The information about the participants consists of enrolment lists, mere names, and it is not clear whether these also included formally enrolled students.<sup>277</sup> Yet there is no doubt that the public lectures were significant as an extramural activity, suggested, for instance, by the characterizations by staff members. The teachers of the university college found in 1899 a new frame of reference for the public lectures when they portrayed these as equivalent to university extension, referring to the practices of offering academic teaching those who were not enrolled students. In Britain, the university extension movement had started in the 1870s and was known elsewhere. The staff conceived this idea when the university college hosted a meeting of Nordic university teachers and some universities had announced in advance that they would present reports on their extension activities. This prompted the teachers of Gothenburg University College to compile a booklet about extramural activities, containing both the public lectures organized at the university college and those lectures the staff members had given elsewhere.<sup>278</sup>

In 1907, Johan Vising, rector of the university college, also compared the public lectures to the better-known phenomenon by characterizing them as 'a kind of permanent university extension'. Vising stressed that the university college had maintained lively contact with the surrounding community and that the lectures given in a popular form constituted a way to maintain this contact with the general public.<sup>279</sup> In 1916, when the university college celebrated its twenty-fifth anniversary, Vising's portrayal of the public lectures

276. RAG, GH FI:1, 'Ordningsstadga för Göteborgs Högskola 1910', items 12.1. and 12.3.; 'Statuter och ordningsstadga för Göteborgs Högskola 1930', items 14.1. and 14.4.; 'Statuter och ordningsstadga för Göteborgs Högskola 1944', items 14.1 and 14.4.

277. RAG, GH F IIIc, 'De offentliga föreläsningarna: Anteckningslistor'. The regulations of 1891 suggest that registered students also had to sign up for public lectures. RAG, GH F I:1, 'Ordningsstadga för Göteborgs Högskola 1891', item 14.

278. Cederschiöld 1899, 3–6.

279. Vising 1907, 3–4. In the first history of Gothenburg University College, public lectures were characterized as an activity attracting townspeople. Sylwan 1916, 57.

as university extension was repeated and this was also connected to the idea of Free Academy.<sup>280</sup>

In addition to such characterizations, the statistics show that the public lectures must have had an important role as an extramural activity since the numbers of participants were fairly impressive, particularly when compared to those of formally enrolled students. Gothenburg University College started in 1891 with 22 enrolled students only and it was not until 1906 that their number for the first time exceeded one hundred. Throughout the years until 1954, when it became a state university, the number of enrolled students was modest, exceeding 500 only at the end of the 1930s and reaching 945 in its last year of operation.<sup>281</sup> Thus Gothenburg University College was a small academy in a growing city, where its regular activities and students did not form such a distinguishable part of the local social and cultural life as was the case with the larger universities in the small towns of Uppsala and Lund.<sup>282</sup>

The public lectures, instead, seem to have been a more visible part of the academic activities in the sense that they attracted considerable numbers of Gothenburg residents year after year (Table 2). During the first academic year 1891–1892, attendance reached some 1,400 in the autumn term and 1,000 in the spring term, which means that the average attendance at the two lecture courses in autumn was 700 and that among the six courses in spring it was 170.<sup>283</sup> Interest in the lectures continued and between 1891 and 1907 the average attendance per term was approximately one thousand.<sup>284</sup> However, these figures do not reveal the actual number of people attending the lectures but probably the total numbers of those registered on different courses without taking into account those who attended more than one course.

As far as the wider audience attending the public lectures is concerned, there is no exact information about its composition. The lists of attendees, which extend to 1935, include no background information such as individuals' occupations. On the basis of contemporary documents it is nevertheless quite safe to conclude that the attendees belonged to the bourgeoisie. First, the regulations of the institution specified an educated public as the target group. Second, the booklet on the extramural activities differentiated lectures to the

280. Warburg 1916.

281. Lindberg and Nilsson 1996a, 81–82; RAG, GH B II:1, *Årsredogörelse 1891–1892*, 25; B II:3, *Årsberättelse 1938–1939*, 49; B II:4 *Årsberättelse 1953–54*, 76.

282. Lindberg and Nilsson 1996a, 248.

283. RAG, GH B II:1, *Årsredogörelse 1891–1892*, 25. The municipal statistics (*Göteborgs statistik 1900*, Table 157) has different figures: 701 for the autumn term and 603 for the spring term.

284. Calculated on the basis of numbers given in Vising 1907, 49.

educated public from those delivered to workers, for instance at the workers' institute, and equated the public lectures held at the university college with the first group.<sup>285</sup> Although there is no specific information about participants, one group in particular has been highlighted, that of elementary school teachers.<sup>286</sup> Historians familiar with local figures have also recognized a wide range of middle-class residents of Gothenburg in the lists: in addition to various kinds of teachers, there were housewives, academically educated professionals and professors. Members of the local elite involved in the university college, either as board members or donators, also appeared occasionally among the audience.<sup>287</sup>

The audience naturally changed during the period of more than a half century when public lectures were delivered but it seems that, at least during the first decades, it was limited to the upper strata of the city. Furthermore, by the time the public lectures at the university college started, Gothenburg Workers' Institute had, at least to some extent, established itself in the locality as a provider of workers' education.<sup>288</sup> Even though social mixing was not the aim of the academics organizing the public lectures in Gothenburg, there were others who considered it an important aspect of academically oriented adult education. In 1892, Professor Harald Hjärne of Uppsala emphasized the role of university adult education in offering a meeting place for people from different social backgrounds. According to him, such contact created by common intellectual interests could also foster unity and togetherness in those questions that otherwise divided people.<sup>289</sup> Although the public lectures at Gothenburg University College could obviously not contribute to increasing contact between workers and people belonging to upper classes, they nevertheless enabled encounters between different strata of the latter group. Moreover, the public lectures brought this wider audience and enrolled students into the same lecture halls.

What role did the public lectures have in the education of enrolled students, on the one hand, and for the general public, on the other? It seems that from the perspective of enrolled students, the public lectures increased the choice of courses available, especially during the first decades. They offered alternatives, which nonetheless did not essentially differ from the 'private lectures' intended

285. RAG, GH F IIIc, 'De offentliga föreläsningarna: Anteckningslistor'; F I:1, 'Ordningsstadga för Göteborgs Högskola 1910', item 12; 'Statuter och ordningsstadga för Göteborgs Högskola 1930', item 14; Lindberg and Nilsson 1996a, 83; Cederschiöld 1899, 7–10, 12.

286. Warburg 1916.

287. Lindberg and Nilsson 1996a, 83.

288. See Chapter 3.

289. *SOU 1924:5*, 140–141.

for enrolled students only. Because the curriculum of Gothenburg University College was initially basically humanistic, it was evidently easier to cater for the enrolled students and the general public at the same time. The topics of the public lectures were often related to history, literature, cultural history, art history, psychology and philosophy. In addition to these, geography and political science also figured in titles. From the perspective of the general public, such disciplines were audience-friendly and lecturers could expect an educated public to be familiar at least with the basic outlines or certain core concepts. Lectures given within the university college and by its staff offered participants a glimpse into the academic world. As the public lectures were usually organized in the form of special courses focusing on specific topics, both groups of students could benefit from receiving new information.<sup>290</sup> Moreover, since the public lectures were given in different disciplines in turn, this obviously gave both groups an opportunity to improve their general knowledge.

The significance of the public lectures nevertheless altered in the course of time as their nature underwent changes and the overall provision of courses for enrolled students increased. The proportion of the public lectures on all courses, calculated on the basis of course titles remained fairly constant: from the 1890s to the 1950s, the public lectures made up about ten per cent of all courses (Table 2). The major transformation took place in the duration of public lecture series. During the 1890s, lecture series were long as half of them included at least eight sessions and only seven per cent contained fewer than four.<sup>291</sup> However, examples from different decades show that lecture series became shorter and began to differ in this respect from other instruction. The development obviously accelerated in the 1920s, and by the academic year 1930–1931, almost half of the courses only comprised two or three sessions. As a consequence of this trend, in 1940–1941 and 1950–1951 the public lectures consisted principally of single lectures or of short series. There was still one exception. Open courses taught by native-speaker language teachers were longer, often lasting the entire term. These courses focused on culture and literature and were offered in the language in question, usually English or French.<sup>292</sup>

290. RAG, GH B II:1, *Årsredogörelser 1894–1895, 1900–1901 and 1910–1911*; B II:2, *Årsredogörelse 1920–1921*; B II:3, *Årsredogörelser 1930–1931 and 1940–1941*; B II:4, *Årsredogörelse 1950–1951*; Lindberg and Nilsson 1996a, 51–58, 81–83.

291. Cederschiöld 1899, 4–5 (list of lecture series).

292. RAG, GH F IIIa:1, 'Föreläsningar och öfningar vid Göteborgs högskola ht 1891–vt 1915'; B II:1, *Årsredogörelser 1900–1901 and 1910–1911*; B II:2, *Årsredogörelse 1920–1921*; B II:3, *Årsredogörelser 1930–1931 and 1940–1941*; B II:4, *Årsredogörelse 1950–1951*; Lindberg and Nilsson 1996a, 82.

**Table 2. Public lectures at Gothenburg University College (GUC) 1894–1951.**

	Number of public lecture series		Number of all courses at GUC		Attendees at public lectures		Formally enrolled students	
	Autumn term	Spring term	Autumn and spring terms	Public lecturers of all courses %	Autumn term	Spring term	Autumn term	Spring term
1894–1895	2	2	56	7	720	483	42	40
1900–1901	3	3	67	9	1 116	1 246	67	64
1910–1911	4	4	83	10	996	1 772	191	183
1920–1921	4	6	117	9	917	979	201	184
1930–1931	5	6	135	8	400	595	320	317
1940–1941*		9	150	6		8 300	447	458
1950–1951*		24	197	12		6 000	764	695

\* The number of the public lecture series and their audience contains both the autumn and spring terms.

Sources: RAG, GH B II:1–4, 'Årsredogörelser 1894–1895, 1900–1901, 1910–1911, 1920–1921, 1930–1931, 1940–1941, 1950–1951'; Göteborgs statistik 1900, 1910, 1935: Göteborgs Högskola; Göteborgs statistik 1962: Göteborgs universitet.

The shorter duration probably resulted from the interest of the university college in directing the teaching duties of professors towards the instruction of enrolled students and thus reflected its diminishing interest in extramural lecturing. In 1930, the regulations of the university college classified a mere two public lectures as a series and from 1937 public lectures were not required to form a whole but single lectures could also be delivered. Moreover, the board reduced the number of public lecture series organized yearly. The changes in duration were also connected with the issue of who delivered them. Whereas the obligation had previously rested principally with the professors, later regulations also allowed presentations by visiting academics to be counted as public lectures although the professors were still obliged to give at least half of them. The increasing role of visiting lecturers also contributed to fact that single lectures or very short series became typical.<sup>293</sup> The fading interest in adult education was not a characteristic of Gothenburg University College only as the eagerness of Swedish academics in general to engage in adult education declined after the beginning of the twentieth century.<sup>294</sup>

293. RAG, GH F I:1, 'Statuter och ordningsstadga för Göteborgs Högskola 1930', item 14.3; 'Statuter och ordningsstadga för Göteborgs Högskola 1944', item 14.3; Sylwan 1916, 57; Lindberg and Nilsson 1996a, 87.

294. Wallerius 1988, 67–73; Törnqvist 1996, 73–74.

A new approach to guest lecturing was introduced in 1937, when the so-called Gothenburg lectures began.<sup>295</sup> The aim was to establish stronger contacts between the university college and the city by introducing topical issues related to the Gothenburg region, its politics and economy. This time the lecturers were not academics but representatives of practical life, that is, industrialists, politicians and other local actors. Thus the Gothenburg lectures provided local leaders with a forum where they could express their views in front of academic and wider audiences. True to its history, *Handelstidningen* emphasized that the Gothenburg series was one of those enterprises that realized the idea of Free Academy.<sup>296</sup>

As public lecture series became shorter, their nature naturally changed from more detailed courses to introductory presentations. This was a more general development in Sweden at the beginning of the twentieth century as popular scientific lectures and academic instruction started to diverge while the boundary between them had not previously been so clear. The historians of Gothenburg University College have pointed out that the status of the public lectures altered in the sense that they began to develop into a secondary addition to the academic teaching and have characterized the later lectures as cultivated entertainment for the bourgeoisie.<sup>297</sup> It is true that lectures with topics that were presumably more entertaining from the perspective of non-academics started to appear. For example in the academic year 1910–1911, lectures were given on topics like ‘Images from the Iberian peninsula’, introducing the area and its culture and ‘The white race and primitive peoples’, addressing the history of colonisation.<sup>298</sup> Yet a considerable part of the topics of the public lectures did not differ radically from those of ‘private lectures’ and, therefore, instead of simply becoming more entertaining, the public lectures themselves probably became more differentiated, some of them having a more popular character while others still preserved their academic approach.<sup>299</sup>

Consequently, from the perspective of enrolled students, the public lectures lost the role of additional special courses as single lectures and short series became dominant in the 1930s and thus the significance of the public lectures as a part of regular instruction diminished and finally disappeared.

295. A memorial fund for S.A. Hedlund funded visiting lecturers from the beginning of the twentieth century. Lindberg and Nilsson 1996a, 83; 230.

296. Lindberg and Nilsson 1996a, 87; *GHT* ‘Göteborgs ledande män i katedern på Högskolan. Föredragsserie ägnad stadens liv.’ 10 April 1937; *GHT* ‘Göteborgs fria akademi’ 23 April 1937.

297. Lindberg and Nilsson 1996a, 83–84, 87–88.

298. RAG, GH B II:2, *Årsredogörelse 1910–1911*.

299. Cf. Lindberg and Nilsson 1996a, 88.

Concise presentations on various topics could evidently still provide new information and insights as well as opportunities to listen to talks by prominent visiting lecturers from other Swedish and even from foreign universities.<sup>300</sup> In addition, due to the varying subjects, the public lectures could still contribute to increasing general knowledge and widening students' perspectives beyond their own fields. Thus both the earlier longer special courses and the later single lectures or short series can be regarded as an activity which to some degree realized the idea of Free Academy in the curricula of enrolled students.

From the perspective of the general public, single lectures or short series meant that opportunities for more profound learning diminished. The issue whether popular lectures should be single sessions or longer series introducing some topic in greater detail had actually been debated by Swedish adult educators since the 1880s. In general, they preferred series as a more effective form of education but acknowledged the significance of single lectures as a source of inspiration for further learning.<sup>301</sup> The latter could also have been one of the functions of the single lectures and short series at Gothenburg University College, in addition to introducing academic research and its results and contributing to the public debate with actual societal topics. As at the beginning of the twentieth century, the significance of the lectures for the local cultural life was still emphasized in the 1930s and 1940s. The role of the local press was important in making the lectures and their topics known as it wrote about them both beforehand and afterwards. For those attending public lectures, these obviously offered cultural recreation and an arena for socializing, like popular scientific lectures in general.<sup>302</sup> Given the nature of mass communication in the early twentieth century, the lecture as a form of presentation and instruction seems to have retained its appeal. Radio started to compete with this kind of adult education in the 1920s by broadcasting popular scientific lectures. In the mid-1930s, the Swedish Radio broadcasted about a thousand lectures yearly.<sup>303</sup>

However, even the longer lecture series of the early period had not enabled studies for certificates, not to mention academic degrees. Thus this kind of instruction did not produce resources similar to those of enrolled students in the form of formal qualifications that could be used for career

300. Sylwan 1916, 58–60.

301. Olsson O. 1925, 18–20; Törnqvist 1996, 91–93, 132–133; Leander 1978, 289, 345–346.

302. *GHT*, 'Göteborgs fria akademi' 23 April 1937; RAG, GH F X:1, 'Betänkande med utredning och förslag angående Göteborgs Högskolas framtida ställning den 19 januari 1948', 21; Leander 1978, 346; Lindberg and Nilsson 1996a, 88.

303. Leander 1978, 344–345, 362; Arvidson 2002, 54–55.

advancement. The reason for attending public lectures arose out of sheer interest in the subjects presented. There were also participants like teachers, who could certainly benefit professionally from university lectures and for this reason they were active in attending them.

## 2.2.4. The Gothenburg Version of University Extension: Bringing the Audience inside the Academy

### **PUBLIC LECTURES AND PRACTICES OF OPENNESS AT SWEDISH UNIVERSITIES**

From the perspective of adult education, the public lectures of Gothenburg University College constituted a special kind of practice because the extension activities were integrated into the university college and not separated from the teaching of formally enrolled students as has usually been the case. Still, they were not the only example of instruction at the Swedish universities open to others than formally enrolled university students. First, the lectures at the state universities were basically open so that anybody could enter and listen to them albeit without receiving any certificates or degrees.<sup>304</sup> Second, Stockholm University College, another private institution, also welcomed outsiders to its lectures. During its first three years from 1878 to 1881, it actually functioned as a kind of free academy providing only public lectures with no enrolled students in the ordinary sense but, instead only 'listeners' (*åhörare*). Moreover, the humanistic section of Stockholm University College admitted its first enrolled students at the beginning of the twentieth century and thus until then served others than students aiming at degrees. Yet its openness was somewhat limited since lectures were only open to secondary school graduates, the students of local higher education institutions and secondary school teachers. No such institution of public lecturing accommodated to the requirements of a wider audience sprang up as in Gothenburg.<sup>305</sup>

Third, both Stockholm and Gothenburg University Colleges allowed visiting students to join regular courses on condition that the teachers in question gave permission. The terms for visiting students, *åhörare* in Stockholm and *auskultanter* in Gothenburg, referred to the fact that they were mere listeners and were not permitted to take exams or receive certificates. In Gothenburg, during the first decades in particular, this option was mainly utilized by elementary school teachers and the students of local colleges but sometimes by people engaged in other occupations and even by academically

304. *SOU 1924:5*, 142–143.

305. Tunberg 1957, 214–216, 221; Bedoire and Thullberg 1978, 21.



educated citizens. The number of visiting students could usually be counted in dozens, exceeding one hundred only exceptionally, and therefore was nowhere near the numbers of the public lecture audiences (Table 2). Nevertheless, in the opening years it could be remarkable when compared with the small number of enrolled students.<sup>306</sup>

However, the mere open character of lectures at the state universities or other practices of allowing the general public to attend regular lectures did not suffice as a basis for adult education activities, as was pointed out in 1924 by a government committee. Regular university teaching could not take into account the conditions of people engaged in working life because teaching was mostly organized during the daytime.<sup>307</sup>

Although the public lectures at Gothenburg University College did not form a distinct extramural activity but were integrated into the institution's normal operations, they obviously differed from other ordinary university instruction open to outsiders. The most obvious difference was the times at which lectures were held, usually in the evenings, enabling those in working life to attend. At first, the idea of evening lectures had met with some resistance among staff members reluctant to accept such arrangements in academic settings. In addition, the way of presentation was also supposed to be accessible to a wider educated audience and thus teachers were expected to give some consideration to the manner in which they delivered their lectures.<sup>308</sup> In the 1890s the teachers were already well aware of the special nature of their public lectures as they pointed out that such lectures had no counterparts at the state universities. The public lectures were supposed to be both scholarly and popular, that is, accessible to an audience with general basic education. Combining these aims was a demanding task for teachers because they had to do extra preparatory work for lectures to be understandable to a heterogeneous audience. The obligation to provide public lecturing rotated among the staff and in the mid-1890s this duty fell on each teacher every four terms, which is why the staff requested that their total teaching loads be reduced.<sup>309</sup>

306. Cederschiöld 1899, 3; Sylwan 1916, 64; Lindberg and Nilsson 1996a, 84–85; Tunberg 1957, 214.

307. *SOU 1924:5*, 142–143.

308. RAG, GH F IIIa:1, 'Föreläsningar och öfningar vid Göteborgs högskola ht 1891–vt 1915'; F I:1, 'Ordningsstadga för Göteborgs Högskola 1910', item 12; Warburg 1916.

309. RAG, GH A I:5, Minutes of the board 14 September 1895, Appendix: Rektor Paulsen till styrelse, without date.

## **THE COMMITMENT OF UNIVERSITIES TO ADULT EDUCATION:**

### **BRITISH UNIVERSITY EXTENSION AND SWEDISH ACADEMIC ADULT EDUCATION**

To situate the practice of public lecturing at Gothenburg University College in a wider context of contemporary higher adult education, it is next viewed against the background of the British nineteenth-century university extension movement and Swedish academically oriented popular education in general.

The British university extension began in 1873 at the University of Cambridge and by the early twentieth century it had become an established and widely spread activity. The estimates concerning the yearly number of participants at the beginning of the twentieth century vary from 20,000 to 50,000. By that time, Cambridge and Oxford had founded over 900 local centres, many of them nevertheless quite short-lived. The basic reason for drawing parallels between the public lectures of Gothenburg University College and the British extension movement was the idea of offering higher education to a wider audience but, in addition to this, lecturing also constituted the basic form of the British extension teaching during its first decades. As in Gothenburg, lectures were organized as series usually consisting of six to twelve sessions. The intention was nevertheless to involve students more actively in studying as there was time for questions and discussion after lectures and, in addition, reading and written work were a regular part of instruction. At the end of a course, participants could also take an examination if they wanted. It seems that the Gothenburg public lectures did not contain such question or discussion components, nor was there written work or examinations although in reality, it was only a part of the British extension students who utilized these.<sup>310</sup>

The British university extension was targeted at working-class people yet most students were middle class since the lack of basic education, time and money prevented working people from participating. University extension was actually more successful in attracting its other target group, women. Thus there were similarities with the lecture audience in Gothenburg. At the beginning of the twentieth century, however, extramural studies became more systematic and continuous in nature as the so-called three-year tutorial class became the dominant form. One of the factors contributing this change was the active role the Workers' Educational Association (WEA) adopted as a partner of the universities.<sup>311</sup> Yet this development did not change the fact that degrees were excluded and the emphasis was placed on the value of university education for

310. Kelly 1970, 219–224; Fieldhouse 1998, 36–40, 199; Ockwell and Pollins 2000, 667–668.

311. Kelly 1970, 219, 224–228, 246–258; Fieldhouse 1998, 202–206; Ockwell and Pollins 2000, 669.

its own sake; students' own self-fulfilment remained the distinctive feature of the British extramural work.<sup>312</sup>

Both Gothenburg University College and the British universities were involved as institutions in organizing adult education, and not only through their staff.<sup>313</sup> There was still the basic difference in the arrangements since the public lectures in Gothenburg were delivered within the university college while the British extension lectures were usually arranged outside the university towns. Thus the Gothenburg practice could be characterized as university extension within the university. This naturally made the Gothenburg lectures less readily accessible and the audience much more limited since only those residing in the city could participate. The geographical expansion of the British university extension nevertheless separated it practically from the parent universities. This separation was accentuated by the fact that extension lecturing was in many cases conducted by teachers who did not belong to the staff of universities and hence did not have a recognized status as members of the teaching body. The enthusiasm of staff members had waned in the course of time because of long and uncomfortable journeys, low fees and insecure career opportunities provided by such work. For this reason the university extension remained outside the mainstream of university activities.<sup>314</sup> In Gothenburg, the public lectures were obviously closer to the mainstream as they were given by staff members and were also intended for enrolled students. In this way, the Gothenburg University College opened a small part of its academic studies to the general public, at least during the first decades when the public lectures did not differ so much from other teaching.

Seen from a broader perspective, the British university extension constituted a part of a wider movement creating several new institutions of a university character from the mid-nineteenth century onwards and notably during the 1870s. As the Universities of Cambridge and Oxford continued to educate the sons of the aristocracy aiming at careers in politics, in the Church or in the law, these new colleges or university colleges emerged from the interests of industrial and commercial life. They were located in big cities and industrial centres like Manchester, Birmingham and Liverpool and their purpose was to serve the needs of merchants, manufacturers, engineers and the increasing body of middle-class professionals by offering mainly full-time education in

312. Blyth 1983, vii, 347; Perry 1977, 2. In spite of awarding degrees, universities under certain conditions granted extension students exemptions from the first year of the B.A. course at the parent university. Kelly 1970, 236.

313. Törnqvist 1996, 96.

314. Fieldhouse 1998, 206; Kelly 1970, 234.

fields benefitting such people.<sup>315</sup> It has been noted that S. A. Hedlund's aim to establish Free Academy as an institution serving people engaged in practical life manifested in many respects a similar spirit.<sup>316</sup> However, Hedlund's idea seems to have differed from the new British universities because his principal interest lay in combining professional life with self-motivated part-time studies.

The distinctive nature of Gothenburg public lecturing—bringing the audience inside the academy and the commitment of the university college as an institution to this activity—also becomes evident when considered in the context of Swedish higher adult education at the end of the nineteenth and during early the twentieth century. The Swedish universities as institutions generally played a minor role as organizers of adult education and the principal actors in this field were outside the universities. National adult education associations and their local branches which, on the whole, have been significant actors in Sweden, also held a strong position in academically oriented adult education. This, however, is not the whole picture of the significance of academics in Swedish adult education. Although institutions were not usually involved, individual professors were actively engaged in popular adult education by giving lectures around the country. In addition to university staff, students also took part in these activities and this has been regarded as a special feature of Swedish and, more broadly, Nordic culture.<sup>317</sup>

Along with the public lectures in Gothenburg, universities as institutions seem to have been involved in adult education in two other instances. First, universities and university colleges participated in the organization of summer courses, which were held from 1893 with some interruptions until 1931. Summer courses lasted from one to two weeks and were mainly attended by schoolteachers. The initiative for the first courses organized at the University of Uppsala had come from folk high school teachers but the courses were nevertheless carried out with the help of Uppsala professors. These brought the ideas of the British university extension and the American Chautauqua movement to Sweden. Chautauqua was an educational summer camp programme which had started in the 1870s with Sunday school teachers as its target group and had diffused widely. In Sweden, other universities followed the example of Uppsala and from 1912 summer courses were held in turn in Uppsala, Lund, Stockholm and Gothenburg. Although summer courses were originally conducted by individual professors, the universities took them over in 1895 with the exception

315. Kelly 1970, 216–219.

316. Lindberg and Nilsson 1996a, 31–33.

317. Liedman 1987, 159, 162; Törnqvist 1996, 73–74, 84–85; Arvidson 2002, 286.

of Stockholm, where they were organized by an outside association. Summer courses also received regular state subsidies from 1903.<sup>318</sup>

One of the driving forces behind summer courses in the 1890s was Professor Harald Hjärne of Uppsala, whose views were similar to those introduced by S. A. Hedlund. Hjärne emphasized adult education as an obligation of universities as it was not sufficient that universities only engaged in regular academic teaching and scientific research. In this way, he actually formulated the idea of three missions of universities and stressed the aspect of interaction between university and society, which adult education promoted. According to him, adult education benefitted not only the general public but also academics by helping them to remain cognisant of the relevance and wider perspective of their research.<sup>319</sup>

Academic summer courses were also organized in the Finnish town of Jyväskylä from 1912 and these were connected to the local ambition to found a university. Interestingly, one of the sources of inspiration in the discussion on higher education there was Gothenburg with its activities in the spirit of Free Academy, revealing that the knowledge of educational ideas and practices crossed national borders.<sup>320</sup>

Another kind of involvement in adult education on the part of the universities can be found in the agencies that furnished educational associations with academic lecturers. The Lund agency was the oldest, established in 1898 by noted professors, and during the early twentieth century four such agencies dispatched lecturers all over the country with the help of catalogues listing those ready to give presentations. The Lund and Uppsala agencies seem to have been connected more closely with the universities than those of Stockholm and Gothenburg.<sup>321</sup> Supplying lecturers, however, did not so much concern the universities as institutions since it was primarily their individual staff members who were active. Both the Lund and Uppsala agencies were authorized to distribute the state subsidies granted to these universities for organizing popular scientific lectures but otherwise the linkage was apparently chiefly based on contacts through individual staff members.<sup>322</sup>

It seems that especially the people involved in popular adult education did

318. *SOU 1924:5*, 146–147; Wallerius 1988, 52–64; Törnqvist 1996, 87–88; Knowles 1977, 36–38; Kelly 1970, 228–229.

319. *SOU 1924:5*, 140–141.

320. Kaarninen M. 2011, 140.

321. These agencies were *Centralbyrån i Lund för populära vetenskapliga föreläsningar*, *Uppsala universitets föreläsningbyrå*, *Västra Sveriges folkbildningsförbund* (Göteborg) and *Folkbildningsförbundet* (Stockholm). *SOU 1924:5*, 101.

322. *SOU 1924:5*, 143–144; Wallerius 1988, 65–67, 107–109.

not find this kind of connection sufficient and structures adequate but pursued a closer connection between the universities and adult education. In 1924, the Swedish adult education committee suggested that in future adult education or extramural departments within the universities of Lund and Uppsala should replace the lecture agencies as the bodies organizing adult education. Nor was the connection of the lecturers with the universities necessarily so strong. In order to be eligible for state subsidies, lectures had to be given by academic teachers but the requirements were not particularly strict since people with academic degrees in general, for instance secondary school teachers, could be counted as academics. Thus at the beginning of the 1920s, barely one fourth of the lecturers listed in the catalogue of the Lund agency were university teachers.<sup>323</sup>

The extramural departments actually constituted the most important element of the proposal made by the adult education committee in 1924, which has been considered the main attempt to commit Swedish universities to adult education during the whole twentieth century. Extramural departments were intended to form the basis and institutional structure for the adult education activities of the universities. Typically, this proposition was not made by the representatives of the universities but by adult educators.<sup>324</sup> The proposal for extramural departments expressed a concrete ambition to include adult education in the regular or 'true' functions of the universities. The activities planned to be organized by the extramural departments included summer courses, popular scientific lectures, study circles or tutorials, field trips as well as training for teachers and tutors engaged in popular adult education.<sup>325</sup> In this way, the duties of extramural departments would have been much more extensive than the mere public lecturing conducted at Gothenburg University College. The driving force behind the Swedish proposal was Oscar Olsson, 'the father of the study circle' and a Social Democrat member of parliament. The idea of extramural departments was inspired by the British example.<sup>326</sup> In its famous 1919 report the British Adult Education Committee had recommended that universities should regard adult education as a regular part of their activities and that they should establish extramural departments to develop and co-ordinate its various branches. Most of the British universities actually followed this recommendation between the world wars and replaced

323. *SOU 1924:5*, 145; Törnqvist 1996, 91–92; Olsson O. 1925, 20–21.

324. Törnqvist 1996, 108–109.

325. *SOU 1924:5*, 157–159.

326. Törnqvist 1996, 11, 109, 164–168.

their temporary committees with a special department headed by a senior academic.<sup>327</sup>

Even though the Swedish adult education committee promoted the idea that adult education should be conducted under the direction of universities, it regarded adult education associations as essential partners as in Britain. An alternative model of people's universities, common in central Europe, Denmark and Norway with institutions completely separate from universities, was rejected. The committee preferred a model where the universities co-ordinated adult education since it took the view that only in this way could the scientific nature of the teaching be guaranteed.<sup>328</sup> However, the new structures of academic adult education the committee advocated would still have preserved the earlier character of studies as a quest for knowledge for its own sake, producing no formal qualifications. Although the committee recognized that higher education conferring competence on those without formal entry qualifications could contribute to advancement in status and earnings, it deemed the question to lie outside its purview.<sup>329</sup> Openness of the universities in terms of awarding diplomas or degrees to non-regular students was not conceivable in the 1920s.

The proposed extramural departments were not established and thus the creation of institutionalized structures for university extension within Swedish universities had failed although some other proposals concerning popular adult education were implemented through the legislation. Nor did the universities themselves show any initiative, actually regarding extramural departments with suspicion, in particular the proposal that the representatives of adult education associations should be involved in their management.<sup>330</sup> A suggestion for similar extramural departments was also made in Finland in 1928 but there the initiative came from the academic world itself as it was the rector of the University of Helsinki who introduced the idea with reference to the Swedish proposal. Nor were such departments established in Finland.<sup>331</sup>

Since the universities did not take the initiative for arranging academically oriented adult education, the emphasis of such education lay outside the universities. It was principally carried out by an organization called the People's University (*Folkuniversitetet*). Its local branches were established in the 1930s and early 1940s by student organizations and, after having built up a national

327. Kelly 1970, 267–269; Fieldhouse 1998, 206–209.

328. *SOU 1924:5*, 141–142, 157; Wallerius 1988, 93–94; Törnqvist 1996, 50–51, 84, 165–168.

329. *SOU 1924:5*, 142.

330. Wallerius 1988, 95–97; Törnqvist 1996, 212–213, 228.

331. Tulenheimo 1937, 141–142 (speech on 16 January 1928).

organization, it became one of the educational associations eligible for state subsidies. The Gothenburg branch of the People's University was established in 1941 and, like the other branches, was run by a student association. At first it called itself 'The Course Organization at Gothenburg University College' but was compelled to renounce this because staff members disapproved of such a name that caused misunderstanding about the connection between the university college and the course organizer.<sup>332</sup>

The public lectures at Gothenburg University College seem to have ended in 1954, when the private institution became a state university.<sup>333</sup> The latest information on them can be found in the annual report of 1953–1954, which was the last academic year of the university college. The report shows that twenty-two lecture series, attended by some 5,900 participants, were held.<sup>334</sup> After that, the reports of the new Gothenburg University make no reference to the public lectures.<sup>335</sup> As a sign of its altered status, Gothenburg University adopted new statutes and from 1956 all three state universities of Uppsala, Lund and Gothenburg were administered by common statutes.<sup>336</sup> Thus it seems that there was no more room for such local features as the public lectures. Nevertheless, efforts to retain this kind of adult education in the statutes had still been made in 1952, when the building of the new institution began. The organizing committee had suggested in its statement that in the future at least two professors still be required to give popular scientific lectures each term. The committee emphasized the heritage of Gothenburg University College and the significance of the public lectures in maintaining contact with the community and contributing to the cultural life of the city.<sup>337</sup> Since the university got a new governing body, the council (*konsistorium*), which consisted solely of academic staff members, board members representing municipal and other local interests disappeared.<sup>338</sup> Therefore, public lecturing obviously lost ground not only in the statutes but also on the more practical level of decision-making and administration.

332. Wallerius 1988, 133–134; Wallerius 1981, 12; Arvidson 2002, 287–288.

333. On the transition, see Lindberg and Nilsson 1996a, 102–105.

334. RAG, GH B II:4, *Årsredogörelse 1953–54*, 76.

335. *Göteborgs universitets katalog. Hösttermin 1954–hösttermin 1957, Hösttermin 1960–hösttermin 1963*.

336. Lindberg and Nilsson 1996a, 104; *Svenska författningssamling 1956*:117.

337. RAG, GH F X:2, 'Förslag betr. Universitetsbildningen 1952, Principutlåtande angående den medicinska högskolans i Göteborg framtida förhållande till Göteborgs högskola', item 104, 2a (a copy, without date).

338. Lindberg and Nilsson 1996a, 103–107.



In the Swedish academic world, extramural activities obviously played a more significant role at Gothenburg University College than at the old universities of Uppsala and Lund, especially at the end of the nineteenth and at the beginning of the twentieth century. Public lecturing has been portrayed as a part of the self-image of Gothenburg University College, expressing the openness of the institution towards the surrounding society.<sup>339</sup> Even though the public lectures at Gothenburg University College formed a special case in adult education, it showed no intention of expansion like other Swedish academically oriented popular education and the British extension movement. It was a practice implemented by academics at their own university, not by people who were primarily adult educators.

## 2.3. Summary of Chapter 2

Sven Adolf Hedlund's plan for Free Academy, introduced in 1864, was a pioneering endeavour as it aimed at opening higher education to bourgeois women without access to university education and to those men of that class not qualified to enter the traditional universities or already having a practical occupation. Thus Hedlund envisaged an adult education institution that would have brought higher education within their reach. By combining adult education, scientific research, emergent disciplines and practically oriented education, Free Academy was intended to serve the needs of a modernizing society and raise the status and prestige of Gothenburg. Even though Hedlund's plan may have sounded extraordinary, examples of combining research and the open access for students could be found abroad and ideas about free and open higher education had also appeared in the Nordic countries.

Free Academy is an example of an idea that never materialized as intended but it is still justified to argue that it came true in two different ways, albeit on a much more modest scale and in the form of adult education only. From 1865 to 1891, popular scientific lectures were arranged for an educated audience by two successive bodies, one of which was connected to the municipality. These activities can be regarded as a pilot project for Free Academy, which was not developed further because Hedlund's views were challenged by the advocates of more conventional higher education and a traditional university-like institution was founded in Gothenburg in 1887. Adult education was nevertheless incorporated into Gothenburg University College in the form of public lectures, becoming a statutory obligation until 1954. In this way, the

339. Lindberg and Nilsson 1996a, 49, 249; Lindberg and Nilsson 1996b, 442.

influential supporters of Free Academy managed, on the one hand, to save a small part of the ambitious plan and, on the other, to continue the popular scientific lectures started in the 1860s.

The public lectures organized at Gothenburg University College constituted a special form of higher adult education which was closely connected to the academic world. They were organized by the university college itself and not by any outside bodies, which was typical of other Swedish academically oriented adult education. As lectures were given within the university college and by its staff, they differed from the usual practices of the well-known early British university extension, with which they were already compared in the 1890s. The public lectures also had a dual purpose by simultaneously serving both the formally enrolled students of the university college and the general public, although not granting the latter any formal qualifications. By bringing the general public consisting of bourgeois townspeople into the academy, the public lectures actually served as university extension within the university.

The public lectures at Gothenburg University College, like the preceding popular scientific lectures, became a prominent part of the local cultural life and were often mass events attracting dozens or at best several hundred listeners. Public lectures could without doubt afford glimpses into academic education to those who had not studied or could not study at university and, for this reason, they obviously formed an important supplement to local educational life. Women in particular seem to have utilized such opportunities during the nineteenth century. Even those with academic education could familiarize themselves with new research findings. However, it was not only knowledge and cultural stimulation the lectures could offer but also social contact.

# 3. GOTHENBURG WORKERS' INSTITUTE: FROM ANTON NYSTRÖM'S IDEAS TO A LOCAL ADAPTATION

## 3.1. Earlier Workers' Education in Sweden and Finland

### 3.1.1. The Concept of 'Workers' Education'

The notion 'workers' education' is an archaic expression used particularly during the late nineteenth and early twentieth centuries. 'Workers' education' and 'workers' institutes' are expressions representing an era when social class determined every aspect of life. Due to the cultural and social barriers of the nineteenth century, it was unlikely for a worker to attend public lectures, the audience of which consisted of educated people from upper classes although lectures may in principle have been open to all. As mentioned in Chapter 2, these barriers consisted of lacking basic education and differences in external features such as clothing, manners, parlance and personal hygiene.<sup>340</sup> Attitudes of the period are exemplified by a discussion related to the construction plan for the Helsinki public library in 1879, which reveals that working-class people were not welcome on the same premises as the bourgeoisie. The need for separate departments was mentioned because not even different opening hours in the same library room were considered sufficient to eliminate the foul smells caused by the common people.<sup>341</sup> Moreover, workers themselves might well have felt uncomfortable in bourgeois company and with academic culture and practices.<sup>342</sup> Thus a suggestion that workers' education in Helsinki could have been provided in the 1890s with the help of regular university lectures was not thought through even apart from the difficulties related to instruction taking place mostly in daytime. This suggestion also pointed to the significance of outward appearance; it was stated that every decently dressed (and well-behaved) person could attend university lectures.<sup>343</sup>

As the Swedish and Finnish equivalents of the term 'workers' education' are somewhat ambiguous in the respective languages, there is some similarity

340. Eriksson 1978, 353. On the manifestations and understanding of social differences, see Frykman and Löfgren 1990, 216–220, 247–248, 269–270.

341. Närhi 1963, 203–204.

342. Cf. Fieldhouse (1998, 38–39) on nineteenth-century British adult education.

343. *HKVPAK 1893* No. 34, 4.

to the concept ‘adult education’ for the term not only includes the target group of education but it is also similar as regards the nature and content of education. In the late nineteenth century, the respective Swedish and Finnish equivalents of workers’ education (*arbetareundervisning, työväenopetus*—meaning literally ‘workers’ instruction’) were often used of elementary education or popular scientific lectures but could even refer to practical or technical education.<sup>344</sup> Later the term ‘workers’ education’ (*arbetarbildning, työväensivistys*) was also used of the activities of workers’ educational associations, which were connected with the socialist labour movement.<sup>345</sup> Education aimed at working-class people could also be called popular education (*folkbildning, kansansivistys*) although this was a more general term also covering peasants. As mentioned earlier, it became a common expression referring to adult education, especially in Sweden.<sup>346</sup> The English terms ‘workers’ education’, or ‘working-class education’, usually referred to the liberal adult education of the early twentieth century, organized in Britain by the Workers’ Educational Association in co-operation with universities. However, in the English-language literature the term has also sometimes been used to refer to technical education and to education organized by the labour movement.<sup>347</sup>

Hence the ambiguity of the concept ‘workers’ education’ indicates that there were many kinds of activities targeted at working people and implies that there were different opinions on what was necessary or suitable education for them. In addition to tension between liberal and vocational education, there was also tension between liberal or more advanced general education and the instruction in basic skills, which will be discussed later.

344. Workers’ education as a term referring to elementary education or popular scientific lectures appeared for instance in Swedish motions for state subsidies, reported by *Dagens Nyheter*, ‘Tidningsöfversikt. En afsigtlig osanning’ 14 April 1883; *Dagens Nyheter*, ‘Tidningsöfversikt’ 18 April 1883; *Aftonbladet*, ‘Andra kammaren’ 21 April 1886. Workers’ education referring to vocational or practical education in Swedish papers are found e.g. in *GHT*, ‘Staten och arbetarfrågan’ 28 November 1871; *Aftonbladet*, ‘Stockholm den 29 november’ 29 November 1881. In the Finnish discussion on state subsidies for workers’ education in 1891 this term referred to elementary, popular scientific as well as vocational education. *Valtiopäivät 1891*, Documents Vol. 5, ‘Petitionsbetänkande No. 9’; Minutes, Ridderskapet och Adeln 4 April 1891, 571–592; Papisto/Prästeståndet 1 April 1891, 484–500.
345. *Arbetarnas bildningsförbund* (ABF) in Sweden was established in 1912 and *Työväen Sivistyslaitto* (TSL) in Finland in 1919.
346. Gustavsson 1991, 28.
347. Goldman 1995, especially 163ff; Kelly 1970, 198–200; Quinney 1983; McIlroy 1998; Merricks 2001.

### 3.1.2. Educational Nature of the Liberal Workers' Movement

The popular scientific lectures arranged in Gothenburg, first by the Royal Society of Arts and Sciences and later by other organizers, exemplify the social settings of adult education in mid-nineteenth-century Sweden and Finland, when those involved were often members of the upper classes. When the common people became a target of adult education, the attention was first focused on the peasantry, which nevertheless held a special position among the labouring classes because of land ownership and the influence it brought about. This rural educational work was mainly conducted from the 1830s by disseminating literature but popular lectures were also organized in some localities.<sup>348</sup>

In Sweden, the early attempts in the field of urban workers' education were made in the mid-nineteenth century in the form of educational circles. Although these were inspired by the idea of levelling out the differences between social classes, they only admitted craftsmen as their members, thus excluding industrial workers, casual labourers and domestic servants, who were deemed lower-ranking. In Gothenburg, an educational circle run by educated people was active in the 1840s and 1850s, organizing lectures, musical performances, outings and dances for bourgeois residents and better-off craftsmen.<sup>349</sup>

In Finland, this idea was adopted two decades later but, as in Sweden, working people meant craftsmen and their families and a substantial part of the members were educated, middle-class people.<sup>350</sup> An interesting exception to this pattern was Tampere, where popular lectures for factory workers were arranged regularly in the 1870s. These educational pursuits were inspired by the ideas of the *Fennoman* movement, advocating improvements in the status of the Finnish language. Local factory owners supported these projects and self-educated workers also featured among the lecturers. Factory workers in Tampere played an active role in another cultural effort as in 1880 they established a local branch of the Society of Popular Enlightenment<sup>351</sup>, the purpose of which was to promote culture and education among the Finnish-

348. Sörbom 1971, 88–90; Olsson B. 1994, 118; Klinge 1978a, 115; Klinge 1978b, 189; Klinge 1978c, 28–29, 94; Klinge 1989, 168–169, 711–712; Liikanen 1995, 193, 243–271.

349. Pählman and Sjölin 1944, 88–89; Leander 1965, 36–37, 42–46; Gustavsson 1991, 58–59; Jarnås-Nilsson 1966, 13.

350. The first circle was established in 1861 in the Finnish city of Turku. Rehumäki 2008, passim; Stenius 1987, 225–230.

351. *Kansanvalistusseura*. The official English name today is Kvs The Finnish Lifelong Learning Foundation.

speaking population. A separate branch aimed at workers was actually exceptional in this organization, which did not usually reach the masses in spite of its principle that education should be open to all and inspire all social classes. The activities of the Tampere branch, including a choir, theatrical performances and lectures, nevertheless dwindled in the 1880s, when the workers' association emerged.<sup>352</sup>

Before the emergence of the workers' institutes, these non-socialist workers' associations were important actors in adult education aimed at all strata of urban working people.<sup>353</sup> In Sweden, the non-socialist or liberal workers' associations established themselves in the 1860s and prospered until socialism started to gain ground in the course of the 1880s. Similar associations had earlier been established in Germany, drawing on the liberal and Christian ideas of Hermann Schulze-Delitzsch. The Swedish non-socialist workers' associations usually resulted from the initiatives made by employers and liberal-minded middle-class people. Therefore, they shared many features with the earlier educational circles and, notwithstanding the intentions, their members for the most part were craftsmen, better-off manual workers and lower middle-class people. It is estimated that in the 1860s the proportion of actual working people, master craftsmen and foremen excluded, did not exceed one third of their members. Political diversity was typical among the board members of the associations, ranging from conservatives to radical liberals, who advocated more substantial improvements in workers' conditions. However, the leaders were often moderate liberals.<sup>354</sup> In Gothenburg, a workers' association was established in 1866 and although it emerged from a workers' initiative it soon became an organization led by educated townspeople. One of these was the liberal editor S. A. Hedlund, the initiator of Free Academy, who had also been involved in the Stockholm education circle. The members of the Gothenburg

352. Kanerva 1972, 182–186; Rasila 1984, 693–696; Haapala 1986, 72–74, 187–188; Liikanen 1995, 185, 272–273; Huuhka 1990, 18–20. Liikanen also refers to cultural societies for workers which operated in rural industrial localities in the 1870s and organized occasional lectures. He also mentions rural educational societies open to farm workers but only offers one example of these. Liikanen 1995, 200–202, 237–238.
353. Education had also an essential role in other mass movements of the nineteenth and early twentieth centuries, of which the temperance movement is a good example. Stenius 1987, 218; Andersson 1980, 63–67.
354. Pählman and Sjölin 1944, 137–150, 170–173; Richardson 1963, 285–286; Andersson 1971, 115–116; Skarin Frykman 1990, 52. There was probably some kind of continuity between educational circles and workers' associations. Fredberg 1919, 711; Leander 1978, 229.

Workers' Association were mainly craftsmen but also included a number of industrial and other workers as well as women.<sup>355</sup>

Like the craftsmen's educational societies, the Finnish non-socialist workers' associations emerged two decades later than their Swedish counterparts. The first association was established in Helsinki in 1884 according to Scandinavian models and when the Tampere Workers' Association started three years later, the Finnish capital in turn set an example for it. In Finland, the non-socialist workers' movement is called 'Wrightian' after the founder of Helsinki Workers' Association, a small-scale industrialist, Viktor Julius von Wright, who emphasized co-operation between workers and employers. Like their Swedish counterparts, the Finnish workers' associations were associations *for* workers rather than *of* workers.<sup>356</sup> In Tampere, for example, until the mid-1890s the board mainly consisted of academically educated professionals, journalists, elementary school teachers, shopkeepers and factory foremen.<sup>357</sup> This association likewise had difficulties in attracting working people, as shown by the fact that at the end of the 1880s these accounted at most for a mere fifth of the members.<sup>358</sup> The reasons given for such a lack of interest were too expensive membership fees, the bourgeois atmosphere manifested in clothing and a formal way of speech as well as the impression that the working-class members of the association formed a kind of elite among workers.<sup>359</sup>

The aim of the liberal workers' associations was to improve the social and economic conditions of working-class people by promoting modest reforms and, in particular, self-help. In order to help workers to help themselves and get them involved in activities improving their situation, the associations often established sickness, burial and relief funds and retail co-operatives. In Finland, some associations also operated employment offices and gathered statistical information on wages, working hours and unemployment.<sup>360</sup> The liberal workers' movement had political goals, of which the extension of suffrage was a central issue. There was however no consensus on it and in Sweden it became

355. Skarin Frykman 1990, 52; Jarnäs-Nilsson 1966, 13–23, 31–38.

356. von Wright 1886; Soikkanen 1961, 21–22; Tuomisto T. 1984, 37–38, 55; Kanerva 1986, 18–19.

357. Kanerva 1986, 18, 21–23. In Tampere, a separate workers' association for outdoor workers was established in 1893 (*Ulkotyönäenyhdistyys*) but its role was more like a trade union and thus educational issues were not very prominent in its work. Rasila 1984, 303.

358. Kanerva 1986, 46.

359. TKA, TTY Ca:1, Minutes 6 December 1891, item 3; 26 August 1892, item 5. Similar accusations also surfaced in Helsinki. Soikkanen 1975, 22.

360. Pählman and Sjölin 1944, 187–195, 213–218; von Schoultz 1924, 59–61; Tuomisto T. 1984, 47, 55–63; Siltala 2019, 18–19.

the dividing line between moderate and radical liberals: the former were more sceptical whereas the latter required equal suffrage for all. The political agenda formulated by the Finnish movement in the 1890s included suffrage reform and, for example, a ten-hour working day.<sup>361</sup> The extension of suffrage did not receive unreserved support among the Finnish leaders either as the political outlook of the movement was shaped by a strong connection to the Finnish Party, a conservative force inclined to moderate social reformism. von Wright himself, although not involved in the Finnish Party, was rather cautious about extending suffrage and stressed that workers should reach a higher level of education and be acquainted with the practices of civic life before they could receive the right to vote.<sup>362</sup>

Education was actually the crux of the liberal workers' movement and, for instance, Kaarlo Renström, the secretary of the Tampere Workers' Association, characterized the movement as being first and foremost an educational effort.<sup>363</sup> The confidence in education and self-help was connected with the tendency of liberalism to regard social problems, of which drunkenness, lack of morality and ignorance were often mentioned, mainly as the faults of individuals. Thus the liberal friends of working people, like von Wright, believed that defects could be remedied by imbuing working people with middle-class habits and virtues like orderliness, thrift, harmony, school attendance, reading newspapers and books and attending lectures. Other virtues typically attached to the middle-class way of life were morality, decency, self-discipline, rationality and responsibility and these also set the standard towards which working people should aspire in order to be able to improve their living conditions.<sup>364</sup>

As the purpose of the workers' associations was to bring about improvements by influencing the behaviour of working-class people rather than by changing society on a larger scale, education became an obvious method for a project emphasizing the responsibility of individuals.<sup>365</sup> In von Wright's words, workers should realize that no measures of society could prevent an inert

361. Pählman and Sjölin 1944, 172–178; Soikkanen 1975, 20; Haataja et al. 1976, 40–41.

362. von Schoultz 1924, 49, 51; Tuomisto T. 1984, 88–89; Kanerva 1986, 17, 68ff; Siltala 2019, 20.

363. On Sweden, see e.g. Richardson 1963, 285–286; TKA, TTY Db:1, *Vuosikertomukset* 1887, 4–6 (Renström); 1888, 5 (Renström); 1892, 3 (Renström).

364. von Schoultz 1924, 48–49 (von Wright's speech); Haapala 1986, 177–178; Pulma 1990, 181–182; Frykman and Löfgren 1990, 266.

365. Cf. Titmus 1980, 135; Arvidson 1989, 149; Quinney 1983, 74–75. For a contemporary example emphasizing the role of individual and education, see Mäkinen K., 1894, 55–56.



person from becoming poor just as improving one's situation depended fundamentally on one's learning.<sup>366</sup> By participating in educational activities workers could also learn the basic skills of civic life and improve their conditions as a joint effort, which manifested not only the liberal notion of individual responsibility but also the significance of associations.<sup>367</sup>

That education was raised to such a significant role in the nineteenth-century discussion on the condition of the working class can also be understood when seen against the background of the idea of individualized citizenship.<sup>368</sup> The legal basis for this development, which gradually affected the lives of working-class people, took shape from the mid-nineteenth century onwards both in Sweden and Finland. Earlier the unqualified workforce in agriculture, domestic work and in other trades had been tied to the structures of the estate society by regulations concerning employment, residence and the authority of the master or employer. According to these regulations, people who did not possess land or who had no other source of livelihood had been obliged to hire themselves out as servants, farmhands or other kinds of labourers for one year at a time. Moving to another locality had been restricted and workers and domestic servants had lived under the authority of their master, who also had the right to administer corporal punishment.<sup>369</sup> The personal liberty of labourers started to increase as new laws were passed in the spirit of liberalism even though they still remained without political rights. The restrictions on moving were repealed in Sweden in 1847 and in Finland in 1879, the obligation to yearly service was revoked in Finland in 1865 and in Sweden in 1885, and these, together with the legislation concerning the freedom of the trade enacted in 1864 in Sweden and in 1879 in Finland, enabled workers to sell their labour freely.<sup>370</sup> In addition, corporal punishment was restricted to adolescents.<sup>371</sup>

The increasing individual freedom was accompanied by the responsibility for one's living. The old collectives, control mechanisms and responsibilities of employers were in the process of dissolution and, even though restricting

366. *Valtiopäivät 1891*, Documents Vol. 5, 'Petitionsbetänkande No. 9', 1.

367. *Tampereen Sanomat*, 'Työväenyhdistyksen perustamisesta' 3 March 1886 (most likely written by Renström); TKA, TTY Db:1 *Vuosikertomus 1887*, 3–4 (Renström).

368. On individualized citizenship, see Sulkunen 1986, 20–21. Boli (1989) explained the emergence of Swedish elementary schooling for children (*folkskola*) in 1842 by the changed understanding of citizenship, where the strengthened role of individuals was essential. He focused on peasants and the changes in their position and cultural milieu.

369. Schmidt 1975, 12–14; Haapala 1986, 62, 90.

370. Nilsson G.B., 1965, 23; Kekkonen 1987, 154; Haapala 1986, 90–91, 104, 206–207; Schmidt 1975, 18–19; Sigeman 1984, 876–877.

371. Petersson B. 1983, 64; Haapala 1986, 63.

individual freedom, they had nonetheless offered the labourers some kind of security. As a consequence of increased liberty the labourers' position often became unstable. These transitions, which took place in the framework of incipient industrialization and migration, caused anxiety among the members of the upper classes about a new kind of working class. The question of how to shape the workers, who – at least in principle – had more individual freedom than earlier, into obedient worker-citizens often came to be solved with such soft means as initiatives for self-help, association building and education.<sup>372</sup>

The education organized by the workers' associations typically consisted of lectures providing general popularized knowledge and instruction in basic skills. This is discussed in more detail in the context of Tampere to show how it formed the background to the establishment of the local workers' institute. Libraries and reading rooms were also founded to encourage workers to self-study. In addition to actual instruction and libraries, the educational approach was visible in the edifying pastimes the associations offered, highlighting the educational role of music, drama and art. Choirs and orchestras functioned in almost every association and, in bigger towns, amateur dramatic societies were also founded. In this way, associations had resources to produce themselves elevating entertainment for the celebrations that they arranged, not forgetting music for dancing, which was an essential part of the evening's entertainment.<sup>373</sup>

372. Sulkunen 1986, 34–35; Haapala 1986, 206–207; Petersson B. 1983, 58–59.

373. Pählman and Sjölin 1944, 154–163; Tuomisto T. 1984, 55–57, 64–66; Kanerva 1986, 121–125, 132–140.

## 3.2. The Establishment of the Gothenburg Workers' Institute in the Context of the Swedish Radical Liberalism of the 1880s

Workers' institutes have often been regarded as a part of the non-socialist workers' movement, either as organizations parallel to workers' associations or by-products or offshoots of these.<sup>374</sup> When the first of these institutes was planned in Stockholm in 1880, several members of the local workers' association were involved but finally the institute was founded independently of that association and it also remained autonomous.<sup>375</sup> The Gothenburg Workers' Institute, founded three years later, has also been connected with the workers' association there and even characterized as its branch but in reality the association did not contribute to the establishment of the institute.<sup>376</sup> The institute originated from the initiative by a private citizen, Lieutenant Edvard Wavrinsky.<sup>377</sup> Even later, the Gothenburg Workers' Association was not an active partner in the process whereby the institute established itself in the community in the course of the 1880s.

The ideological background of the Gothenburg Workers' Institute is Swedish radical liberalism and notably religious liberalism. Edvard Wavrinsky took part in various activities advancing religious freedom and so did his principal source of inspiration, Anton Nyström, who was the creator of the Stockholm Workers' Institute and the embodiment of the Swedish radical liberalism of the 1880s. Nyström was a controversial figure also championing positivism and, more ardently than contemporary liberals in general, the improvement of workers' conditions. Since the Stockholm Workers' Institute functioned as a model for Wavrinsky and since Nyström himself was involved in the establishment of the Gothenburg institute, it is necessary to discuss Nyström's ideas and their impact on adult education to understand the ideological and cultural context of the developments in Gothenburg. Moreover, in Tampere as more generally in Finland, the Stockholm Workers' Institute was an example or a point of departure offering the framework for the discussion on workers' education.

374. Pählman and Sjölin 1944, 155; Richardson 1963, 285–286; Andersson 1980, 30–32, 39.

375. Andersson 1980, 38–39; Bolin 1930, 58–59.

376. On the connection, see Jarnås-Nilsson 1966, 125–127 and Skarin Frykman 1990, 54–55.

377. Before the mid-1880s Wavrinsky's name was written usually either as *Wawrinsky* or *Wavrinsky*. The form that became established later was *Wavrinsky*, which is also used in this study.

### 3.2.1. Edvard Wavrinsky, a Practical Idealist

Edvard Wavrinsky (1848–1924) has not been a subject of scholarly research and the two short biographies written about him at the beginning of the twentieth century go no further than the outlines of his life history.<sup>378</sup> Some information about his activities prior to the establishment of the workers' institute is nevertheless available in a list of biographical data he himself compiled<sup>379</sup>, in newspapers<sup>380</sup>, reference works and Gothenburg address books. Wavrinsky seems not to have published anything about workers' institutes.

Wavrinsky is best known to posterity for his work in the temperance and peace movements, to which he devoted himself after having run the Gothenburg Workers' Institute for only three years. In 1886, he became the director of the Swedish branch of the Independent Order of Good Templars (IOGT), a temperance organization with its origins in the United States, and from 1905 he served as the head of its international organization. The interest in internationalism is also shown by his involvement in the Swedish as well as in the international peace movement and by the fact that he was an Esperantist. In addition to temperance and peace work, Wavrinsky directed his energies to politics. He became a member of parliament in 1891, first representing liberal groups and from 1912 the Social Democrats.<sup>381</sup> As far as his later achievements in the field of education are concerned, he was the one who introduced the idea of the study circle in Sweden in 1888, when he started educational activities among the Good Templars.<sup>382</sup> Wavrinsky was characterized as a person with fervent enthusiasm for humane, cultural and social questions. Although some contemporaries regarded him as a person who 'did not sufficiently take account of realities', he was also portrayed as a practical idealist who worked hard to promote the causes close to his heart. In the parliament, this was shown by motions covering various areas of life like temperance and

378. Skarstedt 1903; Stärner 1920. According to Skarstedt, his account was based to some extent on Wavrinsky's autobiographical notes but there are no references. These notes are probably unpublished and obviously not the 'Data' published in Kämpe's book (see below) since the latter consists solely of dates and brief notes, whereas Skarstedt (e.g. on p. 51) also quotes some thoughts.

379. 'Data ur Edv. Wavrinskys liv. Sammanställd av honom själv', in Kämpe 1932, 452–474.

380. Kungliga biblioteket, digitaliserade svenska dagstidningar 1879–1886.

381. *Nordisk familjebok* Vol. 31 (1921), columns 920–921, <http://runeberg.org/nfck/0486.html>, accessed 1 February 2022; *Svenskt biografiskt handlexikon* Vol. II (1906), 700, <http://runeberg.org/sbh/b0700.html>, accessed 1 February 2022; Stärner 1920, 10–11, 13–15, 17; Sanner 1995, 165, note 3; *Tvåkammarriksdagen 1867–1970*, Band 1, 188.

382. *Kungl. Göta artilleriregemente* II, 171. Thus Oscar Olsson, another activist in the temperance movement and the one usually regarded as the father of the study circle, was not the first to become interested in it but yet the one who developed the method. Laginder et al. 2013, 7–8.

peace work, animal protection, the abolition of capital punishment, maternity and unemployment insurance as well as instruction in hygiene.<sup>383</sup>

Edvard Wavrinsky grew up in an upper-middle-class family, whose father owned a brewery and acted as a bank manager in Linköping and later as a wholesale merchant in Stockholm. After secondary school, Edvard attended military academy and became an officer.<sup>384</sup> At the time Wavrinsky established the Gothenburg Workers' Institute, he was in his mid-thirties but already had fairly wide professional experience. He relinquished regular service shortly after having graduated from the military academy in 1872 and finally resigned his military commission in 1884. According to the biographers, he became an officer because he was interested in gymnastics and sports, which represented for him the idealized picture of military education. The military did not, however, measure up to his expectations as his idealistic strivings clashed with life in barracks and 'his oppositional character' reacted against the blind obedience. After regular service in the army, he made his living as an engineer and surveyor in railway construction and as a technical assistant in a machine export agency.<sup>385</sup>

He seems to have been fluent in some foreign languages, and for a while ran a language institute in Stockholm. He also made study trips abroad and spent a longer time in the United States. There he was employed as the curator of the Swedish army exhibition at the Philadelphia World Exposition of 1876 and studied firefighting at the Washington D.C. firefighting services. He settled in Gothenburg in 1878 and was first employed at a joinery shop owned by his father-in-law. In 1880, he started a business of his own by establishing an agency which represented, for example, a paper mill and a life insurance

383. Skarsted 1903, 52–58; Stårner 1920, 5–6, 11–13; *Tvåkammarriksdagen 1867–1970*, Band 1, 188; *Nordisk familjebok* Vol. 31 (1921), columns 920–921, <http://runeberg.org/nfck/0486.html>, accessed 1 February 2022; *Svenskt biografiskt handlexikon* Vol. II (1906), 700, <http://runeberg.org/sbh/b0700.html>, accessed 1 February 2022. Wavrinsky's interest in temperance and peace movements, the social question, humanizing punishments and animal protection were without doubt inspired by the ideas related to rational faith and practical Christianity, which will be discussed in the following chapter. Sanner 1995, 165–168, 172.

384. Stårner 1920, 6–7. His paternal grandfather's family was from Eastern Europe.

385. 'Data ur Edv. Wavrinskys liv. Sammanställd av honom själv', in Kämpe 1932, 452–455; Skarstedt 1903, 50–51; Stårner 1920, 7–9, 19–20; *Kungl. Göta artilleriregemente* II, 171; *Tvåkammarriksdagen 1867–1970*, Band 1, 188; *Svenskt biografiskt handlexikon* Vol. II (1906), 700, <http://runeberg.org/sbh/b0700.html>, accessed 1 February 2022; *Nordisk familjebok* Vol. 31 (1921), columns 920–921, <http://runeberg.org/nfck/0486.html>, accessed 1 February 2022; *Göteborgs Adress- och Industri-Kalender 1882, Adress-Afdelningen*, 131; *ibid. 1883, Statistiska Kalender-Afdelningen*, 51, <https://sok.regionarkivet.se/goteborgs-adress-och-industrikalender-1850-1899/>, accessed 1 February 2022.

company. Insurance was actually the field in which he was to make a long professional career.<sup>386</sup>

Wavrinsky's preoccupation with social issues apparently had its roots in the mid-1870s, when he was employed on the railway construction site. Contact with workers prompted him to learn more about their conditions and he founded an association where he organized instruction and encouraged workers to engage in self-study by purchasing books for them. The sojourn in the United States made a great impact on Wavrinsky, who later described how the American spirit, with elements like the absolute recognition of human dignity, the self-esteem of people and the freedom from repressive prejudice, had made him feel as if he were born again.<sup>387</sup> His impression was that the conditions of American workers were much better than those of Swedish workers.<sup>388</sup> After having settled in Gothenburg, his interest in social questions led him to the local workers' association.<sup>389</sup>

That the conditions and education of working people became an issue in Gothenburg during the early 1880s is not surprising given the rapid growth and changing nature of the city at that time. Between 1850 and 1880, the number of residents had almost tripled from 26,000 to 76,000, signifying a growth percentage that was faster than ever before and also faster than during the following decades. The growth was for the most part due to migration from the rural areas, bringing workers to the city in great numbers.<sup>390</sup> The demand for labour increased as this important seaport and commercial hub also developed into an industrial city with textile, metal, food, wood and paper industries.<sup>391</sup> In general, manual work characterized the lives of the vast majority of Gothenburg's residents but this extensive group was by no means homogenous. In addition to industrial workers, craftsmen and their employees, it included seamen, workers in the harbour, in warehouses, on construction sites and in different odd jobs as well as domestic servants, laundresses and cleaners.<sup>392</sup> The histories of the city do not provide the proportion of working-class population but according to a rough calculation based on the

386. *Ibid.*

387. Skarstedt 1903, 50–52; Stårner 1920, 7–9.

388. Stated by Wavrinsky's daughter in a short description of her father. Lamm 1949, 127–128.

389. Skarstedt 1903, 51–52.

390. Fritz 1996, 24–25, 27; Attman 1963, 314.

391. Fritz 1996, 55–80, 134–172; Attman 1963, 91ff.

392. Skarin Frykman 1990, 107–110, 119–122; Skarin Frykman 1994, 94–95.

number of inhabitants in different types of residential areas, about 65 per cent of inhabitants were working-class people in 1880.<sup>393</sup>

Wavrinsky apparently made his first initiative for an institution offering workers' education, 'a small-scale workers' academy' as he called it,<sup>394</sup> in the autumn of 1882. Although no further information survives about this plan, it is most likely that he had the Stockholm Workers' Institute in mind. The Stockholm institute, founded two years earlier, was at that time the only institution in Sweden providing systematic popular scientific education to working people. The idea of workers' higher education had also diffused to other localities. The organizing of the Malmö Lecture Society, a name that was also used of such institutions, must have been under way since it was established in December 1882 and the planning of the Uppsala Workers' Institute, which opened in March 1883, had probably been started when Wavrinsky made his proposal.<sup>395</sup>

Since Wavrinsky was a member of the Gothenburg Workers' Association, albeit not belonging to its governing bodies, it was natural that he first approached this with his proposal, even more so because of the educational nature of these associations.<sup>396</sup> The records of the workers' association do not contain any information referring specifically to this plan but an entry in September 1882 shows that Wavrinsky had submitted a written proposal, which was read out in a board meeting. The proposal itself cannot be found and it was not discussed in subsequent meetings.<sup>397</sup> Nevertheless, Wavrinsky later referred to this proposal and it seems that the plan had actually not been as grandiose as the name 'workers' academy' may imply. He had only requested that the workers' association offer premises for the lectures he was going to

393. Attman 1963, 264–265, 282–285.

394. *Arbetarbögskola*.

395. Leander 1978, 242.

396. Skarstedt 1903, 51–52; Lamm 1949, 130. The lists of board members given in the Gothenburg catalogue of addresses reveal that Wavrinsky was not a board member of the workers' association.  *Göteborgs adress- och Industri-Kalender 1879, Statistiska Kalender-Afdelningen*, 47; *ibid.* 1880, 47; *ibid.* 1881, 47; *ibid.* 1882, 63–64; *ibid.* 1883, 65, <https://sok.regionarkivet.se/goteborgs-adress-och-industrikalender-1850-1899/>, accessed 1 February 2022. At the end of 1883 he was nevertheless one of the auditors. *GHT, 'Arbetareförening'* 26 November 1883; RegA, GAI A I:1a, Minutes 19 February 1883, item 2.

397. RegA, GAF A 1:4, Minutes 9 September 1882 item 1. Between 9 September 1882 and March 1883, when the Workers' Institute was established, no other entries naming the proposal or letters by him can be found. RegA, GAF A1:4, Minutes January 1881–2 January 1890; B1:1 Correspondence 1877–1882 (also contains later letters). However, the materials seem to be somewhat fragmented. The major local papers obviously did not mention Wavrinsky's proposal in the autumn of 1882 (*Göteborgs Handels- och Sjöfartstidning*, *Göteborgs-Posten* and *Göteborgs Veckoblad* are digitized.)

organize, obviously with the help of lecturers who would have given their services free of charge.<sup>398</sup> Yet the name ‘academy’ seems to have suggested the pursuit of continuity and even institutionalization, features which an organization focusing solely on education could offer and which were lacking in the educational activities of the workers’ association.

The board was not, however, willing to promote the issue and the idea was simply rejected since, in Wavrinsky’s words, ‘the proposal did not receive a positive response or even sympathy’.<sup>399</sup> There are actually plausible explanations for the rejection. First, the workers’ association may have deemed such an institution unnecessary because the association itself was already organizing lectures and discussion meetings.<sup>400</sup> Second, the disinclination the board showed towards the idea of a workers’ institute may have resulted from Wavrinsky’s person and doings. He had been involved in radical circles promoting religious freedom since the turn of the 1880s and it is possible that a plan introduced by such a person aroused suspicions. Even though many of the board members were presumably moderate liberals, there were also conservatives among them, like the chairman J. A. Hallgren.<sup>401</sup> There were actually similar suspicions a few years later when Wavrinsky became active in the Good Templars. His earlier involvement in a religiously liberal movement prompted accusations against him of attempts to infiltrate his own views about religion into the temperance organization.<sup>402</sup> Third, even though Wavrinsky had used the name ‘workers’ academy’, the leaders of the workers’ association presumably associated the plan with the Stockholm Workers’ Institute. If Wavrinsky’s religious liberalism bothered some of them, the founder of the Stockholm institute, Anton Nyström, must have worried them much more.<sup>403</sup> Moreover, a controversy caused by Nyström’s positivist opinions and their alleged influence over the Stockholm Workers’ Institute one year earlier must

398. RegA, GAI A I:1a, Minutes 19 February 1883, item 2.

399. *Ibid.*

400. RegA, GAF A 1:4, Minutes 8 January 1883, item 2; Jarnås-Nilsson 1966, 104.

401. Fredberg 1919, 720. Hallgren’s conservatism is also suggested by his negative attitude to general suffrage. Jarnås-Nilsson 1966, 105–106.

402. Stårner 1920, 9; Kämpe 1932, 125–127. Kämpe’s book as a whole focuses on this religious dispute in the IOGT. On Wavrinsky’s religiously liberal background and the nature of his religiosity, see Kämpe 1932, 85–88, 111, 117–118, 143, 179, 308, 319, 325–326, 412. The dispute is also addressed in Svensson A. 1979, 94–103.

403. According to Andersson (1980, 52), some liberal associations in Stockholm kept their distance from Nyström because they were worried about the trouble any connection with him might cause.



still have been fresh in mind, having been reported by the newspapers around the country.<sup>404</sup>

While it is probable that Wavrinsky's and Nyström's activities in the circles promoting liberal and radical thoughts contributed to the rejection of Wavrinsky's first proposal, this involvement also formed a key motive for founding the Gothenburg Workers' Institute. Although contemporaries were obviously aware of the role of religious liberalism, this was not so well-known afterwards because Wavrinsky did not openly write about such motives. Moreover, such background seems to have been shut out while reasons related to the creation of a responsible individual and citizen have attracted attention, having been considered important in later adult education as well. In the case of Anton Nyström and the Stockholm institute, the positivist background has often been mentioned but still there is no analysis of its actual significance for the development of workers' institutes.<sup>405</sup> For these reasons, and because Wavrinsky's motives must partly to be deduced from his actions as the material is otherwise scarce, religious liberalism as a background of these institutions is discussed in more detail in this study. Furthermore, the connection between religious liberalism and workers' institutes illuminates one of the aspects of modernization as a context where adult education emerged and also reveals how the particular interests of the founders influenced the beginnings of these institutes.

The statements emphasizing the political and religious neutrality of instruction, which from the early 1880s became a standard phrase in the programmes of the Swedish workers' institutes, also suggest that these questions played a role in the first institutes. That the concern over political and religious influence was originally related to radical liberalism has for the most part been forgotten or overshadowed by the attention attracted by the rise of the socialist labour movement, either as a threat experienced by the upper classes or as their motive for promoting workers' education.

404. Bolin 1930, 32. Wavrinsky also became a target of similar attention by the press in 1887–1888 in the context of the religious dispute within the IOGT. Kämpe 1932, 123.

405. See e.g. Frängsmyr 1991, Andersson 1980; Andersson 1982.

### 3.2.2. Wavrinsky and Religious Liberalism

The establishment of the first workers' institutes falls in a period when liberal and radical ideas gained ground in Swedish intellectual and political life. Although the 1880s is perceived as the breakthrough of modern radicalism in Sweden, the cultural and ruling elites were still largely conservative in their social outlook, religious in the way the Lutheran state church defined and anti-utilitarian and classical humanists in their cultural and educational views. Such an ideological climate was challenged by intellectuals demanding extended suffrage and reforms of the school system, presenting arguments for a rational and utilitarian view of life and highlighting the role of science as the basis for explanations concerning nature and human life. Numerous associations were founded to publicize and promote such ideas. Among them was *Verdandi*, established by university students in Uppsala to defend freedom of thought and speech, to highlight social questions and to promote popular education. Cultural radicalism found expression in literature as novelists portrayed social conditions and class distinctions realistically. The 1880s was also a period when popular movements gained momentum and, in addition to the socialist labour movement, the temperance movement gained ground in Swedish society.<sup>406</sup>

Religion likewise became a target of new, unprejudiced and unconventional interpretations. Religious liberalism drew on the critical views on Christian doctrines that had emerged in Sweden from the mid-nineteenth century onwards. Criticism arose out of the clash with modern natural sciences, which produced evidence inconsistent with church dogma, and of a more relativistic view on Christianity resulting from better acquaintance with other religions, to which the study of religions contributed. A significant impetus to this discussion was given by the novelist Victor Rydberg in 1862 with his book on the biblical doctrine concerning Christ. Rydberg attacked Christian views on miracles, original sin, Hell and the Trinity and questioned the idea that Jesus was the son of God, emphasizing his humanity instead. In addition to Christian doctrines, religious liberals also attacked the authoritarian structures of the Lutheran church and thus partly shared views with the free church movement in defending the role of parishioners in religious observances against the monopoly of the clergy.<sup>407</sup>

406. Richardson 1963, 80–101, 309ff; Andersson 1980, 30–32; Gustavsson 1991, 70–74; Frängsmyr 2000, 141–149; Olsson B. 1994, 122–129.

407. Another important Swedish contribution was C.J. Boström's criticism of the doctrine of Hell of 1864. Sanner 1995, 63–64; Frängsmyr 2000, 79–83, 137; Richardson 1963, 92; Jansson 2021, 442–443.

## THE FRIENDS OF FREE THINKING

Religious liberalism or radicalism has not been highlighted in the accounts of Wavrinsky's life. Nor do the brief references to the associations he was involved in reveal the nature of his activities related to religious liberalism.<sup>408</sup> Therefore, the associations promoting religious freedom he established at the turn of the 1880s deserve a closer look.

His first enterprise was a circle called 'The Friends of Free Thinking'<sup>409</sup>, which he assembled in 1879.<sup>410</sup> Practically the only thing known about this group is that it consisted of young people and it obviously encouraged discussion on religious topics by challenging the teachings of the state church. At any rate, this is what its sister organization with a similar name in the small industrial community of Motala in Southern Sweden did and was described as anti-Christian by the bishop of the diocese. The members of the Motala group were mainly working men and it is possible that the Gothenburg circle attracted people whom Wavrinsky had met in the workers' association.<sup>411</sup> In general, Swedish workers' associations were loyal to the state church and regarded religion as an essential part of popular education. Until the 1880s, religious topics did not feature in their meetings. Some associations had actually forbidden discussion on religion in order to avoid the disputes anticipated to result if sectarians and representatives of the free church movement had an opportunity to disseminate their ideas. The attitudes nevertheless began to change and in the second national convention of the workers' associations, held in summer 1882, religious freedom was one of the topics discussed.<sup>412</sup> This meeting reveals that Wavrinsky's thoughts did probably not mesh well in the Gothenburg Workers' Association as its chairman J. A. Hallgren declared in his speech that promoting religious freedom was not among the tasks of the workers' associations.<sup>413</sup>

408. Skarstedt 1903; Stärner 1920. Kämpe (1932) focuses on a single episode of religious dispute but nevertheless opens up some aspects of Wavrinsky's thoughts about religion and even more his adversaries' views about Wavrinsky's ideas.

409. *Fria Tankars Vänner*, literally 'friends of free thoughts'.

410. 'Data ur Edv. Wavrinskys liv. Sammanställd av honom själv', in Kämpe 1932, 454.

411. Skarstedt 1903, 51–52; *Sanningsökaren* 1878 No. 4, 129; *Sanningsökaren* 1880 No. 4, 126–127; Landen 1889, 13. For a characterization of the Motala group, see *Östgöta Correspondenten*, 'Linköpings stifts prestmöte' 8 July 1882.

412. Pählman and Sjölin 1944, 161–163; Olsson B. 1994, 118.

413. *Sanningsökaren* 1882 No. 8, 227–228. Neither did the members of the Gothenburg Workers' Association support absolute religious freedom in 1886. *Nerikes Allehanda*, 'Från rikets andra stad, Arbetareprogrammet' 7 April 1886.

## THE TRUTH SEEKERS AND RATIONAL FAITH

Even though ‘The Friends of Free Thinking’ in Gothenburg remained by all accounts a small, little known circle, the criticism of the church and its dogma received more visibility as Wavrinsky founded another association, ‘The Society of the Truth Seekers in Gothenburg’<sup>414</sup> at the end of 1880.<sup>415</sup> This society was a part of a small religiously liberal movement, the ideas and aims of which were expressed and discussed in a journal with the name *Sanningssökaren* (The Truth Seeker). The journal had started in 1877 and was published in Stockholm but was also distributed to the other Nordic countries. The Truth Seekers<sup>416</sup> called their approach to religion rational faith (*förnuftsstro*)<sup>417</sup> and drew on ideas central to religious liberalism as they criticized the literal interpretation of the Bible and emphasized the use of reason in interpretation. According to the Truth Seekers, faith should not be against reason and the laws of nature, and thus faith should not be against the use of reason manifesting itself in scientific research. On the contrary, rational faith was in harmony with free inquiry as this could help to find the core of faith.<sup>418</sup>

Rational faith was actually characterized by contradictory tendencies. On the one hand, it aimed at constituting an alternative Christian movement and in this it was related to Unitarianism, a faction within Protestantism underlining the role of reason in religion and criticizing especially the doctrine of the Trinity. On the other hand, rational faith aspired to the position of a meta-religion, trying to find the core under the surface of all religions because the Truth Seekers emphasized that ‘there is only one religion but it has many forms’. In this, they regarded rational faith as a counterpart to natural religion, an idea developed by religious scholars. Despite all their criticism, the Truth Seekers were still disposed to hold on to Christianity, regarding themselves as Christians according to the spirit of that religion but not according to its dogma. There was a practical reason for holding on to Christianity and it

414. *Sanningssökarnes förening i Göteborg*.

415. Landen 1889, 8–9.

416. Sanner uses the term *förnuftsstroende*, the literal translation of which is ‘a believer in rational faith’ or ‘a rationalist’ (see the following footnote). I prefer ‘Truth Seekers’ because this term was used in the name of the association Wavrinsky established and it was also used in the press during the early 1880s.

417. In the English abstract of Sanner’s book this term has been translated as ‘rationalism’. Sanner 1995, 421.

418. *Sanningssökaren* 1880 No. 1–2, front inside cover ‘Anmälan’; Landen 1889, 3–4; Sanner 1995, 163, 170, 176. The title of Landen’s booklet refers to the history of religious freedom in nineteenth-century Sweden but it focuses on the Society of the Truth Seekers in Gothenburg, which changed its name to the Congregation of Rational Faith in 1884. Landen 1889, 13.

was related to their main goal, freedom of religion enabling people leave the Lutheran state church. As the Truth Seekers challenged the way the church interpreted Christian dogma, many of them wanted to leave the church in order to be able to practise their religion in the way they preferred. However, according to contemporary Swedish law, it was not possible to leave the church without entering another Christian denomination and this is why the Truth Seekers attempted to gain recognition as a Christian denomination.<sup>419</sup>

The form of religious liberalism the Truth Seekers represented was actually fairly radical and they saw themselves as a part of the contemporary freethinker movement although eschewing pure atheism.<sup>420</sup> It was also accompanied by an approach to society they called practical Christianity, which had its basis in the Unitarian conception that morality was the core of religion and the renewal of morality was necessary for social change. Practical Christianity referred to the idea that faith should manifest itself in deeds instead of the contemplation of doctrinal questions such as original sin and atonement. According to the Truth Seekers, such contemplation made earthly life gloomy and stressed salvation as the goal of human struggle although the goal should have been making the kingdom of God come true on earth. Thus work for social reforms realizing justice and equality among people was basically religious in nature and a manifestation of practical Christianity. The Truth Seekers did not, however, have any concrete programme for social change but favoured such general goals as universal education, equality between women and men, the elimination of class distinctions, humanizing criminal punishments and preventing war. Moreover, the Truth Seekers emphasized that it was not sufficient to reform the external circumstances only but that the change should start within individuals. Thus the Truth Seekers highlighted the role of intellectual development and from the start announced the diffusion of general education to be one of their principles. Although some of the theorists and followers had political interests, it was stressed that rational faith itself should remain neutral with respect to political questions.<sup>421</sup>

The foundation of the Society of the Truth Seekers in Gothenburg was catalysed by an incident which exemplifies the negative attitudes of the ecclesiastical establishment towards religious liberalism. Klas Pontus Arnoldson, the

419. Sanner 1995, 68, 70, 171–175; *Sanningsökaren* 1880 No. 1–2, front inside cover ‘Anmälan’; Landén 1889, 11.

420. Sanner 1995, 170, 179–180.

421. Sanner 1995, 68–71, 192–195, 204–205; *Sanningsökaren* 1880 No. 1–2, front inside cover ‘Anmälan’; *Sanningsökaren* 1877 January, 5–14; *Sanningsökaren* 1877 Juli–Augusti, 250, 255, 258–259; *Sanningsökaren* 1879 No. 4, 97, 103–104.

editor of *Sanningsökaren*, had given lectures on the American Unitarian W. E. Channing in the lecture hall of a Gothenburg secondary school but the bishop, who was the inspector of secondary schools in his diocese, called them off by forbidding the use of the school premises for such a purpose. According to the bishop, Arnoldson's lectures denied the foundation of the Christian faith and described them as 'attacks of modern unbelief'. He regarded the ideas of rational faith as fallacies and made known that those who did not believe in the divinity of Christ could not be respectable people.<sup>422</sup>

As a reaction to this, Wavrinsky established the Society of the Truth Seekers in Gothenburg in 1880 and acted as its chairman during the first years.<sup>423</sup> Short-lived associations of Truth Seekers had already functioned in Gothenburg and Stockholm during the early 1870s and one had been established in 1880 in the small town of Jönköping in Southern Sweden. Moreover, associations like the Friends of Free Thinking in Motala were counted among this movement.<sup>424</sup> Like the journal *Sanningsökaren*, the Truth Seekers in Gothenburg aimed at complete religious freedom and intended to make preparations for a church or community based on rational faith. The members were not required to profess any specific doctrine but were allowed to maintain the faith that best suited their religious needs since the founders understood rationality and religious sentiment to be universal to all. In spite of this liberal and tolerant attitude, the society nonetheless emphasized that its fundamental principles included the belief in one God, the afterlife and the victory of good over evil to reject the allegations of atheism and positivism, which obviously had already been made against the Truth Seekers. The rules also stressed that the society would not follow any particular cult in its meetings to ensure its free development.<sup>425</sup>

These principles evidently reflected the nature of Wavrinsky's own religiosity. Yet he seems to have been inclined to agnosticism in the sense that he could not know the nature of God and he probably rejected a conception

422. *Sanningsökaren* 1880 No. 12, 365; Landen 1889, 8–9.

423. The names of functionaries are not listed in the annual reports published in *Sanningsökaren* but the fact that Wavrinsky was the chairman can be concluded from news stories about Reverend Turland's visit in *Göteborgs-Posten*, 'Sanningsökarnes förening' 29 September 1882 and *GHT*, 'Reverend Ephraim Turland' 30 September 1882. He was still the chairman in 1885. *GHT*, 'De förnuftstroendes samfund' 17 August 1885 (Morgon-nummer).

424. Landen 1889, 7–9; Sanner 1995, 162. The Gothenburg association of 1871 had been established by K.P. Arnoldson, who later became the editor of the journal *Sanningsökaren*.

425. *Sanningsökaren* 1881 No. 2, 63–64; *Sanningsökaren* 1882 No. 2, 58–60 (the Truth Seekers in Gothenburg, annual report 1881); *Sanningsökaren* 1883 No. 3, 88–90 (the Truth Seekers in Gothenburg, annual report 1882).

of an anthropomorphic or personal God. The Truth Seekers in general had a somewhat ambiguous conception of God as they seemed to approach pantheism yet kept their distance from it. It is possible that Wavrinsky also abandoned the idea of Heaven and Hell as he said he did not need such inducements or admonitions to fulfil his duties but emphasized the importance of doing one's best without selfish calculations as the goal of earthly life.<sup>426</sup> Some people obviously regarded him as a Unitarian, and in the early 1880s he was even referred to as a Unitarian preacher.<sup>427</sup> Criticizing hypocrisy and the attention paid to external forms, he tried later as the leader of the Good Templars to tone down the religious label of that movement and stressed that the rituals with religious content conducted as a part of their activities should be voluntary.<sup>428</sup>

In two years, about sixty people joined the Society of the Truth Seekers in Gothenburg, and as their meetings for the most part were open to all interested, the number of participants could be twice the number of actual members. During this two-year period, the society showed considerable activity by organizing more than forty meetings with lectures and discussions. Thus, despite the relatively small number of regular members, its activities must have been fairly prominent in Gothenburg, especially as it advertised its meetings in the local press, which also sometimes reported on them. One of the highlights was the visit of the Unitarian minister Ephraim Turland from Manchester in September 1882, only three weeks after Wavrinsky had presumably submitted his proposal for establishing a workers' academy. When Turland gave his speeches, Wavrinsky acted as his interpreter.<sup>429</sup>

Hence there is no doubt that Wavrinsky was well-known in Gothenburg for his involvement in religiously liberal activities at that time. In addition to the Truth Seekers, another channel for advancing religious liberalism opened up

426. Wavrinsky's letter to the editor of *Oskarshamn-Tidningen* 17 March 1887 and O.E. Lindberg's letter to Wavrinsky (date not given, obviously 1888), cited in Kämpe 1932, 86–87, 210. For the Truth Seekers' views on God, see Sanner 1995, 175–179. According to Sanner, the movement ended up with a stronger pantheistic conception by the end of the 1880s.
427. *Dagens Nyheter*, 'Unitarierna' 8 January 1881; *Malmö Nya Allebanda*, 'Inrikes Nytt' 12 January 1881; Kämpe 1932, 338 (a letter from Wm. W. Turnbull to Dr Oronthyatekha 20 September 1888 cited).
428. Skarstedt 1903, 53–54.
429. *Sanningsökaren* 1882 No. 2, 58–60 (the Truth Seekers in Gothenburg, annual report 1881); *Sanningsökaren* 1883 No. 3, 88–90 (the Truth Seekers in Gothenburg, annual report 1882). On advertisements and news, see e.g. *Göteborgs-Posten* 21 January 1882 and 10 June 1882; *GHT* 9 September 1882, 23 September 1882, 27 September 1882; *GHT*, 'Reverend Ephraim Turland' 30 September 1882; *Göteborgs-Posten*, 'Sanningsökarnes förening' 29 September 1882. See also Jansson 2021.

in Gothenburg as the Society for Religious Freedom was established there in November 1882 by ‘friends of religious freedom’. Wavrinsky was one of these and belonged to the inner circle of this new society since he was appointed to a committee drawing up its rules. This was also an enterprise that was followed by the local press.<sup>430</sup> Wavrinsky became a board member and seems to have been one of the leading figures while living in Gothenburg.<sup>431</sup>

In general, the early 1880s was a time when the question of religious freedom featured in the national discussion because of the parliamentary motion calling for the unconditional right to leave the state church, tabled in 1882 by K. P. Arnoldson.<sup>432</sup> Although the issue was topical, a counterpart to the Gothenburg Society for Religious Freedom was established in Stockholm only two years later. Not surprisingly, the founder was Anton Nyström, whose positivist thinking and its impact on adult education is discussed next.<sup>433</sup>

### 3.2.3. Anton Nyström: A ‘Doctor of Society’ Advocating Higher Workers’ Education

#### A POSITIVIST IN STOCKHOLM

Anton Nyström (1842–1931) shared with Wavrinsky and the Truth Seekers the goal of achieving total religious freedom but he was also heavily engaged in other topical societal questions. He was a doctor by training and specialized in skin diseases and mental illness.<sup>434</sup> To those wondering why a medical doctor was investigating social questions, Nyström responded that only few people had the opportunity to study life at such close quarters as doctors. Medical practice had taught him how an enormous proportion of diseases was caused by ‘social conditions, false theories, unfair laws, unsystematic education and by many kinds of inequity and prejudice’. For this reason Nyström thought that doctors should also be ‘doctors of society’ healing such social maladies.<sup>435</sup> Along with religious issues, Nyström’s radicalism manifested itself in his

430. GHT, ‘Religionsfrihetsförening’ 7 November 1882; *Göteborgs-Posten*, ‘För bildande af en religionsfrihetsförening’ 7 November 1882; *Göteborgs Veckoblad*, ‘Religionsfrihetsförening’ 9 November 1882; GHT, ‘Religionsfrihetsföreningen’ 22 December 1882.

431. *Göteborgs-Posten*, ‘Religionsfrihetsförening in Göteborg’ 16 December 1884; GHT, ‘Religionsfrihetsföreningen’ 27 February 1886.

432. Landen 1889, 11; Richardson 1963, 91.

433. Frängsmyr 1964, 114. Frängsmyr’s article ‘Den unge Anton Nyström och positivismen’ was published with minor changes as ‘Positivisten på barrikaderna’ in *Svärsmaren i vetenskapens hus* in 1977.

434. Nyström 1929, 62, 72.

435. Nyström 1879, 3–5; Nyström 1880b, 35.



activities as a defender of workers' rights. He was an industrious writer and published extensively on the questions he was preoccupied with and also promoted these issues by founding several associations.<sup>436</sup>

In his memoirs, Nyström recounted that he became a free thinker as a student, ending up as an atheist a few years later, and adopted a scientific view of life where Darwinism played a significant role.<sup>437</sup> He acquainted himself with the ideas of the French philosopher Auguste Comte in the early 1870s and positivism, Comte's philosophy, provided conceptual tools for elaborating his thinking. In the spirit of positivism, Nyström argued against theological and metaphysical speculation by emphasizing the role of science in the development of society. Echoing Comte, he assumed that in the social evolution of humankind, the theological (or fictive) and metaphysical (or abstract/philosophical) stages were followed by the positive, scientific stage. At this highest stage, supernatural forces and abstract entities as explanatory factors would be replaced by the search for the laws inherent in all phenomena, natural as well as societal. For this reason, all scientific theories should be based on the observation of reality. Solutions to the complex problems of the age could be found by exploring the laws of society and therefore Nyström emphasized that policymaking should be based on scientific principles, enabling the sound development of society without destruction and upheavals.<sup>438</sup>

Comte's thinking had actually two sides, philosophical and religious. His philosophy can be characterized as critical empiricism emphasizing scientific method whereas the religious side was not only a theoretical system but a sort of cult or practical moral religion, where humanity displaced God and the ideal of life was altruism, living for others. As an outward symbol Comte's religion used its own chronology and calendar. From the mid-1870s Nyström propagated positivism by translating Comte's works into Swedish and by writing books and articles on positivism. Nyström was enthusiastic about both sides of Comte's system and, for example, published a positivist devotional book. In 1879, Nyström founded the Positivist Society in Stockholm on the model of the Parisian society Comte had founded three decades earlier. The Positivist Society in Stockholm organized meetings with lectures and discussion on Sundays, which was obviously an attempt to create an alternative

436. Later, he also campaigned for reforms in psychiatric wards and the use of contraceptives, offered sexual advice by mail and was involved in the peace movement. Luttenberger, 'C. Anton Nyström', *Svenskt biografiskt lexikon* (urn:sbl:8499).

437. Nyström 1929, 21–22, 42–43, 45–47, 52, 57–58; Frängsmyr 1964, 86–87, 89–90.

438. Nyström 1929, 100–104; Nyström 1880a, 9.

to church services, and observed a few positivist feast days.<sup>439</sup> One of the aims of Nyström's Positivist Society was to establish a new spiritual community for those who did not find the existing religious denominations congenial.<sup>440</sup>

In the 1870s and early 1880s, Nyström attacked Christian dogma and narrow-mindedness and suggested that state and church be separated, the faculties of theology at universities closed and denominational religious education at schools replaced by the neutral history of religion.<sup>441</sup> Thus it is not surprising that Nyström's ideas chimed with those of the circles of the Truth Seekers but since positivism had gone further apart from Christianity than most Truth Seekers, for instance by rejecting a personal god, it contained features that these could not accept. Both positivists and the Truth Seekers nevertheless criticized Christian dogma and the status of the state church, which united them on the level of action to pursue absolute religious freedom.<sup>442</sup> Like some of the Truth Seekers, Nyström wanted to leave the church and tried to twice. Even though he managed to obtain a certificate confirming his renunciation, it was not valid in legal terms because he did not propose to transfer to any other Christian denomination, which was the imperative condition, but to the Positivist Society.<sup>443</sup> As far as Wavrinsky is concerned, it is not known if he tried to leave the church but when marrying for the second time in 1887, he made an unsuccessful attempt to organize a civil marriage. In spite of their attempts, the Truth Seekers likewise did not gain recognition as a Christian denomination.<sup>444</sup>

#### **WORKERS' GREAT SOCIAL MISSION AND THE NEED FOR HIGHER ADULT EDUCATION**

Nyström's attitude towards working people was shaped by positivism but in 1879 certain domestic episodes, including the measures taken by the authorities against a lumber industry strike in Sundsvall in Northern Sweden

439. According to Frängsmyr, positivism had attracted attention in Sweden even before Nyström although no books focusing on it had been published in Swedish. Frängsmyr 1964, 93–100, 108, 111–112; Andersson 1980, 51.

440. *Den positivistiske budbäraren* 1880 No. 1, 2.

441. Frängsmyr 1964, 113; Luttenberger, 'C Anton Nyström', *Svenskt biografiskt lexikon* (urn:sbl:8499). Some of these demands were also in a list of measures to be taken in the near future, printed in the back inner cover of Nyström's serie *Sambälliga tidsfrågor* (e.g. No. 1 and 4).

442. *Sanningsökaren*, 1877 Maj, 155–161 ('Positivismen och den svenske dissenterlagen af Anton Nyström', with comments by the editor); Sanner 1995, 187–191; Frängsmyr 1964, 106–107.

443. Nyström 1929, 106–107; Andersson 1980, 50–51; Luttenberger, 'C. Anton Nyström', *Svenskt biografiskt lexikon*, (urn:sbl:8499); Sanner 1995, 179.

444. Lamm 1949, 130; Sanner 1995, 174 footnote 1.

and the first workers' assembly, also convinced him of the necessity to speak up for them.<sup>445</sup> Although Nyström wanted to improve workers' conditions, he did not perceive workers as merely a class in need of help and support. Inspired by Comte, he raised workers to a special position among social classes and argued that they had the capability to contribute to the advancement of culture and society and even portrayed this role as their 'great social mission'. Nyström believed that at least the more talented workers were already ready to participate in the development of society, the church and education.<sup>446</sup> The great social mission of the working class would be carried through by assisting the new intellectual elite, formed by positivist philosophers, in its efforts to find solutions to contemporary challenges. For this, knowledge about the laws of nature and society was necessary. However, workers' role in this alliance was auxiliary as they were not expected to take part in political life as politicians but as citizens exerting their power indirectly, as members of associations, builders of public opinion and even as electors.<sup>447</sup>

Nyström assumed that workers' capability to contribute to the development of society and culture was due to their moral superiority to the upper classes. Like Comte, he even glorified the working class because of this alleged quality, shown in the characteristics of solidarity, empathy and self-denial, which were necessary for promoting the common good. According to Nyström, these higher moral qualities were inborn in working people as they had rarely received any regular education. Academics, on the contrary, were led by egoism in their scholarly work and were also preoccupied with fruitless theological and philosophical speculations, neglecting practical and useful studies that could help the masses with their difficulties and suffering. Working people had common sense, indisputable experience and practical insights into the genuine necessities of life, hence they were able to contribute to the development of culture and society. Thus there was both moral and intellectual kinship between workers and positivists which made their alliance natural.<sup>448</sup> Connecting the common people with morality conflicted with the prevailing view seeing the members of the educated classes as the bearers of moral

445. Nyström 1879, 17; Nyström 1929, 89–95; Andersson 1971, 131–132; Andersson 1980, 34–35.

446. Nyström 1880a, 5–6, 10–11, 16–17, 20–21, 38–39.

447. Nyström 1880a, 22–24, 36–37; Nyström 1880b, 3.

448. Nyström 1880a, 6–8, 10–13, 17–18, 22–24; Gustavsson 1991, 72–73.

superiority. Such superiority was understood to be due to their upbringing and education, which produced a cultivated, consistent and balanced worldview.<sup>449</sup>

To be able to benefit from their inherent capabilities and moral qualities, adult workers needed systematic education and working-class children more comprehensive and better elementary schooling. Grown-up workers should cultivate their minds, not only labour, and Nyström's ambition was to broaden their horizons from the subject matter of elementary school to the rudiments of science. Education was necessary, since only by becoming aware of the laws of nature and society could people organize social and personal life in a sensible way. Society would benefit from workers' education since it was essential that all its members could contribute to the common good.<sup>450</sup>

Such a vision of workers' education emphasizing scientific instruction was a novelty. The usual opinion for long in the nineteenth century was that practical skills, elementary knowledge and religious instruction were sufficient for the common people. Educating peasants and workers had even been considered dangerous because of the assumed threat of 'half education', a state of imperfect and superficial knowledge that could result from a small amount of learning not properly absorbed. This was connected to the concern that 'half education' could contribute to the emergence of unfounded expectations of social advancement and, consequently, social discontent.<sup>451</sup> Moreover, popular education for urban workers, on the one hand, and for peasants, on the other, had been set against each other, for instance, by C. A. Agardh in the 1830s. He had considered workers' education the more risky because their social standing differed from that of landowning peasants and because towns were thought to lack the control and moderation characterizing the relations between rural people. For these reasons, education was feared to engender distorted ideas of workers' position.<sup>452</sup> Many of Nyström's contemporaries also questioned the capability and interest of working people to study theoretical subjects and their need to learn such things.<sup>453</sup>

449. Högnäs 2001, 30–31; Kaveh 2012, 117–119; Frykman and Löfgren 1990, 85. I have used the expressions 'educated' and 'education' for the Swedish terms *bildade* and *bildning*. The meaning of *bildning* will be discussed later.

450. Nyström 1880a, 37; Nyström 1880b, 3–4, 10, 16–19, 22, 25, 33, 38–40.

451. The concept 'half education' appeared in Sweden in the early nineteenth-century debate concerning higher education but spread to discussion on popular and workers' education as well. Gustavsson 1991, 35; Runeby 1995, 62–70, 74–75; Eriksson, Niklas 2012, 158–161.

452. Gustavsson 1991, 57–58; Lundgren 2003, 205–206.

453. Nyström 1880b, 24, 40–41.

In Nyström's opinion, workers needed profound education, or 'enlightenment', in order to develop themselves as human beings and members of society.<sup>454</sup> Workers deserved 'whole education' instead of 'half education', and by the latter he must have referred to superficial knowledge.<sup>455</sup> Nyström was convinced that there were plenty of workers seeking opportunities to educate themselves, being able to absorb and utilize higher learning because of their untapped intellectual potential. Although he admitted that studying could be difficult for people unaccustomed to this kind of exercise, he still believed that through diligence they could be trained in such an activity that was new to them.<sup>456</sup> Yet he was a realist in the sense that he did not expect all workers to be interested in educating themselves. It would first be more ambitious working people who would seek the cultivation of the mind and, in turn, encourage larger circles to educational activities.<sup>457</sup>

In Nyström's discussion on workers' education, enlightenment (*upplysning*) was an essential concept but he also used the concept *bildning*. Cognate with the German *Bildung*, this concept does not have an exact equivalent in English and is sometimes rendered as liberal education<sup>458</sup>, general education or culture, but also as mere education although it is a more comprehensive notion. *Bildning* includes the idea of learning or cultivation as a person's inner process and the outcome of this process, or dedication to knowledge and learning with the resulting change in the whole person: in understanding, character and emotions.<sup>459</sup> The Finnish counterpart of that term, *sivistys*, has been characterized as a key concept of the nineteenth- and early twentieth-century political and social discourse, referring to the fact that it was a necessary concept in outlining any of the major questions of the era.<sup>460</sup> Presumably the notion *bildning* had a comparable role in Sweden as well. The concept did not only appear in learned discussion but also in the ordinary language of newspapers, speeches and the programmes of associations, for example, and so it could

454. Nyström 1880a, 33–34, 36–37; Nyström 1880b, 12, 15–16, 32–34, 38–39.

455. GHT, 'Doktor Anton Nyströms föredrag' 3 January 1883. At the end of the nineteenth century, 'half education' often referred to superficial learning acquired to gain prestige, e.g. Ellen Key used the concept in this meaning. Eriksson Niklas 2012, 162–164, 167.

456. Nyström 1880b, 30, 32.

457. Nyström 1880a, 30.

458. Anglo-American liberal education can be seen as a version of German *Bildung* although the modern liberal education tradition developed independently. Sjöström et al. 2017, 170. Thus translating *bildning*/*Bildung* as liberal education may involve connotations from this tradition.

459. Schånberg 2004 11–12. On the philosophical and historical background of the concept *bildning*, see Gustavsson 1991, 27–59.

460. Turunen 2016, 28–29.

have different nuances in different contexts.<sup>461</sup> This concept was also central in S. A. Hedlund's criticism of universities and in his outlines of Free Academy (see Chapter 2.1).

The concept *bildning* had a strong social connotation as it was associated with the upper classes and was one of the characteristics that differentiated the upper strata of society from the labouring classes. This was also revealed by the expression *den bildade klassen*, the educated class. The principal outward manifestations of *bildning* were school education and formal qualifications, cultural interests and manners. Although liberals and intellectuals concerned about the conditions of working people emphasized the importance of improving the level of *bildning* among the masses, they did not usually have such an upper-class education in mind. The education of the masses was called *folkbildning*, education for the people or popular education, with different arrangements and content from that intended for the upper classes. Popular education in its early phase was also conducted by actors who came from outside, or from above, of the target group and were 'educated'.<sup>462</sup>

Nyström, however, preferred the expressions enlightenment, scientific enlightenment, *bildning*, higher education (*högre bildning*) and studying or dedication to studies when describing the goals of the Stockholm Workers' Institute.<sup>463</sup> These imply that he understood the content of workers' education to be more extensive and ambitious and the learning process to be more thorough than conventionally assumed. In this way, he raised workers in the sphere of *bildning* and his ideas have been considered a turning point as to how the relation between working people and education in Sweden was understood. Raising workers in the sphere of *bildning* is in accordance with the observation that Nyström's conception of *bildning* drew on both sides of the philosophical background of the concept. One of these was the nineteenth-century German new humanism with the idea of personal development and the other one the older Enlightenment tradition with its confidence in science and in everyone's capability to be educated. This is also suggested by the fact that Nyström used the both terms, *upplysning* (enlightenment) and *bildning*.<sup>464</sup>

461. Lundgren 2003, 199.

462. Gustavsson 1991, 35–36; Runeby 1995, 65–66; Schånberg 2004, 11–13; Lundgren 2003, 200–202; Kaveh 2012, 115–117. In addition to a social dimension, *bildning* also involved a gender dimension as upbringing and school education were different for boys and girls of upper classes.

463. Nyström 1880b *passim*. Nyström, however, used the concept *folkeupplysning*, popular enlightenment, e.g. in a speech given in 1883. *GHT*, 'Föredrag' 2 January 1883 and 'Doktor Anton Nyströms föredrag' 3 January 1883.

464. Leander 1965, 25–26; Gustavsson 1991, 70–73, 76–78.

Early forms of adult education could easily be regarded as compensatory education or as remedial measures for the inadequate school system.<sup>465</sup> Nyström, like many liberals, was not satisfied with the nature and quality of Swedish elementary education and especially with the prevalence of religious teaching, which led him to point out the necessity of generating ‘an up-to-date elementary school system’.<sup>466</sup> Compulsory elementary education was enacted in 1842 and the same statute obliged every parish to establish at least one elementary school. At the turn of the 1880s, about 95 per cent of children between seven and fourteen years took part in some form of instruction either at elementary, secondary or girls’ schools or at home.<sup>467</sup> This high participation rate, however, concealed the problems of the elementary schools attended by the majority of children. These included half-day (or half-time) studying, peripatetic schools and non-attendance resulting in poor learning outcomes.<sup>468</sup>

What is more, the content of elementary education was limited. Until the end of the nineteenth century, elementary schools were allowed to organize instruction for poor and mentally retarded children according to a shorter curriculum, which actually became the standard in many localities. As a result, children often left school at the age of eleven and the shorter curriculum, referred to as the minimum course, led to the predominance of religious instruction, which was also strongly present in the longer school course. In addition to religion and hymn singing, the minimum course consisted of only the most basic skills of reading, writing and the four rules of arithmetic. The narrowness of elementary schooling was accentuated by the methods of religious instruction as it focused largely on learning the catechism by heart. For this reason, elementary schooling was criticized as a mere preparatory stage for the classes young people had to attend to be able to take part in confirmation. In practice, for the majority these confirmation classes constituted the rite of passage for entering adulthood and attaining citizenship in the sense of being able to enter labour market and marriage.<sup>469</sup>

Yet the unsatisfactory character of Swedish elementary schooling was not the basic educational reason for Nyström to establish the workers’ institute. He considered improved elementary education a necessity but emphasized

465. On the compensatory role of adult education, see e.g. Titmus 1980, 138; Titmus 1996, 13.

466. Nyström 1880b, 25.

467. Richardson 2004, 55–57; Richardson 1963, 237–238.

468. Sörensen 1942, 102, 106–108, 121–122, 134. Half-time studying meant school attendance every other day, week or term. Richardson 1963, 244–245.

469. Sörensen 1942, 126–134, 360–380; Richardson 1963, 251–255, 352–353.

that it was not sufficient for working-class people since other kinds of schools were required for adults, no matter how excellent the childhood education. In this way, he expressed the fundamental ideas of adult education and life-long learning. Grown-ups needed 'higher and more diverse learning' than elementary schools could provide and people 'should learn as long as they live'. For Nyström, the core of adult education was 'the serious cultivation of the mind', not basic skills or vocational education.<sup>470</sup>

### 3.2.4. Nyström's Prototype in Stockholm: A Positivist Project Offering an Alternative to Christian Cultivation

#### **ENLIGHTENMENT, MORALITY AND INDEPENDENT JUDGEMENT IN THE SERVICE OF THE POSITIVIST MISSION**

Nyström introduced the idea of the workers' institute in 1880 and defined its aim as 'enlightenment, cultivation of the mind and becoming accustomed to regular and serious inner activity, which can secure peaceful development and counteract deleterious amusement'.<sup>471</sup> Because he emphasized the necessity of systematic theoretical instruction, he felt disdain towards the educational work conducted by the workers' associations. He regarded this work as unambitious because it focused on entertaining lectures trying to attract wide audiences and declared that workers' associations could not be 'schools for higher education'. This open criticism alone would probably have been sufficient to cause ill-feeling but Nyström went even further by attacking 'one of the largest workers' associations' for organizing balls and evening entertainments 'where prostitutes and their companions had also been allowed'.<sup>472</sup> In spite of such critical views, evidently known in Gothenburg when Wavrinsky approached the local workers' association with his first proposal, Nyström nevertheless shared their general educational goal. Both aimed at developing workers into responsible individuals and citizens, with the middle-class virtues of morality, decency and self-discipline as the tokens of responsibility.<sup>473</sup>

From Nyström's idea of workers' social mission it followed that they needed further education to be able to act as citizens, 'to achieve their rights and

470. Nyström 1880b, 24–25.

471. E.g. *Dagens Nyheter* 'Allmänt nykterhetsmöte', 9 February 1880; Nyström 1880b, 18. Nyström gave two talks on the matter, of which the latter was published as a pamphlet (Nyström 1880b).

472. Nyström 1880a, 33–34; Nyström 1880b, 12–14. According to Andersson (1980, 306, footnote 24), Nyström accused the Norrköping Workers' Association.

473. E.g. Nyström 1880b, 3–4, 18, 33–37.



to be able to fulfil their duties'. At the turn of the 1880s, citizenship in political terms did not yet concern the masses. The Swedish parliamentary reform of 1866 had turned the old Diet into a bicameral parliament but still left the vast majority of population without the right to vote. Hence the extension of suffrage had become a topical issue from the 1870s.<sup>474</sup> Nyström was a supporter of general suffrage but considered better and more adequate education to be a prerequisite for it.<sup>475</sup> This reflected Nyström's principle that 'the inner life of a human being should be in order before the outer conditions can be satisfied', which was shared by the Truth Seekers. With regard to workers this principle meant that 'the intellectual and moral advancement of the working class should precede, not follow, the improvement of its material conditions'.<sup>476</sup>

Nyström thought that with the help of education based on science, workers could independently form opinions on important questions so that they would not be dependent on information provided by others and open to persuasion. Moreover, workers endowed with judgement would be able to pre-empt social unrest, which, he claimed, could result from various social evils. Such evils were the lack of knowledge not only among workers but also among 'the supporters of the old doctrines', the conservative resistance to reforms, economic distress and unjust wars. Thus, in Nyström's thinking, the reasons for potential social unrest and upheavals were not limited to the threat of socialism only but formed a wider social question. Even though Nyström was regarded as a radical, he opposed socialism because of its revolutionary character. He underlined that the conditions of working people should be improved peacefully and legally; it was not weapons that should be given to the masses but books.<sup>477</sup>

The improvement of workers' moral condition (*sedlighet*) was raised by Nyström as a reason for establishing the workers' institute although this seems to have conflicted with the idea of their inborn moral superiority to the upper classes. He did not, however, regard the working class as uniform in terms of capabilities and morality but referred to more enlightened workers, on the one hand, and to immature or ignorant 'lower' workers, on the other. Nyström also stressed that moral defects were partly caused by external factors

474. On the workers' associations and the extension of suffrage, see Pählman and Sjölin 1944, 170–185.

475. Nyström 1880b, 37–39.

476. Nyström 1880a, 37–38. In the mid-1880s, Nyström and the socialist leader August Palm debated this issue. Palm insisted that material conditions should be improved before it was possible to improve intellectual conditions, denying that education could be the solution to social problems. Andersson 1980, 54; Sundgren 2007, 43–47.

477. Nyström 1879, 9–11; Nyström 1880a, 5, 20, 22; Nyström 1880b, 35, 37, 39–40.

like material need and poor living conditions. Moreover, a moral defect like drunkenness was not only a working-class problem—among upper classes it was actually more reprehensible because education should have made them capable of abstaining from excessive drinking.<sup>478</sup> The Swedish concept *sedlighet* usually referred to morality in a broad sense although towards the end of the nineteenth century it often came to be associated with sexual morality.<sup>479</sup> Nyström, however, focused mainly on the evils of drunkenness and crime as moral defects he wanted to cure with the help of education and only briefly mentioned sexual moral laxity.<sup>480</sup>

The assembly in February 1880, where Nyström first introduced his idea for a workers' institute, was actually advertised as a temperance meeting but it is evident that promoting temperance was not the only motive for establishing the Stockholm Workers' Institute.<sup>481</sup> Not denying that the battle against drunkenness genuinely played a role, Nyström apparently made use of this topical issue to draw attention to his plan, which he presented as a solution for carrying out temperance work.<sup>482</sup> The benefits of such publicity were also noticed by a contemporary writer, according to whom Nyström raised the issue of workers' education 'in the midst of the ongoing widespread agitation for temperance'.<sup>483</sup> The temperance movement was a growing mass movement in Sweden at the turn of the 1880s, and since drunkenness had a social dimension as it caused poverty and distress among families, its message appealed to workers and craftsmen. Promoting temperance could also be a good argument for convincing potential supporters of the usefulness of organizing popular scientific lectures for workers, which was not self-evident among Nyström's contemporaries.<sup>484</sup>

Temperance work did not only offer Nyström publicity but also a field where the relevance of the Christian approach could be challenged. He highlighted the need for an alternative to the religious temperance work and

478. Nyström 1880b, 4, 7, 15, 30; Nyström 1880a, 20.

479. *Nationalencyklopedin*, Vol. 16 'Sedlighetsrörelsen'. See also Pulkkinen and Sorainen 2011, 15–16, 21 and Markkola 2007, 39–40.

480. Nyström 1880b, 4–7, 15.

481. E.g. Andersson (1980, 37–38) emphasizes the significance of temperance work as a motive.

482. *Dagens Nyheter*, 'Allmänt nykterhetsmöte' 9 February 1880.

483. *GHT*, 'Arbetareinstitut' 17 Februari 1883.

484. Sulkunen 1986, 22–35; Lundkvist 1977, 51–52, 118–120. On the usefulness of popular scientific lectures and their funding, see Leander 1955, 104–106.

this secular form was workers' education.<sup>485</sup> It is interesting that later in the 1880s Wavrinsky also tried to introduce secular temperance work through the Good Templars and it has even been suggested that this may have been his ultimate motive to be involved in the IOGT.<sup>486</sup>

Nyström's alternative to Christianity in general was positivism and there are several matters revealing that the starting point of his educational project was also positivist. To begin with, the convener of the February 1880 meeting was not a temperance association but the Positivist Society itself. For this reason, a Stockholm newspaper described the assembly as a 'Positivist Society's temperance meeting'.<sup>487</sup> Moreover, reducing drunkenness like the other goals of workers' education belonged to Nyström's positivist programme, the ultimate goal of which was 'a completely harmonious social order'. The reform of society and individual life would be implemented by organizing these in accordance with the laws discovered by scientific research, and this necessitated 'an all-embracing social theory'. Since no such theory had so far emerged and it was not possible to start constructing the ideal social order, Nyström focused on reforming individuals by means of secular education, the purpose of which was to prepare them to act in existing society and tackle its maladies.<sup>488</sup> Treating a social malady such as drunkenness must also have been a necessary step for realizing his positivist vision as he considered drinking to be an irresponsible waste of time and money, implying that sober workers would have more time to serve the common good.<sup>489</sup>

Thus education was necessary both for creating an ideal society in the future and for curing the problems of the existing one. Of the latter, the role of the state church and religious world view was Nyström's special target since he thought that these hampered the rational development of society and individuals. Nor did he conceal such thoughts in his pamphlet on workers' institutes. Although its title referred to enlightenment and morality as the goals of these institutes, he nonetheless wrote several pages about the necessity for scientific education as an alternative to the religious cultivation of the mind.

485. *Dagens Nyheter*, 'Allmänt nykterhetsmöte' 9 February 1880; *Stockholms Dagblad*, 'Positivistiska samfundets nykterhetsmöte' 9 February 1880; *Aftonbladet*, 'Nykterhetsmöte' 9 February 1880. The discussion in the February temperance meeting ended in a dispute between the positivists and the religious faction.

486. Kämpe 1932, 86, 125, 186–187; Svensson A. 1979, 94–103; Lindgren 2001, 17–18.

487. *Dagens Nyheter*, 'Till ett Allmänt nykterhetsmöte' 7 February 1880; *Stockholms Dagblad*, 'Positivistiska samfundets nykterhetsmöte' 9 February 1880; Andersson 1980, 37.

488. *Dagens Nyheter*, 'Allmänt nykterhetsmöte' 9 February 1880 (contains a lengthy quotation from Nyström's speech); Nyström 1880b, 14–15. For the social function of education, see also Nyström 1880b, 35–36.

489. Nyström 1880b, 10–11, 30, 32.

The latter was dominant in society as the state-supported church promoted religious views and religious instruction had its enthusiastic supporters whereas the field of general education was neglected. A cultural programme consisting of concerts and drama on Sundays would also be introduced to widen the range of activities from the strictly religious ones available to workers on their only holiday of the week.<sup>490</sup> Furthermore, Nyström thought that theological speculations were totally useless for workers in the struggle to improve their conditions. To be able to form ‘a sounder world view’, workers should focus on life on earth and study the laws of nature and human life.<sup>491</sup> Such a world view would also provide tools for challenging the teachings of the church as the workers’ institute with its scientific instruction would develop independent thinking and judgement so that workers could find ‘sufficient evidence against the older doctrine with its imagined beliefs and impractical plans’.<sup>492</sup> In the case of the workers, this must have referred to religious doctrines rather than to Nyström’s other target, traditional philosophy, since the latter was not included in the elementary education available to them.

It was no secret that Nyström wanted to diffuse the positivist world view and his writings reveal that the activity he called ‘missionary work’ had a connection to his educational plan. Although there were fewer than one hundred members in the Swedish positivist society at the beginning of the 1880s, Nyström seems to have been confident of his success. According to him, there were already devout supporters of positivism apart from France in countries such as England, the Netherlands, Italy, Spain, Sweden, the United States, Brazil, Chile and India. Positivist societies, with the Parisian society as the central organization, constituted a vehicle for developing and spreading this ideology. In January 1880, Nyström started a bulletin called *Den positivistiske budbäraren* (the positivist messenger) and the positivist mission also had a printing shop where this bulletin and Nyström’s pamphlets were printed.<sup>493</sup>

Given Nyström’s vision of workers’ social mission, they were not only a target group of the positivist mission but he thought that the more enlightened could also act as missionaries together with positivist intellectuals.<sup>494</sup> When

490. Nyström 1880b, 15, 25–28.

491. Nyström 1880a, 11–12.

492. Nyström 1880b, 39–40.

493. Nyström admitted that the diffusion of positivism had been rather slow because the development of the positivist system had required time and the first promulgators and supporters did not want to introduce it to the large audience when still incomplete. *Den positivistiske budbäraren* 1880 No. 1, 2–3; Nyström 1880a, 10, 16; Andersson 1971, 126.

494. Nyström 1880a, 17; *Den positivistiske budbäraren* 1880 No. 1, 2.

emphasizing workers' role as the allies of the positivists, he without doubt also reflected the current Swedish situation with the discussion on suffrage and the first signs of workers' collective power, manifesting itself in strikes and mass meetings. These signals obviously increased expectations of workers' significance as allies, all the more so as Nyström had the impression that many of them were liberal-minded.<sup>495</sup> That positivists tried to approach workers was already noticed by Swedish periodicals after the mid-1870s, when Nyström had published his first positivist texts.<sup>496</sup> Nyström himself stressed that the positivist societies in Stockholm and abroad had managed to attract workers. The Stockholm society actually had rather narrow membership as it mainly consisted of craftsmen and of a few workers but had hardly any academically educated members.<sup>497</sup> Nyström's aspirations to diffuse positivism among the workers of Stockholm at the turn of the 1880s were after all not so bizarre considering that at that time there was no organized socialist workers' movement. Some historians have pointed out that throughout the 1880s Nyström and the socialist leader August Palm competed with each other for radical workers.<sup>498</sup>

The interface between the positivist mission and workers' education can be found in Nyström's belief that missionary work should not be conducted by proselytizing individuals but by relying on workers' free and independent judgment, which was the only way of adopting the ideology.<sup>499</sup> Developing students' own judgment was the purpose of the scientific instruction the workers' institute was intended to provide, and Nyström had unfaltering confidence in the power of such education. He obviously believed that this kind of education would automatically show working people which ideology or philosophy of life served their interests best, and in his opinion, it was naturally positivism.<sup>500</sup> Moreover, the central role of education in the missionary work was also visible in the activities of the Parisian and Stockholm positivist societies. Nyström characterized the education arranged by the Parisian society as systematic courses in scientific topics and the positivists in different countries obviously had ideas of establishing special schools for

495. Nyström 1880a, 21. Nyström's interest in recruiting political allies from among the workers is also revealed by the fact that in 1882 he was involved in an effort to establish a liberal left-wing party together with liberal groups and forces from the agrarian party, and in this he sought partners from the working class elite. Lindberg F. 1976, 2–3.

496. Frängsmyr 1964, 106.

497. Nyström 1880a, 10; Frängsmyr 1964, 108–109.

498. Frängsmyr 1991, 44–45; Sundgren 2007, 45; Andersson 1982, 185.

499. *Den positivistiske budbäraren* 1880 No. 1, 2–3.

500. Nyström 1880a, 22–23, 37; Nyström 1880b, 9–10, 12, 15–16, 39–40.

diffusing their ideology.<sup>501</sup> Therefore, it was evident that Nyström considered workers' education to be a medium for promoting the diffusion of positivism in general but without doubt workers familiar with scientific thinking could also become allies of the positivists struggling to achieve their goal of religious freedom. This was also revealed in the context of the establishment of the Gothenburg Workers' Institute, discussed in Chapters 3.2.5. and 3.2.6.

### **A POSITIVIST SOURCE OF INSPIRATION**

It was not only the goals, ideas and connections that made the workers' institute a positivist project; the curriculum and arrangements of the planned institution are also concrete proof. In addition, they reveal Nyström's source of inspiration, which is interesting given that he did not mention any model for the workers' institute and, for decades later, actually denied following the example of any institution.<sup>502</sup> Historians have drawn attention to the similarities between the Stockholm Workers' Institute and the British Mechanics' Institutes and Working Men's Colleges, of which the former offered scientific and technical instruction and the latter focused on liberal adult education.<sup>503</sup> A conceivable forerunner of popular scientific lecturing could have been found closer to home in Stockholm, in the academically oriented lectures organized by Stockholm University College, but these were not aimed at workers.<sup>504</sup> Notwithstanding these possibilities, it is evident that Nyström's idea of a workers' institute had a positivist model even though this was not an existing institution but still a plan. In one of his pamphlets, Nyström named a publication written by a Parisian metal worker and positivist, Émile Laporte, introducing a plan for the education of young workers.<sup>505</sup> Nyström had originally developed an idea of 'a humanistic school' for adults, intended for all social classes, while introducing positivist thinking in Sweden in the mid-1870s.<sup>506</sup> He apparently turned his educational effort towards working people when he committed himself more fully to the ideals of positivism and established a closer relationship with workers. Laporte's text, published in 1877, most likely also contributed to this.

501. *Den positivistiske budbäraren* 1880 No. 1, 1–2.

502. Heden 1921, 89; Leander 1955, 66, 77.

503. Leander 1955, 66–69; Leander 1965, 53–56, 78; Frängsmyr 1991, 37–38. Leander admitted that Nyström himself never referred to the British institutes. On the Mechanics' Institutes and Working Men's Colleges, see also Fieldhouse 1998, 23–32.

504. Bedoire and Thullberg 1978, 16, 21–22.

505. Nyström 1880a, 16.

506. Nyström 1929, 108.

The substance of Laporte's pamphlet was that vocational education, which in practice was the only education available to young French workers, did not suffice because it only served the immediate interests of industrial life and not workers' intellectual and moral development. More comprehensive and universal education introducing the achievements of modern natural and social sciences was necessary to broaden their horizons and develop them as human beings and citizens able to fulfil their civic duties.<sup>507</sup> Nyström also emphasized education that was general and not vocational in nature, the latter being the purview of specific institutions like technological and craft schools.<sup>508</sup> Nyström's originality, however, lies in the target group of this education. Whereas Laporte outlined education for apprentices and young workers between fourteen and twenty-one years of age, presumably for male workers, Nyström focused on more mature workers, both women and men.<sup>509</sup>

The subjects Nyström included in the programme of the workers' institute were basically the fundamental sciences classified by Comte and these also appeared in Laporte's plan.<sup>510</sup> The knowledge they deemed indispensable consisted of sciences exploring the universe and the earth, sciences exploring living creatures (including human beings) and sciences exploring society. Thus Laporte's list included mathematics, astronomy, physics, chemistry, biology, sociology—Comte's new science of society—and ethics. In Nyström's plan, these were modified to six groups of subjects: 1) mathematics, 2) astronomy and geography, 3) physics and chemistry, 4) anatomy and physiology, including hygiene, 5) cultural history and 6) political science and economics. Anatomy and physiology, which were naturally close to a doctor, replaced biology and political science and economics replaced sociology. Ethics as a separate subject was not included in Nyström's programme. His own speciality was cultural history, which he himself later taught at the Stockholm Workers' Institute, consisting of the history of philosophy, religions, political systems, social conditions, art, science and technology. This subject, a history of civilization

507. Laporte 1877, 21–23, 26–29, 31–32, 44–45.

508. Nyström 1880b, 19.

509. Laporte 1877, 43–44; Nyström 1880b, 17. Though Laporte wrote that scientific education should in general be offered to both men and women, this plan was obviously intended for young male workers since he outlined a programme for apprentices and referred to their future role as employees, citizens and heads of families. See especially p. 22 and 44.

510. On Comte's scientific system, see e.g. Bourdeau, 'Auguste Comte', <URL= <https://plato.stanford.edu/archives/spr2021/entries/comte/>>

introducing the greatest achievements of humankind, exemplified the encyclopaedic nature of Nyström's project.<sup>511</sup>

In Laporte's outline for young workers, studying all subjects required seven years alongside work but Nyström believed that three years would be sufficient for his programme. In practice, the lectures at the workers' institute would be organized on the evenings of six weekdays (including Saturday) so that one evening was dedicated to each of the six subjects. Instruction would be given for eight months from September to May. As an indication of the systematic nature of studies Nyström advocated, students were advised to follow the whole lecture course and choose two subjects per year, thus being able to complete all six subjects in three years.<sup>512</sup> With such a programme consisting of systematic scientific and theoretical education and with funding collected from private citizens, the Stockholm Workers' Institute started in October 1880.<sup>513</sup>

#### **THE DISPUTE CAUSED BY NYSTRÖM'S POSITIVISM AND THE PRINCIPLE OF NEUTRALITY**

Given Nyström's missionary work, public appearances and extensive literary production about positivism, it was not surprising that the newly established the Stockholm's Workers' Institute with Nyström as its director attracted attention.<sup>514</sup> The institute actually managed to cause 'a spectacle' after its first year in autumn 1881.<sup>515</sup> The dispute was started by Hans Forssell, a high-ranking civil servant and a former minister of finance, in his capacity as a city councillor addressing himself to the subsidy the institute had applied for from the municipality.<sup>516</sup> Forssell attacked Nyström's ideas and urged the city council to refuse the subsidy on the grounds that the Stockholm Workers'

511. Laporte 1877, 34–37, 42; Nyström 1880b, 17; Frängsmyr 1964, 93; Nyström 1886–1892, *Allmän kulturhistoria I–VI*. On Nyström's respect for encyclopedism, see Nyström 1880a, 15.

512. Nyström 1880b, 17–18.

513. Bolin 1930, 9–16.

514. Nyström's publications included *Positivismen. En systematisk framställning af denna lära jemte en biografi öfver dess grundläggare Auguste Comte*, 1879; *Sambälliga tidsfrågor. En följd af folkskrifter*, 1879–1881; *Den positivistiske budbäraren. Organ för sambälliga meddelanden*, 1880–1889.

515. The dispute was called 'a terrible spectacle' by the Minister of Ecclesiastical Affairs C.G. Hammarskjöld, referring to the reaction of the public, certain newspapers and the King. Forssell's attack was obviously partly motivated by a power struggle between him and the Prime Minister, Arvid Posse, who had promoted the state subsidy to the Stockholm Workers' Institute, as Forssell's accusations offered an opportunity to discredit Posse. Richardson 1963, 263–264.

516. Forssell was actually one of the most eager proponents of economic liberalism in Sweden at that time but in cultural questions he was a traditionalist. Schück, 'Hans L. Forssell', *Svensket biografiskt lexicon* (urn:sbl:14374); Norberg 1998, 202–205.



Institute was an institution representing and diffusing positivism, which he considered a threat to Swedish society. His target was first and foremost the religious side of positivism, which he portrayed as a completely organized new church intended to be disseminated worldwide. In Sweden, this church was represented by the Positivist Society in Stockholm. He described Nyström as the priest of this local church, subordinated to the chief priest in Paris, and claimed that the members of the church were obliged to defend positivist opinions in their public action and to participate in missionary work.<sup>517</sup>

On the whole, Nyström's involvement in the positivist movement was for Forssell sufficient reason to conclude that the Stockholm Workers' Institute was an instrument for disseminating the teachings of positivism among working people but he also wanted to present specific proof of this. According to him, Nyström had written in the French journal of the movement that the establishment of the workers' institute was one of the duties this had performed in the service of the Positivist Society.<sup>518</sup> A further piece of evidence he presented to support his allegation was the fact that, in addition to Nyström, another board member was a positivist. However, Forssell suspected that there could be others as well. The positivist connection was obviously even stronger than he could imagine as at least seven out of those ten committee members drawing up a detailed plan for the institute had been members of the Positivist Society and, likewise, six out of the seven original board members.<sup>519</sup>

Forssell managed to present positivism and Nyström as its principal Swedish protagonist in such a threatening light that the city council refused to grant the subsidy to the Stockholm Workers' Institute. That Nyström was called a positivist was no news to the councillors but many of them had not been entirely familiar with the contents of positivism and with its religious side. Yet the information exposed was mainly taken from Nyström's own texts, which Forssell himself also stressed. Although Forssell turned this information into an attack, obviously containing rhetorical exaggeration, some deliberate misrepresentation or misinterpretation and questionable deduction

517. *Dagens Nyheter* 'Presidenten Forssell mot d:r Nyström' 22 November 1881 and 23 November 1881 (Forssell's speech).

518. *Dagens Nyheter*, 'Presidenten Forssell mot d:r Nyström' 22 November 1881. In Forssell's quotation, Nyström denied that the institute was a positivistic school in a proper sense because there was no direct positivistic propaganda. He nevertheless stated that the teachers were not reactionaries but unprejudiced.

519. *Dagens Nyheter*, 'Presidenten Forssell mot d:r Nyström' 22 November 1881. The members of the planning committee and of the first board of the Stockholm Workers' Institute are to be found in Bolin 1930, 11, 14, and their membership of the Positivist Society is revealed by Andersson 1971, 125. See also Andersson 1980, 38–39.

of the nature of the instruction, it nevertheless showed some of Nyström's essential ideas.<sup>520</sup> Forssell's speech, Nyström's rejoinder and several comments were published in the Stockholm press and the dispute was also reported in newspapers appearing outside the capital, Gothenburg included, for more than two weeks.<sup>521</sup>

Such publicity strengthened Nyström's reputation as a positivist even though in the subsequent press debate he tried to correct some of Forssell's assertions and denied that the institute was a propagandist school. In this, he was supported by liberals criticizing Forssell's interpretation of positivism and by the teachers of the institute together with Professor Hugo Gylden, the inspector of the institute.<sup>522</sup> Gylden did not find Nyström's personal religious and political opinions relevant to the operation of the institute and although he admitted that Nyström's ideas could be deemed bizarre and even ridiculous, he did not consider them dangerous to society. The liberal Stockholm newspaper *Dagens Nyheter* wondered sarcastically whether the fear of Doctor Nyström's positivism and its curious church with a dozen followers gave rise to the idea that the workers' institute was a threat to the church with a multitude of priests and members counted in millions.<sup>523</sup> In fact, Nyström remained practically Comte's sole disciple in Sweden and positivism as an organized movement did not win any considerable favour outside France.<sup>524</sup>

Despite such marginalization, the radical ideas advocated by Nyström disturbed the general public and many politicians.<sup>525</sup> Nyström's positivist conception of religion and the dispute between him and Forssell contributed to the fact that religion was added to the definition of neutrality required of workers' institutes.<sup>526</sup> The principle of neutrality in connection with adult education was not a specifically Swedish characteristic; similar demands had

520. Richardson 1963, 263–264.

521. The liberal Stockholm newspaper *Dagens Nyheter* published Forssell's speech on 22 and 23 November 1881, Nyström's rejoinder on 23 November 1881 and Forssell's rejoinder on 24 November 1881; reports and comments were published in this newspaper 18, 19, 23, 25 and 26 November, 1 December 1881 and e.g. in *Aftonbladet* 'Stockholm den 22 november', 22 November 1881; *Dagens Nyheter*, 'Tidningsöfversigt. Arbetareinstitutsfrågan' 2 December 1881.

522. An inspector to oversee the instruction at the workers' institute was a condition of the government subsidy granted in autumn 1881. Bolin 1930, 26–28.

523. *Dagens Nyheter*, 'Förklaring rörande undervisningen vid Arbetareinstitutet' 19 November 1881, 'Frågan om arbetareinstitutet i Stockholm' 21 November 1881 and 1 December (without title, p. 1); Richardson 1963, 264.

524. Frängsmyr 1964, 95–96, 118; Bourdeau, 'Auguste Comte', <URL= <https://plato.stanford.edu/archives/spr2021/entries/comte/>>

525. 'The Stockholm Workers' Institute was, for instance, characterized as 'an institution hostile toward society'. *Aftonbladet*, 'Stockholm den 22 november' 22 November 1881.

526. Andersson 1980, 47–49, 53.

been presented, for instance, in Germany and England to facilitate the participation of different groups of people.<sup>527</sup> Nyström himself had emphasized political neutrality even before the establishment of the Stockholm institute since he had understood it as a necessary condition to secure funding.<sup>528</sup> Political and religious neutrality also featured in the parliamentary debates concerning state subsidies for workers' institutes throughout the 1880s. The price the institutes had to pay for public subsidies was the control by officialdom and neutrality in political and religious questions. In theory, this meant that political and religious topics were forbidden in the instruction offered by the Swedish workers' institutes until the 1920s.<sup>529</sup>

Taking political neutrality as a guideline at the turn of the 1880s was hardly a precaution against the spread of socialism in the workers' institute as could be assumed from a later perspective. At the beginning of the 1880s, no socialist workers' movement existed in Sweden. August Palm, a tailor and founder of the movement, gave in November 1881 a presentation regarded as the first socialist talk in Sweden. In the following years, several socialist associations were established in the major cities, some of them short-lived, and it was only in 1889 that the Social Democratic Party was founded.<sup>530</sup> Thus Stockholm Workers' Institute originated at a juncture when liberals like Anton Nyström, an opponent of socialism, represented the radical forces in society and the requirement for political neutrality was above all a measure to dispel doubts about radical liberal influence.<sup>531</sup>

### 3.2.5. Wavrinsky's Workers' Institute as a Promoter of Rational Faith and Religious Freedom

#### **CHARACTER BUILDING, DEVELOPING STUDIOUSNESS AND ABSTINENCE AS PUBLICLY ARTICULATED GOALS**

After the rebuff from the workers' association, Edvard Wavrinsky did not give up his idea of establishing a workers' institute but made a new attempt at the beginning of 1883. Since he was not a prolific writer publishing his views and plans like Anton Nyström, not many documents by him related to the

527. Seitter 1990, 58–59; Fieldhouse 1998, 27.

528. Bolin 1930, 26–27.

529. Richardson 1963, 264–273; Andersson 1980, 257–259, 269–270. Political and religious topics objectively presented were allowed in 1923.

530. Beckholmen 1984, 160; Andersson 1980, 31–32.

531. Bolin 1930, 11–12, 26–27; Richardson 1963, 262; Andersson 1980, 47–48.

early stages of the Gothenburg Workers' Institute have survived.<sup>532</sup> These few result from the activities of the institute, since he acted both as the director of the institute and as the secretary of its board, and include minutes of board meetings, bulletins and annual reports. Even funding applications signed by all board members must have been written by him in his capacity as secretary. In addition to such materials, newspapers and letters he had received, are utilized.

The few documents nonetheless reveal something of Wavrinsky's intentions and expectations. The reasons he publicly expressed were typical goals of contemporary popular or workers' education, emphasizing the liberal ethos of individual responsibility but they can also be related to rational faith and practical Christianity. According to Wavrinsky, the purpose of the workers' institute was to inspire the desire for self-study, dispel the taste for damaging or reprehensible amusement and develop upright and steady character.<sup>533</sup> Although such aims might suggest that controlling workers' leisure activities was one of the functions of adult education, also mentioned in a parliamentary motion on subsidizing workers' education in 1883, Wavrinsky probably intended primarily to instil self-control.<sup>534</sup> The goals he mentioned were connected to the qualities of self-discipline, orderliness and morality, which are reminiscent of the ideal of 'a conscientious worker', used to characterize the typical view of life in early twentieth-century Swedish working-class culture. A conscientious worker was not only abstinent and thrifty but also disposed to perceive life as project where time was used wisely. Because the first workers' institutes were nevertheless established somewhat earlier, there is an essential difference: while in the 1880s the ideal was defined by the educated classes, during the early twentieth century it was shaped in part by workers themselves.<sup>535</sup>

Damaging and reprehensible leisure activities usually referred to drinking and this was obviously what Wavrinsky also meant. However, harmful pastimes could also refer to something regarded as idle or vain like dances

532. The catalogue of the Swedish national library, *Kungliga biblioteket*, contains only one publication written by Wavrinsky before 1890 (a fictive tale from 1870) but several publications from 1890 onwards with titles usually referring to temperance and peace work. During the period preceding the establishment of the institute (1 January 1882–28 February 1883), the digitized major Gothenburg newspapers (*Göteborgs Handels- och Sjöfartstidning*, *Göteborgs-Posten* and the weekly *Göteborgs Veckoblad*) seem to contain no contributions by Wavrinsky addressed to the workers' institute. Neither did the journal *Tidning för ungdom*, which Wavrinsky edited, contain any such material.

533. RegA, GAI A I:1b, Appendix No. I/1883 'Förslag till Program och Stadgar för Göteborgs Arbetareinstitut', paragraph 1.

534. On the motion, see Olsson B. 1994, 119.

535. 'Den skötsamme arbetaren' in Swedish. Ambjörnsson 1988, 9–10, 16, 19–20, 56–57.

and entertainments. Even reading novels could be regarded as harmful because fantasy was believed to divert young people's attention from reality.<sup>536</sup> Wavrinsky did not oppose social life in general and at least he sympathized with evening entertainments with activities as he himself recited poetry at such gatherings. One of the subjects he taught at the workers' institute was elocution.<sup>537</sup> Cultural amusements such as theatre were also close to his heart, even to the extent that as a young man he had planned to be an actor.<sup>538</sup> Neither did he reject fictive stories since they formed a part of the content of the magazine *Tidning för ungdom*<sup>539</sup>, which he edited between 1880 and 1883. The articles and stories in this magazine targeted at young people were intended to be both useful and enjoyable, 'at the same time provoke thoughts and feed the imagination'. Fictive stories were thus harnessed for the purposes of education in this project, which was educational in all respects.<sup>540</sup>

Drunkenness was considered a specifically working-class problem and the fight against it formed an important part of the efforts to improve workers' conditions. Regardless of its actual extent, drunkenness was nonetheless becoming more obvious because of urbanization, factory work requiring orderliness and the changing habits transferring drinking from homes to pubs and alehouses.<sup>541</sup> The temperance movement had become stronger in Gothenburg from the early 1870s as new local associations with total abstinence as their goal had replaced the older ones promoting 'half abstinence'. The first Swedish lodge of the Good Templars, Wavrinsky's later mission, was established in Gothenburg in 1879.<sup>542</sup> Wavrinsky was already interested in temperance work at the beginning of the 1880s and, for example, was one of those organizing in spring 1882 a temperance meeting suggesting limitations to the number and opening hours of local alehouses. This effort

536. Nyström 1880a, 11; *GHT*, 'Doktor Anton Nyströms föredrag' 3 January 1883.

537. *Göteborgs-Posten*, 'Soiréen å Stora teatern' 20 December 1883; *GHT*, 'W.G.T.O Stor fest' 13 December 1883; RegA, GAI A I:1b, Appendix No. XV/1884 'Redogörelse för Göteborgs Arbetareinstitutets verksamhet under våren 1883 samt under det första arbetsåret 1 maj 1883–1 maj 1884', 3 (hereafter Redogörelse vt 1883 & 1883–1884).

538. *Östersundsposten*, 'Löjtnant Edvard Wavrinsky' 5 October 1886; Lamm 1949, 127.

539. 'Magazine for the young'.

540. With the exception of fictive stories, the titles of articles are reminiscent of popular scientific lectures: biographical accounts of outstanding men and women, essays on cultural history and natural sciences and short articles on topical issues. *Sanningsökaren* 1881 No. 9, 283–284; *Sanningsökaren* 1882 No. 6, inside cover page 'Insända böcker'.

541. According to the statistics, the sales volume of spirits per capita was actually decreasing in Gothenburg from the 1870s until the early twentieth century. Attman 1963, 281. On how alcohol became a problem of the industrializing society, see Sulkunen 1986, 22–24.

542. Attman 1963, 311–313; Lundkvist 1977, 51–52.

actually points to a link between temperance work and the pursuit for religious freedom in Gothenburg. In addition to Wavrinsky, two other conveners of that meeting also figured as the founders of the Society for Religious Freedom a few months later.<sup>543</sup> Wavrinsky seems to have established relations with the Good Templars in autumn 1882 at the latest but became a member as late as in November 1884, almost two years after the establishment of the Gothenburg Workers' Institute.<sup>544</sup>

Studious, self-disciplined and abstinent workers could without doubt be expected to be capable of performing deeds making earthly life better and, therefore, these qualities also manifested practical Christianity. Furthermore, one of the purposes of the workers' institute was character building. In Wavrinsky's words, the intention was 'by the means of true education to control those powers working deep and to dissociate workers from empty and pernicious speculation and activities which hinder the sound development of character'.<sup>545</sup> Character building was a natural companion to the other goals of workers' education but can also be connected with the development of morality, which was the core of rational faith. The Truth Seekers thought that morality depended on individual's emotional development, which is why the inner change of human beings was so important. Education was not only a matter of training intellect but also of refining the emotions.<sup>546</sup> Character building seems to have been one of the matters important to Wavrinsky since he had founded *Tidning för Ungdom* for this purpose and also gave public lectures on the topic.<sup>547</sup>

Education developing character and morality should be scientific in nature. According to Wavrinsky, the aim of the workers' institute was to develop awareness of laws explaining the phenomena of nature and humanity

543. *Göteborgs Weckoblad*, 'Nykterhetsmöte' 20 April 1882 and 'Alla nykterhetsvänner' 17 May 1882; *GHT*, 'Alla nykterhetsvänner' (advertisement) 10 May 1882 and 'Nykterhetsmöte' 19 May 1882. In Gothenburg, many members of the free church movement, which also strove for religious freedom, were involved in the temperance movement. Members of these movements often had liberal political views. E.g. the baptist preacher T. Truvé was both a convener of the above-mentioned temperance meeting and one of the founders of the Gothenburg Society for Religious Freedom. Attman 1963, 312–313; Hermansson 1984, 290, 294. Wavrinsky's good relations with the free church movement were reported in *GHT*, '*Rösträttsförening*' 7 April 1886.

544. *GHT*, 'Diskussionsmötet i Exercishuset Söndagen d. 24 Sept.' 4 October 1882; Skarstedt 1903, 52; Lamm 1949, 128.

545. RegA, GAI A I:1b, Appendix No. III/1883 'Till Göteborgs arbetsgivare'.

546. Sanner 1995, 177–178, 197.

547. *Sanningsökaren* 1879 No. 1–2, 60–62 ('Ur ett bref om uppfostran. E.O. Wavrinsky'); *Göteborgs-Posten*, 'Föreläsningar' 14 October 1880 and 'Populära föredrag' 10 November 1880; *GHT*, 'Populära föreläsningar' 12 November 1880.

(*mänsklighet*), or the human mind (*ande*). He characterized this kind of popular scientific education for adults as ‘higher’, referring to more profound knowledge than elementary school instruction offered.<sup>548</sup> Thus Wavrinsky adopted Nyström’s scientific ideal based on positivism and shared with him the view of more profound education being necessary to workers, which implied that he believed workers to be capable of such learning. Wavrinsky also considered education valuable in itself and not only useful indirectly, counteracting harmful pastimes.<sup>549</sup> There were without doubt people in Gothenburg who questioned such views and shared the opinion of a Stockholm city councillor, reported in *Handelstidningen* shortly before the establishment of the institute. According to this, ‘it was necessary to workers to learn writing and arithmetic but unnecessary to rack their brains with physics and astronomy’.<sup>550</sup> Even a local writer expressing a sympathetic attitude towards workers’ institutes pondered how to maintain workers’ interest and to balance between lectures introducing attractive topics and systematic courses, which were understandably boring as they required mental effort and hard work.<sup>551</sup>

Wavrinsky regarded education as necessary for improving workers’ role in society since it offered ‘the primary way of achieving independence and citizenship’.<sup>552</sup> By independence he may have been referring to economic conditions, for instance, but more likely he had intellectual independence in mind because the Truth Seekers highlighted the significance of human reason, involving the idea of independent thinking. For Wavrinsky, citizenship probably meant not only civic participation in associations but also political citizenship in terms of suffrage. This is suggested by the fact that three years later he was nominated as a candidate in the parliamentary elections by the Gothenburg Suffrage Association (*Rösträttsförening*), which aimed at universal and equal suffrage.<sup>553</sup> At any rate, as a Good Templar leader he advocated extended suffrage in the early 1890s and later, as a member of parliament, worked for universal suffrage applying also to women.<sup>554</sup>

548. RegA, GAI A I:1b, Appendix No. I/1883, ‘Förslag till Program och Stadgar för Göteborgs Arbetareinstitut’, paragraph 1; A I:1a Minutes 19 February 1883, item 7; *GSH 1883:46*, 4.

549. *GSH 1883:46*, 5.

550. *GHT*, ‘Från Stockholm’ 24 January 1883. The writer was nevertheless sarcastic when quoting this opinion.

551. *Göteborgs-Posten*, ‘Göteborg den 21 Februari’ 21 February 1883.

552. RegA, GAI A I:1b, Appendix No. XV/1884 ‘Redogörelse vt 1883 & 1883–1884’, 8–9.

553. *GHT*, ‘Rösträttsföreningen’ 7 April 1886 and ‘Herr Redaktör’ 10 April 1886.

554. Lundkvist 1974, 47; Skarstedt 1903, 58.

Achieving independence and citizenship could be regarded as an example of those benefits of education affecting both individuals and society.<sup>555</sup> Individuals could improve their conditions and position whereas society would benefit from conscientious workers, from less disorders and from citizens participating constructively in the development of society. Individual and wider benefits actually seemed to intertwine in Wavrinsky's arguments for the workers' institute, as also in Nyström's. Education was not only a means of influencing the behaviour of individuals by diverting them from harmful activities and increasing their sense of responsibility but also a way of producing resources for civic action. This double benefit was also related to Wavrinsky's understanding of the nature of knowledge: it was power and it could improve workers' conditions, from which would follow that 'the sacrifices made by society and individuals would be paid back abundantly'.<sup>556</sup> Thus he considered knowledge, or education, an investment, suggesting the idea of education forming intellectual capital. This was a concept Nyström had used.<sup>557</sup>

Considering the contemporary ethos of liberalism emphasizing the role of the individual, the arguments for the workers' institute could also be viewed by posing the question how weightily the needs of individuals figured in them, or in other words, whether it was the perspective of the individual or society that dominated the entanglement of the motives. However, Wavrinsky's few remarks do not reveal this but, given his connection to rational faith and practical Christianity involving the principle of altruism, his perspective was evidently broader than that of the individual. Even though he stressed the importance of developing the individual's character, this was probably a contribution to the good of a community or society more broadly. Nyström apparently focused on the perspective of society since for him the purpose of education was to prepare workers for their role as citizens and for their social mission as the assistants of positivist philosophers.<sup>558</sup> Although scientific education was also the solution for organizing the lives of individuals in a sensible way, this probably served basically the interests of society. This is not to say that the needs of individuals were not important, which is also suggested by the role he assigned to cultural recreation in workers' education.<sup>559</sup>

555. *GSH 1883:46*, 4–5.

556. RegA, GAI A I:1b, Appendix No. XV/1884 'Redogörelse vt 1883 & 1883–1884', 8–9.

557. *GHT*, 'Doktor Anton Nyströms föredrag', 3 January 1883.

558. He wrote for example that workers advance culture as a corporate body, not as individuals. Nyström 1880a, 36.

559. Nyström 1880b, 17, 27–28.



## PROMOTING RELIGIOUS FREEDOM AS THE HIDDEN MOTIVE

As suggested earlier, the typical goals of workers' education benefitted the cause of rational faith and practical Christianity but there were still other aspects indicating that disseminating popular scientific education was motivated by the aspiration to further religious freedom. The most explicit evidence is found in Nyström's letters to Wavrinsky but the nature of the Society of the Truth Seekers in Gothenburg and the missionary efforts of the movement also support this.

In February 1883, Nyström wrote a few letters to advise Wavrinsky on matters related to the establishment of the Gothenburg Workers' Institute. The letters show that they were personally acquainted with each other and they had obviously been corresponding for some time.<sup>560</sup> Moreover, they must have met in January 1883, when Nyström visited Gothenburg and gave public lectures, one of these on popular adult education.<sup>561</sup> This presentation, contemplating the issue from social, moral and intellectual perspectives and introducing the programme of the Stockholm Workers' Institute, was evidently meant to be preparation for the Gothenburg institute.

Unfortunately, the correspondence available is one-sided in that only Nyström's letters are to be found in the archives of the Gothenburg Workers' Institute. In these letters, Nyström mainly addressed practical issues such as the best course of action in the preparations, people who should be involved in its governance, suitable teachers, payments to lecturers and entrance fees. However, the first and most interesting letter begins with a reference to the starting points of the whole enterprise. Nyström characterized adult education as 'one of the great contemporary questions', and continues with a statement on the significance of popular scientific education:

Simply, intellectual and religious freedom follows inevitably from scientific instruction, which is why I, for my part, believe that no agitation for religious freedom is as valuable as disseminating education among the masses. Let this be the cornerstone of our policy.<sup>562</sup>

This passage crystallizes the connection between popular scientific adult education and religious liberalism. Nyström's confidence in the power of education and, in particular, education based on a scientific world view was so

560. RegA, GAI B 1:1, Nyström to Wavrinsky 7 February 1883 and 22 February 1883.

561. GHT, 'Doktor Anton Nyströms föredrag' 3 January 1883.

562. RegA, GAI B 1:1, Nyström to Wavrinsky 7 February 1883. Nyström used in this letter the word *folkupplysning*, popular enlightenment.

unflinching that he did not find it necessary to advance religious freedom more overtly by agitating or proselytizing. He clearly thought that presenting the basics of science to the students of workers' institutes would suffice because natural sciences in particular offered evidence inconsistent with the teachings of the church. Such learning would lead inevitably to the use of free and independent judgement, prompting workers to challenge the dogma of the state church. Nyström had already expressed a similar belief in free deliberation when making plans for the positivist mission.<sup>563</sup> Compulsion had no place in education, which he also stressed in his presentation in Gothenburg. For him, education was a means of influencing people by persuading them to reflect on different conceptions and clarify them with the help of discussion, not by using any external coercion or limitations.<sup>564</sup>

In this respect, the debate between Nyström and Hans Forssell proves interesting. Even though Forssell exaggerated in portraying positivism as an ideology aspiring to the status of a new world religion, it was nonetheless true that Nyström had a vision of missionary work, albeit on a much more modest scale. When denying the accusations of agitation in the Stockholm Workers' Institute, Nyström had probably not been dishonest. His intention was not to spread positivism or religiously liberal ideas through this institution by sheer agitation but to advance these ideas by means of scientific education offering perspectives for developing independent thinking among working people. From his perspective, a significant aspect of intellectual freedom was freedom from traditional religious thinking.

It is not only the expression 'our policy' in Nyström's letter which implies that Wavrinsky shared the idea of promoting religious freedom by way of disseminating education but the very nature of the activities organized by the Society of the Truth Seekers in Gothenburg as well. Within this association, Wavrinsky strove for rational faith and religious freedom through educational work, consisting of lectures and discussions also open to non-members. The rules of the association stressed that members must not force their opinions on others but, by setting a good example, show 'the practical meaning of the principles the association honours'.<sup>565</sup> Thus overt agitation for religious liberalism and religious freedom was not Wavrinsky's policy either but rather education supporting these aims. Almost without exception, the topics of lectures and

563. *Den positivistiske budbäraren* 1880 No. 1, 2–3.

564. GHT, 'Doktor Anton Nyströms föredrag' 3 January 1883.

565. *Sanningssökaren* 1881 No. 1–3, 63–64 (the Truth Seekers in Gothenburg, rules, paragraphs 1 and 2).

discussions were related to religion in some way, ranging from the history of Christianity and the philosophy of religion to current questions concerning the strategy of the organization. Regarding the form of the educational activities, there was an interesting similarity to those developed earlier in the workers' associations: a small library, lectures organized more frequently and occasional discussion meetings.<sup>566</sup> Apart from providing education to its members and other interested townspeople, the Truth Seekers intended to establish a school for their children in order to offer an alternative to the traditional religious instruction at elementary schools. This did not measure up to their standards because it consisted basically of learning the catechism by heart.<sup>567</sup>

While the Society of the Truth Seekers in Gothenburg limited its activities to the locality and obviously had no plans for spreading the message across the country, Victor Pfeiff, the editor of *Sanningsökaren*, established in January 1882 in Stockholm the Home Mission of Rational Faith and Practical Christianity.<sup>568</sup> Its aim was to diffuse rational faith and practical religiosity and oppose sectarianism and dogmatism by means of education consisting of lectures on scientific, historical and religious topics targeted primarily at labourers in town and country alike.<sup>569</sup> Scientific and historical education was essential for the Truth Seekers since their conception of God was based on scientific thinking, expressed in the idea that faith and reason could not be in conflict with each other. Knowledge about God's manifestations—nature, world history, human beings and their physical and mental structures—helped people to learn to know God, which was not possible by reading only the catechism and Bible stories. Moreover, as the use of reason was the cornerstone of rational faith, the significance of scientific knowledge lay in its ability to develop independent thinking, which could oppose the dogmatic faith of the state church and irrational sectarian preachers.<sup>570</sup>

566. *Sanningsökaren* 1882 No. 2, 58–59 (the Truth Seekers in Gothenburg, annual report 1881); *Sanningsökaren* 1883 No. 3, 88–90 (the Truth Seekers in Gothenburg, annual report 1882).

567. *Sanningsökaren* 1880 No. 12, 370; *Sanningsökaren* 1881 No. 2, 63–64; *Sanningsökaren* 1883 No. 3, 90 (the Truth Seekers in Gothenburg, annual report 1882); *Sanningsökaren* 1881 No. 5, 151–153; *Sanningsökaren* 1881 No. 10, 312–313; *Sanningsökaren* 1881 No. 11, 337–342.

568. *Inre missionen för förnuftstro och praktisk kristendom*. The association seems soon to have abbreviated its name to *Missionen för förnuftstro* (Mission of Rational Faith). It also substituted 'practical religion' for 'practical Christianity' in its final rules. *Sanningsökaren* 1882 No. 8, 232, 236–237.

569. *Sanningsökaren* 1881 No. 1–3, 65–66; *Sanningsökaren* 1881 No. 3, 76–77; *Sanningsökaren* 1882 No. 2, 51–53; *Sanningsökaren* 1882 No. 8, 232–233 (item 2).

570. *Sanningsökaren* 1881 No. 3, 75; *Sanningsökaren* 1882 No. 2, 53; *Sanningsökaren* 1882 No. 8, 237–238.

Therefore, the programme of education the Home Mission wanted to spread was similar to that of Nyström's workers' institute. There was only one exception, instruction in religion, which in its traditional form had no place in Nyström's institute—history of different religions was nevertheless included in the subject cultural history. In addition, while the Home Mission considered the rural working population an important target group, the workers' institutes focused on urban centres.

The connection between the Home Mission and workers' education did not escape the attention of a commentator, who mentioned this in a news report blaming the Truth Seekers for failure to obtain a state subsidy for Stockholm Workers' Institute, the only existing institution of its kind in 1882. By a coincidence, some members of the *lantmannapartiet*, a moderate liberal party with a favourable attitude towards workers' education, had ended up at the founding meeting of the Home Mission held in Stockholm. This party was supposed to sponsor the motion for a state subsidy but, according to the report, it hesitated after its members had heard the 'excesses' expressed by the Truth Seekers in that meeting. The party did not want to fund the institute, 'which could fall into the hands of some of these intransigents'.<sup>571</sup> The excesses obviously referred to the allegedly atheistic views presented by the Truth Seekers and to the discussion on the nature of religiosity and the concept of God. This discussion had given rise to a rumour according to which the meeting had voted on the existence of God.<sup>572</sup> The suspicion that the workers' institute might be taken over by radical supporters of religious liberalism may have resulted partly from the fact that there were also a few vociferous positivists at the meeting. However, even without any 'excesses', the concern about the influence of radical religious liberals on workers' education could have been a consequence of the very nature and aim of the Home Mission. The aim, spreading scientific and historical education among workers with the purpose of developing independent thinking, was introduced in the founding meeting.<sup>573</sup>

From Wavrinsky's perspective, a workers' institute offering education similar to that of the Home Mission must have extended the opportunities

571. *Hvad Nytt?*, 'Weckorapport från hufvudsstaden: Ett narrspel med allvarsam påföljd' 6 February 1882; *Norrköpings Tidningar*, 'Från hufvudstaden: Arbetareinstitut och riksdagen' 6 February 1882.

572. *Sanningssökaren* 1882 No. 2, 55–57.

573. *Dagens Nyheter* 'Ett möte af sanningssökare' 23 January 1882; *Stockholms Dagblad*, 'Sanningssökarnes möte' 23 January 1882; *GHT*, 'Stockholm: Sanningssökarnes möte' 24 January 1882.

to combat religious dogmatism and intolerance from those the Gothenburg society of the Truth Seekers could offer as it had a narrower focus on religious issues. The masses of working people with minimal education but with potential collective power constituted a promising field for missionary work in the name of popular science. The reason for focusing on workers in the struggle for religious freedom was actually expressed in summer 1882 at the national convention of the workers' associations. One of the participants proposed that the implementation of religious freedom be combined with the extension of suffrage because in this way there would be working-class members in the parliament and these would allegedly be more tolerant in religious issues than the representatives of the other social strata.<sup>574</sup> This idea had a later parallel in the Swedish temperance movement of the 1890s, where the significance of extended suffrage was also noted as it allied with movements striving for working-class suffrage in order to bring about changes in the legislation on alcoholic beverages. Wavrinsky as the Good Templar leader was among those active in this.<sup>575</sup>

#### **THE FIRST WORKERS' INSTITUTES AND SOCIALISM**

With respect to possible political motives, workers' institutes have sometimes been characterized as institutions aiming at conserving the current order of society and repressing socialism.<sup>576</sup> In 1883, radical social ideas in Sweden were no longer presented by liberal reformists alone. The organization of the socialist movement was not, however, very rapid and the first association in Gothenburg was established in April 1884, one year after the workers' institute was opened.<sup>577</sup> Moreover, during the early 1880s there were still liberals who did not perceive socialism as an urgent threat as they believed that socialist ideas were not viable in Sweden. The reason was 'the common sense' or 'high cultural level' of Swedish workers, which is why they were not supposed to be responsive to such theories.<sup>578</sup> One of these liberals was S. A. Hedlund, who in the 1883 parliamentary debate on a state subsidy for workers' institutes praised Swedish workers for their efforts to develop intellectual capabilities and acquire knowledge. Hedlund contrasted them with workers abroad, showing hostility towards society and the upper classes.<sup>579</sup>

574. *Sanningsökaren* 1882 No. 7–8, 227–228.

575. Lundkvist 1974, 47; Hurd 1994, 45.

576. E.g. Olsson B. 1994, 119; Sundgren 2007, 43; Berg and Edquist 2017, 68.

577. Jarnås-Nilsson 1966, 137.

578. Jarnås-Nilsson 1966, 128–129; Andersson 1971, 110, 115.

579. Richardson 1963, 265.

If repressing socialism played any role in the establishment of the Gothenburg Workers' Institute, it was clearly not the uppermost. It is difficult to see why such a goal was not mentioned for example in funding applications, since the local government, taxpayers and employers would obviously not have disapproved. However, in his 1883 lecture in Gothenburg, Nyström stressed the significance of intellectual freedom as a safety valve in society, having the power to muffle socialist agitation.<sup>580</sup> Preventing socialism became an argument for funding the workers' institutes later in the course of the 1880s when socialism gained more ground. Although neutral educational work was then regarded as a measure preventing socialism, there were at the same time fears that lectures could be used as a channel for agitation by both radical liberals and socialists. Mistrust of Nyström persisted and at the end of the 1880s he faced a new attack from Bishop Gottfried Billing related to the content of his lectures on cultural history and questioning the political and religious neutrality of these lectures.<sup>581</sup>

In the early 1880s, Wavrinsky was presumably a radical liberal. One of the biographies actually described him as 'an obvious left-wing man from his first public appearance, with very radical views on certain questions'. If this characterization refers to the early 1880s, left-wing referred to radical liberals rather than socialists.<sup>582</sup> For example, he seems to have been involved in a radical liberal association called *Folkpartiets februariförening*, which was one of those groups where Nyström also acted.<sup>583</sup> Wavrinsky's actions in the Truth Seekers can also suggest radicalism in political terms. Practical Christianity involved a dimension of social criticism and the editors of *Sanningsökaren*, A. F. Åkerberg and K. P. Arnoldson, defended socialism at the turn of the 1880s, albeit criticizing its materialistic form.<sup>584</sup>

Radical liberalism as such is of course no actual proof of Wavrinsky's sympathies for socialism—Nyström opposed it—or of the fact that preventing socialism was not a motive for workers' education. Wavrinsky's radical liberalism nevertheless suggests that such a motive was less likely since radical liberals were also under suspicion regarding their involvement in workers'

580. *GHT*, 'Doktor Anton Nyströms föredrag' 3 January 1883.

581. Richardson 1963, 265, 268–269, 270–273. Andersson 1980, 53–54; Olsson B. 1994, 120.

582. Stårner 1920, 14. In a newspaper report from 1886, Wavrinsky nevertheless stated that he was not a left-winger but probably wanted to stress that he was not a socialist. *GHT*, 'Arbetareinstitutets verksamhet' 22 March 1886.

583. Andersson 1971, 133; Andersson 1980, 45.

584. Sanner 1995, 169, 192–194, 207–208. Arnoldson was a left-wing liberal and Åkerberg became a socialist in the 1880s.

education. Moreover, if not sympathetic towards socialism, Wavrinsky must at least have been curious about it. In 1882, when August Palm gave his first talks on socialism in Gothenburg, Wavrinsky was present, although, like many other participants, he criticized Palm's views.<sup>585</sup> Moreover, given Wavrinsky's comments on socialism in 1885 it is tempting to assume that his earlier attitude, too, was not totally negative. He regarded many of the socialists' demands as justified, although he did not agree, for example, with their idea of property and was annoyed by the angry talk and impudent behaviour of the local Social Democrats.<sup>586</sup>

What makes the prevention of socialism a less likely motive is not, after all, related to Wavrinsky's political views but to the still marginal position of socialism in Swedish society at the turn of 1883. Even if Wavrinsky had opposed socialist ideas, this ideology would probably not have appeared threatening due to its floundering beginnings, at least compared to the target of his and Nyström's common crusade, the state church with its centuries-long dominance in society. The changes in the status of the state church required much work through the reforms in the legislation, which could not be carried out without political support from the new groups of voters. These needed systematic education to be intellectually independent. Although no information is available on Wavrinsky's specific political goals at that time, his known activities suggest that achieving unconditional religious freedom was clearly among his priorities, if not the first priority. A characterization in *Socialdemokraten* in 1886 also supports this: 'Mr. Wavrinsky is an honest and energetic man but he has the shortcoming of owning no decided opinion about any matter except the separation of the church from the state.'<sup>587</sup>

585. *Göteborgs-Posten*, 'Socialisten Palm's föredrag' 24 January 1882; Beckholmen 1984, 160–163, 165–166.

586. Wavrinsky's letter 'Några betraktelser med anledning av senaste allmänna mötet i Slottskogen', published in *Göteborgs Nyheter* 5 August 1885, is printed in Beckholmen 1950, 73–75. *Socialdemokraten* reported the following spring on Wavrinsky's presentation on socialism delighted as his conclusion had been, according to the paper, that if Swedish socialists did not set higher demands, all thoughtful people would probably soon become socialists. *Socialdemokraten*, 'Från Göteborg' 26 March 1886.

587. *Socialdemokraten*, 'Från Göteborg' 4 February 1886.

### 3.2.6. Away from the Public but under Nyström's Eye

Nyström's eagerness to counsel Wavrinsky was without doubt due to the opportunity opening up to disseminate his educational innovation. Even before Nyström had started the Stockholm Workers' Institute, he had envisaged it as the central institute setting an example to other Swedish towns of importance.<sup>588</sup> This shows that he intentionally created a model of workers' education.

The establishment of the Gothenburg Workers' Institute was a project carried out by Wavrinsky himself with the help of Nyström and a small circle of private citizens chosen by Wavrinsky. Events progressed rapidly in February and March 1883. In a letter to Wavrinsky, Nyström stressed the importance of keeping power over the institute in the hands of people who were not 'reactionary' or 'superficial', by which he must have been referring to cultural and religious liberals. This is why he also wanted Wavrinsky to become the director of the institute and advised him to turn to trustworthy people only and avoid publicity. Acting in silence could also prevent possible hostile reactions and resistance, which could hamper or even block the enterprise, of which Nyström indeed had experience.

I take it for granted that you yourself intend to become a teacher at the Gothenburg Workers' Institute, for example in mathematics, physics and chemistry and I also urge you to try to impose yourself on the whole enterprise. The governance must absolutely not fall in the hands of either reactionary schoolmasters or superficial newspapermen. Act silently and organize everything privately with only few allies: competent teachers, workers of firm character, sympathetic capitalists; form a board on the quiet, without further ado, and in the meanwhile try to find suitable premises and a little capital. It is best that the press be allowed to write about the issue only when all is in readiness.<sup>589</sup>

Wavrinsky seems to have followed this advice. Maybe the rebuff from the Gothenburg Workers' Association and another attempt with the Good Templars had shown him that it was better to act with selected private citizens known to be favourable rather than with organizations, which might have members disinterested in or even suspicious of his project.<sup>590</sup>

Nyström guided Wavrinsky to act behind the scenes and also encouraged him to make some manoeuvres to advance the project. Although he had

588. Nyström 1880b, 24.

589. RegA, GAI B 1:1, Nyström to Wavrinsky 7 February 1883.

590. RegA, GAI A I:1a, Minutes 19 February 1883, items 2 and 7.



cautioned Wavrinsky against leaking any information to the newspapers, it was evidently Nyström who organized an appeal for the workers' institute to be published in *Handelstidningen* through his contacts in *Folkpartiets februariförening*.<sup>591</sup> The writer was a pseudonym 'Metal Worker', who most likely was Olof Larsson, a foundry worker by trade and one of Nyström's working-class allies. Larsson was a member of the Positivist Society, vice-chairman of *Folkpartiets februariförening*, a former member of the Stockholm's Workers' Institute board and a resident of Gothenburg at that time. The newspaper also reported that signatures were gathered for a petition for the establishment of a workers' institute.<sup>592</sup>

There was also another article in *Handelstidningen* which could have had something to do with Wavrinsky. At any event, this writer was aware of the project of establishing a workers' institute in the city and the purpose of the long review was to introduce the Stockholm institute because people interested in workers' education may have had a 'partly imperfect, partly false conception of the quality and aim of this educational institution'. In general, the tone was very positive, praising, for example, the principle of offering general education instead of vocational training. However, the writer found fault with the position of the humanities and Swedish language, literature and history in its curriculum and concluded that the Gothenburg institute need not be a perfect copy of the Stockholm institute.<sup>593</sup>

Nyström's active role behind the scenes is also revealed by the guidance he gave Wavrinsky on the people who should be contacted and on the funding of the institute. Nyström emphasized that some prominent figures were necessary on the board for the success of the whole enterprise, not least because of the funding of the institute. He also commented the list of potential board members Wavrinsky had sent him and offered his help to persuade those he knew to join the project. In addition, Nyström informed Count Albert Ehrensvärd, the governor of Gothenburg and Bohus County about the plan. Nyström's letter suggests that they probably wished to have Ehrensvärd as a kind of patron of the enterprise, using his influence and relations to collect the capital needed. Whether Ehrensvärd finally had any role

591. RegA, GAI B 1:1, Nyström to Wavrinsky 7 February 1883; Andersson 1971, 124–125; Andersson 1980, 45.

592. GHT, 'Till Göteborgs arbetare', written by 'Järnarbetaren', 3 February 1883; RegA, GAI B 1:1, Nyström to Wavrinsky 7 February 1883; Andersson 1971, 124–125; Lindberg F. 1976, 11. Nyström mentioned Larsson by surname only and thus the pseudonym may have been Emanuel Larsson, another positivist and Nyström's friend.

593. GHT, "Arbetareinstitut" i Stockholm och inrättandet af en dylikt i Göteborg' 17 February 1883.

in the beginnings of the Gothenburg Workers' Institute is not known but he communicated that there were substantial funds in Gothenburg easily available for such a purpose.<sup>594</sup> By this Ehrensvärd alluded to the willingness of wealthy merchants and industrialists to donate money for the public good, which had also become evident in the case of the Education Fund. Ehrensvärd was actually its chairman and hence already involved in local adult education.<sup>595</sup>

Wavrinsky personally contacted a few residents of Gothenburg, introduced his plan for a workers' institute and invited them to the inaugural meeting, with the intention that the participants would form the board of the future institute. In addition to Wavrinsky, eight men attended the meeting in February 1883. Four of them can be classed as workers (a blacksmith, a painter, a shoemaker and a porter of the customs house) whereas the remainder were those prominent citizens necessary to ensure the acceptance of the local elite. Wavrinsky had chosen two city councillors as board members, both of them (a merchant and an industrialist) representing the economic life of Gothenburg. The two other non-workers (a professor and a doctor of philosophy) can be characterized as representatives of the local scholars. The participants, however, decided to add yet another member to the board and opted for Sigfrid Wieselgren, who was a judge, an active lecturer and a writer, and importantly, also a member of parliament.<sup>596</sup> Wieselgren had a connection with Nyström as they had been friends during their student days in Uppsala, even sharing lodgings and, according to Nyström, Wieselgren had been a free thinker at that time.<sup>597</sup> The workers had originally numbered only two but had been increased and thus finally four out of ten board members were workers. However, Wavrinsky could not avoid criticism from working people, revealed by comments stating that workers had been put on the board for form's sake only.<sup>598</sup>

The fact that three of the board members—Wieselgren, the merchant Julius Lindström and Professor August Wijkander—also had a role in the discussion on Free Academy and in the establishment of Gothenburg University College shows the smallness of the local circles involved in education. Moreover, Lindström and Wijkander were supporters of Free Academy, which

594. RegA, GAI B1:1, Nyström to Wavrinsky 7 February 1883 and 13 February 1883.

595. *Göteborgs Adress- och Industri-Kalender 1882, Statistiska Kalender-Afdelningen*, 61; *ibid. 1883*, 63, <https://sok.regionarkivet.se/goteborgs-adress-och-industrikalender-1850-1899/>, accessed 1 February 2022.

596. RegA, GAI A I:1a, Minutes 19 February 1883, items 1, 3 and 5; *Nordisk familjebok* Vol. 32 (1921), 341–343, <http://runeberg.org/nfcl/0195.html>, accessed 1 February 2022.

597. Nyström 1929, 35–36; Frängsmyr 1964, 77–78.

598. Edström 1961, 43.

suggests that these enterprises had also something in common. In addition to the obvious factor, education aimed at adults or those excluded from higher education, both emphasized scientific instruction given in a free spirit.

Wavrinsky's choices also reveal something about his networks as at least a part of them originated in the course of his earlier social and cultural projects. Wavrinsky knew J. F. Sandbäck, a porter at the customs house, from temperance activities and they had also featured as candidates for the city council in the same list.<sup>599</sup> The connection between Wavrinsky, Wijkander and Doctor Karl Warburg is to be found in the Education Fund as the latter were its lecturers and Wavrinsky acted as its auditor at the beginning of the 1880s.<sup>600</sup> Wijkander, who became Wavrinsky's important associate and a long-serving chairman of the board, was a physicist oriented to astronomy and meteorology and the director of the Chalmers Technical Institute. He has also been characterized as a cultural liberal.<sup>601</sup> None of the board members chosen by Wavrinsky were leaders of the local workers' association, nor had they been during the preceding years. This confirms that the workers' institute and the workers' association in Gothenburg did not have a close connection as was the case in some other localities. Even later in the 1880s there were no such people who had been on the boards of both organizations.<sup>602</sup>

Wavrinsky stressed that the institute should not be connected to single individuals and not become 'private in nature' because of the controversy over the Stockholm Workers' Institute was a warning of what could happen. This suggests that Wavrinsky understood that he himself might also raise doubts. For this reason, the Gothenburg institute should be built on a broader base, in Wavrinsky's words it should be 'a purely social matter' (*en rent samhällelig angelägenhet*).<sup>603</sup> It is nevertheless evident that there was no intention to create a municipal institute since Wavrinsky had not approached the city council and since this would obviously not have been an option realizable without initiating a discussion on the responsibilities of local authorities. In the Sweden of the 1880s, the municipal provision of education was confined to

599. GHT, 'Alla nykterhetsvänner' 10 May 1882; *Göteborgs-Posten*, 'Valmän!' 11 December 1882. Sandbäck was also a Good Templar. Svensson A. 1979, 46–48.

600. *GSH 1886:53*, 17; *Göteborgs-Posten*, 'Styrelsen för Göteborgs undervisningsfond' 1 December 1882; *Kungl. Göta artilleriregemente II*, 171.

601. *Nordisk familjebok*, Vol. 32 (1921), 386–387, <http://runeberg.org/nfcl/0217.html>, accessed 1 February 2022; Edström 1961, 43, 92.

602. *Göteborgs Adress- och Industri-Kalender 1879*, *Statistiska Kalender-Afdelningen*, 47; *ibid.* 1880, 47; 1881, 47; 1882, 63–64; 1883, 65; 1884, 71; 1885, 72; 1886, 72; 1887, 72; 1888, 72; 1889, 72, <https://sok.regionarkivet.se/goteborgs-adress-och-industrikalender-1850-1899/>, accessed 1 February 2022.

603. RegA, GAI A I:1a, Minutes 19 February 1883, item 2.

elementary instruction for children and, in some larger towns, to vocational evening schools for apprentices and young workers.<sup>604</sup> Therefore, Wavrinsky obviously had in mind an institution along the lines of an association. This was exactly what was going on in Stockholm, where the administration of the workers' institute was reorganized in spring 1883 by founding an association to maintain it because such a broader basis was regarded as necessary to ensure the continuity of this institute in its original spirit.<sup>605</sup> In Gothenburg, however, no actual association existed and only those present at the inaugural meeting were involved in the founding of the institute. Nor was the Gothenburg Workers' Institute an association where members could have influenced the composition of the board but it was the board itself that had the authority to choose new members. At first, the only outsider was an auditor the students holding an annual card were entitled to elect.<sup>606</sup>

Thus the way the administration was constructed supported the autonomy of the institute as its position became relatively independent of the local government. Keeping the management of the institute in the hands of reliable people, Wavrinsky perhaps took Nyström's advice to stave off reactionary schoolmasters. Teachers were potential actors in the field of popular adult education because of their profession, but Nyström's mistrust of them arose from the characteristics of the Swedish school system. First, the control and administration of both elementary and secondary schools was in the hands of the ecclesiastical authorities as these, for instance, appointed teachers. Elementary schools, which by far outnumbered secondary schools, operated under the direction of the local church administration, meaning in practice that local school boards were nominated by the parochial church council and it was the vicar who served as the chairman, exercising significant power. Moreover, the inspection of elementary schools was principally conducted by the clergy or the trainers of schoolteachers, the latter also subordinate to the church.<sup>607</sup> The situation in Gothenburg was nevertheless different since it was the only locality in Sweden where the municipality elected the members of the elementary school board and thus only a minority of these were clergy.<sup>608</sup> If Nyström was aware of this, it was clearly not sufficient to dispel his doubts.

604. *Aftonskolor*. Attman 1963, 339–341; Söderberg 1965, 269–271; *SCB 1984:2*, 34–35.

605. Bolin 1930, 59.

606. RegA, GAI A I:1b, Appendix No. I/1883 'Förslag till Program och Stadgar för Göteborgs Arbetareinstitut', paragraphs 4 and 11.

607. Richardson 1963, 329.

608. Attman et al. 1971, 429–430.

Second, if religion played an essential part in the instruction of the masses at elementary school, Latin played a similar role in secondary school education and its predominance not only left living languages and natural sciences in a peripheral position but also shunned the latest perspectives on society and culture.<sup>609</sup> Instead of Latin, it was instruction in these other subjects that Nyström advocated. Thus secondary school teachers, many of whom represented the classical educational ideal and mistrusted natural sciences, could pose a threat to the workers' institute. This points to an interface between Nyström and S. A. Hedlund's plan for Free Academy.

When counselling Wavrinsky, Nyström paid attention to cultural history in particular since he regarded it as a core subject of the institute. Some idea of what this subject contained can be gleaned from the encyclopaedic history of civilizations in six volumes, written by Nyström on the basis of his lectures at the Stockholm Workers' Institute and published from 1886 to 1892.<sup>610</sup> It was actually cultural history Hans Forssell had raised as an example of positivist education, characterizing it as 'a positivist propaedeutic'. Even a member of the Positivist Society referred to it as a subject contributing to positivist propaganda.<sup>611</sup> However, on the grounds of the titles the work as a whole, with its thousands of pages of the history of sciences and societies, does not give an impression of downright propaganda although there are some indications of a positivist starting point. In the introduction to the first part, Nyström mentions aims such as offering means for 'counteracting false doctrines', fighting against reactionary plans and spreading 'sound and proven theories to all social classes'. In the six volumes, of which four focus on pre-modern history, Nyström also writes about the descent of man, the development of different religions and, finally, introduces Auguste Comte and positivism. His lectures may even have dealt with the pursuit of religious freedom and separating state and the church, since the topic is found in a plan for contents although not included in the work.<sup>612</sup>

Thus a small part of Nyström's cultural history, at least in written form, opened an alternative perspective for the development of religion and society, diverging from traditional school and academic instruction. Perhaps the very

609. Richardson 1963, 122–136, 352.

610. *Allmän kulturhistoria I–VI*, 1886–1892, containing ca 3,900 pages; Nyström 1929, 156–163.

611. *Dagens Nyheter* 'Presidenten Forssell mot d:r Nyström' 22 November 1881; Andersson 1980, 49–50.

612. *Allmän kulturhistoria I*, 20–21 (introduction), 5–18 (contents), Tables of contents for volumes I–VI.

fact that Nyström presented Christianity as one of the religions, set the descent of man in a scientific context and introduced eighteenth- and nineteenth-century religious and political movements was radical as workers' education, although these topics almost disappeared into the voluminous *magnum opus*. A debate in the parliament at the end of the 1880s suggests this, raising the question whether it was possible to lecture on revolutions and contemporary economic and socialist theories without discussing politics and religion.<sup>613</sup>

One of Nyström's concerns was finding suitable and reliable people to lecture on cultural history:

As regards cultural history, one of the most important subjects, beware before anything else of schoolmasters and the official Swedish historians. The subject should be lectured by as tolerant minds as possible. If you cannot organize a thorough presentation of the developments (which, moreover, requires several years) it will surely be possible for the present to recruit lecturers introducing the major episodes and personalities, with suitable agreements including strict instructions about neutrality in religious issues.<sup>614</sup>

Hence liberal-minded lecturers were required to introduce the history of civilizations, religions and ideas from the perspective Nyström valued. Taking religious neutrality as the starting point for choosing teachers must be interpreted as a defence against the possible infiltration of traditional religious instruction into the workers' institute. Without doubt, this is why he also encouraged Wavrinsky himself to take control over the institute.

Nyström not only gave advice but also offered practical help. One of the first teachers at the Gothenburg Workers' Institute was Edvard Jäderin, whom Nyström had engaged to give lectures on astronomy. Jäderin was a lecturer at the Royal Institute of Technology in Stockholm and had become known for his ability to present scientific topics in an easily accessible way at the Stockholm Workers' Institute. Jäderin must also have been suitable as he shared Nyström's pursuit of religious freedom.<sup>615</sup> In addition, Nyström attempted to manoeuvre his positivist friend, Emanuel Larsson, into the newly found institution as a librarian and another friend, Olof Larsson, as a board

613. Richardson 1963, 270.

614. RegA, GAI B 1:1, Nyström to Wavrinsky 7 February 1883.

615. RegA, GAI B 1:1, Nyström to Wavrinsky 13 February 1883; A I:1b, Appendix No. XV/1884 'Redogörelse vt 1883 & 1883-1884', 3; Frängsmyr 1964, 114; Andersson 1980, 51; Franzén, 'Edvard Jäderin', *Svenskt biografiskt lexikon* (urn:sbl:12270).

member on the grounds that his experience on the board of the Stockholm institute could be useful. However, these proposals proved fruitless.<sup>616</sup>

The inaugural meeting approved Wavrinsky's plan and the Gothenburg Workers' Institute was opened in March 1883.<sup>617</sup> The organization of the new institute was extremely simple, consisting of the board, with Wavrinsky as the director and the preliminary rules directing the work of the institute. The board had discussed whether it would be advantageous to postpone the opening until the finances of the institute were secured and the rules and programme finalized but decided nevertheless to 'strike while the iron was hot' although the first lectures, forming no coherent entity, could not fulfil the fundamental aim of the institute, systematic lecture courses. Nor had the funding of the institute been secured and the first lectures in spring 1883 were organized on a small budget.<sup>618</sup>

The programme approved by the board was practically the one Wavrinsky had drafted and followed the example of the Stockholm Workers' Institute. The scientific nature of the instruction was emphasized. The mission of the institute was 'to diffuse popular scientific education in an up-to-date way' and 'to increase knowledge about the laws of nature and humanity among working people'. In Gothenburg, too, the curriculum was based on Comte's fundamental sciences although with minor alterations to that of Stockholm as the subjects were: 1) mathematics, 2) science (physics, chemistry and astronomy), 3) anatomy and physiology with hygiene, 4) natural history (biology and geology), 5) description of the earth and its peoples (geography), 6) cultural history, 7) social studies, 8) modern languages and elocution. By modern languages Wavrinsky referred above all to Swedish language and Swedish literature and in his programme cultural history also focused especially on Swedish history. The method of instruction was lectures, as in Stockholm. However, there was one significant difference from the Stockholm institute. A concession was made to instruction in elementary skills, which nevertheless would be permitted only exceptionally. The emphasis on general education was clear but a remark that

616. RegA, GAI B 1:1, Nyström to Wavrinsky 22 February 1883; A I:1a, Minutes 21 March 1883, item 7. On Emanuel Larsson's connection to positivism, see Andersson 1980, 49–50.

617. *GHT*, 'Göteborgs Arbetareinstitut' 8 March 1883; *Göteborgs-Posten*, 'Göteborgs Arbetareinstitut' 8 March 1883.

618. *GHT*, 'Göteborgs Arbetareinstitut' 8 March 1883; RegA, GAI A I:1a, Minutes 19 February 1883, items 4, 6 and 7; B 1:1, Nyström to Wavrinsky 13 February 1883; AI:1b, Appendix No. XV/1884 'Redogörelse vt 1883 & 1883–1884', 3–4.

vocational education did not fall within the scope of the institute was later added to the programme.<sup>619</sup>

The principle of neutrality also became one of the defining features of the Gothenburg Workers' Institute. Following the example of the Stockholm institute, the rules drafted by Wavrinsky stipulated that instruction should not touch upon political and religious disputes. This was also emphasized in the inaugural meeting.<sup>620</sup> Neutrality was raised by Wijkander in his opening speech of as prerequisite for maintaining harmony within the institute. According to him, religion and politics were not excluded out of contempt but because they were such demanding topics.<sup>621</sup>

Consequently, the workers' institute was established on the decision made by its board only, without any formalities or seeking permission from the authorities. Thus no decisions were made by the authorities, no competition between proposals or with existing educational institutions and, apparently, no objections. As preparations had been made out of the public eye, there had been no opportunity to oppose the plan.

### 3.2.7. The Source of Inspiration: Nyström's Institute or Folk High Schools?

According to Wavrinsky, the Gothenburg Workers' Institute 'was almost completely based on similar foundations than the Stockholm Workers' Institute'.<sup>622</sup> In spite of this and the otherwise clear influence of the Stockholm institute, a long-serving director of the Gothenburg institute, Axel Jonsson, noted in his history of the institute that folk high schools had served as the model.<sup>623</sup> Jonsson's claim can be understood in the sense that when the first workers' institutes were established it was not uncommon to find parallels with folk high schools since both operated outside the school system and targeted their instruction at adults and the young people over school age.<sup>624</sup>

619. RegA, GAI A I:1b, Appendix No. XV/1884 'Redogörelse vt 1883 & 1883–1884'; Appendix No. I/1883 'Förslag till Program och Stadgar för Göteborgs Arbetareinstitut', paragraphs 1, 2 and 3; *GSH*, 1883:46, 4; Nyström 1880b, 17–19; Bolin 1930, 12, 15–16.

620. RegA, GAI A I:1b, Appendix No. I/1883 'Förslag till Program och Stadgar för Göteborgs Arbetareinstitut', paragraph 3; A I:1a Minutes 19 February 1883, item 4.

621. *GHT*, 'Göteborgs Arbetareinstitut' 8 March 1883.

622. RegA, GAI A I:1b, Appendix No. XLIII/1886 'Redogörelse för Göteborgs Arbetareinstitutets verksamhet under det tredje arbetsåret juni 1885–juni 1886', 10 (hereafter 'Redogörelse 1885–1886').

623. Jonsson 1933, 3–4. See also Jonsson 1914. Jonsson nevertheless was inconsistent since he mentioned in another context that Stockholm Workers' Institute had been the model in Gothenburg. Jonsson et al. 1923, 883.

624. Richardson 1963, 262–263.



Thus it is possible that folk high schools were regarded as models for workers' institutes because of these features, indicating that contemporaries recognized them as forms of adult education. Wijkander, for example, mentioned folk high schools in this sense, referring to them as a form of rural popular adult education.<sup>625</sup> In the first subsidy application addressed to the city council, folk high schools were also raised but more like representatives of existing popular adult education practices rather than any model and, above all, as a reminder of institutions receiving funding from local authorities.<sup>626</sup>

The above-mentioned application also reveals that Wavrinsky did not consider folk high schools to be a model: 'It is naturally not possible to organize, and not preferable to organize, the instruction of working people in cities and towns in a wholly similar way as instruction in the rural areas.' The circumstances of farmers' sons and daughters, on the one hand, and urban workers, on the other, differed so radically from each other that folk high schools with their boarding facilities and education lasting several months could not offer a practical solution to the educational needs of those who had to earn their living in daily work. For this reason, Wavrinsky emphasized that the Stockholm Workers' Institute with its evening lectures was a more suitable model. He also remarked that wishes to establish an institute like that in Gothenburg had been expressed particularly by working people themselves.<sup>627</sup>

It was not only the practical arrangements of the workers' institutes that differed from those of the folk high schools since these two types of educational institution represented completely different sets of values. Even though civic and general education were among the goals of the Swedish folk high schools, they also cherished religion, which was shown in their hours of devotion and religious instruction given in the form of lectures on church history. In addition to this, national culture and practical skills related to agriculture and rural life were esteemed.<sup>628</sup> Jonsson was of course aware of this as he pointed out that folk high schools offered instruction in 'humanistic, patriotic and practical subjects' and he also stressed that the Stockholm Workers' Institute could not be connected with the folk high schools.<sup>629</sup> Nyström emphasized

625. *Göteborgs-Posten*, 'Göteborgs Arbetareinstitut' 8 March 1883; *GHT*, 'Göteborgs Arbetareinstitut' 8 March 1883.

626. *GSH 1883:46*, 4–5. This document was written by Wavrinsky and board members Professor Wijkander and Doctor Warburg. RegA, GAI A I:1a, Minutes 19 February 1883, item 7.

627. *GSH 1883:46*, 4–5.

628. Odhner 1918, 35–41; Landström 2004, 34; Lundh Nilsson 2010.

629. Jonsson 1914; Jonsson 1933, 3–4.

theoretical instruction and there was no place for religious, vocational and practical education in his institute.<sup>630</sup>

Jonsson was not the only one to raise the folk high schools as an ideal for urban workers' education; this idea had also surfaced in the dispute between Nyström and Forssell, revealing the tension between scientifically oriented education and education with a religious, patriotic and practical emphasis.<sup>631</sup> In the dispute, the opponents of the Stockholm Workers' Institute had even predicted its downfall and wished that a new kind of educational institution for working people, guided by principles different from those of Nyström, should be established on its ruins. This view was also articulated more clearly: the institution responsible for workers' instruction in the capital should be like the rural folk high schools.<sup>632</sup> This gave the proponents of the workers' institute cause to worry that the educational institution envisaged would incorporate religion into its programme if it received a state subsidy. Instruction in religion was regarded as an inevitable consequence of a state subsidy, resulting finally in an institution controlled by the state and the church.<sup>633</sup> Moreover, the opponents had also suggested that lectures be held in vocational evening schools, the task of which was to arrange elementary and practical instruction. This idea was disapproved on the grounds that an institution with such instruction was a school (*undervisningsanstalt*), not a free educational institution (*fri bildningsanstalt*) like the workers' institute with its scientific education.<sup>634</sup>

In addition to the adult education conception combining folk high schools and workers' institutes, there may have been another reason for Jonsson to emphasize folk high schools as the source of inspiration in the early twentieth century. He may have been trying to divert the attention from the radical liberal currents as the background to the Gothenburg Workers' Institute since the form of radicalism and religious liberalism represented by Wavrinsky and Nyström had evaporated. The director of the moment was perhaps reluctant to revive this piece of history, especially since the Gothenburg Workers'

630. The essential difference between Nyström's workers' institute and the folk high schools has been emphasized by Leander (1980, 29–31).

631. *Dagens Nyheter*, 'Ett fritt arbetareinstitut och en folkhögskola "på stat"' 26 November 1881 and 'Folkmötet i ridhuset vid Gref-Turegatan', 28 November 1881.

632. *Aftonbladet*, 'Stockholm den 23 november' 23 November 1881; *Stockholms Dagblad*, 'Stockholms arbetareinstitut' 23 November 1881.

633. *Dagens Nyheter*, 'Ett fritt arbetareinstitut och en folkhögskola "på stat"' 26 November 1881 and 'Folkmötet i ridhuset vid Gref-Turegatan' 28 November 1881.

634. *Dagens Nyheter*, 'Presidenten Forssell mot d:r Nyström' 23 November 1881; *Aftonbladet*, 'Stockholm den 29 november' 29 November 1881; *Dagens Nyheter*, p. 1 (without title) 1 December 1881.

Institute had established itself as a solid element of local educational life and since its nature had also changed substantially in the course of decades.

Interestingly, neither did Anton Nyström refer to the religious ideas of positivism as the background of the Stockholm Workers' Institute in his memoirs published in 1929. Perhaps such forgetfulness suggests that the issue was a sore point or a little embarrassing since positivist religion had never become popular and the Positivist Society had come to an end in 1902, after a decade of dwindling activity. Nyström himself started to direct his energies from political and religious debates to medical questions after the 1880s. He nevertheless described positivism as the factor that had opened his eyes to workers' issues and highlighted the positivist philosophy of science and the positivist classification of sciences as the inspiration for the institute.<sup>635</sup> Although the religious side of positivism may at this point have appeared weird, religious freedom was still a topical question. Religious freedom in the sense of freedom from religion—not requiring membership in a religious denomination approved by the authorities—was proclaimed in Sweden as late as in 1951.<sup>636</sup>

In the 1880s, the workers' institute created by Nyström was a controversial innovation as it could be seen both as an ideal and a threat.<sup>637</sup> This did not prevent the diffusion of the model, although, as in the case of Gothenburg, there was something distinctly clandestine about the process of its establishment.

635. Nyström 1929, 122–123; Frängsmyr 1964, 72, 115. According to Frängsmyr, there is no evidence that Nyström ever gave up positivism although Frängsmyr did not specify which aspects of positivism he meant. Leander (1955, 106) noted that Nyström remained a supporter of the principal ideas of positivism throughout his life.

636. Hedenborg and Kvarnström 2006, 202.

637. Olsson B. 1994, 121.

### 3.3. Status, Nature and Sphere of Influence of the Institute from the 1880s to the 1930s

#### 3.3.1. Tracing Early Municipal Adult Education Policy from Funding and the Frames of Action

Workers' institutes emerged as a sign of change in attitudes towards the education of working-class adults. However, the change making adults a target group of education did not yet combine separate adult education activities into an integrated field nor generate a special sector understood to require co-ordinated measures by the national or local authorities. A parallel was drawn between workers' institutes and folk high schools but this kind of popular adult education usually remained unconnected with other practices such as university public lectures or vocational courses.

In addition to a lack of an overall picture, no single form of adult education was a subject of systematic or continuous development, which would have produced specific policy documents expressing the intentions of authorities before the early twentieth century. In 1911, the Swedish government initiated enquiries into lecturing activities and libraries but it was not until 1920 that popular adult education as a whole became a target of governmental planning when a committee outlined the principles for granting subsidies.<sup>638</sup> For this reason, the nature and extent of public interest in adult education at the turn of the twentieth century must be traced from the actions of authorities, including funding and control. When exploring the nature of the institutions resulting from the process examined in the preceding chapters, these aspects are discussed first.

Subsidies were granted by both central and local governments but in this study focusing on the local level municipal funding is naturally the relevant subject of examination as it reveals the extent to which local decision-makers were willing to promote a project like the workers' institute. Moreover, because the city was the actual arena of education, the municipal authorities had more say in supporting the workers' institute in practical matters, for instance by placing premises at its disposal. In modern terms, financial and other support together with the institute's relation to the municipal administration

638. The reports of these committees were published: *Förslag angående ändrade grunder för statsunderstöd åt anstalter för populärvetenskapliga föreläsningar* (1911); *Förslag angående de åtgärder, som från statens sida böra vidtagas för främjande af det allmänna biblioteksväsendet i Sverige* by Valfrid Palmgren (1911) and *Betänkande med utredning och förslag angående det fria och frivilliga folkbildningsarbetet* (SOU 1924:5).

can be defined as municipal adult education policy. Such a policy not only contributed to the institute's opportunities to act but also to its status in the locality. Analysing one educational activity inevitably affords only a rather limited picture but some comparisons with other educational institutions are made to reveal the preferences of the authorities and other supporters. More comprehensive study of the local funding of adult education has not even been possible because the expenses of academic public lectures and vocational education—either special courses intended for adults or regular instruction utilized by adults—cannot be distinguished from the overall activities and costs of the institutions organizing such education.

### **A RECOGNIZED BUT SLIGHTLY MARGINAL POSITION**

The Gothenburg Workers' Institute was established as a private and independent institution but public funding came to play a crucial role in its economy. The board of the institute realized from the start that to be able to implement the ambitious programme Wavrinsky had drafted it needed public funding. The lectures of the first spring were organized on a tiny budget and the topics were determined according to the availability of lecturers who were ready to lecture free of charge. Thus instruction did not form a coherent entity and was far from the ideal of popular scientific education that had inspired the founders. Planning longer and more systematic courses required sufficient and regular income for the lecturers' fees and the rents for the premises and so the board submitted its subsidy application to the city council two weeks after the opening of the institute.<sup>639</sup>

The application received a largely positive response in the city administration as the possible benefits of the workers' institute were conceded. One of the arguments for the municipal support emphasized the importance of increasing understanding between social classes, so that 'workers would learn to understand us and we, for our part, would learn to understand them', referring to the need to create social harmony in the city. An element of doubt could also be discovered among council members: lectures were not regarded as very educative, as they only offered working people 'a shadow' of knowledge, possibly echoing the conception of half-education according to which partial education was regarded as useless or even harmful.<sup>640</sup>

The funding of the workers' institute also raised the question of principle, whether it was legitimate to use tax revenue for a purpose not among the

639. *GSH 1883:46*, 4–6.

640. Jonsson 1933, 8–9.

regular obligations of the municipality, which, on the whole, were limited at that time. A city like Gothenburg also had other funds at its disposal, from which non-statutory cultural and educational institutions (some schools, a workers' reading room and a local museum) received support. These funds included donations and the finance office referred especially to the Education Fund, discussed in Chapter 2, as a possible source of funding. The finance office stressed that this fund had thus far mainly benefitted wealthy townspeople through its academically oriented lectures and therefore considered it fair to use these means for workers' education as well.<sup>641</sup> In addition to donations, the municipality also administered the profits from the retail sales and serving of spirits, which was run by a monopoly. This arrangement had been created for the purpose of controlling the consumption of spirits among working people and the sales profits were channelled to the municipality to be used for the good of the community.<sup>642</sup> It was this latter option the city council decided on when it granted the sum applied for the workers' institute.<sup>643</sup> As the support did not come from the regular budget consisting of tax revenue, to which workers seldom contributed, but from the spirits sales profits, this actually meant that the target group of the institute did, after all, contribute to its funding, since workers usually constituted the bulk of the customers in the licenced premises.<sup>644</sup>

Municipal subsidies originating from the profits of the spirits sales became the regular source of income for the Gothenburg Workers' Institute. However, this funding was not automatic since the board had to apply for it on a yearly basis, being every time obliged to prove the usefulness of the institute.<sup>645</sup> From 1885 the institute also had another public source of funding as the government started to grant a subsidy to workers' institutes and other organizers of popular scientific lectures for working people.<sup>646</sup> The government had already subsidized the Stockholm Workers' Institute in 1881 and from 1885 this support was distributed to institutions located in other towns as well. The preconditions for receiving the government subsidy were the neutrality of instruction in political and religious matters and the control exerted by an inspector appointed by the authorities. Because the parliament decided on the subsidy yearly, there was a regular discussion in the 1880s as to

641. *GSH 1883:46*, 1–3; Olson 1984, 231.

642. Attman 1963, 280–281.

643. Jonsson 1933, 9.

644. Cf. Attman 1963, 280.

645. Jonsson 1933, 45; *GSH 1886:66*, 3–5; *GSH 1891:59*, 3–4.

646. *SOU 1924:5*, 114; Jonsson 1933, 45.

whether the support was justified or not, often touching upon the question of controlling the religious and political content of education.<sup>647</sup>

A study on Swedish popular adult education policy from 1870 onwards has explored funding, government subsidies in particular, by focusing on the conditions of the grant system and their impact on the development of educational activities.<sup>648</sup> Although the study concedes that the influence of central government before the 1910s was rather limited, it nevertheless seems to exaggerate this influence because the perspective has principally been on the regulations issued at government level, paying only little attention to what really happened at the local level. There were of course conditions like the requirement for political and religious neutrality, but it is difficult to see that the government intentionally tried to shape the administrative forms and the overall content of education during this early period.<sup>649</sup> For example, it is not at all evident that popular education institutions adopted an associational form because of the governmental regulation. The pioneering institutions like the Stockholm Workers' Institute chose this organization, already typical of earlier nineteenth century educational efforts, on its own initiative as it offered more freedom of action. Furthermore, spreading scientific education was obviously not an ideal that originated from the conditions set by the authorities but workers' institutes adopted it from their model institute in Stockholm. Moreover, instruction in sciences did not become such an important aim at folk high schools.<sup>650</sup>

For the Gothenburg Workers' Institute, public funding consisting of municipal and government subsidies became the backbone of finances to the extent that it was actually dependent on them, on the municipal support in particular. For example, in 1883–1884, the municipal subsidy alone covered approximately half of the costs; in 1884–1885, municipal and government subsidies together covered the overwhelming majority of the costs (71 per

647. Richardson 1963, 262–273.

648. Berg and Edquist (2017) explored the subsidies for folk high schools, lecture institutions (including workers' institutes) and libraries.

649. Berg and Edquist 2017, 63–64, 70–74, 167, 170. According to Berg and Edquist, government influence was not a question of micromanaging but rather of self-regulation, i.e. the government created a system whereby the institutions of popular education were regulated at a distance. This does not, however, alter the fact that they refer to an intentional governmental policy.

650. The conditions on the first state subsidies to the organizers of lectures in 1885 contained no stipulations on the content of education. The regulations of 1922 included examples of subjects in practical elementary instruction, for which the subsidy could also be used. This in fact extended the scope of state subsidized instruction. Bolin 1930, 67–68; *SOU 1924:5*, 76–78.

cent) whereas in 1889–1890 they covered practically all the costs (96 per cent).<sup>651</sup>

There was still one precondition for the government subsidy: the municipal (or private) subsidy should be at least equal to the governmental subsidy.<sup>652</sup> Thus the government actually ensured that local authorities pledged to support workers' institutes and lecturing activities also in the future although this would not have been necessary in Gothenburg as shown below. In practice, the other part of the funding came mainly from the municipalities. The amount of the governmental subsidy was not steady and as its amount was decided yearly the share of a single institution depended on the total granted and on the number of institutions among which it was distributed.<sup>653</sup>

In Gothenburg, the government subsidy decreased after the 1890s, whereas the municipal subsidy increased (Table 3). In 1900, the municipal subsidy was more than twice as much as the governmental subsidy and the trend continued during the first decades of the twentieth century so that in 1920 the municipal subsidy was six-fold to the government support. Thus the municipal support came to form the majority of the income of the institute. This is shown, for example, in the figures for 1929, when the municipal support amounted to 54 per cent, private funding to 15 per cent and the government subsidy only to 11 per cent whereas the remaining 20 per cent consisted chiefly of entrance fees and the proceeds of donation funds.<sup>654</sup> Such a development reveals that interest in funding adult education was stronger on the municipal than on the government level. Moreover, during the 1930s, the total sum granted by the government to the workers' institutes and lecturing societies decreased.<sup>655</sup>

Donations from private citizens did not, after all, become as important as initially anticipated and which the experiences in Stockholm had probably given reason to expect. When the Gothenburg Workers' Institute started in spring 1883, it had no base fund collected from private donators as did the Stockholm institute.<sup>656</sup> In its first two years the Gothenburg institute actually received donations intended to cover the budget deficit, one of them from a

651. RegA, GAI A I:1b, Appendix No. XV/1884 'Redogörelse vt 1883 & 1883–1884', 15–16; *GSH 1885:70*; Berrman and Idestrom 1983, 48 (Revisionsberättelse 1889–1890).

652. E.g. *GSH 1886:66*, 4–5.

653. Jonsson 1933, 23.

654. RegA, GAI F XI:1, *Redogörelse för Göteborgs Arbetareinstitutets verksamhet 1929–1930*.

655. Leander 1978, 142, 368.

656. RegA, GAI A I:1a, Minutes 19 February 1883, item 7; A I:1b, Appendix No. XV/1884 'Redogörelse vt 1883 & 1883–1884', 15–17; Bolin 1930, 13–15.



notable local company, D. Carnegie & Co. Fundraising in the academic year 1884–1885 managed to collect money to buy an instrument, *laterna magica*, an image projector using pictures on glass sheets.<sup>657</sup> Later donations also seem to have been occasional. One of the remarkable donations came in 1904, 25,000 crowns, as a bequest from August Röhss, who had been a local businessman, a famous patron and an active figure in municipal affairs.<sup>658</sup>

**Table 3. Gothenburg Workers' Institute. Public funding 1885–1930.**

	Government and municipal subsidies in total*	Government subsidies %	Municipal subsidies** %
1885	8 000	37.5	62.5
1890	8 000	37.5	62.5
1895	8 700	31.0	69.0
1900	8 400	28.6	71.4
1905	10 400	23.1	76.9
1910	12 900	18.6	81.4
1915	13 150	12.5	87.5
1920	19 700	13.7	86.3
1925	20 200	10.9	89.1
1930	18 400	13.0	87.0

\* In Swedish crowns of these years. \*\* Municipal subsidy was granted for the academic year (1885–1886 etc.).  
Source: Jonsson 1933, 45 (Tablå över anslagen av staten och Göteborgs stad).

In the first years, entrance fees formed an additional source of income. Pricing favoured those who participated in several courses on a regular basis at the expense of those who attended single lectures.<sup>659</sup> Collecting entrance fees was problematic, since the board understood that the fees should be sufficiently low to enable the participation of poor people but it nevertheless regarded them as necessary for the economy of the institute.<sup>660</sup> The prices initially set proved to be too high and from the autumn term 1884 the impecunious

657. *GSH 1891:59*, 3–4; Berrman and Ideström 1983, 21; RegA, GAI A I:1b, Appendix No. XXIX/1885 'Redogörelse för Göteborgs Arbetareinstitutets verksamhet under det andra arbetsåret maj 1884–maj 1885', 14–15 (hereafter 'Redogörelse 1884–1885').
658. In crowns of 1904. Jonsson 1933, 25; Jonsson 1914; *Nordisk familjebook* Vol. 24 (1916), column 143, <http://runeberg.org/nfcd/0090.html>, accessed 1 February 2022.
659. A peculiarity related to the first term is the pricing of the lectures according to gender as women paid only two thirds of the men's fees, presumably due to their lower wages. RegA, GAI A I:1b, Appendix No. XV/1884 'Redogörelse vt 1883 & 1883–1884', 4, 6.
660. *GSH 1883:46*, 5.

were allowed to participate free of charge.<sup>661</sup> Paying a fee of two Swedish crowns at once to cover the all lecture series of a term took a substantial share of a weekly pay which, for instance, for a male brewery worker was about eleven crowns, for a female bottle washer six crowns, for a male dyer ten crowns and for a female spinner eight crowns.<sup>662</sup> For a housemaid it was even more difficult to pay for all lectures at once since her yearly earnings were only about eighty crowns, the majority of the pay consisting of her bed and board.<sup>663</sup> After having first lowered the fees in 1884–1885, the board decided to abandon entrance fees for lectures in the autumn term 1886, obviously due to the decreasing number of participants. Fees were still collected from those who took part in elementary courses.<sup>664</sup>

If the municipal funding of the workers' institute is juxtaposed with that of other local educational institutions, it is easy to see that it was marginal in comparison with elementary schools, which constituted the major municipal item of expenditure in this field. In 1883 and 1900, the municipal support for the workers' institute formed, respectively, 1.5 and 0.9 per cent of the costs of the elementary schools. Perhaps a more appropriate comparison than the elementary school, which concerned all children of certain age groups, is a technical evening school, *Slöjdföreningens skola*.<sup>665</sup> In 1883 and 1900, the municipal support for the workers' institute made up, respectively, 27 and 20 per cent of the municipal support for this school, revealing that the funding of the workers' institute was modest even in the evening school context. The subsidies allocated to this technical school likewise came from the profits of spirits sales.<sup>666</sup> Thus, supporting the workers' institute was not a costly way to promote workers' education and to extend municipal control over it. The priorities of private donors were exemplified by the donation August Röhss made in 1901 to Gothenburg University College as this institution received 350,000 crowns to establish a chair in economics.<sup>667</sup> This was fourteen times as much the workers' institute received three years later.<sup>668</sup>

661. RegA, GAI A I:1b, Appendix No. XXIX/1885 'Redogörelse 1884–1885', 7.

662. On the basis of yearly wages in 1884–1885 in Gothenburg, given in Bagge et al. 1933, 528 (Table 127), 539 (Table 133). Wages were paid weekly. Fritz 1996, 148.

663. Lagerqvist and Natthorst-Böös 1984, 100. This figure is not for Gothenburg but for Sweden as a whole.

664. Jonsson et al. 1923, 886.

665. Attman 1971, 439.

666. Elementary schools also received government subsidy. *GSH 1884:59*, 25–26; *GSH 1901:72*, 7, 130; Jonsson 1933, 45.

667. Attman 1963, 308.

668. Jonsson 1933, 25.

Hence the workers' institute managed to organize its activities on a relatively small budget, a fact which also prompted the board to underline the economic difficulties of the institute in 1891.<sup>669</sup> With a small income, the organization of the institute had naturally to be simple. At first, the only regular staff member on pay was the director, and even for the first directors this post was a sideline. Porters, whose duties included selling tickets, worked part-time on those premises where courses were arranged and secretarial help for the director was hired when necessary. Lecturers and other teachers were non-permanent.<sup>670</sup>

The recognized yet slightly marginal position of the workers' institute was also revealed by the question concerning its premises. For a period of four decades, the institute had no building of its own but rented lecture halls and classrooms from other organizations and was also allowed to use some municipal school premises free of charge. In this way, lectures were usually given in at least three places and other courses sometimes even in six different places. The main lecture hall the workers' institute used from its inception was located in the building of the Gothenburg Workers' Association and the institute also rented some smaller rooms there.<sup>671</sup> Although the workers' association had initially not been enthusiastic about an educational institution like the workers' institute, renting premises to it was not a problem. On the one hand, the workers' institute obviously managed to inspire confidence in the community with its administration and programme and, on the other, renting premises had become an important field of operation to the liberal workers' association as its activities otherwise dwindled.<sup>672</sup> The workers' association evidently regarded rental as a purely business matter. When the workers' institute in 1884–1885 had temporarily to give up from the large lecture hall due to economic problems, the workers' association did not help, for example, by offering a reduction.<sup>673</sup>

Operating in rented halls and classrooms had not been the intention of the directors and the board and, from the early 1890s, they made several attempts to acquire permanent premises. This would have been important not only for practical reasons but also for the identity and image of the institute. In 1894, the board applied for 100,000 crowns from a donation fund administered

669. *GSH 1891:59*, 3.

670. RegA, GAI A I:1b, Appendix No. XV/1884 'Redogörelse vt 1883 & 1883–1884' 6, 15; Berrman and Idestrom 1983, 48 (Revisionsberättelse 1889–1890); *GSH 1891:59*, 4.

671. Jonsson 1914; Jonsson et al. 1923, 884; Jonsson 1933, 16.

672. Jarnäs-Nilsson 1966, 109.

673. RegA, GAI A I:1b, Appendix No. XXIX/1885 'Redogörelse 1884–1885', 4.

by the municipality to be used for the costs of raising their own building, or alternatively, 25,000 crowns for creating a base fund for that purpose. The city council decided to allow the smaller amount on the grounds that the organization of the institute had not yet become established.<sup>674</sup> It is perhaps not so surprising that the municipality was not inclined to allocate the bigger amount to an institution that had existed for only eleven years. Nevertheless, the thirty years it took to acquire their own building suggests that the institute was not a high priority among municipal educational matters. It was only in 1924 that the municipality decided to place a building, a former commercial school, at institute's disposal. Even then the workers' institute could not have the entire building for its use but had to share it with another educational institution. In spite of this, the situation was much better than before and the new premises were regarded as functional.<sup>675</sup>

Thus after four decades, during which the municipality had supported the work of the workers' institute—albeit modestly—it finally recognized this institution as an established part of the community by allocating it premises. Interestingly, the new premises also brought the institute closer to the bourgeois city centre. Whereas the main lecture halls and classrooms had earlier been located at the building of the workers' association in a working-class area a little further, the new building stood inside the old moat, in the district of Inom Vallgraven.<sup>676</sup>

#### **FROM A SEMIAUTONOMOUS ORGANIZATION TO A MUNICIPAL INSTITUTION**

In spite of the radical background of the institute, its management ended up in hands that most likely were regarded as trustworthy from the perspective of the local establishment. Wavrinsky's period in the institute was short as he resigned after only three years, in 1886. His successors were more conventional educators with a strong connection to the school system and, therefore, obviously gave rise to no mistrust among municipal leaders and other local powers. G. O. Börjesson, who led the institute until 1904, was a lecturer at a teachers' training college and also served as the elementary schools inspector in the Gothenburg area. In addition, he wrote textbooks in such elementary and practical skills as bookkeeping, spelling and geometry, intended for

674. Jonsson 1914; Jonsson 1933, 14–15.

675. Jonsson 1933, 14–15; Berrman and Ideström 1983, 53–54.

676. Jonsson 1933, 14; Jarnäs-Nilsson 1966, 171; Berrman and Ideström 1983, 53. On the districts of Gothenburg and their residents, see e.g. Lönnroth 1984.

commercial and vocational schools.<sup>677</sup> Börjesson's successor, the long-serving director until 1939, was a secondary school teacher, Axel Jonsson, whose subjects were Swedish language, history and geography.<sup>678</sup>

The director of the private institute nevertheless worked under the supervision of the board. Although it was the board itself that elected new members until the end of the 1920s,<sup>679</sup> the choices of the city council would obviously not have differed much if it had had total control over the institute. Some of those members Wavrinsky had selected for the first board were liberals but probably not very radical ones.<sup>680</sup> Even though his interests seem not to have greatly influenced the composition of the first board, it is still likely that his departure affected the nature of the administration, or indeed activities in general. From the 1880s to the 1930s, the board consisted mainly of educated and wealthy citizens who, as far as their professions are concerned, can be regarded as pillars of the community rather than radicals. Professor, teacher and merchant were the most frequent titles among the board members, with the addition of a few doctors, engineers, officers, lawyers, workers and craftsmen.<sup>681</sup> In this way, the composition of the board actually complied with the regulations contained in the original rules, requiring that the board members represent local businessmen, industrialists, academics and working people. The rules did not, however, stipulate that any given number or proportion of members should represent the target group of the institute.<sup>682</sup>

The representation of working people on the board was strongest during the 1880s and early 1890s when these made up approximately one third of the board members, after which it declined so that at the end of the 1910s only two out of thirteen board members were workers. Finally, in the 1920s, there was apparently not a single worker on the board.<sup>683</sup> One likely explanation for this is the strengthened position of the Workers' Educational Association (ABF) in the educational life of Gothenburg. The ABF, established in 1912, was one of the Swedish educational associations organizing adult education in the form of study circles and lectures on topics which were often connected with their students' spheres of life. By the 1920s the Gothenburg branch had

677. Fredberg 1919, 736–737; Thelin 1994, 189. Börjesson's textbooks include *Lärobok i bokföreläsning: för yrkes- och handelsskolor* (1884), *Öfningar i svensk rättskrifning* (1884) och *Lärobok i geometri* (1898).

678. Fredberg 1919, 737; Berrman and Idestrom 1983, 11.

679. Jonsson 1933, 25.

680. August Wikander has been characterized as a moderate liberal. Edström 1961, 92.

681. Jonsson 1933, 29–32.

682. RegA, GAI A I:1b, Appendix No. XV/1884 'Redogörelse vt 1883 & 1883–1884', 2.

683. Jonsson 1933, 29–32 (list of board members).

become an active player in the field attracting workers and thus it is possible that workers' interest in assuming administrative tasks of adult education was also channelled to this organization.<sup>684</sup>

Although the board itself selected its members, the municipality nevertheless became in 1884 entitled to nominate two members and an inspector supervising the activities and spending of the institute as a precondition for its subsidy.<sup>685</sup> However, as its funding increased, the municipality became more interested in the matters of the workers' institute and, at the turn of the 1930s, the development finally resulted in the overhaul of the administration. This arrangement was not targeted at the workers' institute only but formed part of a larger reorganization scheme of institutions receiving municipal support. In 1927, a motion was tabled in the city council suggesting that the municipality should revise its administrative authority in the numerous organizations it subsidized since a disparity had developed between its influence and its subsidies. The administrative authority of the city council rested on its right to nominate board members in these outside organizations but there were nevertheless institutions the municipality supported without this right. Even when the municipality was entitled to nominate representatives, these usually constituted a minority although municipal support often formed the principal income of institutions in question. Such a situation resulted from the fact that the municipal subsidy had originally been modest but increased in the course of years without bringing about any change in the number of representatives.<sup>686</sup>

Consequently, Gothenburg city council decided in 1929 that as a precondition for the future municipal subsidy of a large number of local organizations the administrative authority of the municipality should be strengthened. As regards the workers' institute, the municipality required the right to appoint all the board members, instead of the two it had earlier nominated, on the grounds that the old system with the board itself electing new members was an outdated and incorrect arrangement. Thus the municipality gained complete control over the workers' institute and it was in practice turned into a municipal institution.<sup>687</sup> By reorganizing the administration of the so-called outside organizations the municipality naturally gained influence and control over these institutions, which it considered appropriate given the financial

684. Arvidson 1985, 78–82; Jonsson et al. 1923, 890–892.

685. Jonsson 1933, 25.

686. *GSH 1927:464*, 2.

687. *GSH*, 'Protokoll No. 13' (Minutes of the city council), 12 September 1929, item 13; *GSH 1929:272*, 13–14; Berrman and Idestrom 1983, 56–57.

support it distributed to them. At the same time the arrangement signified a substantial extension of municipal authority in various fields as many earlier private or semi-private bodies were municipalized in this way. This measure updating the power relations to correspond to the actual financial responsibilities of the municipality only accentuated a development that had been going on for decades. Although the workers' institute was not a special case, together with its own building, this change of status can be regarded as a final step in its institutionalization in the community. However, these developments portray a total transformation whereby a practically self-governing institution originating from a private initiative turned into a municipal organization.

### 3.3.2. Nature and Content of Education: How the Notion of Higher Workers' Education Materialized

#### **THE CHALLENGES OF HIGHER WORKERS' EDUCATION AND WAVRINSKY'S DEPARTURE**

Edvard Wavrinsky's plan to create an institution aspiring to become a workers' academy had been ambitious. However, ideals and reality collided in the everyday educational work as, for instance, workers' educational preferences, working conditions and the availability of teachers were factors shaping the nature of the workers' institute right from the beginning and contributed to the way the original plan was put into practice. It was not only arrangements and teaching methods that were adapted to prevailing circumstances but the institution also started to serve other purposes than those which had inspired its founders.<sup>688</sup>

Despite the idea of higher workers' education, with the emphasis on scientific and social subjects, the institute was intended to be a kind of a free academy, offering intellectual inspiration on the basis of voluntary participation. Degrees and diplomas as goals of studying were not a part of this plan although such a wish had also been expressed in the press. The voluntary nature of studies did not prevent Wavrinsky from encouraging workers to engage in systematic and persevering study. He recommended that participants, to be able to benefit from instruction, take entire courses instead of attending single lectures, which seems to have been typical, and also urged students to make notes to better assimilate the information they received. The intended systematic character of studying was also connected to the way the

688. Cf. Titmus 1991, 22.

lectures were organized. As in Stockholm, every subject had its own designated evening and students were advised which subjects were suitable to study side by side if they were able to take more than one lecture course at a time.<sup>689</sup>

Since working days were long, lectures started at a quarter past eight and lasted for one or one and half hours, which was late considering the early wake-up in the morning. Apparently many students came straight from work to make it to the lectures. As their working days ended at different times, a reading room with books and newspapers was planned to enable them to spend their time usefully while waiting for the lectures to start.<sup>690</sup> Instruction was organized into two terms lasting for three months, the autumn term extending from September to December and the spring term from January to April. The organizers were nevertheless realistic as regards the length of the terms. In spring, students were absent more often at the end of the term as the working day was often longer in this time of year when daylight extended to evening, or simply because the beautiful season offered other attractions. It also soon became evident that paydays 'were less suitable for giving or listening to lectures'.<sup>691</sup>

Following the example of the Stockholm Workers' Institute, Wavrinsky had planned popular scientific lectures to constitute the principal form of instruction. Lectures were the typical way of delivering knowledge in nineteenth-century adult education, already employed in the educational societies of craftsmen and the upper classes, the latter exemplified by the Lecture Committee and the Education Fund in Gothenburg. It was also the form of instruction academia relied on. Especially in the case of workers' education, lectures were advantageous as books were not needed, since buying books was practically beyond the means of working people. Moreover, workers were not often practised as readers and, in general, scarce leisure time and poor living conditions were not conducive to activities requiring concentration. A lecturer, instead, could condense wider themes into a one-hour presentation to be absorbed by students.<sup>692</sup> Yet Wavrinsky, like many other adult educators, thought lectures could also have the function of inspiring and encouraging

689. RegA, GAI A I:1b, Appendix No. XV/1884 'Redogörelse vt 1883 & 1883–1884', 4–6; F II:1, Minutes of a discussion meeting 22 September 1885 A, item 2;  *Göteborgs-Posten*, 'Göteborg den 21 februari' 21 February 1883.

690. RegA, GAI A I:1b, Appendix (unnumbered, between XVII and XVIII/1885), a printed announcement written by Wavrinsky in August 1884.

691. RegA, GAI A I:1b, Appendix No. XXIX/1885 'Redogörelse 1884–1885', 4; No. XLIII/1886 'Redogörelse 1885–1886', 4–7.

692. E.g. Leander 1965, 70; Leander 1978, 184; Sylwan 1916, 39.



participants to further self-study, for which books could be acquired from libraries.<sup>693</sup>

After the initial enthusiasm following the establishment of the workers' institute wore off, the number of people attending lectures declined in the academic year 1884–1885 and the average number of participants per lecture fell from several hundred to little more than fifty.<sup>694</sup> This gave rise to a crisis in the new organization as Wavrinsky and the other board members were anxious about the future of the institute and, to secure its continuation, pondered which direction the instruction should take. Wavrinsky even expressed his concern about the threat of closing down the institute due to lack of interest. The reasons for workers' apathy were also debated in the discussion exercises organized as a part of the instruction in Swedish language. Several speakers pointed to the obvious impediment, long working hours and the resulting fatigue, which was also emphasized by two working-class board members.<sup>695</sup> In a letter to Wavrinsky a student of the institute described the impact of long working days, stressing how both the body and the mind became exhausted and how it was only natural that after a day's work workers only wished to eat and rest.<sup>696</sup> Wavrinsky agreed: working days should be shorter so that workers could have time for intellectual development but this was not in the hands of the institute's board. A solution was sought from the timing of lectures but little could be done. Sunday, which was the workers' only day off, was preferred by them but not all instruction could be arranged on one day only. The competence of lecturers was also raised with suggestions that teachers known to be excellent or suitable for instructing at the workers' institute should be invited from other towns to attract more students.<sup>697</sup>

However, the attempts to solve the crisis focused mainly on the question of the nature of instruction. Although the founders had originally defined popular scientific lectures as the principal form of instruction, they had left

693. RegA, GAI A I:1b, Appendix No. I/1883 'Förslag till Program och Stadgar för Göteborgs Arbetareinstitut', paragraph 1.

694. Jonsson 1933, 44.

695. Two secretaries kept minutes (A by C.J.E. Svensson and B by A. Rodhe) at the meeting held on 22 September 1885, because one of the purposes of discussion meetings was to train students to act in this role and thus more than one secretary could be elected. RegA, GAI F II:1, Minutes of a discussion meeting 22 September 1885 A and B; Minutes 6 October 1885; *GHT*, 'Arbetareinstitutets verksamhet' 22 March 1886.

696. RegA, GAI B I:1, pseudonym 'Elef af Arbetareinstitutet' to Wavrinsky. Numbers '4.86' in the letter might refer to April 1886. It is nevertheless located among the correspondence of 1886 and seems to refer to one of the meetings organized in spring 1886 on the future direction of the workers' institute.

697. RegA, GAI A I:1b, Appendix No. XLII/1886, Minutes of a discussion meeting 20 April 1886; F II:1, Minutes of a discussion meeting 6 October 1885.

open the possibility of organizing elementary education under exceptional circumstances. This option had also been used from the autumn term 1883 by offering courses in arithmetic, reading, elocution, spelling, penmanship and simple bookkeeping.<sup>698</sup> As the elementary courses seemed to be that part of instruction attracting increasing numbers of students, their popularity prompted the board to discuss where the emphasis of education should lie.<sup>699</sup> The question was also important from the perspective of municipal funding. On the one hand, the authorities emphasized that the workers' institute had progressed as an educational institution because of its elementary courses in particular, but on the other, the increasing elementary instruction was a reason to suggest that municipal subsidy should be withheld since the original purpose had changed.<sup>700</sup>

The nature of education was also debated by students in autumn 1885 in their discussion exercise titled 'Should elementary instruction be the only mission of the workers' institute?'. Participants considered both forms of instruction important but they were aware of the critical views on lectures, expressed, for instance, by social democratic workers, who regarded lectures as useless.<sup>701</sup> Wavrinsky was against the idea of changing the nature of the institute by cutting out lectures and by focusing solely on elementary education. One of his arguments for popular scientific lectures was that they offered workers intellectual enrichment to be shared and diffused among family members, friends and within different associations. What workers had learnt at the institute could become a topic of conversation or even of a presentation in a meeting, all this contributing to learning as the subject matter would not be forgotten. He also justified lectures by noting that they could build bridges between 'the more fortunate ones' and working people. Perhaps he meant that lectures enabled the actual encounters between the audience and lecturers or between workers and lower middle-class people, who might also attend lectures. Or perhaps he thought that raising the level of education brought workers intellectually closer to the middle class, including the idea of a better understanding between social classes brought up earlier in the city council. Wavrinsky was supported by the subsequent director, G. O. Börjesson, who

698. Jonsson 1933, 16; RegA, GAI A I:1b, Appendix No. XV/1884 'Redogörelse vt 1883 & 1883–1884', 13–14; Appendix No. XXIX/1885 'Redogörelse 1884–1885', 4.

699. RegA, GAI A I:1a, Minutes 8 April 1885, item 6.

700. *GSH 1886:66*, 2–3.

701. RegA, GAI F II:1, Minutes of a discussion meeting 22 September 1885 A and B; Beckholmen 1950, 74.

compared the workers' institute with secondary schools offering lectures and classroom instruction side by side.<sup>702</sup>

In this discussion exercise, arguments for elementary courses were presented by students of the institute and by educated people involved in its activities. Courses were regarded as useful for those with limited basic education, as a worker with personal experience of the matter explained, and a suitable form of education for younger people while lectures could better serve the interests of more mature workers.<sup>703</sup> The proponents of elementary instruction also referred to their supporting role in the educational work of the institute as they believed that those participating in such courses were likely to continue to lectures.<sup>704</sup>

Nineteenth-century workers' education has often been regarded as an activity, the content and methods of which were determined by the educated classes and where workers were passive objects.<sup>705</sup> The discussion exercises and public meetings addressing the programme of the institute nevertheless show that in Gothenburg the leaders of the institute were willing to listen to students—both present and potential—in the matters of the institute. Moreover, discussion exercises themselves, offering students an opportunity to assume the role of chairman or secretary, brought an aspect of active participation to this kind of education.<sup>706</sup>

In the discussion on the nature of the workers' institute, Wavrinsky illustrated the prevailing situation of workers' education by referring to two diverging models. The first one of these relied on popular scientific lecturers as the only form of instruction and was represented by the Stockholm Workers' Institute. The other was based solely on elementary instruction and this kind of education was organized in Copenhagen.<sup>707</sup> Since the nature of instruction remained a topical question, Wavrinsky made a study trip to Copenhagen at the beginning of 1886 to acquaint himself with the workers' education organized there.<sup>708</sup>

On the basis of his study trip, Wavrinsky suggested changes bringing instruction in natural sciences closer to classroom teaching. The changes would

702. RegA, GAI F II:1, Minutes of a discussion meeting 22 September 1885 A and B.

703. Ibid.

704. RegA, GAI A I:1b, Appendix No. XLII/1886, Minutes of a discussion meeting 20 April 1886.

705. E.g. Rydbeck 2013, 50–51; Gustavsson 1991, 35–36; Kaveh 2012, 116–117.

706. RegA, GAI A I:1b, Appendix No. XLIII/1886 'Redogörelse 1885–1886', 7–8; *GHT*, 'Arbetarsamfunden' 13 March 1886.

707. RegA, GAI F II:1, Minutes of a discussion meeting 22 September 1885 A and B.

708. RegA, GAI A I:1b, Appendix No. XLIII/1886 'Redogörelse 1885–1886', 10–11.

have increased students' opportunities to communicate with teachers, thus facilitating learning and inspiring participants to study new subjects.<sup>709</sup> Although these suggestions were not implemented, changes in the institute's character were nevertheless under way. The board had started to adjust the programme by arranging more elementary courses in spring 1884, partly inspired by the instruction organized in Copenhagen and partly because of requests made by workers. When extending elementary instruction the board was aware that the workers' institute was becoming more school-like and approaching a more conventional idea of workers' education as it referred to the possible similarities with the local vocational evening school. After Wavrinsky's departure, the practical value of instruction and even its usefulness for different trades was raised by the board and the subsequent director in the discussion on the goals of the institute and new subjects.<sup>710</sup>

Thus elementary instruction, originally intended as an exceptional form of education, was acknowledged as an essential part of the institute's activities. Wavrinsky formulated the change in the principles as follows: 'Having originally been based almost completely on similar grounds as the Stockholm Workers' Institute, the institute has gradually adopted more and more the nature of those institutions organizing workers' education in Copenhagen.'<sup>711</sup> This turn actually reveals how the idea of the workers' institute was adapted to the local circumstances. Since the population of Gothenburg was less than half that of Stockholm, the potential number of those interested in attending popular scientific lectures was also smaller.<sup>712</sup> Attending scientific lectures was a demanding way of studying, as some students of the Gothenburg institute wrote in a letter to the editor: 'we workers do not understand anything of the subjects lectured on there', and in their opinion, lectures could be discontinued whereas they stressed the importance of elementary instruction.<sup>713</sup> Nyström's optimism about the attraction of popular scientific education had obviously been based on his rather limited experience of working-class people, consisting of encounters with the small active elite involved in the associations within his

709. RegA, GAI A I:1b, Appendix No. XLII/1886, Minutes of a discussion meeting 20 April 1886.

710. *GHT*, 'Göteborgs arbetareinstitut' 30 May 1884 (a report by the workers' institute cited); RegA, GAI A I:1b, Appendix No. XXIX/1885 'Redogörelse 1884–1885', 4; an unnumbered appendix (after No. XLI/1886) 'Göteborgs Arbetareinstituts Läsordning höstterminen 1886', written by G.O. Börjesson; Jonsson 1933, 12.

711. RegA, GAI A I:1b, Appendix No. XLIII/1886 'Redogörelse 1885–1886', 10.

712. For population, see e.g. *SCB, Befolkningsstatistik, Folkmängd i städer 1800–1967*, [https://www.scb.se/hitta-statistik/sok, stader\\_1800\\_1967.xls](https://www.scb.se/hitta-statistik/sok, stader_1800_1967.xls), accessed 1 February 2022.

713. *Göteborgs-Posten*, 'Insändt, Elever vid institutet' 31 March 1886. See also *GHT*, 'Arbetareinstitutets verksamhet' 22 March 1886.

sphere of influence. However, in Stockholm this kind of vanguard and other interested parties constituted a sufficient student body for the local workers' institute, which retained lecturing long into the twentieth century.<sup>714</sup> What was regarded as a sufficient audience depended of course on high expectations, revealed by the disappointment the Gothenburg institute's leaders expressed when the average number of listeners fell to about fifty.<sup>715</sup>

It was not only the choice or balance between lecturing and elementary instruction that was understood to contribute to the attraction of the workers' institute but the content of lectures was also raised in this context. In a discussion meeting held in spring 1886, some workers suggested that the prohibition of political and religious topics should be abandoned. According to a newspaper report, Wavrinsky replied that 'nobody wished more than he that the institute could operate without any restrictions'. He nevertheless continued that it was better to be content with what they were offered, especially because the restraints seemed not to be so critical, as could be observed in the discussion meetings of the institute, obviously referring to the possibility of a freer exchange of views. Some social democratic workers emphasized the difference between Gothenburg and Copenhagen, where 'the left-wing scientists with a burning interest in workers' education offered workers a little of their store of knowledge', revealing hopes cherished of the nature of education.<sup>716</sup> The existence of expectations for topics introducing societal questions and issues close to workers' sphere of living was also shown in a letter to Wavrinsky. A student expressed the wish for lectures to be offered 'on working people, their responsibilities towards themselves and society, on their life in the past and now, on the heroes of work and on those who have promoted workers' intellectual development'.<sup>717</sup>

Workers' indifference to popular scientific lectures undoubtedly disappointed Wavrinsky as his original plan of workers' higher education seemed to fail. 'Unfortunately, the workers' institute has not been able to produce any great achievement', he wrote in August 1885.<sup>718</sup> Probably Wavrinsky,

714. Leander 1955, 76, 191–192; Leander 1980, 101.

715. RegA, GAI F II:1, Minutes of a discussion meeting 22 September 1885 A and B; A I:1b, An unnumbered appendix (after No. XLI/1886) 'Göteborgs Arbetareinstitutets Läsörding höstterminen 1886, written by G.O. Börjesson; *GHT*, 'Arbetareinstitutets verksamhet', 22 March 1886.

716. RegA, GAI A I:1b, Appendix No. XLII/1886, Minutes of a discussion meeting 20 April 1886; *GHT*, 'Arbetareinstitutets verksamhet' 22 March 1886.

717. RegA, GAI B I:1, pseudonym 'Elef af Arbetareinstitutet' to Wavrinsky. See footnote 696.

718. Beckholmen 1950, 72–75 (Wavrinsky's letter to the editor of *Göteborgs nyheter* 5 August 1885 reproduced in its entirety).

like Nyström, could not fully understand the conditions of the majority of workers, making studying difficult in many respects. Moreover, the initiators' idea of useful education probably did not coincide with that prevailing in the target group. Nyström considered theoretical instruction in natural and social sciences useful but his reference point was university education, which so far had been dominated by theology and idealistic philosophy, and Wavrinsky also emphasized the intrinsic value of education.<sup>719</sup> Even though the institute did not issue diplomas or certificates, many students probably expected usefulness in terms of practicality or, with regard to theoretical instruction, of relevance to their lives. Although there were workers interested in scientific lectures, the great demand for elementary courses surprised Wavrinsky and the board, who had not foreseen the significance of such education when the programme had been prepared.<sup>720</sup>

What also disappointed Wavrinsky was the lack of support from the local workers' organizations, both liberal and socialist. The latter criticized the workers' institute for not being able to offer social democratic workers anything worth learning. One of the local socialist leaders, C. M. Heurlin, belittled the institute in a letter to the editor by remarking that he could usually not 'give his working time to see shadow pictures and to hear of the merits of Karl XII and other great men'.<sup>721</sup> The attack from the liberal workers' association came from its former chair, J. A. Hallgren, who had been a teacher at the institute. In spring 1886 he declared that the public funding received by the institute was misspent and that the institute should be closed down for the time being because it had been established too early.<sup>722</sup> He continued his attack in the general assembly of the liberal workers' associations later that year by denouncing the Swedish workers' institutes as a fiasco. According to him, the curriculum contained too many subjects of no interest to workers and, for this reason, the programme should only focus on purely technological and vocational instruction and on social studies.<sup>723</sup>

All this evidently contributed to Wavrinsky's decision to resign in spring 1886. Temperance work also started to offer new challenges when he was

719. *GSH 1883:46*, 5.

720. RegA, GAI A I:1b, Appendix No. XXIX/1885 'Redogörelse 1884–1885', 4.

721. Jarnäs-Nilsson 1966, 126; Beckholmen 1950, 74–76.

722. *GHT*, 'Arbetareinstitutets verksamhet' 22 March 1886.

723. *Göteborgs-Posten*, 'Arbetaremötet i Örebro' 2 July 1886; *GHT*, 'Tredje svenska arbetaremötet' 30 June 1886 and 'Göteborgs arbetareinstitut' 18 September 1886; Jarnäs-Nilsson 1966, 126–127.

elected the director of the Swedish branch of IOGT that summer.<sup>724</sup> However, the possibility that the question of control played a role in Wavrinsky's departure cannot be totally excluded. Even though Wavrinsky seems to have diminished the disadvantages caused by the restrictions on religious and political topics, the paper of the social democrats offered another version of his comment above. According to *Socialdemokraten*, Wavrinsky had said 'we should welcome what we are offered until there will be an association maintaining an independent institute with freedom which is in accordance with the requirements of the time'. The paper continued that if such an association could not be founded, Wavrinsky would resign from the board of the institute.<sup>725</sup> It is of course possible that this kind of report either unintentionally misquoted information it probably had at second hand or, to promote its own agenda, exaggerated Wavrinsky's message. Or simply, it could have quoted in part a different passage from his talk. Nonetheless, the question of control seems to have been under discussion around the time he decided to resign.

#### **HUMANITIES DOMINATE LECTURE TOPICS**

Lectures, on the one hand, and school-like elementary or classroom teaching, on the other, came to constitute the basic forms of education at the Gothenburg Workers' Institute, nevertheless remaining separate lines. Although elementary courses gained popularity, in 1914 the director still considered lectures the principal form of instruction, revealing that this part of the initiator's legacy was strong.<sup>726</sup> In 1895, the institute started an entirely new form of activity by organizing so-called popular concerts to provide aesthetic enjoyment for workers who could not afford the prices of ordinary concerts.<sup>727</sup>

The content of elementary instruction, which later became known as evening classes, extended in the course of years from the most basic skills to new subjects, reflecting the rising level of primary education. During the fifty-year period until 1933, courses were most frequently organized in English language, penmanship, arithmetic, bookkeeping, German and Swedish, the latter consisting of spelling and composition writing. These were also the subjects attracting the most students. By the 1930s, typing and stenography had also been taken into the programme and these subjects attracted substantial

724. GHT, 'Arbetareinstitutet' 24 April 1886; *Aftonbladet*, 'Verldsgoodtemplarordens storlogemöte' 6 July 1886; RegA, GAI A I:1a, Minutes 31 August 1886.

725. *Socialdemokraten*, 'Bref från landsorten. Från Göteborg' 2 April 1886. Cf. GHT, 'Arbetareinstitutets verksamhet' 22 March 1886.

726. Jonsson 1914.

727. Jonsson 1933, 19–20.

numbers of students. The popularity of foreign languages and vocationally oriented commercial subjects was also typical of the Tampere Workers' Institute in the 1920s and 1930s (see Chapter 4).<sup>728</sup>

Lectures as coherent series continued to be the aim although it was not always possible to organize this kind of systematic education. The original timetable with fixed days for different subjects, borrowed from the Stockholm Workers' Institute, was replaced by a freer arrangement. The statistics collected by Director Jonsson show that from 1883 to 1908 the most frequently lectured subjects were, in this order, Swedish history and general history; natural sciences (all branches); geography; cultural history; anatomy, physiology and hygiene; and the history of literature, art and music. Lectures in humanities outnumbered sciences, and if geography is also included in the humanities, there were twice as many lecture courses in humanities than in sciences. Incorporating geography into humanities is reasonable since, at least in the early years, it also extended to various historical and cultural topics. During the period 1908–1933, humanities and geography became even more dominant at the expense of natural sciences.<sup>729</sup>

In terms of participants, the most popular lecture subjects during the fifty-year-period from 1883 to 1933 were (in this order) geography; cultural history; the history of literature, music and art; history and political science; natural sciences; and physiology and hygiene. Thus, it was not only the course offerings but also students' interest that focused more on culture and history than on natural sciences. The role of economics and social sciences was not very significant in this fifty-year period either in terms of courses or participants.<sup>730</sup>

In spite of the hopes workers expressed in the 1880s, religious and political questions remained forbidden in Swedish popular and liberal adult education until the 1920s, when these topics were allowed on condition that they were treated objectively.<sup>731</sup> It also seems that themes related specifically to working class life and milieu did not have any significant place in the programme. The categories of subjects possibly containing such topics (social studies, temperance questions and miscellaneous themes) were not among the most frequently lectured.<sup>732</sup>

728. Jonsson 1933, 16–17, 43 (table of elementary courses); RegA, GAI F XI:I, *Redogörelse 1929–1930, 1930–1931, 1938–1939*.

729. Jonsson 1933, 10–11.

730. Jonsson 1933, 42 (table of lectures).

731. *SOU 1924:5*, 10–12; *SOU 1946:68*, 113–116.

732. Jonsson 1933, 42–43.



However, such broad categories given in statistics do not illustrate the actual content of education. Therefore, the characteristics of popular scientific lectures in the 1880s and at the turn of 1890s will be illustrated with the help of three annual reports covering the academic years 1883–1884, 1885–1886 and 1889–1890.<sup>733</sup>

Cultural history, which Nyström regarded as one of the most important subjects if not the most important, did not appear in the programme of the Gothenburg Workers' Institute during the first years. This is understandable because it was probably difficult to find teachers acquainted with the various fields Nyström had included in this subject. When lectures on cultural history were arranged in autumn 1889, these did not form a systematic whole but consisted of miscellaneous topics like the history of warfare and the early ages of the North, including the status of women. Swedish history was nevertheless taught from early on with a focus on political history, where monarchs, their reigns and wars were central. Lectures in history also touched on cultural phenomena like the inventions that marked the transition from the Middle Ages to the early modern period, or economic and local questions like railway construction in Sweden and smuggling in Gothenburg region. In 1889–1890, general history also appeared on the programme and consisted of a lecture series on ancient, medieval and modern history. History in this rather traditional form was obviously the best example of systematic education as chronology and a shared understanding of the essential content provided a framework for this.<sup>734</sup> Other subjects were not apparently so easy to organize into structured entities.

From the perspective of Wavrinsky's original goals, religious freedom was interestingly a topic-lectured on at least twice in the early 1880s. Yet the titles suggest that the lectures were confined to the Swedish legislation and the lecturer was the known conservative, J. A. Hallgren and not, for instance, Wavrinsky or another religiously liberal teacher of the institute, Doctor E. W. Wretlind.<sup>735</sup> The perspective of working-class life did not appear in the lecture titles of these years.

733. RegA, GAI A I:1b, Appendix No. XV/1884 'Redogörelse vt 1883 & 1883–1884', 5–12; Appendix No. XLIII/1886 'Redogörelse 1885–1886', 5–7; 'Redogörelse för Göteborgs Arbetareinstituts verksamhet 1889–1890', reproduced in Berrman and Idestrom 1983, 25–30.

734. On history lectures, see also Jonsson 1933, 10.

735. Wretlind was one of those who established Gothenburg's Society for Religious Freedom in November 1882. *GHT*, 'Religionsfrihetsförening' 7 November 1882.

Geography, or the description of peoples and lands as it was called, was lectured by Wavrinsky himself during the first years and the subject provided information on different parts of the world and their inhabitants as the name suggests. Depending on which part of the world was the topic, lectures might address religion and customs (Africa and Asia), history (Greece) or education, the army and society (North America). In 1890, another lecturer introduced the Arctic Ocean, its natural phenomena and population.

The approach to subjects belonging to natural sciences seems to have been fairly practical. In the lectures on anatomy, physiology and hygiene, instruction was given on topics related to the human body and its functioning including digestion, diet, stimulants and alcoholic beverages, infectious diseases and emergency first aid. In addition to astronomy, lectures on natural sciences introduced phenomena presumably familiar to many from working life together with practical applications of science: steam engines, warmth and thermometers, fuels, light and light sources in different periods of history. This kind of practical approach was also typical of those lectures on technology that the Education Fund organized in the 1870s and 1880s for an educated audience.<sup>736</sup> Natural history, for its part, might include topics like fishing. Such an approach to sciences was understandable given the general educational background of working-class people, their milieu and the wish to attract a large audience. However, this is noteworthy since the institute had originally stressed that its instruction should not be vocational. Although not directly vocational, such lectures could yet have been more practically oriented than the instruction given in the vocational evening schools, which mainly offered instruction in skills like spelling and basic arithmetic.<sup>737</sup> Moreover, the approach to sciences did probably not differ greatly from that of the Stockholm institute, where practical applications were emphasized as a part of instruction in physics and chemistry in the early 1880s.<sup>738</sup>

When compared with the curriculum of secondary schools, which cultural liberals often looked down on, there was interestingly a common feature. If Latin and mathematics which occupied the greater part of lessons during the nine years of secondary school in the 1880s, are excluded, the next subject in terms of hours was the combination of history and geography, both of which also had a strong position at the workers' institute. Sciences had a marginal role

736. See Chapter 2.2.1.

737. Cf. Lundh-Nilsson 2010. By exploring the content of different subjects in detail, Lundh-Nilsson has shown that the instruction at Swedish folk high schools was more practically oriented than earlier thought.

738. Bolin 1930, 12, 25.

in the secondary school curriculum of the 1880s but neither did they reach the prominence at the workers' institute obviously intended by Wavrinsky.<sup>739</sup>

The secondary school curriculum was actually a factor influencing the subjects that could be included in the programme of the workers' institute since the teachers of these schools constituted a notable group of lecturers during the period 1883–1933. Director Jonsson himself was a history and geography teacher and the regular appearance of these subjects was evidently not coincidental. Secondary school teachers were nevertheless outnumbered by academics (professors, lecturers, doctors of philosophy). The titles would suggest that lecturers representing working people did not appear. Nor does the information collected by Jonsson reveal the period when lecturers were active or give the number of their lectures, hence no conclusions can be drawn about teachers' professional backgrounds at different stages or the prevalence of any group. However, it is likely that before the 1890s the local secondary school teachers gave the most lectures and, when academics instructed, these were guests since there was no university in Gothenburg before 1891. Neither could the establishment of Gothenburg University College that year improve the availability of local teachers in natural sciences as this institution focused for long on humanities, although some social sciences were added to its curriculum at the turn of the century. It is possible that in the field of technology, Chalmers technical institute could have provided other teachers in addition to Professor Wijkander, the long-serving chairman of the board. Professionals from various fields, journalists and representatives of different art forms widened the perspectives of instruction as visiting lecturers but these were not employed during the first decade. Local medical doctors made an exception from the very outset by giving lessons in hygiene.<sup>740</sup> Consequently, the lecture subjects at the workers' institute were to a large extent determined by the availability of teachers and thus the distribution of subjects in different main categories was not even. Therefore, it was the local circumstances that played a significant role in the way the content of education was determined rather than any governmental steering.<sup>741</sup>

If the titles of lectures given by the staff of Gothenburg University

739. Richardson 1963, 70–71, tables 5–7; RegA, GAI A I:1b, Appendix No. XV/1884 'Redogörelse vt 1883 & 1883–1884', 5–12; Appendix No. XLIII/1886 'Redogörelse 1885–1886', 5–7; 'Redogörelse för Göteborgs Arbetareinstituts verksamhet 1889–1890', in Berrman and Idestrom 1983, 25–30.

740. Jonsson 1933, 11, 34–39; Sylwan 1916, 51–52; Attman 1963, 341. The first subject representing sciences in Gothenburg University College was oceanography in 1914.

741. Cf. Berg and Edquist 2017, 70–73.

College at the workers' institute are compared with the public lectures of the university college in the 1890s, it seems that the former were more popular and intelligible. Lectures at the workers' institute included presentations on notable historical figures, artists and writers as well as accounts of history, distant countries and peoples while those intended for an educated audience were obviously more abstract, focusing not only on personalities but on works of art and, for instance, on theories of philosophy, linguistics and psychology.<sup>742</sup> It is nevertheless likely that during the early twentieth century the difference between the lectures of these institutions in some respects gradually levelled out and there may even have been some kind of competition between the public lectures given by visiting lecturers at the university college and those arranged at the workers' institute.<sup>743</sup>

### 3.3.3. The Institute's Sphere of Influence: Numbers and Backgrounds of Students

#### LECTURES FOR LARGE AUDIENCES AND ELEMENTARY COURSES FOR INCREASING NUMBERS OF STUDENTS

One way of assessing the significance of an educational project is to look at its sphere of influence in the locality by exploring how many townspeople it attracted to its activities. This also reveals how well the initiators had managed to comprehend local educational needs. The first experimental lectures in spring 1883 attracted large audiences, some lectures even more than 700 listeners.<sup>744</sup> Although the initial excitement soon wore off, lectures organized on five evenings a week still had 300 listeners on average, causing Wavrinsky to point out that this was three times more than the Stockholm Workers' Institute had ever succeeded in attracting.<sup>745</sup> Perhaps the board's efforts also had an effect as it marketed the lectures by printing and distributing 5,000 copies of a circular addressed to workers. The local press published brief news items about the institute and announced forthcoming lectures free of charge. In addition to novelty, lack of alternative pastimes may also have contributed to the interest in the first lectures. Their topics sounded exciting and entertaining: North

742. Cederschiöld 1899, 7–10, 12.

743. Eriksson Nils 1985, 22–23.

744. *GSH 1883:46*, 5; RegA, GAI A I:1b, Appendix No. XV/1884 'Redogörelse vt 1883 & 1883–1884', 4. *Handelstidningen* estimated the number even as high as 800–900. *GHT*, 'Arbetsinstitutet' 24 Mars 1883.

745. RegA, GAI A I:1b, Appendix No. III/1883 'Till Göteborgs herrar arbetsgivare', an undated circular signed by Wavrinsky.

American Indians, Robinson Crusoe and a lecturer from Stockholm talking about planets and showing images with a magic lantern.<sup>746</sup> Furthermore, the earlier disputes around the Stockholm institute probably also aroused curiosity.

No registers containing information about those who took part in lectures are extant but their numbers can be found in the annual statistics. However, these are less informative because the figures do not reveal the actual number of participants but the number of attendances, which is the result of different calculations.<sup>747</sup> Therefore, the statistics show a figure which is many times the actual number of people involved. In addition to the total number of visits, the statistics offer the average of listeners per lecture.<sup>748</sup> Neither are the averages helpful in determining the actual numbers of people but they nevertheless provide some indication of the scale.

The statistics reveal that the peaks experienced during the first spring term did not become a regular phenomenon (Table 4). Although the collapse during the academic year 1885–1886 with approximately 30 listeners per lecture was already overcome in the following year, in subsequent years the average number of participants in the main lecture hall did not usually exceed 200. It was only from 1903–1904 when the average of listeners in the main lecture hall went up, usually being closer to 300, with a record of 413 in 1904–1905. Although the number of visits and the average of listeners decreased during the latter half of the 1920s, this trend was not permanent as the figure for the early 1940s shows.<sup>749</sup> The averages of courses can be deceptive: there could still have been lecturers and topics attracting an audience of several hundred for a night or two while some others had to content themselves with a handful of listeners.<sup>750</sup> What this kind of measurement nevertheless shows is the general nature of the lectures as mass events.

746. RegA, GAI A I:1a, Minutes 18 August 1883, item 14; A I:1b, Appendix No. XV/1884 'Redogörelse vt 1883 & 1883–1884', 3–5, 12; Appendix No. XXIX/1885 'Redogörelse 1884–1885', 7; *GHT*, 'Göteborg: Göteborgs arbetareinstitut' 20 February 1883 and 'Arbetareinstitutet' 24 Mars 1883. The other local papers also started to announce the forthcoming lectures.

747. E.g. the report for 1885–1886 shows that the yearly total (*antal åhörare*) is the sum of attendees for each lecture series and a person could be counted more than once if he/she attended several lecture series concurrently. The number of attendees for each lecture series, in turn, is the total number of attendees at each session of the lecture series (the attendees were counted every time). RegA, GAI A I:1b, Appendix No. XLIII/1886 'Redogörelse 1885–1886', 4 and Appendix I.

748. E.g. *Göteborgs statistik 1900*, Tab. 162; *Göteborgs statistik 1910*, Tab. 184; Jonsson 1933, 44 (the number of lectures and attendances).

749. Jonsson 1933, 44 (the number of lectures and attendances).

750. E.g. in 1885–1886 the number of participants ranged from 9 to 300. RegA, GAI AI:1b, Appendix No. XLIII/1886 'Redogörelse 1885–1886', Appendix 1.

**Table 4. Gothenburg Workers' Institute. Numbers of lectures and attendees.**

	Lectures	Attendees	Average of attendees per lecture	
			All lectures	Main lecture hall
1885–1886	140	4 170	30	35
1890–1891	210	23 867	114	172
1895–1896	232	33 597	145	214
1900–1901	201	22 424	112	142
1905–1906	141	39 882	283	332
1910–1911	177	43 767	247	278
1915–1916	173	42 203	244	275
1920–1921	168	38 844	231	263
1925–1926	168	33 117	197	203
1930–1931	165	30 691	186	181
1941–1942	162	39 915	246	276

Sources: Jonsson 1933, 44 (Tablå över antalet föreläsningar och antalet besök); GSH 1942:194, 10–11, Bilaga II (Statistik över föreläsningarna vid Göteborgs arbetarinstitut 1941–1942).

In elementary instruction the classes were smaller. Limiting the number of students was obviously not due to any pedagogical reasons but was simply determined by the sizes of classrooms available.<sup>751</sup> The first elementary courses held in 1883–1884 had approximately 30 students each, totalling 60 in the autumn term and 185 in the spring term. Students were registered for each course once but these totals do not reflect the numbers of actual people because one student might participate in more than one course.<sup>752</sup> The relation between registrations and actual people can nonetheless be elucidated with the help of figures available for the academic year 1889–1890. In the autumn term, the number of registrations was 241 and the register contains 162 job titles. Together with the corresponding figures for the spring term (227 registrations and 136 job titles) they suggest that the number of actual students might have been roughly two thirds of those registered.<sup>753</sup> If this relation is valid for the 1890s as well, the number of actual participants would in autumn term 1895 be about 180 (275 registrations) and in spring 1896 around 220 (333 registrations).<sup>754</sup>

751. RegA, GAI AI:1a, Minutes 7 December 1883, item 3; A I:1b, Appendix No. XXIX/1885 'Redogörelse 1884–1885', 4.

752. The larger groups in mathematics and penmanship seem to have worked by turns so that only about half of students were present at a time. RegA, GAI AI:1b, Appendix No. XV/1884 'Redogörelse vt 1883 & 1883–1884', 13–14.

753. 'Redogörelse för Göteborgs Arbetareinstituts verksamhet 1889–1890', in Berrman and Idestrom 1983, 41, 44.

754. *GSH 1896:70*, 7.

Gothenburg's municipal statistics do not contain information about the elementary course students and Jonsson's history only provides totals for each subject during the fifty-year period 1883–1933. However, according to Jonsson, classroom instruction became increasingly popular.<sup>755</sup> This is also born out by the student register for 1905–1906 containing the number of actual people: 378 students in autumn 1905 and 375 in spring 1906. It is noteworthy that men formed the overwhelming majority, leaving the proportion of women at roughly one quarter.<sup>756</sup> The small proportion of women is actually not exceptional in Sweden since in the study circles of the educational associations women were in the minority until the mid-twentieth century.<sup>757</sup> In the following years, the popularity of the evening classes continued, as shown by the figures for the autumn terms 1921 and 1930, when the numbers of students were 636 and 780 respectively. These were obviously registrations and not the numbers of actual participants.<sup>758</sup>

Accordingly, the number of participants in elementary instruction increased from a few dozen in the first autumn to several hundred by 1930, whereas the average number of students attending lectures decreased during the 1920s. Although the average of 186 listeners per lecture in 1930–1931 seems not so bad, the board of the institute emphasized the role of evening classes in the work of the institute and established new classes because of their popularity.<sup>759</sup> Classroom instruction had become a serious competitor to the original idea of popular scientific lectures. There was an obvious demand for such instruction in basic skills and, in addition, the board of the institute had purposely increased the number of courses since the 1880s. The number of registered students does not of course reveal how many stayed until the end of the term but the fees collected from them may have been an incentive to continue with their studies.

#### **ADULT MANUAL WORKERS AS THE PRINCIPAL AUDIENCE OF THE FIRST YEARS**

Adult education such as the workers' institute raises the question as to who the students were, adults or young people, workers or other townspeople. Unfortunately, no systematic information on those who attended lectures exists. It

755. Jonsson 1933, 43; Jonsson et al. 1923, 883, 885.

756. RegA, GAI D 3:1, 'Staden: Høstterminen 1905, Vårterminen 1906', 'Majorna: Høstterminen 1905, Vårterminen 1906', 'Redbergslid: Høstterminen 1905, Vårterminen 1906'.

757. Rydbeck 2001, 16–17.

758. Jonsson et al. 1923, 885; *GSH 1931:246*, 8.

759. *GSH 1931:246*, 1–2.

was only during the first years that the institute collected information on the ages and occupations of students who paid for lectures but when the institute abandoned entrance fees it also discontinued this practice. The registers of the first years have not survived but some information is offered by the annual reports, although these do not distinguish between those who attended lectures and the participants of elementary courses. What they do reveal is that participants were adults as, in the academic years 1884–1885 and 1885–1886, the average age of students was close to 40 years. The ages, however, ranged from 15 to 66 years. The lowest age varied considerably in different places where instruction was organized and could be even as high as 24 or 25 years whereas the highest age ranged from 54 to 66 years.<sup>760</sup> This shows that people who can be regarded as fairly old by the standards of the time also participated in this kind of educational activity although the number of the oldest was obviously small.<sup>761</sup> The relatively high average age suggests that lectures, which attracted most students because of their nature as mass events and because the number of elementary courses was still small, attracted mature adults more than did elementary instruction. This view was also expressed in the discussion meeting of the institute.

It is logical that Wavrinsky, who wrote the annual reports of the first years, focused on the proportion of working people when reporting on the social status of students. On the basis of the occupations students had given when registering, he estimated that the proportion of *kroppsarbetare*, manual labourers, was from two-thirds to three-quarters in the lectures in the main lecture hall in the workers' association's building in the academic year 1884–1885. The composition of the audience nevertheless varied from place to place. In one working-class area, Majorna, practically all participants were workers whereas in another, Redbergslid, lower middle-class people like shopkeepers and female teachers also appeared. However, according to Wavrinsky, workers and lower middle-class people attended lectures at different times as the former came on weekday evenings while workers preferred Sundays. The main lecture hall, located in a working-class area but still closer to the centre of the city, also had a more heterogeneous audience. In addition to the weekday and the area where instruction was organized, the nature of the instruction offered influenced the

760. RegA, GAI A I:1b, Appendix No. XXIX/1885 'Redogörelse 1884–1885', 5–6; Appendix No. XLIII/1886 'Redogörelse 1885–1886', 4.

761. This is also suggested by the information on students attending elementary courses (see below).



composition of the audience since the students on elementary courses were usually workers.<sup>762</sup>

#### **ELEMENTARY COURSES ATTRACTING THE YOUNG AND YOUNG ADULTS**

For want of information on the students attending lectures, it is still possible to form a more detailed picture of the ages and occupations of the participants in elementary courses since these were registered as they continued to pay fees. I have scrutinized the earliest information to be found in the archives, which is from the academic year 1885–1886, together with the years 1888–1889 and 1905–1906. However, the registers of the two first academic years seem not to include all the courses arranged then.

Regarding students' ages, elementary courses were distinctly a form of instruction attracting young people and young adults (Table 5). While the ages in the autumn term 1885 ranged from 13 to 46 years and in autumn 1888 from 14 to 54 years, students from 15 to 29 years constituted the great majority, more than 70 per cent. In addition, more than half of all students belonged to the age group of 15 to 24 year-olds. This characteristic was still visible at the beginning of the twentieth century. In autumn 1905, the proportion of the young and young adults on the courses held at the main location in the workers' associations building ('city' in Table 5) was even greater: 15 to 29 year-olds accounted for 81 per cent of all, while the largest group consisting of the youngest (15 to 19 year-olds) reached 40 per cent. In the branches of Redbergslid and Majorna, where the number of participants was substantially smaller, the students were also young as the vast majority belonged to the group of 15–24 year-olds.

Even though the elementary courses at the Gothenburg Workers' Institute partly offered similar instruction to that of elementary school, these courses did not generally become a substitute for school in the sense that school-aged children would have rushed there. It seems that participants under 15 years were unusual. This was actually the intention of the institute's board as it announced that courses were meant for adults and decided in 1885 that participants under 18 years could only be admitted in exceptional circumstances.<sup>763</sup> As there nonetheless were students younger than 18, this shows that the board had not completely succeeded in its effort to maintain the clear adult

762. RegA, GAI A I:1b, Appendix No. XXIX/1885 'Redogörelse 1884–1885', 5–6; RegA, GAI A I:1b, Appendix No. XLIII/1886 'Redogörelse 1885–1886', 4.

763. RegA, GAI AI:1b, Appendix No. XV/1884 'Redogörelse vt 1883 & 1883–1884', 8; AI:1a, Minutes 28 August 1885.

education nature of the institute, which is not surprising given the conditions of young workers. At the turn of the twentieth century fifteen-year-olds from working class were usually earning their living in one way or the other and no longer attended day-time schools. Thus their position did not differ from that of adult workers and evening classes were practically the only opportunity for them to improve their education.

**Table 5. Gothenburg Workers' Institute. Ages of students on elementary courses in 1885, 1888 and 1905.**

Autumn 1885				Autumn 1888			
Age	All %	Women %	Men %	Age	All %	Women %	Men %
13–14	1.9		2.3	14	2.1	6.1	0.9
15–19	29.6	30.0	29.5	15–19	21.0	30.3	18.2
20–24	22.2	10.0	25.0	20–24	34.2	42.4	31.8
25–29	20.3	20.0	20.5	25–29	18.2	9.1	20.9
30–34	11.1	30.0	6.8	30–34	10.5	6.1	11.8
35–39	7.4	10.0	6.8	35–39	7.0	3.0	8.2
40–44	3.7		4.5	40–44	2.8	3.0	2.7
45–46	1.9		2.3	45–49	1.4		1.9
				50–54	0.7		0.9
No information	1.9		2.3	No information	2.1		2.7
Total %	100.0	100.0	100.0	Total %	100.0	100.0	100.0
	N=54	N=10	N=44		N=143	N=33	N=110

Autumn 1905, city				Autumn 1905, Majorna and Redbergslid			
Age	All %	Women %	Men %	Age	All %	Women %	Men %
				14	10.7		12.3
15–19	39.6	42.1	38.8	15–19	40.0	70.0	35.4
20–24	26.1	29.0	25.1	20–24	22.7	20.0	23.1
25–29	15.5	18.4	14.5	25–29	6.7	10.0	6.2
30–34	10.6	6.6	11.9	30–34	9.3		10.7
35–39	4.3	2.6	4.9	35–39	5.3		6.2
40–44	2.0	1.3	2.2	40–44	4.0		4.6
45–50	1.0		1.3	45–49	1.3		1.5
50–	0.3		0.4				
No information	0.6		0.9				
Total %	100.0	100.0	100.0	Total %	100.0	100.0	100.0
	N=303	N=76	N=227		N=75	N=10	N=65

Sources: RegA, GAI G VI:2, 'Anteckningslistor 1885–1886'; D I:1 File Nr. 32 'Journal Huvudlokalen; Ht 1888–Vt 1889'; D 3:1, 'Staden: Höstterminen 1905', 'Majorna: Höstterminen 1905', 'Redbergslid: Höstterminen 1905'.

Although they did not exactly replace elementary school, these courses obviously acted as remedial education providing an opportunity to revisit what was taught in elementary school, which may have been incomplete due to the short time spent at school, part-time instruction or simply because of poor teaching. Since places of birth were not registered, it is not possible to know how many of the students had moved from the rural areas, where elementary education was usually more limited than in towns. In view of the urbanization taking place in these years, it is likely that a substantial part of students were indeed born outside Gothenburg. Moreover, subjects not included in the elementary school curriculum were also taught, which apparently also attracted young students. Such subjects from the first years of the twentieth century were bookkeeping, starting right at the beginning, and German and English from the first years of the twentieth century.<sup>764</sup>

Nonetheless, it was not only young people who attended elementary courses. Some students were over forty years old, but among the more mature students, the age group 30–40 might account for almost one fifth of students as in 1885 and 1888. Regarding gender, there was a difference as female students tended to be somewhat younger. For example, in 1888 and 1905 the great majority of women – more than 70 per cent – were under 25 years. This may be simply because older women likely had children and hence no time for studies.

#### **CRAFTSPEOPLE AND SKILLED WORKERS FORMING THE MAJORITY OF ELEMENTARY COURSE STUDENTS**

When reporting the social status of students during the first years, Wavrinsky made no distinctions within the group of workers (*kröppsarbetare*). This was also long customary in the Finnish workers' institutes in the twentieth century. Grouping all workers in one category is not, however, illustrative because the group was stratified according to the specialization and skill and included occupations of various types. Therefore, I made a more detailed classification of occupations found in the student registers for the academic years 1885–1886, 1888–1889 and 1905–1906 in order to ascertain what kinds of people attended courses and how their backgrounds might have contributed to their participation in education. The more detailed classification also shows the different

764. An experiment with German had taken place in 1888 but because of economic problems German and English became regular subjects only in 1902 and 1904. Jonsson 1933, 17.

situations of women and men since the labour market was sharply divided according to gender.

On the basis of men's occupations, I formed eleven classes (Table 6). The majority of students in those years fall into categories 1 to 4, manual workers. The others, with the exception of clerical workers and students, are tiny but worth mentioning as they show the spectrum of students' social backgrounds.

**Table 6. Gothenburg Workers' Institute. Occupations of male students on elementary courses in 1885–1886, 1888–1889, 1905–1906.**

	Autumn 1885	Spring 1886	Autumn 1888	Spring 1889	Autumn 1905	Spring 1906	Autumn 1905	Spring 1906	Autumn 1905	Spring 1906
	%	%	%	%	City %	City %	Maj. %	Maj. %	Red. %	Red. %
1. Craftsmen	32	27	41	41	24	21	12	7	15	10
2. Skilled workers	23	29	9	11	17	14	6	7	9	37
3. Unskilled workers	20	21	16	16	17	21	63	73	46	28
4. Porters, caretakers etc.	2	3	7	6	8	10	3	3	18	4
5. Foremen and technicians	5	2	3	1	1	1				
6. Shopkeepers	2	2	3	1	3	2				
7. Clerical workers, shop assistants	9	2	6	9	16	18			9	17
8. Minor officials		2	9	5	1	3			3	
9. Teachers etc.					3	2				
10. Pupils/students		2	1	6	8	6				
11. Other		2		2	1		16	10		4
12. No information	7	8	5	2	1	2				
Total %	100	100	100	100	100	100	100	100	100	100
	N=44	N=58	N=110	N=111	N=227	N=185	N=32	N=29	N=33	N=57

Location: City = main location; Maj. = Majorna; Red. = Redbergslid

Sources: RegA, GAI G VI:2, 'Anteckningslistor 1885–1886'; D I:1, File Nr. 32 'Journal Huvudlokalen Ht 1888–Vt 1889'; D 3:1, 'Staden: Höstterminen 1905, Vårterminen 1906', 'Majorna: Höstterminen 1905, Vårterminen 1906', 'Redbergslid: Höstterminen 1905, Vårterminen 1906'.

The groups described here as manual workers deserve more attention as they together accounted for most of the students and also constituted the original target group of the institute. Although the difference between a craftsman and a skilled worker was sometimes probably not highly significant, I categorized the practitioners of traditional crafts as a separate group.<sup>765</sup> Craftsmen like shoemakers, tailors, bakers, brewers, carpenters and masons had earlier formed the upper stratum of workers since, as masters of a trade,

765. I used Söderberg's and Rasila's lists of crafts as a starting point. Söderberg 1965, 121–122 and passim; Rasila 1984, 315–328.

they had been entrepreneurs with their own employees. However, the nature of many crafts had changed and on the basis of the titles given at the turn of the twentieth century it is not possible to know the actual status of a craftsman. Skilled employees of craftsmen may also have used such titles and some of those using a craftsman's title may have worked in small-scale industry like carpenters and turners.<sup>766</sup> During the last decades of the nineteenth century, almost 80 per cent of people earning their living from crafts in Gothenburg were employees, which also suggests that a number of those registered at the institute with a craftsman's title were probably employees.<sup>767</sup> The reason for distinguishing between craftsmen and skilled workers is less the actual status of these workers but the status and tradition of craftsmen's occupations, which gave them a special characteristic. Some craftsmen might be small-scale entrepreneurs or at least self-employed, when the work also involved selling products or services. Moreover, the training of craftsmen was supposed to require several years of apprenticeship, and, although its regulation had ended in Sweden, the tradition was still alive and constituted the principal form of vocational training in many occupations.<sup>768</sup>

I classified as skilled those workers with a specialized occupation, often employed in industry, mechanical workshops or, for example, in printing houses. These workers had also acquired their skills in working life since until the twentieth century there were in Sweden no vocational schools providing practical training for workers. However, apprenticeship training in industry was not nearly as typical as it was in crafts and the time required to learn the trade was usually shorter.<sup>769</sup>

The third group of manual workers consists of unskilled or unspecialized workers, to which I have classified those whose job title is unspecified or refers, for example, to physical outdoor work which presumably did not require so much skill. This category also includes factory workers without more precise titles although industrial work was not automatically unskilled work. It seems nevertheless likely that if a worker possessed a specific skill in industrial or other work, he would report it in the student register. Titles referring to a craftsman's employee are also included in this group because it is impossible

766. Söderberg 1965, 14; Nilsson A. 2008, 50–53.

767. Fritz 1996, 109; cf. Haapala 1986, 111–112.

768. Söderberg 1965, 11; Nilsson A. 2008, 74–78, 98–100. Haapala (1986, 349–350) classified the workers in Tampere according to the level of independence of their work. No such classification was possible here because the job titles alone do not provide sufficient information and I was also interested in aspects like training for the job.

769. Nilsson A. 2008, 78–80, 98–100.

to know whether they were skilled workers or more like apprentices. Given such rather strict criteria, it is possible that the group also contains workers who could have been regarded as skilled as differentiating between skilled and unskilled workers is not easy on the basis of mere occupational titles, some of which refer to obsolete tasks. The class of unskilled workers also includes apprentices and various auxiliary workers. The fourth category consisted of porters, caretakers and drivers, whose occupations related to maintenance and transportation.<sup>770</sup>

Looking first at these four categories of manual workers together, the information collected from student registers is consistent with Wavrinsky's observations about lectures in the mid-1880s. Of the elementary course students in the academic years 1885–1886 and 1888–1889, three quarters or more belonged to the four categories of workers. From the other smaller groups clerical workers stand out and, in 1888–1889, there were also a few minor officials such as policemen, soldiers and postmen as well as students from the teachers' training college. The latter studied bookkeeping, which obviously was not on the training college curriculum.<sup>771</sup> In 1905–1906, the proportion of workers had fallen to two thirds whereas clerical workers had increased their share at the main location ('city'). Students of local day schools formed a noteworthy group in this year as they studied English and German, which were new subjects at the institute.<sup>772</sup> The proportion of the other groups was small but shows that, for instance, shopkeepers and even teachers occasionally found their way to the classroom instruction of the institute. In the working-class neighbourhoods of Majorna and Redberglid, located further from the centre, the composition was somewhat different as more than 80 per cent of students belonged to the four workers' categories.

The proportions within the group of working people varied to some extent according to time and place. However, with the exception of Majorna and Redberglid in 1905–1906, craftsmen formed practically the largest group whereas the proportion of skilled and unskilled workers varied. If craftsmen and skilled workers are viewed together since these two groups contained better situated workers, they made up the majority of working people, which could even reach 70 per cent. In the academic year 1905–1906, when their proportion was approximately 50 to 60 per cent of working people, not only

770. Some of the drivers seem not have been independent cabmen but employees of bakeries or dairies.

771. RegA, GAI D I:1, File No. 32 [Journal Huvudlokalen Ht 1888–Vt 1889].

772. RegA, GAI D 3:1, 'Staden: Höstterminen 1905, Vårterminen 1906'.

unskilled workers increased their share; there was also a substantial group of porters, caretakers and drivers. The vast majority of students in the working-class neighbourhoods of Majorna and Redbergslid in 1905–1906 belonged to the category of unskilled workers but the number of students was also substantially smaller there. As mentioned earlier, in addition to the location, the nature of courses obviously contributed to the composition since only penmanship, arithmetic and bookkeeping were taught in Majorna and Redbergslid while the courses in the main location also included Swedish grammar, foreign languages, cultural history and civics.<sup>773</sup>

Consequently, figures above show that elementary instruction often attracted in particular the better situated workers, also given that the criteria used here for a skilled worker are fairly strict and the group could even have been somewhat larger. That education in general attracted the upper stratum of workers is not surprising because the same tendency has been reported for British nineteenth-century adult education.<sup>774</sup> Yet the popularity of elementary instruction at this time among skilled workers and craftsmen was perhaps unforeseen since both Wavrinsky and Nyström believed that popular scientific lectures would attract such workers. Participation in elementary instruction did not, of course, exclude lectures. Wavrinsky had actually noticed that a certain core group of workers with relatively good basic education attended the lectures of the Gothenburg Workers' Institute and hoped, like Nyström, that these would lead the way for the masses.<sup>775</sup>

In principle, the way craftsmen were trained may also have rendered their participation in elementary instruction less likely. Apprentices were required to attend vocational evening school, which for the most part offered general education similar to the elementary courses at the workers' institute. The apprentice system in Sweden was not, however, regulated and school attendance was not monitored, which was obviously one of the reasons why only a small part of apprentices participated.<sup>776</sup> Even those who had earlier attended evening schools may have wanted to improve or supplement their skills. Similar observations about participation in basic instruction have also been reported of British nineteenth-century adult education. Students in the

773. RegA, GAI D 3:1, 'Majorna: Hötsterminen 1905, Vårterminen 1906'; 'Redbergslid: Hötsterminen 1905, Vårterminen 1906'.

774. Kelly 1970, 124–129, 155–157; Fieldhouse 1998, 23–29, 32–34.

775. Nyström 1880b, 30; RegA, GAI A I:1b, Appendix No. XV/1884 'Redogörelse vt 1883 & 1883–1884', 8–9.

776. Nilsson A. 2008, 96–98, 121. Nilsson estimated that in 1890 ten per cent of employees in industry and handicrafts had attended vocational evening schools. In 1900 the proportion was 12 per cent.

mechanics' institutes, the most important and widespread form of working-class education in the mid-nineteenth century, were upper working-class and lower middle-class people even though the original orientation towards scientific and technical education had in many places given way to less demanding topics and elementary education. However, British evening schools offering the rudiments of reading and writing attracted a more varied audience but there, too, craftsmen seem to have been the biggest group.<sup>777</sup>

The nine categories of women's occupations differ to some extent from those of men (Table 7). In general, the scope of occupations classified as workers is narrower than among men. Since the number of women was small, I merged the groups of craftswomen and skilled or specialized workers. This is also reasonable because the overwhelming majority of craftswomen were seamstresses, who might be either independent entrepreneurs or employees.<sup>778</sup> Just like men, women were assigned to this category if they had a specific job title. There are also two other categories of female working-class occupations, of which unskilled or unspecialized workers together with auxiliary workers is a category formed similarly to that for men and thus includes factory and other workers without specific titles. By contrast, the category of domestic servants is a distinctly female group. Another specifically female class is the category housewives/at home, which includes young girls, probably with no occupation, and those who only gave a title 'Mrs' or 'Miss'. All these were most likely involved in domestic tasks but on the basis of such titles it is difficult to assess whether they were working-class women or the daughters and wives of lower middle-class men.

Because of the insignificant number of women in the other cases, only the academic year 1888–1889 and the courses at the main location in 1905–1906 are examined here. The proportion of manual workers (categories 1 to 3) is considerably smaller than for men. With the exception of autumn 1888, they only accounted for roughly forty per cent of students. However, assuming that some of those involved in housekeeping were wives and daughters of workers, the proportion of working-class women was probably larger. As in the case of male students, craftswomen and skilled workers constituted the vast majority of manual workers. Given the role of domestic servants in the female labour market, their number and proportion was very low, probably partly because they were tied to household duties in the evenings and may have had difficulties in paying the participation fee from their small pay. Of the groups

777. Kelly 1970, 124–129, 155–157; Fieldhouse 1998, 23–29, 32–34.

778. On seamstresses in Gothenburg, see Fritz 1996, 148–149.



outside the three categories of workers, the proportion of clerical workers and shop assistants was considerable, especially in 1905–1906, amounting to some 30 per cent of female students while the proportion of male clerical workers was under 20 per cent. The representatives of the other categories are again solitary examples: only a few teachers stand out, some of them attending classes in foreign languages and the lectures on cultural history, which was classified as classroom instruction that year.<sup>779</sup> Hence elementary courses attracted female students who were craftswomen, skilled workers, clerical workers, shop assistants and housewives or young girls at home.

**Table 7. Gothenburg Workers' Institute. Occupations of female students on elementary courses in 1885–1886, 1888–1889, 1905–1906.**

	Autumn 1885	Spring 1886	Autumn 1888	Spring 1889	Autumn 1905	Spring 1906	Autumn 1905	Spring 1906	Autumn 1905	Spring 1906
	%	%	%	%	City %	City %	Maj. %	Maj. %	Red. %	Red. %
1. Craftswomen and skilled workers	30	9	55	33	37	27			30	10
2. Unskilled workers			3	5	5	9			30	20
3. Domestic servants			3	7		4				
4. Clerical workers, shop assistants	10		9	16	28	31			10	10
5. Shopkeepers etc.			3		3	1				
6. Teachers					6	7				
7. Pupils/students			3			1				
8. Housewives/at home				9	20	19		100	30	60
9. Other				2	1	1				
10. No information	60	91	24	28						
Total %	100	100	100	100	100	100		100	100	100
	N=10	N=11	N=33	N=43	N=76	N=86	N=0	N=8	N=10	N=10

Location: City = main location; Maj. = Majorna; Red. = Redbergslid

Sources: RegA, GAI G VI:2, 'Anteckningslistor 1885–1886'; D I:1, File Nr. 32 'Journal Huvudlokalen Ht 1888–Vt 1889'; D 3:1, 'Staden: Höstterminen 1905, Vårterminen 1906', 'Majorna: Höstterminen 1905, Vårterminen 1906', 'Redbergslid: Höstterminen 1905, Vårterminen 1906'.

The registrations in 1888–1889 and 1905–1906 permit a few observations on the subjects popular among different groups. Craftsmen chose penmanship and arithmetic in particular and these were also preferred by those classified as unskilled male workers. As regards skilled male workers, English stands out, especially in autumn 1905. English and German were also popular among craftsmen and unskilled workers then. The registrations of male clerical

779. RegA, GAI D 3:1, 'Staden: Höstterminen 1905, Vårterminen 1906'.

workers were divided fairly evenly, with the exception of English and German, which were also their favourites in 1905. Foreign languages also attracted female clerical workers but the favourite among craftswomen and skilled female workers was penmanship.<sup>780</sup>

From the perspective of the resources such subjects produced, penmanship and foreign languages obviously served both personal interests and working life. Neat and clear handwriting was necessary in letter writing but it was also an asset for craftspeople who, for instance, needed to maintain ledgers. Foreign languages were useful in a seaport and in its commercial life, attracting clerical workers wishing to improve themselves. English classes might also have attracted those dreaming of emigrating to America, like young unskilled workers. Emigration was high at the turn of the century and Gothenburg was the port from which most emigrants departed Sweden.<sup>781</sup> Male craftsmen's and workers' interest in brushing up their arithmetic was without doubt connected to work. If English, German and bookkeeping are excluded, skills that from a later perspective seem elementary were obviously regarded as advantages in the working life of the time and thus worth acquiring.<sup>782</sup> The role of such practical and in this sense also vocational skills in the programme of the workers' institute also show how the original ideas of Edvard Wavrinsky evolved according to the interests of students, differing from those of the initiator.

The preponderance of craftspeople, especially among male students, suggests that the specific features of Gothenburg's industrial life were not visible in any significant way in the composition of the students of the elementary courses. Craftsmen were not a special characteristic of an industrial city and a seaport but practised everywhere and the proportion of skilled workers, a group consisting largely but not solely of industrial or workshop employees, did not exceed that of craftsmen. However, some students with a craftsman's title may have worked in industry or larger workshops, as mentioned earlier. Among the unskilled female and male workers, factory workers were generally in the minority. Only few sailors and stevedores were registered on the courses

780. RegA, GAI D I:1, File No. 32 'Journal Huvudlokalen Ht 1888–Vt 1889'; D 3:1 ' ,  
'Staden: Hötsterminen 1905, Vårterminen 1906'.

781. Fritz 1996, 32–33. Gothenburg emigrants typically came from the working-class areas of the city.

782. Nilsson A. 2008, 139–142.

although the city was home to over three thousand sailors.<sup>783</sup> These worked mostly far from home and thus could not attend studies. One reason for the number of craftsmen could be that adult education had a longer history among them as they had been its target since the middle of the nineteenth century. The tradition of apprentice training at evening schools, or at least expectations that craftsmen would attend them, also created an atmosphere conducive to learning. Moreover, together with the skilled workers they formed a better paid group than other working people and could thus afford the course fees.

The categories of foremen, minor officials and teachers can be characterized as lower-middle-class. Discovering a few representatives of these in the student registers raises the question whether their proportion was greater in popular scientific lectures offering knowledge transcending school education. This was actually implied in Jonsson's history although he stressed that a substantial number of listeners had nevertheless been workers.<sup>784</sup> Such an affirmation may have been a response to views challenging the role of working people as the students of the workers' institutes. Similar views have also been presented by scholars emphasizing the role of middle-class audiences at the lectures at the Stockholm Workers' Institute.<sup>785</sup>

The information on the elementary course students in Gothenburg shows that at least this part of education reached the intended target group of the workers' institutes. However, motivating and encouraging workers to participate was not always easy, notably at the beginning, evidenced by the appeals to workers and employers made by the board of the institute. Such encouragement was also exemplified by a comment in the institute's printed programme for the autumn term 1886, welcoming workers in their working clothes as this facilitated arriving on time after a working day.<sup>786</sup>

#### **DEVELOPMENTS IN THE 1930S AND THE 1940S**

Regarding the workers' institute in later years, evening class students, as the elementary courses were called at the time, seem to be younger. No statistics reveal the age structure but the institute reported in the early 1940s that the instruction given in the evening classes favoured the most common school

783. RegA, GAI G VI:2, 'Anteckningslistor 1885–1886'; D I:1, File No. 32 'Huvudlokalen Ht 1888–Vt 1889'; D 3:1, 'Staden: Höstterminen 1905, Vårterminen 1906', 'Majorna: Höstterminen 1905, Vårterminen 1906', 'Redbergslid: Höstterminen 1905, Vårterminen 1906'; Attman 1963, 225, Diagram 17.

784. Jonsson 1933, 27–28.

785. Olsson B. 1994, 89–90; Törnqvist 1996, 89–90.

786. RegA, GAI A I:1b, An unnumbered appendix (after No. XLI/1886) 'Göteborgs Arbetareinstitutets Läsoördning höstterminen 1886', written by G.O. Börjesson.

subjects. The majority of students were young people from 16 to 20 years, many of whom had not succeeded in finding work after school.<sup>787</sup> The annual reports of the 1930s support this as it seems that the proportion of school leavers without work was substantial. Students not reporting their occupation were often presumably such young people and their proportion was 20 per cent at the beginning of the decade and 24 per cent at its end. The overwhelming majority of these were women. Other job categories could naturally also include young people. The reports also suggest some kind of a shift in social background. Approximately half of the evening class students during the 1930s were shop assistants and clerical workers, whereas industrial or skilled workers only constituted some 15 per cent.<sup>788</sup> This shift was possibly related to the students' age structure. The youngest, who had just left school, could not be skilled workers but were typically employed as errand boys and girls, probably included in the category of shop assistants and office workers.

The shift also seems to reflect the changes in the economic structure of the city as there was an increase in service occupations. As to social status, such young errand boys and girls could nevertheless be from working-class families. What attracted young people to the evening classes in the 1930s was the possibility of complementing their education with school-like instruction in basic skills. There was obviously still a demand for such supplementary education or repetition as the education of the majority of young people was limited to six or seven years of elementary school. The evening classes also offered subjects not taught at elementary school, such as foreign languages (English and German) and practically oriented skills in bookkeeping, typing and stenography, which were useful especially for those employed as clerical workers, or aspiring to such career.<sup>789</sup>

787. RegA, GAI F VI:1, Gothenburg Workers' Institute to the city treasurer G. Parment 28 April 1942.

788. RegA, GAI F XI:I, *Redogörelse 1929–1930 and 1938–1939* ('Elementarkursernas yrkesstatistik').

789. *GSH 1931:246*, 5; Richardson 2004, 99 (Table 4), 113, 117; Marklund 1992, 222.

### 3.4. Summary of Chapter 3

The Gothenburg Workers' Institute was established in 1883 by Edvard Wavrinsky and modelled on the Stockholm Workers' Institute. Both Wavrinsky and the founder of the Stockholm institute, Anton Nyström, were radical liberals wishing to improve workers' conditions and promote religious freedom with the help of scientific education aimed at working people. Wavrinsky left few documents on his ideas about workers' education but his activities in a religiously liberal movement, the Truth Seekers, promoting rational faith and practical Christianity, connect the beginnings of the workers' institute with the aims of this movement. As the use of reason was the cornerstone of rational faith, scientific knowledge was understood to develop independent thinking, which could oppose the dogma of the church. Other goals of the institute mentioned by Wavrinsky – developing studiousness, character and morality – were typical of the contemporary workers' education but can also be related to practical Christianity, emphasizing morality as the core of religion and regarding earthly deeds like work for social reforms as manifestations of religiosity.

The pursuit of unconditional religious freedom, enabling people to leave the state church without entering another Christian denomination united Wavrinsky and the Truth Seekers with the positivist Nyström. Inspired by August Comte's ideas, Nyström developed the Stockholm Workers' Institute in 1880 to train workers to be able to carry out their social mission, reforming society together with positivist philosophers. The institute had a positivist model and its curriculum consisted of systematic education in the fundamental sciences classified by Comte. Nyström's intention was to develop workers' independent thinking by introducing results of scientific research and exhorting them to challenge the doctrine of the church, making them allies in the struggle for religious freedom. This was also the aim of Wavrinsky and the Truth Seekers.

Nyström's creation was unprecedented, based on the belief that people from all social classes, both men and women, are capable for theoretical learning, and it became a model for workers' education not only in Sweden but also in Norway and Finland.<sup>790</sup> However, Wavrinsky's ambitious aims, counting on workers' interest in popular scientific instruction, soon collided with the reality of their circumstances and the future of the Gothenburg institute

790. Leander 1978, 242; Huuhka 1990, 48–58, 68–93, 179–192; Högnäs 2001, 32–34.

was even under threat. Right from the start, popular scientific lectures were accompanied by instruction in basic skills as the board realized that demand for such existed due to workers' scanty basic education. The institute diverged from the original ideals, becoming a more conventional adult education institute. Wavrinsky resigned after having directed it for three years only.

Due to the radical liberal connection, the Gothenburg Workers' Institute was established behind the scenes and without the involvement of the local authorities. It became a private institution but dependent on public funding, of which municipal subsidies were the greatest part. This suggests that the local authorities were more interested in supporting adult education than was the government. However, this was not a costly way for the local government to promote and control these activities when compared to other education expenditure. A precondition for public support was neutrality on political and religious questions, to which requirement the radical liberal background of the workers' institutes had given reason. In spite of its original radical connection, by the early twentieth century the Gothenburg Workers' Institute had become an established part of the local community, led by directors with backgrounds in schoolteaching and board members representing mainly the educated and middle-class residents of the city. In 1932, the workers' institute became a municipal institution.

The institute did not quite develop into such a seat of higher adult learning as its founder had intended. The popularity of elementary courses, later called evening classes, made the institute more school-like and practical. What became the legacy of the original ideas was instruction in the form of lectures although these apparently did not always form such systematic entities as had been intended and the emphasis was on the humanities rather than on the natural and social sciences, which had been emphasized by Wavrinsky.

Apart from their numbers, virtually nothing is known about those attending lectures after the initial stages. From the first years of the twentieth century until the 1940s, the average number of listeners per lecture was usually more than two hundred, showing that the lectures were mass gatherings. It was probably not only workers who attended lectures, some lower middle-class people may also have attended. That the institute nevertheless attracted the intended target group is revealed by the information about students on elementary courses in the 1880s and early 1900s, showing that they were largely manual workers, usually better-off craftspeople and skilled workers. Most of these students were young people and young adults under thirty years, indicating, on the one hand, the adult education nature of the courses

but, on the other, the adult-like position of working-class youth with regard to education. By the 1940s, the students of the evening-classes were even younger as the majority consisted of those under twenty years.

The Gothenburg Workers' Institute was closed down in 1993 and this has also been the fate of the other Swedish workers' institutes. Before closure, the Gothenburg institute had for some time mainly organized lectures in old people's homes and pensioners' clubs while evening classes had become superfluous as such instruction was organized within the system of municipal adult education.<sup>791</sup>

791. Berrman and Ideström 1983, 58–62; *Göteborgs kommunalkalender* 1993, 108–109; 1994, 133–147, <https://sok.regionarkivet.se/goteborgs-kommunkalendrar-1929-2000/>, accessed 1 February 2022.

## 4. TAMPERE WORKERS' INSTITUTE: A FINNISH ADAPTATION

### 4.1. From a Project of a Non-socialist Workers' Association to a Municipal Institution

#### 4.1.1. Tampere Workers' Association and Adult Education

Knowledge of the Stockholm Workers' Institute spread to Finland and its establishment was reported in October 1880 at least in some Swedish-language papers published in the country.<sup>792</sup> Five years later, V. J. von Wright, the leader of the Helsinki Workers' Association, intended to participate in the Nordic meeting of the workers' institutes in Kristiania (Oslo) but this meeting was cancelled. He was nevertheless able to utilize his travel grant by familiarizing himself with the workers' associations and institutes in Sweden and Norway. In 1886, he published a report on this four-week study trip, describing the workers' institutes at length.<sup>793</sup>

In Tampere, it was the non-socialist, or liberal, workers' association where workers' education developed and which from the end of the 1880s became the first advocate of a permanent institute. Enthusiasm was already shown in 1887, when the board of the newly established association raised the issue, undoubtedly inspired by the Swedish models and von Wright's travel report. Although there was not a single workers' institute in the country, the board discussed whether the association should submit a proposal to the Diet suggesting that the government start to subsidize workers' institutes but did not, after all, find it necessary.<sup>794</sup> When the workers' association broke away from the patronage of its middle-class leaders after the mid-1890s, the initiative was taken by the local political force, the Finnish Club<sup>795</sup>, a part of the nationwide pro-Finnish (*Fennoman*) movement promoting the status of the

792. *Åbo Underrättelser*, 'Från Skandinaviska länderna. Bref från Stockholm' 6 October 1880; *Folkvännen*, 'Från Sverige. Stockholms Arbetareinstitut' 27 October 1880.

793. von Wright 1886; Ahonen 1992, 61. According to Karjalainen (1970, 85), the Finnish word for a workers' institute, *työväenopisto*, appeared for the first time in von Wright's application for state subsidy in 1891 but in fact he already used it in this Finnish-language travel report.

794. TKA, TTY Ca:1, Minutes 6 November 1887, item 8. The workers' association had the intention to promote the issue through the representative Tampere had in the Diet. Voionmaa 1932, 355–359.

795. *Suomalainen Klubi*.



Finnish language and culture against the dominance of the Swedish language. The Finnish Club had been involved in the workers' association during the early 1890s, exerting a strong influence over it with the intention of winning the support of working people.<sup>796</sup>

Because the ideas and practices of workers' education in Tampere were developed within the workers' association, alongside the attempts to secure a permanent workers' institute, it is necessary first to explore these to understand what choices were made when the institute was planned and established. In some respects the instruction offered by the Tampere Workers' Association probably differed very little from that the Gothenburg Workers' Institute initially organized, apart from the fact that the number of courses in Tampere was smaller and their provision even more sporadic. There was nevertheless at least one difference, and that was related to vocational education.

The Tampere Workers' Institute emerged in a city undergoing fundamental changes in population, industrial life and urban area, just like its counterpart in Gothenburg. Tampere had a population of 31,000 in 1899 when the workers' institute was opened, having experienced a rapid growth during the preceding three decades as its population had increased sixfold. The years just before the establishment of the institute were characterized by accelerating growth and hence a small town had been transformed into the third largest city in Finland. The population growth was mainly due to migration bringing young people and young adults from the rural areas to become the workforce needed in expanding manufacturing industry.<sup>797</sup>

Tampere was above all an industrial centre, with half of the entire population earning its living from industry and crafts at the turn of the twentieth century while this proportion in the other Finnish cities was around one quarter. Factories contributed to the social composition of the population and working-class people, who at that time formed three quarters of the residents, became a characteristic of the locality. In addition to industrial workers, whose proportion was almost 60 per cent of the workforce, other significant groups were construction and outdoor workers, domestic servants and craftsmen. There was nevertheless a feature specific to Tampere as more than half of the factory workers were women, also creating a female majority in the population. Women were drawn to Tampere especially by the textile

796. Kanerva 1986, 71–73, 85; Rasila 1984, 295–296, 577–582; Haapala 1986, 189, 193–194. The Finnish Club was founded in 1890, but even before that many of its members had been active in the workers' association.

797. Rasila 1984, 200–201, 205–219.

industry, which was the predominant branch there. The Finlayson cotton factory was the biggest industrial plant in Tampere, in fact the biggest factory in the Nordic countries, employing one third of the local workforce at the turn of the twentieth century. Industry also shaped the urban milieu as the major factories were located in the city centre.<sup>798</sup>

### **KAAKLO RENSTRÖM AND AUKUSTI DAHLBERG AS ADVOCATES OF THE WORKERS' INSTITUTE**

The key figure in advocating the workers' institute at the beginning of the 1890s was Kaarlo Renström (1860–1932), acting as the secretary of Tampere Workers' Association from its inception in 1887 until 1894. He was one of the founder members and the driving force of the association during its first years but his interest was not confined to Tampere as he also promoted the nationwide co-operation of workers' associations. He was a journalist by profession and employed by the paper *Tampereen Sanomat* from 1883, finally becoming its editor-in-chief from 1893 to 1894. This gave him an opportunity to spread the message of the liberal workers' movement, for which purpose he also established and edited a newsletter called *Kansalainen* (Citizen). The newsletter was published as a part of *Tampereen Sanomat* from 1887 to 1893, reporting on the activities of the association and the lives of working people.<sup>799</sup>

Renström was also a founder member of the Finnish Club and in the ongoing split within the *Fennoman* movement and the Finnish Party he sided with the so-called Young Finns, forming the opposition to the conservative Old Finn faction. His employer, *Tampereen Sanomat*, was the local organ of the Young Finns.<sup>800</sup> Although Renström as a journalist belonged to the middle class, he nevertheless had a working-class background as his father had been a bricklayer. Renström had attended secondary school for a few years, which was exceptional for working-class children at that time. He left the workers' association in 1894, when he moved to South-East Finland, first to the town of Kotka and later to the city of Viipuri, where worked as a journalist and was also active in journalists' associations.<sup>801</sup>

798. Rasila 1984, 23–25, 219–225, 248–250, 253–257; Haapala 1986, 35, 38.

799. *Kuka kukin oli 1900–1961*, 427; Kanerva 1986, 24, 35–40, 609–610 (list of board members); Rasila 1984, 293, 552.

800. Dahlberg 1901, 114 (list of members); Rasila 1984, 547. On the split and factions of the *Fennoman* movement, see Vares 2000, 43–57.

801. Renström finnicized his surname to Riukuniemi in 1906. Kanerva 1986, 24; *Kuka kukin oli 1900–1961*, 427; Heikinheimo 1955, 629; *Karjala*, 'Kaarlo Riukuniemi 60-vuotias' 17 December 1920; *Karjala*, 'Viipurista ja Karjalasta. Kaarlo Riukuniemi 40 vuotta sanomalehtimiehenä' 27 October 1922.

Another advocate of the workers' institute during the early 1890s was Aukusti Dahlberg (1863–1912). Like Renström, he was a member of the workers' association, serving on its board in 1890 and 1895, a member of the Finnish Club (from 1893) and a journalist by profession. Their political views nevertheless differed since Dahlberg was attached to *Aamulehti*, the local paper of the Old Finns. He was a contributor to the paper from 1889, becoming a regular employee in 1894. From 1905 Dahlberg was the editor-in-chief and, in addition to his journalistic career connected with the Finnish Party, he held several commissions of trust in that party. He had a master's degree from the University of Helsinki but his educational career had not been typical. Dahlberg, who was born in Tampere and had a working-class background like Renström, was the son of a foundry worker and had first worked a few years in the Finlayson cotton factory before starting secondary school in Helsinki. At that time he was seventeen, almost as old as those graduating from that school but his school education was nevertheless expedited a little as he was exempted from the first year having studied some Latin privately. He left school at the age of twenty-two and graduated from the university, majoring in history and Finnish language, when he was twenty-nine.<sup>802</sup>

In the workers' association, Renström and Dahlberg were involved in its educational activities as lecturers and Dahlberg also taught Finnish language. Moreover, at the beginning of the 1890s both were members of different committees organizing its educational work and promoting the establishment of the workers' institute.<sup>803</sup> With regard to the texts advocating the workers' institute, Renström expressed his opinions principally in the annual reports of the workers' association, which he composed until 1893. Dahlberg wrote a longer article on the subject, published in 1894 both in *Aamulehti* and in the yearbook of the Finnish workers' associations (*Työväen Kalenteri*).

Although the significance of adult education was emphasized in the liberal workers' movement from the 1880s onwards, grown-up workers had nonetheless received some kind of guidance earlier. In modern terms such training, developing workers' practical or occupational skills or teaching

802. Dahlberg finnicized his surname to Alhovuori in 1906. Dahlberg 1901, 115 (list of members); Kanerva 1986, 47, 609–610 (list of board members); Rasila 1984; 549; *Aamulehti*, 'Aukusti Alhovuori' 31 December 1912; *Suomen kirjailijat 1809–1916*, 47; Ylioppilasmatrikkeli, <https://ylioppilasmatrikkeli.helsinki.fi/1853-1899/> (Dahlberg, Aukusti), accessed 1 February 2022.

803. TKA, TTY Db:1, *Vuosikertomukset 1887*, 16; *1890*, 25; *1893*, 9–10; *1894*, 4–5; Ca:1, Minutes 13 April 1891, item 6 and 24 April 1892, item 6.

good manners, can be characterized as informal<sup>804</sup> as it had taken place in their daily surroundings.<sup>805</sup> The benefits of theoretical adult education had been questioned because of workers' lacking basic education, considered an obstacle to understanding the content of popular scientific lectures.<sup>806</sup> In addition, sheer contempt for workers' intellectual abilities had been typical, as Renström noted. However, the attitudes were in the process of changing and whereas workers had formerly been considered unsuited to any intellectual pursuits and civic action, they were no longer regarded 'as creatures that drudged like beasts of burden', or machines, whose only purpose was to labour. Renström connected this with altered views on their human worth and role as citizens. According to him, workers' role as citizens with the right to act among other citizens was accepted more widely and society had already begun to acknowledge their rightful aspirations and demands. For this reason, education supporting workers' role in civic life had become important.<sup>807</sup>

Doubts about 'half education', for example, still appeared among the upper classes in the early 1890s. When von Wright's petition concerning the state subsidy for workers' education was discussed in the Diet in 1891, some representatives did not regard lectures as an appropriate form of education because the audience was not believed to be sufficiently mature for certain topics. Errors of judgement could occur among workers with so little knowledge and they were thus liable to accept the content of lectures as universal truths. Unsuitable topics included revolutionary ideas, feared to be propagated by the lectures of workers' associations since these were not under public control.<sup>808</sup> This was an interesting concern given that the workers' associations at that time were still governed by middle-class forces, albeit usually liberal-minded individuals. Renström was familiar with such suspicions of the

804. On the distinctions between formal, nonformal and informal education, see e.g. Rubenson 2011, 5.

805. *Valtiöpäivät 1891*, Documents Vol. 5, 'Petitionsbetänkande No. 9', 1–2; *Tampereen Sanomat (Kansalainen)*, 'Mietteitä työväen oloista ennen ja nyt' 16 November 1892 (the date of the supplement is 26 November but this must be a mistake). Teaching good manners for craftsmen was an essential aim of the craftsmen's educational societies. Rehumäki 2008, 189. In the early nineteenth-century, the concept *sivistys* (education, cultivation) could also refer to good manners and outward demeanour. Kokko 2010, 10–11; Kokko 2016, 112–113, 119–120.

806. *Tampereen Sanomat*, 'Tampere. Luentojen pitämisestä' 30 March 1869.

807. TKA, TTY Db:1, *Vuosikertomus, 1888*, 5 (Renström); *Tampereen Sanomat*, 'Työväenyhdistyksen perustamisesta' 11 March 1886. The latter was probably also written by Renström.

808. *Valtiöpäivät 1891*, Documents Vol. 5, 'Petitionsbetänkande No. 9', 5–7.

aims of the liberal workers' movement and this was a reason for him to stress that the movement was a peaceful educational effort.<sup>809</sup>

### **LIBERAL, ELEMENTARY AND VOCATIONAL EDUCATION**

In the rules of the Tampere Workers' Association, founding a reading room (or a library) and starting lectures were the first items on its agenda placed above other measures for improving workers' conditions, thus revealing the crucial role of education in these efforts.<sup>810</sup> How exactly lectures and other general education could enhance the situation of working people remained nevertheless rather vague but benefits like broadening workers' intellectual perspectives and encouraging them to take part in civic activities were mentioned.<sup>811</sup> Renström thought that educational facilities like a reading room, a library, and activities like lectures, courses and other cultural pursuits could also be useful for the association and its aims by creating solidarity among members. This suggests that education could also be indirectly of benefit to workers.<sup>812</sup> In addition, the goal of education was to raise 'self-awareness', which was a term Renström had obviously borrowed from the Finnish philosopher and politician J. V. Snellman, who in turn had been influenced by Hegel. Snellman referred by a self-aware individual to a thinking and willing subject, but in this kind of popular use the elevation of self-awareness probably meant more straightforwardly intellectual awakening and workers' growing awareness of their conditions and of themselves as citizens.<sup>813</sup>

Thus improving workers' educational level seems to have been a self-evident objective not requiring any further explanation, which was also typical of the Swedish discussion. As mentioned in the context of the Swedish concept *bildning*, its Finnish counterpart *sivistys* (general/liberal education or cultivation), has been characterized as a key concept in the Finnish late nineteenth- and early twentieth-century political discourse, necessary for outlining any of the major questions of the era.<sup>814</sup> Arguments containing any detailed or concrete reasons can hardly ever be found in texts and documents related workers'

809. TKA, TTY Db:1 *Vuosikertomukset 1887*, 7 (Renström); *1892*, 3 (Renström).

810. *Tampereen Sanomat*, 'Ehdotus Tampereen työväenyhdistyksen säännöiksi' 24 March 1886; Kanerva 1986, 19.

811. *Tampereen Sanomat*, 'Työväenyhdistyksen perustamisesta' 11 March 1886.

812. TKA, TTY Db:1, *Vuosikertomus 1889*, 7–8 (Renström).

813. The Finnish expression was *itsetiätöisuus* or *itsetaajunta*. TKA, TTY Db:1, *Vuosikertomukset 1888*, 5 (Renström); *1889*, 8 (Renström); *1892*, 3 (Renström); Himanka 2008, 23–26.

On another example of how 'self-awareness' was used in this context, see *Tampereen Sanomat*, 'Työväenyhdistyksen perustamisesta' 11 March 1886.

814. See Chapter 3.2.3.; Turunen 2016, 28–32.

general education, showing the alleged power of this concept as a solution to various problems. Moreover, the leaders of the liberal workers' movement, being educated middle-class people, obviously considered their own condition and schooling a standard towards which workers should strive to improve their circumstances. Therefore, education was not only regarded as workers' right but also as their obligation.<sup>815</sup> Explaining the significance of education and the benefits of self-improvement to workers themselves could also be regarded as superfluous since many of them had already come to understand their position and how it should be improved, as a contributor to *Tampereen Sanomat* emphasized.<sup>816</sup>

The significance of education also became evident in practice as one of the first tasks of the newly established workers' association in autumn 1887 was to organize lectures.<sup>817</sup> These were intended to form series, introducing various branches of knowledge and aspects of social issues in an accessible way. Such lectures would also function as a preparation for a permanent workers' institute since it was considered only a matter of time before such an institution would be established, so urgent seemed the need for regular adult education to be.<sup>818</sup> Nonetheless, single lectures on isolated topics, not coherent and systematic series, became the typical form of teaching. Even their number was initially modest, five lectures per year at the turn of the 1890s, but soon a few series could be organized yearly. The difficulties in organizing lectures were partly due to the limited financial resources and to the unavailability of lecturers.<sup>819</sup>

Like the Swedish workers' institutes, Tampere Workers' Association gave priority to lectures as a form of education.<sup>820</sup> That popular scientific lectures were regarded as the principal form can be explained by foreign models of workers' education and by the organizers' experiences from their own schooling and cultural pursuits, where such presentations were typical. Moreover, the role of the spoken word was considered primary since books

815. *Tampereen Sanomat*, 'Työväen opistojen tutkimus-matka-raha' 9 May 1894. Cf. Haapala 1986, 177–178.

816. *Tampereen Sanomat*, 'Työväenyhdistyksen sarjaluennot' 16 November 1894.

817. TKA, TTY Db:1, *Vuosikertomus 1887*, 16 (Renström).

818. *Tampereen Sanomat*, 'Kansantajuisia luentoja' 24 October 1887.

819. TKA, TTY Db:1, *Vuosikertomukset 1890*, 25; *1891*, 15, 25; *1893*, 9–10; *1894*, 4–5; Kanerva 1986, 124.

820. *Tampereen Sanomat*, 'Ehdotus Tampereen työväenyhdistyksen säännöiksi' 24 March 1886; Kanerva 1986, 19. Education could also be considered from a broader perspective since a library, a choir and an orchestra were mentioned. TKA, TTY Db:1, *Vuosikertomus 1887*, 6, 16 (Renström).

were rare among workers and reading skills less developed.<sup>821</sup> The selection of topics also suggests that the backgrounds of the organizers and expertise of lecturers often determined the contents as subjects like church history and ancient Finns were considered important for workers' intellectual development. However, social questions were not entirely forgotten.<sup>822</sup>

The organizers of workers' education in Tampere also soon noticed that teaching in basic skills was necessary, since there was a large number of adults who had not learnt such skills in their childhood. The first elementary courses were organized in arithmetic, spelling and penmanship in 1890.<sup>823</sup> The general level of education is illustrated by the fact that in 1890 more than one third of the population older than ten years in Finnish urban centres had no writing skills although almost all could read. Even their reading ability may sometimes have been weak.<sup>824</sup> In spite of the Elementary School Act of 1866, the establishment of schools especially in rural areas had been slow and there was still no compulsory education in Finland. However, in Tampere the opportunities for elementary schooling had improved from the 1870s onwards. Thus elementary school education could not be expected of all and this became apparent especially as young people migrated to the towns. Among the older generation, regardless of where they had spent their childhood, lack of basic education was typical.<sup>825</sup>

Renström considered elementary courses necessary for workers possessing inadequate basic skills so that these could make full use of the other educational services the workers' association had established, like the library and reading room.<sup>826</sup> Another reason for widening the range of education was obviously that instruction in basic skills was regarded as more useful and thus more attractive to workers than popular scientific lectures.<sup>827</sup> Such a view was emphasized in newspaper articles reminding workers that skills in reading,

821. Nyman 1899, 3.

822. TKA, TTY Db:1, *Vuosikertomus 1893*, 9–10.

823. TKA, TTY Ca:1, Minutes 15 December 1889, item 3 and Db:1 *Vuosikertomus 1890*, 23–24.

824. *STV 1921*, Table 21. 'Väestön ryhmitys sivistyskannan mukaan 1880–1910', p. 46; KTK, *Käsityöläiskoulu 1894*, 5.

825. Rasila 1984, 642–647; Voionmaa 1932, 784–798; Leino-Kaukiainen and Heikkinen 2011, 23–24; Rahikainen 2011, 370–371, 373–374.

826. TKA, TTY Db:1, *Vuosikertomus 1892*, 4 (Renström).

827. In Helsinki, workers had preferred elementary courses to lectures and, according to the organizers, the reason was that they did not consider lectures useful. *Aamulehti*, 'Työväen opetus' 28 December 1889.

writing and counting were essential to advance at work and compete with others in the same occupation.<sup>828</sup>

In practice, elementary courses also proved problematic. As in Gothenburg, long working hours made attending evening classes difficult since students were too exhausted to be able to follow instruction and do exercises. In addition, regular study was not easy. According to teachers, practically none of the students had attended school and they ‘were not used to focusing their attention on the smallest details that elementary courses required’. Therefore, ‘the unfamiliar mental exertion after a monotonous working day with machines’ proved too strenuous. Only the most talented were able to finish their course while many others dropped out despite teachers’ attempts to adapt instruction to the level of each student. These experiences gave reason for suggesting that lectures were actually a better alternative during the evenings of working days and elementary courses should be arranged only on Sundays.<sup>829</sup> Thus the attitudes concerning the content and methods of education were not only guided by the assumed educational needs of workers or the pedagogic views and ideological assumptions of organizers, but also by external circumstances.

Since neither elementary courses nor lectures could attract large numbers of participants and the plans for the workers’ institute had not made progress, the workers’ association remodelled its education in 1895 and started so-called folk high school courses, which had been successful in Helsinki. While the earlier lectures had been given occasionally, usually at times suitable for the teachers, new lectures series with popular scientific topics were organized in a more systematic way. Lectures were given during a compact ten-week period on three evenings of the week, with two subjects on each. The new arrangement obviously pleased participants as they persevered through the entire courses. The first courses consisted of Finnish history, literature and geography, hygiene and singing, taught by local secondary and elementary school teachers. The programme of the later courses also included economics, ethics, church history and natural science. Fridays were reserved for discussion, singing, speeches and poems and the spirit of these evenings was reportedly patriotic. Folk high school courses were deemed a successful enterprise, not

828. *Aamulehti*, ‘Työväen alkeiskurssit’ 14 January 1890; *Tampereen Sanomat*, ‘Työväen alkeiskurssit’ 15 January 1890.

829. *Tampereen Sanomat (Kansalainen)*, ‘Tampereen työväenyhdistys’ 5 November 1890 (minutes of the monthly meeting of the workers’ association, item 3); TKA, TTY Db:1 *Vuosikertomus 1890*, 24 (Renström); *Tampereen Sanomat (Kansalainen)*, ‘Luennot ja alkeiskurssit työväestölle’ 5 July 1893.



only because students attended lectures regularly but also because the social activities described above appear to have been elevating.<sup>830</sup>

Education organized by the Tampere Workers' Association was typical adult education of the period, consisting of liberal and elementary education, the contents of which were determined by its educated leaders. There was, however, a special feature since trade unions functioning as subsections in the workers' association arranged vocational or vocationally oriented courses, which has not previously been considered in the literature on Finnish adult education. Trade unions seem not to have been typical in Swedish liberal workers' associations—these flourished earlier—but the Tampere Workers' Association followed von Wright's ideas and encouraged workers to establish unions where employers were also welcome. The first unions in Tampere were founded at the turn of the 1890s, typically by craftsmen such as painters, shoemakers, tailors and printers. Educated middle-class people played an important role in these early unions and so Kaarlo Renström drew up the rules of the painters' union and also acted as the secretary of the shoemakers' association. From a hesitant beginning they gained strength by the end of the decade and started to function more regularly. New unions were also founded.<sup>831</sup>

Trade unions emphasized promoting skill among their goals along with improving education, morality and the social status of their members. Social status was understood to be dependent on the qualities mentioned first. The methods intended to improve skills included lectures and discussion sessions on occupational questions, buying professional literature for the use of members and providing bursaries for studies in Helsinki or abroad.<sup>832</sup> The workers' association itself and its middle-class activists were favourably disposed to vocationally oriented education and in fact considered it a task of the workers' associations.<sup>833</sup> In spite of this, the organizers of practically

830. TKA, TTY Ca:1, Minutes, 25 September 1895, item 4; 28 October 1895, item 3; Db:1 *Vuosikertomukset 1895*, 29–31, 1897, 26–30. Cf. *Tampereen Sanomat*, 'Kansanopistokurssit Tampereella' 23 February 1898.

831. Kanerva 1986, 49–64; Rasila 1984, 304–308. Trade unions also organized vocationally oriented courses in Turku. Teräs 1995, 57–58. On Sweden, see Pählman and Sjölin 1944, 154 ff., 267; Andersson 1971, 116. In Gothenburg the first unions were founded at the beginning of the 1880s and they were not connected with the liberal workers' association. Beckholmen 1950, 40–62; Beckholmen 1984, 167, 171.

832. TKA, TTY Db:1, *Vuosikertomus 1889*, 43 (Renström).

833. *Tampereen Sanomat (Kansalainen)*, 'Ohjelma työväenliikkeelle Suomessa' 7 June 1893. A favourable attitude towards vocational education was also expressed for example in *Tampereen Sanomat (Kansalainen)*, 'Mietteitä työväen oloista ennen ja nyt' 16 November 1892 and *Tampereen Sanomat*, 'Yliopistojen kansankurssit I' 4 July 1894.

oriented courses were union members who were professionals in the trade.<sup>834</sup> In general, not only practical education was understood to be necessary for the trades but the significance of general education for workers' occupational skill was also recognized. V.J. von Wright emphasized that a high level of education was a precondition for the development of trade and industry and an article in the newsletter *Kansalainen* explained how general education also improved the vocational skill indispensable in competing with foreign products.<sup>835</sup>

During the 1890s there were nevertheless more intentions than actual vocational education, although it must be stressed that the number of lectures and elementary courses organized by the workers' association itself was also rather modest. The painters' union organized courses in decorative painting and in graining (imitation of the grain of wood by painting), lectures on technical questions and instruction in drawing. Teachers were apparently local decorators and painters.<sup>836</sup> The printers' union arranged an elementary course in Swedish, which in this occupation could be regarded as a professional skill and not only general education since Swedish-language publications were also produced in Tampere. At the end of the decade, the union of machinists and metal workers offered courses in technology and mechanical engineering as well as in electrotechnics, with engineers from local factories as teachers.<sup>837</sup> In addition, there were also courses which did not progress beyond the planning stage. Shoemakers several times discussed organizing vocational courses and master builders and mechanics put forward ideas about offering instruction in drawing. Neither were all attempts of the painters' union successful as vocational courses in 1898 could not be implemented because the municipality did not subsidize them.<sup>838</sup>

Practical instruction was not only targeted at men. One of the women's activities in Tampere Workers' Association had been a sewing club, which from 1893 was developed into an actual training course. The sewing club had mainly focused on embroidery, whereas the courses trained participants in making simpler and more useful products like clothing. Women were taught to cut clothes and to use a sewing machine and they were allowed to buy the finished items for themselves. Such courses were regarded as necessary since

834. TKA, TTY Db:1, *Vuosikertomukset 1898*, 59–60; 1899, 45, 52.

835. *Valtiopäivät 1891*, Documents Vol. 5, 'Petitionsbetänkande No. 9', 1; *Tampereen Sanomat (Kansalainen)*, 'Työväen opetuskysymys valtiopäivillä' 29 April 1891. This article was a quotation from *Päivälehti*, which was published in Helsinki.

836. TKA, TTY Db:1, *Vuosikertomukset 1893*, 44; 1899, 52.

837. TKA, TTY Db:1, *Vuosikertomukset 1898*, 59–60; 1899, 45.

838. TKA, TTY Db:1 *Vuosikertomukset 1892*, 54, 61; 1898, 68–69.

there seemed to be plenty of working women without any handicraft skills, understood to be an important part of economical housekeeping. Contrary to lectures and elementary courses, sewing and vocational courses were only open to the members of the association and the unions.<sup>839</sup>

Another related initiative was a cookery school introduced in 1889 in the workers' association. This school was meant for young working-class women to train them in housekeeping and to offer skills they often lacked after having worked in a factory since their youth. Skills in housekeeping, as in making clothes, were considered essential for housewives to be able to survive on little money and to avoid living in want. In addition to those skills needed in a working-class home, the curriculum included housekeeping in middle-class homes to train students to be domestic servants. Because of the full-time nature of the school, evening classes for housewives and working girls were also suggested.<sup>840</sup> The school was opened in 1892 but it was judged not to benefit workers because it attracted middle-class girls and women rather than factory girls.<sup>841</sup>

#### 4.1.2. The Early 1890s: A Permanent Institute for Citizenship Education

##### UNSUCCESSFUL INITIATIVES

The idea of establishing a workers' institute was raised several times in the Tampere Workers' Association during the early 1890s but none of the initiatives bore fruit. When the issue was discussed for the first time in 1890, Renström suggested that the education of adult workers could be organized after the model of the Swedish workers' institutes and their curriculum but did not, however, make any concrete proposal at this point.<sup>842</sup> The first actual motion for the establishment of a workers' institute was made in spring 1891, again by Renström. It is likely that von Wright's application for a state subsidy for workers' education, submitted to the Diet earlier that year, had inspired

839. TKA, TTY Db:1, *Vuosikertomukset 1893*, 6–8; 1894, 11; 1895, 23; 1896, 34–35; 1897, 54–55. The local women's association also organized elementary courses for female factory workers and domestic servants in arithmetic, penmanship and spelling, sometimes together with lectures and singing. *Aamulehti*, 'Naisyhdistyksen toimeenpanemat alkeiskurssit' (advertisement) 9 October 1892; *Aamulehti*, 'Naisyhdistyksen kokouksessa' 28 April 1894; *Aamulehti*, 'Tampereen Naisyhdistyksen alkeiskurssit' 11 October 1896; *Tampereen Sanomat*, 'Tampereen Naisyhdistyksen alkeiskurssit' 23 January 1897.

840. TKA, TTY Db:1, *Vuosikertomukset 1889*, 21–23; 1890, 40.

841. Varto 1906, 42.

842. *Tampereen Sanomat (Kansalainen)*, 'Tampereen työväenyhdistys. Kuukauskokous' 5 November 1890.

Renström.<sup>843</sup> His motion was seconded but the committee appointed to draft a plan did not produce any report and this happened again in 1892, when the question was raised anew. Although no actual proposal for the institute was written in 1892, a funding application was completed and submitted to the city council but it was not even discussed there.<sup>844</sup> In 1893, the task of preparing a report on the workers' institute was assigned to the regular education committee of the workers' association but this report, too, was not completed although the committee discussed the topic several times. It seems that the committee members hesitated, giving as their reason unfamiliarity with such institutions, and in 1894 the committee applied for a travel grant for a study trip to Scandinavia. Evidently, they wanted information not only about the Swedish institutes but also on other practices in workers' education. However, the city council rejected the application.<sup>845</sup>

After these efforts, the establishment of a workers' institute only resurfaced as a topical question in Tampere in 1898. Perhaps one reason for the declining initiative was Renström's resignation from the secretaryship of the workers' association in summer 1894.<sup>846</sup> Other reasons may have been the lack of interest in courses among workers, the incipient disagreements within the workers' association and the related deepening split of the Finnish Club. The role of these political developments in the establishment of the workers' institute and why the project became successful at the end of the decade will be discussed later.

### FOCUSING ON CITIZENSHIP EDUCATION

The funding application submitted to the city council in 1892 is the only document related to the establishment of the workers' institute dating from the early 1890s but some other texts also shed light on the reasons why such an institute was considered necessary. These are Renström's annual report for 1892, Dahlberg's detailed article of 1894<sup>847</sup> and an article written by a

843. *Valtiöpäivät 1891*, Documents Vol. 5, Petitionsbetänkande No. 9'.

844. TKA, TTY Ca:1, Minutes, 13 April 1891, item 6; 24 April 1892, item 6; 12 May 1892, item 11; Db:1 *Vuosikertomus* 1892, 6–7 (Renström); Kaupunginvaltuusto, Minutes (microfiche) 28 June 1892, item 164, Appendix No. 123 'Tampereen kaupungin Herroille Valtuusmiehille', written by J.W. Hellberg and Kaarlo Renström.

845. TKA, TTY Db:1, *Vuosikertomus* 1893, 10, 23–24; Ca:1, Minutes 4 April 1894, item 7; 7 October 1894, item 2, Appendix 'Tampereen Työväen-Yhdistykselle'; *Aamulehti*, 'Työväenopistokysymys Tampereella' 7 April 1894.

846. On Renström's resignation, see Kanerva 1986, 71, 610 (list of board members).

847. Dahlberg 1894, referring hereafter to the version printed in *Työväen kalenteri*, slightly longer than the one published in *Aamulehti* ('Työväenopiston tarpeellisuudesta Tampereella I–III' 11, 15 and 20 April 1894).

pseudonym 'A Friend of Workers', published in *Kansalainen* in 1891. The identity of this writer remains unknown but the editor Renström announced that *Kansalainen* echoed his ideas.<sup>848</sup>

Although the advocates of the workers' institute proposed the founding of a new kind of institution, the question was also about continuity in the sense of developing the existing activities into a permanent structure enabling systematic study. Written before the attempt to develop teaching with the help of the folk high school courses, all these three writers, like the funding application of 1892, highlighted the prevailing insufficiency of education.<sup>849</sup> The basic problem was the temporary nature of education as it consisted of single lectures or infrequently arranged short courses. This led to another defect: the knowledge offered was fragmentary and unconnected and could hardly enhance anyone's learning.<sup>850</sup> Even lectures series in the form in which they were arranged 'could not present a systematic unity, a scientific entity, which alone broadens the standpoint of the listener and develops intelligence or, in sum, educates a person'<sup>851</sup>. Nor could other existing or planned educational activities benefit adult working-class people since folk high schools with their full-time teaching served rural youth only and courses planned for the extension of elementary school were intended for younger students.<sup>852</sup>

The other reasons for considering a workers' institute necessary were mainly connected to education for citizenship and were therefore typical arguments for workers' education. These writers nevertheless placed more stress on civic education in their arguments than did Anton Nyström and Edvard Wavrinsky in Sweden. This may partly have been due to the passage of time, making the question of workers' civic and political participation more urgent.

848. *Tampereen Sanomat (Kansalainen)*, 'Tärkeä toiminta-ala Tampereen Työväenyhdistykselle' by 'Työväen ystävä' ('A Friend of Workers') 18 February 1891 and 4 March 1891. This pseudonym was a Swedish-speaker, for the article had been translated from Swedish, but probably a local resident because he was familiar with municipal affairs. Koskinen (2019) has argued that 'A Friend of Workers' was Renström but it seems unlikely because of the language. The pseudonym's opinion of the curriculum also differed from Renström's, see Chapter 4.1.5.

849. TKA, Kaupunginvaltuusto, Minutes (microfiche) 28 June 1892, item 164, Appendix No. 123 'Tampereen kaupungin Herroille Valtuusmiehille'.

850. TKA, TTY Db:1, *Vuosikertomus 1892*, 4 (Renström); *Tampereen Sanomat (Kansalainen)*, 'Tärkeä toiminta-ala Tampereen Työväenyhdistykselle' 18 February 1891; Dahlberg 1894, 45.

851. Dahlberg 1894, 47.

852. TKA, TTY Db:1, *Vuosikertomus 1892*, 4–5 (Renström); *Tampereen Sanomat (Kansalainen)*, 'Tärkeä toiminta-ala Tampereen Työväenyhdistykselle' 18 February 1891.

Renström's brief comments focused more on the role of education in preparing workers to become active citizens whereas Dahlberg seems to have given priority to compliance and conformity as the expected results of education. Renström actually referred to Nyström's demand that workers should receive 'human education', that is liberal education, because only educated workers were capable of exercising their rights correctly, judge social (or political) trends and 'work independently in the service of progress'.<sup>853</sup>

While 'A Friend of Workers' only mentioned in passing that workers should be taught what the concept 'citizen' entails, Dahlberg elaborated this further. He was concerned about workers' ignorance of how society functions and about misconceptions over individuals' rights, responsibilities and workers' position in society. Such erroneous understanding of rights had been expressed by unemployed outdoor workers demanding relief work from the local authorities, which Dahlberg regarded as an attempt to shift part of their subsistence onto the municipality. This must have run contrary to Dahlberg's views on individual responsibility. Therefore, stronger educational efforts were necessary since 'sound views' might not survive when some people gave promises of material benefits and spread erroneous ideas on rights and responsibilities.<sup>854</sup> By this he referred to the incipient working-class radicalism developing in Finland during the early 1890s, perceptible also in Tampere. Radicalism was motivated by the discontent arising from the economic recession and unemployment of the early 1890s and inspired by socialist ideas diffusing from abroad. However, there was still no organized socialist movement or actual socialist leaders in the country at the time.<sup>855</sup> Neither was Dahlberg extremely anxious about the situation as he stressed that such mistaken ideas had not yet been widely diffused among the workers of Tampere. In spite of this, he pointed to education as a tool for opposing political provocation and for preventing the diffusion of 'sick ideas among the common people'.<sup>856</sup>

Dahlberg was clearly familiar with Nyström's ideas and actually repeated these word for word here and there, for instance when writing that society was governed by solid laws just like nature. Dahlberg hardly intended to

853. TKA, TTY Db:1, *Vuosikertomus 1892*, 4–5 (by Renström).

854. *Tampereen Sanomat (Kansalainen)*, 'Tärkeä toiminta-ala Tampereen Työväenyhdistykselle' 18 February 1891; Dahlberg 1894, 43–44. The Tampere Workers' Association had opposed relief work in 1893 because such help was supposed to weaken workers' sense of responsibility to take care of themselves. Haapala 1986, 192.

855. Soikkanen 1975, 23–25; Soikkanen 1961, 64–71; Kanerva 1986, 17, 88.

856. Dahlberg 1894, 44–45.

disseminate positivist thoughts but stressed, like Nyström, that all members of society should understand these laws before any improvements could be achieved in their outer conditions. This was obviously related to Dahlberg's idea that workers should be familiar with the way society functions, including the rights and responsibilities and one's place in society. Such knowledge would undoubtedly increase the understanding of which kind of demands and actions were excessive. Moreover, he emphasized that knowledge of society would produce citizens respecting law and social order.<sup>857</sup>

Compliance and conformity as the expected results of education were also suggested by expressions like 'sound views' and 'sick ideas'. Dahlberg obviously thought that education should lead workers to adopt social and political ideas reasonable and justified from the viewpoint of educated middle-class people like himself, protecting workers from misleading ideas and agitation. This kind of paternalistic attitude was also revealed by his remark that knowledge gave a perspective, which made all social and political questions to appear 'in their right form'.<sup>858</sup> For the educated middle-class people advocating workers' education it was self-evident that its content was determined by people like them. V.J. von Wright, for instance, referred to this by noting that in all civilized countries, employers, academics, teachers and the associations of well-off people arranged the kind of instruction they considered useful for workers.<sup>859</sup>

In spite of such elements of paternalism related to the content of teaching and to the idea of disseminating middle-class education and values among workers, Dahlberg also regarded equipping workers to take part in civic life as a purpose of the workers' institute.<sup>860</sup> His view on the nature of this civic participation was nevertheless rather cautious as he thought that the institute was not going to create politicians in a proper sense but informed members of society, participating indirectly. In this, he quoted Nyström's pamphlet almost word for word. By indirect participation Dahlberg obviously meant acting in associations and expressing opinions as he thought that workers' intellectual capital, experience of life, expectations and views should be acknowledged.

857. Dahlberg 1894, 48–49.

858. Dahlberg 1894, 45. On the paternalism of the liberal workers' movement, see e.g. Rasila 1984, 294.

859. *Valtiöpäivät 1891*, Documents Vol. 5, 'Petitionsbetänkande No. 9', 2.

860. Educating the common people did not necessarily involve paternalism. Olsson B. 1994, 82.

He may also have thought that indirect participation involved workers' role as voters though he did not explicitly express this.<sup>861</sup>

Workers' opportunities for political participation were limited, since the Diet was still based on the division into estates and that of burgesses representing the urban population nevertheless excluded large segments of it. Male workers did not in general have the right to vote, and thus were not eligible for election, since the basis of suffrage was taxable income and there were also additional restrictions usually excluding those workers earning enough to be taxed. Moreover, suffrage was denied to all women.<sup>862</sup> When Dahlberg referred to participation in civic life, he did not actually have national politics in mind but municipal affairs, although this was not made easy, either. Municipal suffrage, the number of votes each voter was entitled to cast and eligibility were also based on taxable income but there was still a significant number of tax-paying workers who would have had the right to vote. However, the majority of them did not have this right in Tampere as the local administrative court had denied it to factory workers on the grounds that they were dependent on their employer as were domestic servants also having no suffrage. Because suffrage was not equal and those with small incomes had fewest votes, workers were usually not elected to the city council. Throughout the 1890s, there were only a few councillors in Tampere who could have been classified as workers.<sup>863</sup>

The question of extending municipal suffrage to factory workers was raised several times in the early 1890s by the Tampere Workers' Association and Renström also took the floor in the national assembly of the movement in 1893 to advance the cause.<sup>864</sup> Perhaps the topicality of the matter was one of the reasons why Dahlberg referred specifically to workers' participation in municipal affairs. Furthermore, it probably seemed a more achievable goal than suffrage in the elections of the Diet and obviously corresponded better to Dahlberg's cautious view on the nature of workers' civic participation.<sup>865</sup> Dahlberg, like von Wright and possibly also Renström, thought that education was a prerequisite for suffrage, and quoted Nyström, according to whom the education and moral improvement of the working class was the

861. Dahlberg 1894, 48–49; cf. Nyström 1880a, 36. Dahlberg was obviously familiar not only with Nyström's pamphlet on workers' institutes (Nyström 1880b) but also with his publication on workers' role in society (Nyström 1880a).

862. Mylly 2006, 39, 41–45; Kuusanmäki 1983, 70–72.

863. Rasila 1984, 582–584; Kanerva 1986, 73–78.

864. Kanerva 1986, 75–77, 80.

865. von Wright also referred to municipal affairs when he stressed that the precondition for workers' expanding civic participation was education. *Valtiöpäivät 1891*, Minutes, Ridderskapet och adeln 4 April 1891, 575.



foundation for all social, political and material improvements.<sup>866</sup> Dahlberg's rather conservative attitude towards workers' participation was probably also related to the fact that as an Old Finn he was inclined towards a smaller reduction of the maximum number of votes in the elections of the Diet, which would have limited less the political power of those with high incomes. By contrast, Renström, as a Young Finn, actively promoted more substantial reduction.<sup>867</sup> Moreover, Renström had a longer history in advocating extended suffrage in the elections to the Diet since he had already taken a stand on it in the mid-1880s, even suggesting women's suffrage.<sup>868</sup>

In an industrial centre like Tampere, the workers constituting a significant part of population were regarded as potential supporters by the Finnish Club.<sup>869</sup> In view of this, Dahlberg's idea of educating workers to become informed members of society but not actual politicians suggests that the role he allowed to workers was more like that of helpers and supporters of his party. This was similar to the relation Nyström had outlined between positivists and educated workers and thus Dahlberg transferred Nyström's ideas into a different political context. Dahlberg also believed that workers would adopt those moderate ideas the educated middle-class organizers promoted, just as Nyström had been convinced that workers would adopt positivism if offered knowledge about natural phenomena and society.

Finally, there was an argument for civic education arising out of the particular Finnish political context. Dahlberg wrote that education was not only power but also protection against the misuse of power, by which he probably alluded to the Russian Emperor and the imperial authorities, whose efforts to integrate Finland more tightly into the Russian empire had become obvious.<sup>870</sup> As a concrete manifestation of Russian efforts to curtail Finland's autonomy, the Finnish postal system had been merged with that of imperial Russia in 1890. This prompted a wave of protests and, as far as popular adult education is concerned, the opening of the first Finnish folk high schools has been interpreted as a result of the national spirit the measure aroused.<sup>871</sup> Involving urban working people in the efforts to strengthen the unity of

866. On von Wright, see Chapter 3.1.2. TKA, TTY Db:1, *Vuosikertomus 1892*, 4–5 (Renström); Dahlberg 1894, 44. Cf. Nyström 1880b, 38.

867. Dahlberg disapproved of Renström's proposal. Dahlberg 1901, 39; Sinisalo 1932, 25–26; Voionmaa 1932, 381–382.

868. Voionmaa 1932, 379–380; Rasila 1984, 295.

869. Rasila 1984, 295–296.

870. Dahlberg 1894, 45.

871. E.g. Kirby 2006, 122–130; Lavery 2006, 71–76. On the folk high schools, see Karttunen 1979, 19–21 and Heikkilä 1985, 249.

the Finnish nation became a mission for educated people, giving reason to highlight the importance of ‘national education’ and knowledge concerning the political status of Finland as ‘A Friend of Workers’ did.<sup>872</sup> Dahlberg pointed out that education provided security for small countries whereas Renström emphasized that education was necessary for the nation to maintain its ‘nationality and independence’.<sup>873</sup> In the Diet of 1891, one of von Wright’s arguments for subsidizing workers’ education was that workers’ improved education was essential to create ‘the internal strength of the nation’.<sup>874</sup>

Anton Nyström had promoted the Stockholm Workers’ Institute as a means to combat drunkenness and other moral laxity. Given the role moral improvement often played as a remedy for workers’ conditions or as a goal of their education also in Finland, it was a surprisingly marginal argument for the workers’ institute in Tampere.<sup>875</sup> This marginality is noteworthy since Renström considered temperance an important question for the liberal workers’ movement. In addition, the sales of strong drink and problems related to drunkenness had for years been contentious issues in the municipal politics of Tampere.<sup>876</sup> Renström only mentioned the fight against drunkenness and against harmful pastimes when referring to the Swedish workers’ institutes and to Nyström’s aims. Dahlberg also touched on moral laxity—drunkenness, wastefulness and negligence—when repeating Nyström’s idea that systematic education was necessary to recognize and expunge these.<sup>877</sup> Therefore, it seems that due to the influence of Nyström’s publications, moral improvement appeared more or less obligatorily in Renström’s and Dahlberg’s reasoning.

Perhaps moral improvement was also indispensable in the rhetoric of the time. The moral decline of the working class was a concern shared by many members of the Finnish upper classes in the context of the ongoing social change with industrialization and migration, involving dissolution of old collectives and control mechanisms. There is no evidence that drunkenness, serious crime or prostitution were problems characteristic of Tampere in particular during the last decades of the nineteenth century but probably

872. *Tampereen Sanomat (Kansalainen)*, ‘Tärkeä toiminta-ala Tampereen Työväenyhdistykselle’ 18 February 1891. Cf. Klinge 1978c, 151–152.

873. Dahlberg 1894, 50; TKA, TTY Db:1, *Vuosikertomus 1892*, 5, 7 (Renström).

874. *Valtiopäivät 1891*, Documents Vol. 5, ‘Petitionsbetänkande No. 9’, p. 1.

875. On the role of moral improvement, see e.g. TKA, TTY Db:1, *Vuosikertomukset 1887*, 6, 8 (Renström) and *1889*, 6, 43 (the rules of the painters’ union by Renström).

876. TKA, TTY Db:1, *Vuosikertomus 1887*, 8 (Renström); Rasila 1984, 572–575.

877. TKA, TTY Db:1, *Vuosikertomus 1892*, 5 (Renström); Dahlberg 1894, 48. Cf. Nyström 1880a, 37 and Nyström 1880b, 7, 26, 30. von Wright did not refer to moral questions either in his application for a state subsidy in 1891. *Valtiopäivät 1891*, Documents Vol. 5, ‘Petitionsbetänkande No. 9’.

became more visible in urban surroundings with a growing working-class population.<sup>878</sup> At the same time, similarly to the concept of education itself, moral improvement could have been a self-evident objective and problems related to the lack of morality presumably familiar to all. Thus it did not require any thorough discussion with specifications or explanations of how education in practice cured these problems.

### **BENEFITS FOR SOCIETY AND THE INDIVIDUAL**

Just like Nyström and Wavrinsky in Sweden, the advocates of the workers' institute in Tampere presented arguments where individual and wider benefits intertwined. This was logical in an intellectual climate where education was perceived simultaneously as a right and a duty.<sup>879</sup> The right to education could be seen as an attribute of the individual, although provided by society, whereas education as a duty was something which individuals performed to benefit both society and themselves as members of society.

In this entanglement, the perspective of society seems to have been weightier, as in the Swedish examples.<sup>880</sup> The ethos of liberalism emphasized the role of the individual but it was obviously the individual's responsibility towards society and a responsible way of exercising rights that was primary in the context of workers' education. Dahlberg stressed that education was a precondition for political rights, which meant that society, or rather its elite, determined the conditions under which individual rights could be granted and exercised. Workers' education was also understood to offer protection to society and its other members against excessive and inconsiderate demands by workers, or as Renström put it, by producing workers 'capable of using their rights correctly'.<sup>881</sup> Dahlberg also thought that education protected society by creating a working class capable of acting for the public good, understanding law and legal social order and, therefore, respecting these. Workers' education was thus an issue affecting the whole of society, which he exemplified by comparing society to a living organism: when there is a failure in one part of society, the whole system will suffer and, conversely, what benefits one part, benefits the whole.<sup>882</sup>

878. Haapala 1986, 163–174, 206.

879. On education as a right and a duty, see e.g. *Tampereen Sanomat (Kansalainen)*, "Työväenopistojen tutkimus-matkaraha" 9 May 1894.

880. According to Tuomisto J. (1991, 46–47), this was typical of the Finnish adult education of the late nineteenth and early twentieth centuries more generally.

881. Dahlberg 1894, 43–45; TKA, TTY Db:1, *Vuosikertomus 1892*, 5 (Renström).

882. Dahlberg 1894, 49.

Hence Dahlberg considered education a factor increasing the resources of society. He also stressed the intellectual capital of workers and believed that their experience of life could be directed towards the common good when they were allowed to participate in civic life. Once again, Dahlberg quoted Nyström: ‘Every society would benefit if all members contributed to the common good with their enlightened understanding.’<sup>883</sup> Renström likewise believed that educated workers would be able to work ‘in the service of progress’, after having learned to evaluate contemporary social phenomena and form opinions on them independently.<sup>884</sup> The idea of workers’ education contributing to national unity clearly contained a broader perspective than that of the individual.<sup>885</sup>

When it comes to the benefits of individuals, the arguments of Renström or ‘A Friend of Workers’ did not touch upon the role of education in improving workers’ material conditions. As mentioned earlier, von Wright argued that learning was necessary for improving workers’ situation, also emphasizing its significance for their well-being, and the usefulness of basic skills in working life had been stressed in the context of elementary courses in Tampere.<sup>886</sup> Dahlberg nevertheless brought up this kind of usefulness by highlighting that education was the foundation for material improvements (together with social and political improvements) although even this probably referred to social reforms more generally.<sup>887</sup> If improvements in individuals’ material lives were almost ignored, the intellectual development of individuals was emphasized by Renström, who regarded ‘human’ (liberal or humanistic) education for workers as indispensable. Dahlberg as well thought everyone should have an opportunity to develop ‘one’s better self’, ‘one’s intellectual self’, or in other words, one’s intellect. Highlighting the human worth of working people and their intellectual capital alluded to the individual foundation of education.<sup>888</sup>

Thus, like Nyström and Wavrinsky, the advocates of the workers’ institute in Tampere paid little attention to the improvement of workers’ material conditions or professional advancement. Nyström in particular wanted to offer opportunities for ‘higher education’ and distanced himself from practically

883. Dahlberg 1894, 46, 48–49. Cf. Nyström 1880b, 39.

884. TKA, TTY Db:1, *Vuosikertomus 1892*, 5 (Renström).

885. *Tampereen Sanomat (Kansalainen)*, ‘Tärkeä toiminta-ala Tampereen Työväenyhdistykselle’ 18 February 1891; Dahlberg 1894, 50; TKA, TTY Db:1, *Vuosikertomus 1892*, 5 (Renström).

886. *Valtiopäivät 1891*, Documents Vol. 5, ‘Petitionsbetänkande No. 9’, 1; *Aamulehti*, ‘Työväen alkeiskurssit’ 14 January 1890; *Tampereen Sanomat*, ‘Työväen alkeiskurssit’ 15 January 1890.

887. Dahlberg 1894, 44.

888. Dahlberg 1894, 46–48; TKA, TTY Db:1, *Vuosikertomus 1888*, 5 (Renström).

oriented instruction or training. From his perspective, 'higher education' focusing on natural and social sciences appeared useful. In Tampere, however, the viewpoint of workers' material conditions and vocational interests emerged when the trade unions planned and organized practically oriented instruction and even the workers' association had a favourable attitude towards them. Such arguments were nevertheless absent when the necessity of a workers' institute was justified.

#### 4.1.3. A New Attempt in 1898:

##### E.S. Yrjö-Koskinen and the Cause of the Finnish Party

While the efforts of the Tampere Workers' Association to promote the establishment of the workers' institute had proceeded hesitantly in the early 1890s and had not received any response from the city council, a new initiative taken by the Finnish Club in 1898 produced rapid results. Why did the pro-Finnish forces of Tampere become active in promoting the workers' institute at this point and what factors contributed to the success of the project?

One of the histories of the Tampere Workers' Institute has referred to the radicalization of the workers' association and the need to distinguish education from the revolutionary ideas appearing in it as the reason for the new initiative.<sup>889</sup> However, to form a more nuanced picture, it is necessary to discuss what this radicalization actually meant at the turn of 1898 and what specific features of this development prompted Eino Sakari Yrjö-Koskinen, the driving force behind the project at that time, to take action for the workers' institute. Moreover, when explanations focus on the radicalization of the workers' association, the developments among other political actors and their interests and expectations are ignored.

#### **THE TRANSITION OF POWER IN THE WORKERS' ASSOCIATION**

The nature of the Tampere Workers' Association was undergoing changes and this became evident by 1896. Both the split within the Finnish Party and the workers' strengthening role in the workers' movement, occurring not only in

889. Virtanen 1975, 14–16. This view was repeated by Huuhka 1990, 48–49. Both writers also claim that Dahlberg demanded in 1894 the separation of the educational work from the radicalized workers' association but it is difficult to find such a demand in his article and it seems that they interpreted the article with later developments in mind. Moreover, at that time the Finnish Club retained a firm grip on the workers' association and Dahlberg regarded the workers' institute as a project belonging to the activities of the workers' association. Dahlberg 1894, 49.

Tampere but nationwide, contributed to the course of events. The rift between the factions of the Finnish Party was due to attitudes towards the Russian authorities attempting to bring Finnish laws into line with the legislation of the Russian empire. The Old Finns were more compliant, emphasizing loyalty to Russia as the key to Finland's prosperity and survival, whereas the Young Finns invoked the constitution with the intention to ensure the status of the country in this way.<sup>890</sup> In the disagreements between the Old and Young Finns the question of the unequal number of votes among the enfranchised, which had become topical in the workers' movement, also caused one of the divides. Of these factions, it was the Old Finns who first withdrew from the workers' movement and this was connected with the suffrage question. In the second national convention of the workers' associations in 1896, suffrage was one of the major issues and equal—but not yet universal—suffrage was accepted as a goal. Since this demand was too radical to the Old Finns, they left the leadership of the movement. The ongoing discussion about founding an independent workers' party also contributed to their departure.<sup>891</sup>

In Tampere, the dissension had begun even before the national convention, with the result that the Old Finns had left the board of the workers' association. As in other localities, the Young Finns remained on the board until 1898 although workers were becoming more numerous and powerful in the leadership. This was exemplified in Tampere by 'a club of comrades' established in summer 1897 by a few radical working men. The club served as a political division within the workers' association and its aim was to monitor the developments of the workers' movement in Finland and abroad, disseminate literature and prepare the issues for the meetings.<sup>892</sup>

In spite of the increasing importance of political and social matters, the workers' association did not abandon education and actually relied on the old forms. In a discussion meeting held in March 1898, intellectual improvement was still emphasized as one of the goals and the question of organizing lectures and folk high school courses was also raised.<sup>893</sup> Until 1899, when the workers' institute was opened, education remained on the agenda of the association as before, including elementary and folk high school courses.<sup>894</sup>

890. E.g. Lavery 2006, 74–75.

891. Rasila 1984, 296; Kanerva 1986, 93–99; Soikkanen 1975, 26, 29–33.

892. Rasila 1984, 296–298; Kanerva 1986, 88–93, 99–107.

893. TKA, TTY Ca:2, Minutes (discussion meeting) 6 March 1898, item 4.

894. TKA, TTY Ca:1, Minutes 23 May 1897, item 10; 15 January 1898, item 4; 6 April 1898, item 2; 21 May 1898, item 14; 16 October 1898, item 7; Db:1 *Vuosikertomukset 1896*, 6–7, 32–34; *1897*, 26–30; *1899*, 79.

The change in the nature of the association obviously raised no demands for political or more societally oriented education, with the exception of a suggestion for lectures on social questions made in February 1898. This did apparently not result in any action and such lectures were only organized from 1902 onwards.<sup>895</sup> Vocational courses of the trade unions also continued at the turn of the century, exemplifying education the content of which sprang from workers' interests but was not of a political nature.<sup>896</sup> Thus revolutionary ideas mentioned as a reason for becoming active with the establishment of the workers' institute did not impact much on the ideas of education within the workers' association before the first years of the twentieth century, when it also started political campaigning with itinerant agitators.<sup>897</sup>

Although the workers' association intended to continue its educational work as before and managed with municipal support to organize folk high school courses in 1897, it encountered difficulties in recruiting teachers from 1896 onwards.<sup>898</sup> This was obviously due to the withdrawal of educated people beginning when the Old Finns left the leadership.<sup>899</sup> The Old Finns and their local party, the Finnish Club, constituted a strong force in the municipal politics of Tampere, and their departure not only hindered the organizing of courses but also harmed the other workings of the association as disputes and numerous changes of board members sapped the confidence of the authorities. This also had an impact on the funding of instruction and, for instance in 1896, the city council postponed a subsidy the association had applied for to fund workers' education on the grounds of uncertainty about who were in charge and in which direction the association would turn.<sup>900</sup>

#### **YRJÖ-KOSKINEN'S ANXIETY ABOUT THE SHIFTING BALANCE OF POLITICAL POWER**

While in Stockholm and Gothenburg the initiators of the workers' institutes had been radical liberals, in Tampere the initiative was taken by conservative forces at the end of the 1890s.<sup>901</sup> Eino Sakari Yrjö-Koskinen (1858–1916) was a teacher of French and German at one of the secondary schools in Tampere

895. TKA, TTY Ca:1, Minutes (monthly meeting) 20 February 1898, item 4; Db:1 *Vuosikertomukset 1902*, 44–48; *1903*, 48; *1904*, 43–44; *1905*, 59–63. Virtanen (1975, 15) mentioned that the question of education organized by workers themselves had been raised but did not specify this.

896. TKA, TTY Db:1, *Vuosikertomukset 1899*, 45, 52; *1900*, 65, 89–90; *1901*, 49; *1902*, 49–50, *1903*, 61; *1904*, 54; *1905*, 53.

897. TKA, TTY Db:1, *Vuosikertomukset 1900*, 31; *1903*, 14–15.

898. TKA, TTY Ca:1, Minutes 15 January 1898, item 4; Db:1 *Vuosikertomus 1896*, 34.

899. Kanerva 1986, 48.

900. TKA, TTY Kaupunginvaltuusto, Minutes (microfiche) 12 May 1896, item 152.

901. In Helsinki, too, the workers' institute was advocated by liberals. Nyström S. 2016, 60.

and later became its headmaster. As a secondary school teacher, he belonged to the small local academic elite and, in addition to this, was an influential figure in local civic and political life. He was a member of the Finnish Club and of the workers' association though he never belonged to the leaders of the latter. In his political outlook Yrjö-Koskinen was an Old Finn and he has been characterized as a Christian traditionalist. He was a city councillor from 1893 to 1896 and represented his family at the Diet in the estate of nobility in 1897. The fact that his father was the leading pro-Finnish politician of the time and long-time Senator Yrjö Sakari Yrjö-Koskinen was obviously not to his detriment although he made his career in national politics principally only after his father's death. E. S. Yrjö-Koskinen was a member of parliament from 1907 to 1914, which was after the representative reform ending the power of the estates, and was elected as a candidate of the Finnish Party.<sup>902</sup>

At the end of 1897 two incidents preoccupied E. S. Yrjö-Koskinen and these prompted him to take measures for the establishment of the workers' institute. The first of these was the emergence of a local workers' party, resulting from the decision of the workers' association to participate in the coming municipal elections independently and with its own list of candidates. Yrjö-Koskinen reported this to his father with a comment that 'stronger winds have started to blow' in Tampere.<sup>903</sup> In the previous elections of the 1890s, the workers' association had not put up its own candidates but had suggested that its members should vote for the candidates of the Finnish Club or had tried to get some candidates onto the list of that party.<sup>904</sup> However, acting under the wings of the Finnish Club was no longer regarded as advantageous to working people, and the decision of drawing up a list of their own was interpreted as the beginnings of the local workers' party, which had been under consideration for some time.<sup>905</sup>

Another concern arose from the Diet's recent decision to grant suffrage to factory workers with sufficient income to pay tax.<sup>906</sup> This decision taking

902. Vares 2007, 796–797; Kanerva 1986, 47–48; Voionmaa 1935, Appendix II, 18. E.S. Yrjö-Koskinen obviously did not contribute to the establishment of the Tampere Workers' Association as Vares stated. Yrjö-Koskinen's name did not appear among the founders of the workers' association and he did not even live in Tampere at that time. Vares evidently confused the Tampere Workers' Association with the Tampere Workers' Institute. TKA, TTY Db:1, *Vuosikertomus 1887*, 9–11.

903. KA, Y.S. Yrjö-Koskisen arkisto, Microfiche VAY 1400, E.S. Yrjö-Koskinen to Y.S. Yrjö-Koskinen 23 November 1897.

904. In 1896, the workers' association had already put up its own candidate to represent Tampere in the Diet. Kanerva 1986, 85; Rasila 1984, 298–299.

905. Kanerva 1986, 86–87, 108.

906. Rasila 1984, 583–584; Kanerva 1986, 77.



effect from the beginning of 1898 gave Yrjö-Koskinen reason to believe that the emergence of an independent workers' party could prove a turning point with significant consequences in the future. As he wrote to his father, 'it is evident that they will not achieve much this time [referring to the municipal elections of December 1897], but when factory workers are pronounced fit to vote, "a workers' party" will then count for something here'. He recognized the special characteristics of Tampere with its substantial number of factory workers and pointed out that 'everybody can understand that Tampere will be a testbed the entire country will be watching' as regards workers' participation in local government. Yrjö-Koskinen's practical preoccupation concerned what reforms the workers' party would mobilize in the municipal sphere and presumed that these could be related to the allocation of the profits from sales of spirits, which was a municipal monopoly.<sup>907</sup> This was actually an important source of revenue for the municipality since, at the turn of the century, it was equivalent to an amount that was more than 40 per cent of the municipal taxes levied. In addition, it was determined that these profits should be used for purposes not statutory for the municipality, leaving thus the councillors freedom to channel the funds into purposes they valued.<sup>908</sup>

Granting suffrage to Tampere factory workers meant a substantial increase in the number of those entitled to vote. The number of factory workers had been increasing by almost eight per cent per year after the mid-1890s and, in 1897, there were 6,600 factory workers in Tampere.<sup>909</sup> Due to low income or age, only some of them would have been eligible to vote. Yrjö-Koskinen estimated that the new electorate would amount to 1,000–2,000 factory workers with 3,000–4,000 votes.<sup>910</sup> Even though such an estimate may appear modest, it is not after all surprising that it caused Yrjö-Koskinen to advocate the workers' institute. In the municipal elections held in December 1897, when the law on factory workers' suffrage was not yet in force, the number of voters had been approximately 1,100 and, in the earlier elections of the 1890s, the number of voters had only rarely exceeded 1,000.<sup>911</sup> Yrjö-Koskinen was of course aware that this new electorate would be less powerful because

907. KA, Y.S. Yrjö-Koskisen arkisto, Microfiche VAY 1400, E.S. Yrjö-Koskinen to Y.S. Yrjö-Koskinen 23 November 1897.

908. Rasila 1984, 537.

909. Haapala 1986, 358–360 (Appendix table 3).

910. KA, Y.S. Yrjö-Koskisen arkisto, Microfiche VAY 1400, E.S. Yrjö-Koskinen to Y.S. Yrjö-Koskinen 23 December 1897. On estimates of the number of tax-paying factory workers, see Kanerva 1986, 77.

911. Voionmaa 1932, 338, 341–342.

working-class voters had only a small number of votes.<sup>912</sup> Given that calls for equal vote had been made not only by workers but also by the Young Finns, there were naturally pressures for change in this respect.

The turn in the suffrage question and in workers' political organization set Yrjö-Koskinen thinking about relations between the Finnish Party and the workers' movement and he still entertained the idea of getting some kind of a grip on the workers' movement or of being able to influence it. This is revealed in a letter to his father at the end of December 1897, when he wrote that 'it is not possible to be rid of the workers' question and the crux of the matter is only who would finally control it'. Having obviously the Finnish Club's influence over the workers' association in mind, he concluded that 'some kind of effort should be made in Tampere'.<sup>913</sup> Yrjö-Koskinen's hopes were probably not entirely unrealistic. At the turn of 1898, it was uncertain how the relationship between the pro-Finnish forces and the workers' movement would develop, just like the success of the attempts of the workers' movement to become an independent political force. At that time the Tampere Workers' Association was still chaired by a middle-class journalist, albeit a Young Finn.<sup>914</sup> Moreover, in the spring of 1898 Yrjö-Koskinen still wrote to his father that the workers' movement was a good thing if only held in check.<sup>915</sup>

Unlike most of the Old Finns in Tampere, Yrjö-Koskinen had not entirely broken with the workers' association and even its new role as the local workers' party did not lead to his departure. Thus he was one of those few educated people to remain a member, actually only leaving the association in 1899 after the founding of the social democratic Finnish Workers' Party.<sup>916</sup> It seems that Yrjö-Koskinen wanted to continue a dialogue with the workers' association to ascertain the views of the new political actor and also to explore the possibilities of influencing it. A few days after the establishment of the local workers' party and the municipal elections, he participated in the monthly meeting of the workers' association and posed the question 'What stance is

912. On the scale of votes, see Rasila 1984, 584.

913. KA, Y.S. Yrjö-Koskisen arkisto, Microfiche VAY 1400, E.S. Yrjö-Koskinen to Y.S. Yrjö-Koskinen 23 December 1897.

914. Kanerva 1986, 610 (list of board members).

915. KA, Y.S. Yrjö-Koskisen arkisto, Microfiche VAY 1400, E.S. Yrjö-Koskinen to Y.S. Yrjö-Koskinen 7 May 1898. A decade later, he still expressed the same idea. KA, E.S. Yrjö-Koskisen arkisto, archive unit 4, folder 16: 'Muistelmia Tampereelta', subheading '20 vuotta Tampereella' (undated but must be from the turn of the 1910s as he mentions that the workers' institute had been operating a little more than ten years).

916. Kanerva 1986, 47–48.

the association going to adopt in municipal affairs?', probably having in mind some kind of programme for the new party.<sup>917</sup>

Yrjö-Koskinen was not the only one in Tampere reflecting what the new direction of the workers' movement meant for the Finnish Club and the concern about the loss of potential supporters became evident in *Aamulehti* at the turn of 1898. Aukusti Dahlberg wrote two contributions, where he lamented the fact that different Finnish-minded associations had not combined their forces for the coming municipal election. Although the Young Finns were also in the process of withdrawing from this coalition, Dahlberg directed his words to the workers' association and deplored that it was no longer interested in the work of the pro-Finnish movement.<sup>918</sup> Another writer emphasized the role of the Finnish Party in promoting the demands of the workers' movement and the close relation between them. He compared the ongoing parting of the ways to a farm, where the children had reached maturity and the distribution of the estate had become necessary. As the work promoting the status of Finnish language and education had not been completed, he wondered how the workers' departure from the Finnish Party would affect these efforts. Would this work be left to 'the old residents' – the Old Finns – to do or would 'those moving from the old house' – the workers' party – still take part in it? The writer also admitted that the separation would reduce the electoral support of the Finnish Party but believed that this could be remedied by attracting wealthier supporters, who were entitled to cast more votes.<sup>919</sup> Despite such rationalizing, it was clearly regrettable from the viewpoint of the Old Finns that factory workers got the vote only when breaking away from the pro-Finnish forces. These had nonetheless advocated the suffrage of workers, albeit aiming to swell their own support.

Yrjö-Koskinen's solution to how the Finnish Party should continue its efforts among working people was education. As he wrote to his father later in spring, the workers' movement could be held in check 'by acknowledging workers' justified demands and showing them those demands that were absurd, biased and product of agitation'. Even though he said he did not expect any wonders of the workers' institute, he still believed that it could 'create some

917. TKA, TTY Ca:1, Minutes (monthly meeting) 12 December 1897, item 7.

918. *Aamulehti*, 'Päivänpakinata' 24 November 1897 and 1 December 1897; Sinisalo 1932, 44–48. According to Kanerva (1986, 103) the pseudonym 'Pakinanpitäjä' (the causerie writer) was Dahlberg.

919. *Aamulehti*, 'Suomalainen puolue ja työväen asia I' 26 January 1898; *Aamulehti*, 'Suomalainen puolue ja työväen asia II' 28 January 1898.

kind of order and basis'.<sup>920</sup> Although Yrjö-Koskinen had not taken part in the earlier educational work of the workers' association he had reportedly made study trips to European countries to familiarize himself with popular adult education.<sup>921</sup>

He introduced his outline for the workers' institute in the Finnish Club in February 1898, giving the failure to find teachers for the folk high school courses planned by the workers' association as the reason for his initiative. In addition, he emphasized the significance of knowledge for the strength of Finnish nation and for the common people in their pursuit of finding truth in various contradictions in life. The latter was obviously related to his comment on 'socialist ideas surfacing here and there' in the Finnish workers' movement. According to Yrjö-Koskinen, these ideas were proof of inadequate knowledge and education as well as of immature thinking. The only remedy was to offer more knowledge and propagate 'true education' to prevent the working class from assuming an envious and bitter frame of mind as a result of irrational agitation. Yet Yrjö-Koskinen did not at the time consider the Finnish workers' movement to be revolutionary although such a development was possible in the future. Even if this happened, he did not believe that it could undermine the foundations of society.<sup>922</sup> It seems that he was more concerned about how the radicalism of the workers' movement would manifest itself in the frames of contemporary institutions, which was suggested by his earlier reflections on how working people would use power when elected to the city council. He also stressed that power would be followed by responsibility, and exercising these would put the workers' movement to the test: how it carried the responsibility would show how serious a societal actor it was.<sup>923</sup>

Given Yrjö-Koskinen's opinion that the right kind of education was necessary for workers to become responsible actors in society, social studies could have been expected to be among the subjects offered at the institute but it was added to the curriculum only later. Economics was nevertheless a subject he deemed necessary together with Finnish history and literature, church history, natural sciences and hygiene. Yrjö-Koskinen noted that the duty of providing knowledge and education for workers fell on the more

920. KA, Y.S. Yrjö-Koskisen arkisto, Microfiche VAY 1400, E.S. Yrjö-Koskinen to Y.S. Yrjö-Koskinen 7 May 1898.

921. Virtanen 1975, 16. According to the reference work *Kuka kukin oli 1900–1961* (p. 583), he had made study trip(s) to Germany and France but these may also have been related to his work as a language teacher.

922. *Aamulehti*, 'Työväen-opiston asia (Alustus Suom. Klupissa)' 5 February 1898.

923. KA, Y.S. Yrjö-Koskisen arkisto, Microfiche VAY 1400, E.S. Yrjö-Koskinen to Y.S. Yrjö-Koskinen 23 November 1897. Cf. Haapala 1986, 195.

fortunate members of society, probably referring not only to competence but also to the sound judgement of educated people. Above all, establishing the workers' institute was one of the municipal duties specifically of the Finnish Club, because, according to him, it was the only party to show competence in municipal affairs.<sup>924</sup> The comment was aimed at the adversaries of the Finnish Club but it also shows that party interests in general played a role.

Interestingly, Yrjö-Koskinen also considered it necessary to deny that the Finnish Club had become active in the issue of workers' education so as to remedy its faltering position, either responding to criticism or anticipating critical comments. Finding such denial necessary nevertheless indicates that the idea was not without foundation. Undoubtedly, he hoped that by establishing the workers' institute the Finnish Club could maintain its position as the organizer of workers' education. By offering education it deemed suitable the Club could challenge the demands of the workers' party and possibly regain some of its former influence over working people and even over the workers' movement and, perhaps also to minimize anticipated losses of supporters. The explanation focusing solely on the radicalization of the workers' association is hence one-sided. The developments in the workers' movement expedited the project long under way as earlier intentions and plans were now taken seriously in the party that was influential in municipal politics. The motive arising from the desire to retain control over workers' education and to prevent the infiltration of radical ideas had another side. As in Sweden, the initiators of the workers' institute also had interests of their own to promote and the increasing power of working people could provide a resource for that.

While the arguments for the workers' institute at the beginning of the 1890s involved both the perspectives of society and the individual, albeit with the emphasis on the former, Yrjö-Koskinen focused almost entirely on the benefits to society that could be achieved with the right kind of workers' education. In his private correspondence he was much more outspoken. This revealed that it was the interests of his party he wanted to promote by establishing the workers' institute and no doubt he was convinced that this was also for the good of society.

The fact that Yrjö-Koskinen awoke to the necessity of a permanent workers' institute at a time when workers had started to show civic and political activity reveals a kind of paradox inherent in workers' education. Educating workers to become able citizens had been the aim of the liberal workers'

924. *Aamulehti*, "Työväen-opiston asia (Alustus Suom. Klupissa)" 5 February 1898.

movement from its inception and, as Yrjö-Koskinen put it, popular education had created ‘a thinking working class’.<sup>925</sup> While earlier workers’ education had had to be content with temporary arrangements, educating a new thinking working class seemed to require more effort in terms of permanent structures.

#### 4.1.4. A Municipal Workers’ Institute and Reactions to It

##### **CONTROL OVER WORKERS’ EDUCATION BY THE FINNISH CLUB**

Yrjö-Koskinen’s plan received unanimous endorsement in the Finnish Club and the project proceeded fast, suggesting that there was in no disagreement on matters of principle. In less than one month, Yrjö-Koskinen and the Finnish Club completed the proposal for the workers’ institute and submitted it to the city council. The arguments were familiar: the popularity and success of the folk high school courses as a proof of workers’ interest in education, recent difficulties in finding teachers for these courses, the necessity to create institutionalized frames for workers’ education and the importance of education developing workers’ understanding in societal questions. The main part of the proposal consisted of practical considerations, which nevertheless included three issues showing how the initiators planned to keep workers’ education in their control, adding thus a political dimension to these practicalities.<sup>926</sup>

The first issue suggesting the intentions of the Finnish Club concerned the director. The club found a full-time director necessary for organizing the lectures of the institute and giving lectures in those subjects regarded as its core: Finnish history, social sciences and economics. Most importantly, the director should have an academic degree, preferably in one of the above subjects.<sup>927</sup> Such a competence requirement ensured that only a small group of educated people, most likely to be found among the supporters of the Finnish Club, could apply for the post.

The second issue was the administration and control of the institute. The Finnish Club proposed that it should be a municipal institution controlled by the city council, which could delegate the administrative task to a special board. The institute should also be financed by the municipality but with funds from

925. Ibid.

926. A committee report by the municipality, published in *Aamulehti* (‘Työväen-opiston asia’ 4 March 1898) was practically identical with the proposal of the Finnish Club. Malinen 1924, 3–4; TKA, Kaupunginvaltuusto, Minutes 11 March 1898, item 96, Appendix ‘Työ’ (the proposal of the Finnish Club 1 March 1898). The proposal of the Finnish Club is also published in Lammi 1949, 89–91.

927. Ibid.

the profits of alcohol sales and not from the regular tax revenue. However, the latter alternative had not entirely been excluded by the committee.<sup>928</sup> Suggesting the establishment of a municipal workers' institute was a remarkable initiative in the Finland of the 1890s since it signified an extension of municipal duties in the field of education. Until then, the municipalities had maintained elementary schools and in larger towns also vocational evening schools. Municipalities like Tampere also supported some private educational activities, exemplified by the courses of the workers' association.<sup>929</sup> The earlier initiatives had proposed an institute maintained by the workers' association, private in this sense but undoubtedly intended to be funded by the municipality.<sup>930</sup> The recent developments in the workers' association must have prompted Yrjö-Koskinen and the Finnish Club to opt for municipal ownership since it enabled direct control over the institute.

The third issue, how to check whether students understood what they had been lectured on, was pedagogic but also involved an aspect of control. Such control was considered an essential part of education, because without checking 'teaching would hover in the air and not take root in the minds of students, or could create fragmental and more or less erroneous ideas'. The initiators admitted that checking would be difficult since questioning students like pupils at school was impracticable due to their large number and the fear of driving away timid and less advanced students. They therefore suggested arranging opportunities to ask lecturers questions and generate discussion on lecture topics as well short revisions to be made by lecturers.<sup>931</sup>

The city council also acted rapidly and the decision on establishing the workers' institute was taken at the beginning of April 1898. The only rift was caused by a councillor representing the workers' association, who asked for the matter to be shelved, thereby making the initiators anxious. Finally this councillor also supported the proposal.<sup>932</sup> A board was appointed and the

928. Ibid.

929. Halila 1983, 380–385, 390–391; TKA, TTY Db:1, *Vuosikertomukset 1894*, 19; 1895, 19; KTK 1896, 26–27.

930. *Tampereen Sanomat (Kansalainen)*, 'Tärkeä toiminta-ala Tampereen Työväenyhdistykselle' 4 March 1891; Dalhberg 1894, 49. The municipal fund suggested for a source of income in the funding application of 1892 would also have brought control by the municipality, like its subsidies in general. TKA, Kaupunginvaltuusto, Minutes (microfiche) 28 June 1892, item 164, Appendix No. 123 'Tampereen kaupungin Herroille Valtuusmiehille'.

931. *Aamulehti*, 'Työväen-opiston asia' 4 March 1898; TKA, Kaupunginvaltuusto, Minutes (microfiche) 11 March 1898, item 96, Appendix 'Työ' (the proposal of the Finnish Club 1 March 1898).

932. TKA, Kaupunginvaltuusto, Minutes (microfiche) 11 March 1898, item 96; 7 April 1898, item 117; Malinen 1924, 5; Lammi 1949, 92–94.

leadership was kept in the hands of the Finnish Club, which was possible because of its dominant position in the city council. All the five board members the city council appointed belonged to the Finnish Club, including Yrjö-Koskinen himself.<sup>933</sup> In addition, the workers' association, a youth association and a temperance society were asked to nominate their representatives with the intent to forge close ties between the institute and circles likely to utilize its education. Since the temperance society chose the editor of *Aamulehti*, Kaarlo Viljakainen, also a member of the Finnish Club, there were originally only two board members not belonging to this club. Yrjö-Koskinen became the chairman of the board.<sup>934</sup>

The board drafted a proposal for the rules of the institute and, interestingly, there is no mention about political neutrality as in the rules of the Swedish counterparts. Neutrality was only added in the rules in the 1920s.<sup>935</sup> Omitting neutrality could indicate that the board members, consisting mainly of members of the Finnish Club, were not concerned about the possibility that education could be used for political purposes not acceptable to them.

There were several reasons for the success of the project at the end of the 1890s, the initiator and the promoters undoubtedly among them. It cannot be without significance that the initiator this time was such an influential figure as Yrjö-Koskinen, whose involvement must have added weight to the undertaking. That his father was the senator in charge of educational issues must have been a valuable asset to him. Yrjö-Koskinen's opinion about the earlier attempts is not known but his party clearly changed its attitude by the end of the 1890s and without doubt the concern about declining support, on the one hand, and about the increasing political power of the workers' movement, on the other, contributed to this. Members of the Finnish Club had in practice led the workers' association in the early 1890s, when the question of establishing the workers' institute had initially been raised. Both the chairman and the vice chairman of the workers' association had been members of the Finnish Club, as indeed had half of the board members. However, with one

933. One board member, Heikki Lindroos, had a connection to the workers' association as well and he soon resigned from the Finnish Club. TKA, Kaupunginvaltuusto, Minutes (microfiche) 7 April 1898 item 117; Dahlberg 1901, 113–122 (list of members); Kanerva 1986, 157–158, 610 (list of board members).

934. Malinen 1924, 5; Lammi 1949, 94–95; Dahlberg 1901, 113–122 (list of members).

935. Lammi 1949, 107–108, 157–158; Virtanen 1975, 54–55.



exception, these had not been members of the board of the Finnish Club, suggesting that they had obviously not belonged to its most powerful core.<sup>936</sup>

This notwithstanding, three city councillors representing the Finnish Club had been members of the committees preparing the workers' institute, which suggests that the reason for the standstill of the project had not, after all, been a lack of influential advocates.<sup>937</sup> As these committees did not produce any proposals (except for the funding application), the workers' institute seems not to have been the priority of those members of the Finnish Club participating in its planning in the early 1890s. The dominant position of the club in municipal politics could also have created opportunities to advance the project in the city council but the application for the travel grant was actually rejected when Yrjö-Koskinen was a councillor. The reason for this could have been the typical parsimony of the local government but tensions within the workers' association may also have contributed. This is suggested by the condition included in the application, according to which the person receiving the travel grant should have an academic degree. Renström as the long-time advocate of the workers' institute and as the secretary of the association would have been a natural choice but he did not have a degree, which raises the question whether he as a Young Finn was not suitable.<sup>938</sup>

Since the promoter of the Tampere Workers' Institute in 1898 was a local political force supported by his influential party, also publishing the proposals in the press, the situation differed substantially from the case of the Gothenburg Workers' Institute. The latter had been established quietly in a small circle of carefully selected people and as a private institution, therefore not becoming an issue for public discussion. In Stockholm, where the institute had also been founded as a private institution, its initiator was a controversial figure not belonging to the political elite of the Swedish capital.

936. This exception was Kaarlo Viljakainen. Kanerva 1986, 609–610 (list of board members); Dahlberg 1901, 105–107; Sinisalo 1932, 196–200 (list of officials). According to Lammi (1949, 86–87), Kaarlo Renström recognized the necessity of calling for the help of more influential people in 1892.

937. These were secondary school teachers E.E. Jernberg, E.V. Emeleus and O.R. Borg, of whom Borg was a councillor from 1892. TKA, TTY Ca:1, Minutes 13 April 1891, item 6; 24 April 1892, item 6; Dahlberg 1901, 113–122 (list of members); Voionmaa 1935, Appendix II, 6–18.

938. TKA, TTY Ca:1, Minutes 4 April 1894, item 7; 7 October 1894, item 2, Appendix "Tampereen Työväen-yhdistykselle" (report of the education committee).

## DOUBTS ABOUT PARTY POLITICS AND THE INITIATORS' OBJECTIVES

The decision to establish the first Finnish workers' institute evoked comments in the press and in the workers' movement. An article in *Tampereen Sanomat*, representing the local Young Finns, basically favoured the institute but criticized its municipal nature. The writer raised party politics as a possible threat to a municipal institution since the political ends of those dominating in the council could encroach on educational work and thus harm the institute. He also referred to neutrality by emphasizing that skilful and 'pure' teaching was necessary because young workers 'in an age when the mind is easily in turmoil' could, unlike schoolchildren, challenge their teachers. Although the writer considered possible political shifts in the city council a problem for the institute, it is difficult to avoid the impression that he also regarded the political aims of the current ruling party, the Old Finns, as suspect. The writer preferred an independent association to the local authorities as an organizer of adult education but still regarded a municipal subsidy as necessary for funding. In this way the institute would be run by 'true friends of education' and not by 'cold authorities'. Showing a dislike of party politics, or more likely of the Old Finns, the writer concluded that 'independent heroes of enlightenment are much better in popular education than entire parties'.<sup>939</sup>

An association independent of the municipality administered the Stockholm Workers' Institute and this practice had been mentioned earlier, for example, by Dahlberg. However, he was obviously not aware that Anton Nyström's main reason for avoiding municipal control had been to prevent religiously conservative schoolmasters from interfering in the content of lectures.<sup>940</sup> While Nyström's preference for a private institution had been connected with religious neutrality benefitting the cause of religious freedom, the reason of the above Young Finn writer in 1898 was related to political neutrality.

The workers' movement in its public comments took a fairly positive stance on the planned institute even though doubts were also expressed concerning the aims and the founders of the institute. The Tampere Workers' Association was pleased with the proposal, 'no matter the spirit in which the institute will be directed, because workers striving for education find it a welcome addition helping to reach this goal'.<sup>941</sup> This is not surprising given

939. *Tampereen Sanomat*, 'Työväenopisto Tampereelle' 9 March 1898.

940. Dahlberg 1894, 52. An independent association as the organizer was also mentioned in *Tampereen Sanomat*, 'Kirje Tukholmasta Joulukuulla 1897. Työväen opisto' by J.E.Ö. 8 January 1898.

941. TKA, TTY Ca:1, Minutes (monthly meeting) 20 February 1898, item 3.

the intentions of the socialist association to continue workers' education as before. Although some kind of tension developed between Yrjö-Koskinen and the workers' association during the spring of 1898, the latter seems to have refrained from publicly criticising the enterprise and decided to wait and see what kind of institute would result from the plans. The association also looked kindly to the request to nominate a member to the board of the institute.<sup>942</sup> The organ of the Helsinki Workers' Association published a report by its Tampere correspondent, who commented more outspokenly that 'in certain quarters' the institute was expected to protect workers from falling into the condition of 'self-awareness' leading to political awareness and action. However, this writer also welcomed the institute because it could contribute to educational work, which was essential for the workers' movement.<sup>943</sup>

Even though the workers' institute did not invoke any strong opposition, a pseudonym in *Tampereen Sanomat* considered that time was not yet ripe for it. This writer thought that the folk high school courses would have been sufficient and a permanent institute necessary only when these courses could no longer supply the need for education.<sup>944</sup> Criticism was also levelled at the people involved in the project. *Tampereen Sanomat* touched on the question of the director, reacting to a rumour that this would be the Old Finn journalist Dahlberg. The paper expressed its disapprobation of him and portrayed him as a man who had caused a big stir among the workers' movement with his articles and therefore as a person not able to inspire confidence in working people.<sup>945</sup> Another local paper, *Tampereen Untiset*, voiced similar criticism of Dahlberg and attacked Yrjö-Koskinen by wondering how such a man could manage to satisfy workers' demands and expectations as his newspaper articles had provoked protests from different quarters.<sup>946</sup>

942. KA, Y.S. Yrjö-Koskisen arkisto, Microfiche VAY 1400, E.S. Yrjö-Koskinen to Y.S. Yrjö-Koskinen 11 April 1898; TKA, TTY Ca:1, Minutes 15 April 1898, item 3; 17 April, item 1; 21 May 1898, item 14.

943. *Työmies*, 'Kirje Tampereelta' by 'Pekka' 2 April 1898.

944. *Tampereen Sanomat*, 'Kansanopistokurssit Tampereella' by 'Äksä' 23 February 1898. The writer also criticized the Finnish Club for double-dealing as regards the folk high school courses: 'the powerful party that always has "popular education" on its lips and "the best interests of workers" in its eyes' had not worked in earnest to arrange the courses'.

945. *Tampereen Sanomat*, 'Sekulia. Epäedullinen mies' 19 April 1898; Kanerva 1986, 103–104.

946. *Tampereen Untiset*, 'Kirje Tampereelta' by a pseudonym 'Koukku' 23 April 1898. This paper represented mainly local businessmen and was on bad terms with *Aamulehti*. Rasila 1984, 553–554.

### **REJECTION BY THE SENATE: INAPPROPRIATE SUBJECTS AND ‘PARTY INTENTIONS’**

After the mainly favourable response and the speedy decision by Tampere city council, the project encountered somewhat unexpected reluctance from the Senate in summer 1898 as this did not grant the permission the municipal authorities had applied for to found the institute. This episode also alludes to the interests of the Finnish Party as the factor motivating the establishment of the workers’ institute.

The organizers of the earlier workers’ education had not sought any permission from the authorities, most likely because of the temporary nature of these activities. However, the permanent workers’ institute was evidently equated with the folk high schools, for which such authorization had been sought from the Senate. With the exception of the vice-chairman of the Senate, the senators recommended the permission be granted on condition that the governor of the province should also control the workers’ institute and the institute should be obliged to report yearly to the government authorities. These were also the standard preconditions imposed on folk high schools.<sup>947</sup> Vice-chairman Carl Tudeer, whose status was roughly equivalent to that of a prime minister<sup>948</sup>, nevertheless insisted on rejection. The reasons Tudeer gave for his decision were the vagueness of the institute’s purpose and the impractical nature of its subjects, without any further explanations or examples of such subjects. He had in fact taken these flaws from the statement of the National Board of Education, which had nevertheless recommended granting permission since the institute would be municipally controlled. Governor-General Goncharov, a Russian official acting as the head of the Senate and as the representative of the Emperor in Finland, agreed with Tudeer, adding that funds were lacking and the appointment of teachers was random, and thus the application for permission was rejected.<sup>949</sup>

The allegation of lacking funding was considered odd and actually incorrect by Verner Malin, a member of the workers’ institute’s board at that time, since according to the application funding from the municipality should have been beyond question. In his opinion, the other arguments

947. Minutes of the Senate 9 June 1898 published in Lammi 1949, 98; Huuhka 1990, 52–53; Heikkilä 1985, 252.

948. Tyynilä 1992, 251.

949. Translations of the statements by the National Board of Education and by Governor-General Goncharov as well as the minutes of the Senate for 30 June 1898 are published in Lammi 1949, 97, 99–100.

likewise showed distrust and lack of understanding.<sup>950</sup> In fact, the reference to impractical subjects possibly revealed that the school authorities' and the vice-chairman's ideas of appropriate workers' education did not include liberal education. This would not have been extraordinary since workers' maturity to absorb popular scientific lectures had been doubted in 1891 in the Diet and a more recent proposal concerning the state subsidy for workers' education submitted to the Diet in 1897 only included elementary courses.<sup>951</sup> The folk high schools had actually discovered during the 1890s that by combining practical instruction like handicrafts and woodwork with theoretical courses these schools could receive state subsidy, which had otherwise been rejected from them. In the Senate, Tudeer had favoured this kind of arrangement at the beginning of the year 1898.<sup>952</sup>

Malin mentioned that one subject in particular, social studies, was regarded as dangerous, but did not specify by whom.<sup>953</sup> If this was Tudeer's opinion, he may have been concerned that social studies would disseminate the wrong kind of ideas among workers although the required control should have convinced him of the harmlessness of the subject. Moreover, the government authorities in charge of the control would obviously not have considered the political views of the prospective local supervisors – the Finnish Party – dangerous.<sup>954</sup> The concern about social studies in fact implied a rather superficial understanding of the nature of the planned institute and the aims of current workers' education emphasizing the education of responsible citizens. As a commentator astonished by the Senate's decision put it, the institute was not intended to be a seat of revolutionary ideas or a breeding ground for thoughts endangering social order but that the decision impeded the very educational work aimed at preventing the radicalization of the workers' movement.<sup>955</sup>

Referring to the impractical nature of the subjects could also have provided Tudeer with an easy way to reject the plan by using criticism already

950. Malinen 1924, 6. Malin, who later finnicized his name to Malinen, was a teacher in history, geography and Finnish language at the same school where Yrjö-Koskinen was employed. Sinisalo 1932, 177–178.

951. On the doubts expressed in 1891, see chapter 4.1.1. *Valtiopiivät 1897*, Documents Vol. 5, 'Petitionsmemorial (borgarst.) No. 30' (by Eero Erkko).

952. Heikkilä 1985, 250–253.

953. Malinen 1924, 6. The dangerous nature of social studies has been repeated in subsequent histories of the Tampere Workers' Institute but Malin, who seems to have been the source, does not say that social studies had been characterized as 'revolutionary' as does Virtanen. Virtanen 1975, 18.

954. *Tampereen Sanomat*, 'Odotustako vai toimintaa' 19 July 1898.

955. *Tampereen Uutiset*, 'Tampereen työväenopistohanke' 2 July 1898. See also *Tampereen Sanomat*, 'Tampereen työväenopiston säännöt' 1 July 1898.

voiced by the school authorities since it is possible that his underlying reason was connected with political antipathies, which he could not express publicly. According to Malin, Tudeer had stated that ‘the whole enterprise originated from party intentions’, by which this had without doubt referred to the Finnish Party. Malin had heard the comment at second hand but he characterized the original source as a very trustworthy.<sup>956</sup> The source was most likely Senator Y.S. Yrjö-Koskinen, since he corresponded regularly with his son and kept him informed throughout the process of establishing the institute on how the issue was progressing in the Senate.<sup>957</sup> Probably the senator also passed on other information related to the rejected application. If Tudeer was actually referring to party politics, it suggests that the attempt of the Finnish Party to make use of workers’ education to strengthen its position was public knowledge not only in the Tampere newspapers.

Without doubt, Tudeer was aware of the role of Senator Yrjö-Koskinen’s son and the Finnish Club in the project and must also have understood how important the senator in charge of educational matters was for the enterprise. Yrjö-Koskinen junior actually made use of his father’s position as in May 1898, when he requested the senator to use his influence to expedite the process and the father promised to do all he could. However, for some reason he was absent from the meeting at which the permission for the workers’ institute was discussed.<sup>958</sup>

Tudeer’s reluctance may have been related to general politicking in the Senate or to opposing the aims of the Finnish Party, including the attempts to gain influence over workers.<sup>959</sup> He has been characterized as a neutral bureaucrat, who in his Russian policies was cautious and compliant, probably due to his background as an officer in the Russian imperial army, having even served as an adjutant of Emperor Alexander II.<sup>960</sup> In the Russian policies Tudeer and the Finnish Party had been close to each other and for this reason the vice-chairman had often supported representatives of the party. The rela-

956. Malinen 1924, 6.

957. KA, Y.S. Yrjö-Koskisen arkisto, Microfiche VAY 1446, Y.S. Yrjö-Koskinen to E.S. Yrjö-Koskinen 11 April 1898 and 9 May 1898; VAY 1447 Y.S. Yrjö-Koskinen to E.S. Yrjö-Koskinen 30 October 1898 and 1 November 1898 (draft letters). See also Huuhka 1990, 53–54.

958. KA, Y.S. Yrjö-Koskisen arkisto, Microfiche VAY 1400, E.S. Yrjö-Koskinen to Y.S. Yrjö-Koskinen 7 May 1898; VAY 1446, Y.S. Yrjö-Koskinen to E.S. Yrjö-Koskinen 9 May 1898 (draft letter). Huuhka 1990, 52–53.

959. Senator Yrjö-Koskinen wrote to his son that ‘the so-called working men’s party’ was ‘considered the rear of the Finnish Party’. KA, Y.S. Yrjö-Koskisen arkisto, Microfiche VAY 1446, Y.S. Yrjö-Koskinen to E.S. Yrjö-Koskinen 22 December 1897 (draft letter).

960. Savolainen 2007, 30–31; Klinge 1997, 41–42.

tionship between Tudeer and the Finnish Party nevertheless cooled and there were several occasions from the mid-1890s where their interests came into conflict, particularly when senators were appointed. These tensions probably affected the relationship between Tudeer and Senator Yrjö-Koskinen, who accused the former of intrigue.<sup>961</sup> It is also possible that Tudeer disliked Yrjö-Koskinen junior since four years earlier he had been one of those civil servants refusing to swear unconditional allegiance to the new Emperor before the Emperor had given his sovereign pledge.<sup>962</sup>

One explanation for Tudeer's attitude could be related to his caution with the Russian authorities. The former governor-general had been distrustful of the patriotic and nationalistic spirit of the folk high schools and promoting such a spirit was also mentioned as one of the aims of the Tampere Workers' Institute.<sup>963</sup> However, even if Tudeer anticipated problems in this respect it seems unlikely that he expressed any opinion on the matter since this part of the institute's rules was not altered before the new reading as were some others.<sup>964</sup> If the question of Finland's status in the Russian empire played a role, it was perhaps connected with the subject of social studies as this might include teaching the features of Finnish society. This is suggested again by an earlier incident with the folk high schools as the governor-general had insisted on the removal of a part referring to lectures on Finnish society and on 'the constitution of the fatherland' from the rules of the folk high schools.<sup>965</sup>

Yet it would be an oversimplification to explain the rejection merely by the Russification policies and Governor-General Bobrikov's policy in particular as one the institute's histories has done.<sup>966</sup> In fact, Bobrikov was not even appointed when the workers' institute was under consideration in the Senate in June and July 1898.<sup>967</sup> Moreover, the doubtful attitudes towards the workers' institute originated from the Finnish school authorities and from the Finnish vice-chairman of the Senate. The correspondence between Senator Yrjö-Koskinen and his son also gives the impression that at least Bobrikov—and

961. Tyynilä 1992, 270; Rommi 1964, 172, footnote 285, 183–184; Koskimies 1974, 129; Heikkilä 1985, 220–221.

962. Vares 2007, 797.

963. Heikkilä 1985, 249–250. On the rules of the Tampere Workers' Institute, see Lammi 1949, 95.

964. Lammi 1949, 107 (rules).

965. Heikkilä 1985, 249. In the folk high schools, social studies was linked to history but was sometimes used for lecturing on the constitution and other aspects of Finland's political status. Karttunen 1979, 38.

966. Virtanen 1975, 18.

967. Bobrikov was appointed on 29 August 1898. Tyynilä 1992, 295. On the minutes of the Senate concerning the workers' institute, see Lammi 1949, 98–100.

probably the Russian authorities in general—had no particular interest in preventing the establishment of the institute. In October 1898 Yrjö-Koskinen junior suggested to his father the possibility that the new application for establishing the workers' institute could be introduced in the Senate as if arriving for the first time, trying thus to exploit the situation in which the new governor-general had only recently taken office. The senator replied that this was not feasible but assured his son that he did not believe that Bobrikov would be opposed to the workers' institute since the Senate had been unanimous this time and nor had the National Board of Education made any complaints.<sup>968</sup>

The rejection by the Senate had not been final and in November 1898 it gave permission to found the institute after the board had made a few alterations to the rules. In response to the complaint about the impractical nature of subjects and to the alleged danger posed by social studies, the board removed this subject and replaced it with geometry, drawing and singing. Furthermore, a remark about advancing vocational skills was added to the purposes of the institute. Teaching the structure and care of machines and tools as well as technical drawing were cited as examples but these were not included in the curriculum.<sup>969</sup>

#### 4.1.5. Inspiration and Models

The Tampere Workers' Institute was established to continue those educational activities the workers' association had conducted for a decade. Lectures, elementary education, folk high school courses and theoretical vocational education had been tried out and the initiators were familiar with such adult education institutions as folk high schools and Swedish workers' institutes. The role of these practices as models or sources of inspiration is discussed next.

#### **FOLK HIGH SCHOOLS AND SWEDISH WORKERS' INSTITUTES: RELIGION AND PATRIOTISM VERSUS SCIENCE**

In its proposal for the workers' institute, the Finnish Club had emphasized the earlier folk high school courses as a model to be followed. This related to lectures given in the evenings and to the subjects, namely Finnish history, church history, general cultural history, social studies and economics, natural

968. KA, Y.S. Yrjö-Koskisen arkisto, Microfiche VAY 1447, Y.S. Yrjö-Koskinen to E.S. Yrjö-Koskinen 30 October 1898 (draft letter).

969. Lammi 1949, 100–101; Malinen 1924, 6.



sciences and hygiene. If evening courses remodelled the idea of the folk high school to be suitable for urban workers, the programme emphasizing humanities pointed to the actual folk high schools, where the history and culture of the home country had a significant role. E. S. Yrjö-Koskinen also emphasized the example of the folk high school courses and the folk high schools operating in the rural areas.<sup>970</sup> Interestingly, his father used the very name of folk high school when referring to the new institute in Tampere. This was obviously a lapse but could nevertheless illustrate the senator's impression of the nature of the enterprise.<sup>971</sup>

E. S. Yrjö-Koskinen stressed the domestic nature of the folk high schools and stated that foreign models were not needed in workers' education, by which he undoubtedly meant the Swedish workers' institutes. He was also inclined to avoid the Swedish model when naming the new institute. He preferred 'a citizens' institute' (*kansalaisopisto*) because it was not only workers but also other citizens who were in need of education.<sup>972</sup> This name was actually used later as an alternative to the workers' institutes in Finland. However, the institution founded in Tampere was named a workers' institute and this appellation had also been used by Yrjö-Koskinen when planning it. Therefore, it seems that he referred to the institute by the name under which the institutionalization of workers' education had been discussed for a decade in Finland although his aim was rather an institution similar to folk high schools.<sup>973</sup>

While the initiators of the Tampere Workers' Institute relied on the model of the folk high schools, during the first half of 1898 *Tampereen Sanomat* published at least three articles covering the Swedish workers' institutes. The first of these appeared before Yrjö-Koskinen introduced his plan and was therefore more like a general contribution to the ongoing discussion but the

970. *Aamulehti*, "Työväen-opiston asia (Alustus Suom. Klupissa)" 5 February 1898; TKA, Kaupunginvaltuusto, Minutes (microfiche) 11 March 1898, item 96, Appendix 'Työ'. On the curriculum of the folk high schools, see Karttunen 1979, 31–41. Instead of social studies, instruction was initially given in municipal affairs.

971. Y.S. Yrjö-Koskinen was probably more familiar with folk high schools than workers' institutes since he had advocated the former already at the end of the 1860s and was responsible for them as the head of the Department of Ecclesiastical Affairs. KA, Y.S. Yrjö-Koskinen arkisto, Microfiche VAY 1446, Y.S. Yrjö-Koskinen to E.S. Yrjö-Koskinen 9 May 1898 (draft letter); Koskinen, Y. 1868 and 1869; Heikkilä 1985, 247–253.

972. *Aamulehti*, "Työväen-opiston asia (Alustus Suom. Klupissa)" 5 February 1898.

973. Karjalainen 1970, 83–86, 91. Karjalainen characterized the Tampere Workers' Institute as a compromise between three ideals: Nyström's positivist workers' institute, the folk high school and the educational ideal of the workers' movement emphasizing instruction in social questions. However, he did not discuss this any further.

other two can be understood as reactions to the proposal.<sup>974</sup> One of them touched upon social and political questions in the lectures of the Stockholm Workers' Institute, revealing that such topics were discussed in spite of the requirement for neutrality. Even though these lectures had stirred up debate on the necessity of controlling workers' institutes, the writer stressed that social questions should not be excluded from the workers' institutes.<sup>975</sup> The other article provided background information for the enterprise in Tampere and described in more detail the history and activities of the Stockholm institute, also emphasizing its scientific nature.<sup>976</sup>

It was actually the attitude towards popular scientific education and towards the conceivable challenge to religion related to such education that created the major tension between the models of the folk high school and the workers' institute. As the purpose of the former was to provide general education in a patriotic and religious spirit, the latter aimed at introducing the results of scientific research in an accessible way. Giving such prominence to science displeased Yrjö-Koskinen because he was worried that science could be misused by spreading dubious assertions in its name. A case of point was positivism, in his opinion indicating how science was misused to combat religion.<sup>977</sup> Yrjö-Koskinen must have known that Anton Nyström was a positivist although the Finnish articles introducing the workers' institutes did apparently not refer to this fact. However, the dispute over the role of positivism at the Stockholm Workers' Institute at the beginning of the 1880s had been reported in detail by *Morgonbladet*, a Swedish-language organ of the pro-Finnish movement and thus probably one of those newspapers Yrjö-Koskinen read.<sup>978</sup> Furthermore, in the 1890s Nyström was still mentioned in the Finnish press in the context of positivism.<sup>979</sup>

974. *Tampereen Sanomat*, 'Kirje Tukholmasta Joulukuulla 1897. Työväen opisto' 8 January 1898; *Tampereen Sanomat*, 'Kirje Ruotsista' 1 May 1898; *Tampereen Sanomat*, 'Tukholman työväenopisto' 12 June 1898.

975. *Tampereen Sanomat*, 'Kirje Ruotsista' 1 May 1898.

976. *Tampereen Sanomat*, 'Tukholman työväenopisto' 12 June 1898.

977. KA, Y.S. Yrjö-Koskisen arkisto, Microfiche VAY 1400, E.S. Yrjö-Koskinen to Y.S. Yrjö-Koskinen 4 March 1898.

978. *Morgonbladet*, 'Den positivistiska striden i Sverige' 28 November 1881 and 29 November 1881; *Morgonbladet*, 'Stockholm arbetareinstitut' 30 November 1881; *Morgonbladet*, 'Presidenten Forssell mot dr Nyström' 3 December 1881; Landgren 1988, 322–324.

979. E.g. *Aamulehti*, 'Baptisti-saarnasta vieläkin sananen' 22 August 1890; *Finland*, 'En literär fejd i Sverige' 3 October 1890; *Päivälehti*, 'Kirje Tukholmasta. Puolueolot valtiopäivillä – Lennstrand' 11 April 1891; *Nya Pressen*, 'Anton Nyström' 5 January 1892; *Nya Pressen*, 'Nordiska skolmötet i Stockholm' 13 August 1895; *Päivälehti*, 'Seitsemäs Pohjoismainen kouluopettajakokous' 13 August 1895.

Yrjö-Koskinen's disapproval of positivism was revealed in a letter to his father in March 1898, characterizing positivism as 'an impossible ideology', which 'with its certainties, discrepancies and impossibilities is a true doctrine of the end of the world'. He referred to Auguste Comte and Herbert Spencer as representatives of positivism and criticized it for its arrogance in denying the possibility of all knowledge outside people's external and internal perception. In his opinion, the requirement for evidence and observations led to absurdity when applied to knowledge about religious phenomena:

As it is not possible to prove, for example, that there is a God, the creator of the world and its laws, and as Herbert Spencer and company have not happened to meet such a being, it follows that nobody else knows anything about Him and even that He does not exist!<sup>980</sup>

Yet Yrjö-Koskinen thought that as a strict philosophy of science positivism was right in stressing the uncertainty of what could be known. However, because of such relativity it was wisest to leave the fundamental questions of human life aside and not regard them as scientific problems. In his opinion, this was the mistake of the positivists: they had not been able to leave such questions outside scientific exploration, revealing 'the unquenchable thirst of the human mind to find certain answers to the great questions of life and death'.<sup>981</sup>

Yrjö-Koskinen raised the issue of misusing science in the speech he delivered at the opening of the Tampere Workers' Institute in January 1899 but with more veiled expressions than in a private letter. His message was that not all knowledge claiming to be founded on scientific research was acceptable. In addition to real and serious knowledge, indisputably proven by research, there was arrogant 'yelling of the latest results of research', which he linked to the 'immature assertions not verified'. According to him, the right kind of knowledge provided ideals and made people humble whereas the wrong kind of knowledge created selfishness and arrogance and could lead to incompetent provocation, for which there was naturally no room in the institute.<sup>982</sup> This part of the talk was a clear reference to the Stockholm Workers' Institute and revealed Yrjö-Koskinen's concerns about its fundamental principle, freedom of thought and research, and about the consequences this principle could

980. KA, Y.S. Yrjö-Koskisen arkisto, Microfiche VAY 1400, E.S. Yrjö-Koskinen to Y.S. Yrjö-Koskinen 4 March 1898.

981. Ibid.

982. *Aamulehti*, 'Puhe' by E.S. Yrjö-Koskinen 17 January 1899.

have in producing dubious theories and enabling their ignorant use. From his perspective, an institution based on positivist ideas could naturally not be a suitable model.

In addition to the challenge to religion the wrong kind of scientific hubris could bring about, there was another issue connected with religion in the Swedish workers' institutes that Yrjö-Koskinen obviously found unsatisfactory. If there was too much emphasis on science in the curriculum, religion was missing both as a subject and as a guiding spirit. It is possible that the Swedish requirement for neutrality was understood in Finland in the strictest sense, meaning that religion—and politics—in all forms were totally excluded from the institutes.<sup>983</sup> Therefore, neutrality supposed to safeguard education from disputes was perhaps regarded by him as too restrictive since this requirement seemed to exclude religion entirely from the institute.

E. S. Yrjö-Koskinen himself was a staunch supporter of the Lutheran church and held various commissions of trust in it during the 1890s. He was a member of the parochial church council for several years and a board member of a Lutheran association established to counterbalance the free church movement.<sup>984</sup> He also served as a representative in the general synod of the Lutheran church of Finland from 1893.<sup>985</sup> In general, the relationship between the Finnish Party—the Old Finns in particular—and the church was close and Senator Y. S. Yrjö-Koskinen was one of those favourably disposed towards it.<sup>986</sup> The criticism of Christianity, inspired by ideas arising out of naturalism, religious liberalism and the free church movement had also diffused in Finland in the 1880s and some of the educated class had become estranged from the church. By the 1890s, the church had become concerned about the possibility of losing its grip on larger circles of citizens and Yrjö-Koskinen senior in an article published in 1892 expressed his concern at the declining status of Christianity and the church.<sup>987</sup> At the end of the 1890s, Yrjö-Koskinen junior was preoccupied with topical questions challenging the authority and status of the church. Issues on the agenda of the general synod of 1898 included the role of the church in keeping the population register, obligatory communion as a precondition for marriage and, civil marriage, which formed a complicated combination touching not only upon administration but also

983. *Tampereen Sanomat*, 'Työväen opistot Ruotsissa' 16 July 1898.

984. This association was *Tampereen Lutherilainen Rukoushuoneyhdistys*. Yrjö-Koskinen was also involved in a youth association close to it. Kortekangas 1965, 238, 250, 253–254.

985. *Kuka kukin oli 1900–1961*, 583.

986. Juva 1956, 130–132.

987. Juva 1956 passim; Juva 1960, 288–290.

on freedom of religion and the church's attitude towards its secularized or reluctant members.<sup>988</sup>

Yrjö-Koskinen thought that religiosity, at least in the sense of religious undertones or respect for Christianity, should be an essential feature of the education at the workers' institute. When characterizing its newly appointed director, Severi Nyman, as a religious person and a supporter of the Lutheran church, he emphasized 'this is not an unimportant fact considering that he will lecture on Finnish history and literature and it will be his responsibility to propose other lecturers to the board'.<sup>989</sup> Hence he regarded the reliability of teachers in terms of their religious convictions as a guarantee of the appropriate nature of teaching. In addition, he seems to have thought that subjects contributing to the creation of students' world views, like history and literature, should be taught in a spirit guided by loyalty to the church. Yrjö-Koskinen's interest in religious education did not limit to workers' education only but he also worried about its state at the university as the decline of compulsory religious education could produce civil servants and secondary school teachers with insufficient knowledge of the central tenets of Christianity.<sup>990</sup> Interestingly, he did not refer to the attitudes of the workers' movement but perhaps he did not yet regard these as a threat to the state church and religion. Anti-religious views were only becoming visible among the leaders of the Finnish workers' movement at that time but ordinary workers in Tampere showed no signs of such attitudes.<sup>991</sup>

Religious spirit also characterized the opening ceremony of the Tampere Workers' Institute in January 1899. The ceremony started with hymnsinging and a local pastor led the prayers and gave the priestly blessing. In his speech, Yrjö-Koskinen underlined that the folk high schools and the folk high school courses had set the model for the institute.<sup>992</sup> In addition to the general religious spirit of the folk high schools, exemplified by the hours of devotion in their

988. KA, Y.S. Yrjö-Koskisen arkisto, Microfiche VAY 1400, E.S. Yrjö-Koskinen to Y.S. Yrjö-Koskinen 26 June 1898. On the complicated nature of these questions, see Juva 1960, 317–328; Tala 2008, 240–248; Pikkarainen 2013, 67–74.

989. KA, Y.S. Yrjö-Koskisen arkisto, Microfiche VAY 1400, E.S. Yrjö-Koskinen to Y.S. Yrjö-Koskinen 15 January 1899.

990. KA, Y.S. Yrjö-Koskisen arkisto, Microfiche VAY 1400, E.S. Yrjö-Koskinen to Y.S. Yrjö-Koskinen 29 January 1898.

991. Soikkanen 1961, 149–154; Haapala 1986, 200–203.

992. *Aamulehti*, 'Tampereen työväenopiston juhlalliset avajaiset' and 'Puhe' by E.S. Yrjö-Koskinen, 17 January 1899.

daily routine, religion was also one of the subjects.<sup>993</sup> In the folk high school courses, too, religion and church history had an important role. For instance, in Helsinki during the latter half of the 1890s, these subjects comprised approximately one quarter of given lectures. Apart from the actual teaching of religion, hymns and prayers were also part of their programme.<sup>994</sup>

Along with religion, patriotism constituted another difference between the educational ideals of the workers' institute and the folk high school. Creating a national and patriotic ethos by teaching Finnish history, culture and folk songs was one of the aims of the folk high schools.<sup>995</sup> Folk high school courses had similar goals. The courses held in Tampere were praised for the patriotic spirit shown in songs, speeches and poems and, in Helsinki as well, patriotic poems and songs not belonging to the actual classes were part of the programme.<sup>996</sup> By contrast, such a spirit was not a feature of Nyström's workers' institute.<sup>997</sup> For Yrjö-Koskinen, patriotism meant love of the home region and of the nature, religion, laws and language of the native country. Patriotism was connected to religion as he stressed that it was God who had implanted this love in the human heart.<sup>998</sup> Raising patriotic and nationalistic ethos was defined in spring 1898 as one of Tampere Workers' Institute's goals, which is one indication that the founders were inspired by the folk high schools rather than by the Swedish workers' institutes.<sup>999</sup>

Patriotism emphasizing the specific features of the Finnish nation had a political dimension, especially as Russian control over Finland was tightening. Yrjö-Koskinen did obviously not want to exclude politics in this sense, as little as religious ethos, from the new institute. However, when politics was understood to relate to current social disputes, he emphasized neutrality as the guideline. He nevertheless stressed that freedom of teaching would not be absent although it would be controlled by choosing reliable teachers under the supervision of the institute's board and the city council. These teachers would be 'sufficiently conscientious, truth loving and intelligent to use this freedom in the right way, to be able to present only those things as unchallengeable

993. Karttunen 1979, 31–33, 41. When folk high schools were planned in the 1880s, some advocates demanded that religion should be the principal subject to make these schools a counterbalance to unchristian pursuits. It was also suggested that the church could control the selection of teachers. Inkilä, 1960, 188–192.

994. *HKVPAK 1904*, No. 8, 9–10; Karjalainen 1970, 87.

995. Karttunen 1979, 31–33, 36–40.

996. *Aamulehti*, 'Kansanopistokursseihin' 19 November 1895; Lammi 1949, 80–81; Karjalainen 1970, 87.

997. Leander 1980, 29–31.

998. Yrjö-Koskinen, E. S. 1896, 13–15, 19.

999. On the goals, see the rules in Lammi 1949, 107.

truths which research had indisputably proved'. What he did not mention was the other guarantee, the educational background of teachers. As they were expected to have a degree from the university or from a teachers' training college, this in practice meant that social and political questions were supposed to be presented from the perspective of the educated middle class and not, for instance, of self-taught workers.<sup>1000</sup>

When comparing the earlier initiatives for the workers' institute with that of Yrjö-Koskinen, it seems that some kind of shift had occurred with regard to the models. During the early 1890s, Kaarlo Renström had several times mentioned the Swedish workers' institutes and proposed a similar institution be established in Tampere. However, in the absence of specific plans it is not possible to know in which way he had intended to implement his idea. He was clearly familiar with the curriculum of the Swedish institutes (or probably that of Stockholm) as he referred to a book in his possession introducing these. His suggestions also imply that he did not only mean similar arrangements with evening classes but also similar programme.<sup>1001</sup> Renström was probably also the author of an article published in *Tampereen Sanomat* in 1893, recommending that an institute 'equivalent to the Swedish institutes' should be started in Tampere. The subjects proposed were more or less the same as in Stockholm with the exception of church history but the major difference was the teaching of basic skills such as writing and arithmetic together with bookkeeping. Although the writer was aware of the plans made for the folk high school courses in Helsinki, he highlighted the Swedish model.<sup>1002</sup>

The other promoters of the workers' institute in the early 1890s were less enthusiastic about the Swedish model. 'A Friend of Workers' referred to them but recommended that the Finnish counterparts should follow the curriculum of the folk high schools, including elementary courses but excluding sciences with the exception of anatomy.<sup>1003</sup> Aukusti Dahlberg thought that the Stockholm Workers' Institute might provide a good model but was at the same time uncertain whether that kind of institution would be appropriate in

1000. *Aamulehti*, 'Puhe' by E.S. Yrjö-Koskinen, 17 January 1899.

1001. *Tampereen Sanomat (Kansalainen)* 'Tampereen työväenyhdistys. Kuukauskokous' 5 November 1890; TKA, Kaupunginvaltuusto, Minutes (microfiche) 28 June 1892, item 164, Appendix No. 123 'Tampereen kaupungin Herroille Valtuusmiehille'; TTY Db:1, *Vuosikertomus 1892*, 5–6.

1002. Because Renström was the editor at that time and the article was published as an editorial, it was obviously written by him. *Tampereen Sanomat*, 'Työväenopetus Tampereella' 15 November 1893.

1003. *Tampereen Sanomat (Kansalainen)*, 'Tärkeä toiminta-ala Tampereen Työväenyhdistykselle' by Työväen Ystävä ('A Friend of Workers') 18 February 1891.

Finland since not enough was known about it. Dahlberg also valued religiosity although he did not explicitly take a stand on the role of religion in workers' education. However, he emphasized that 'Christian light and knowledge' were as important to workers as to peasants, referring by this to folk high schools.<sup>1004</sup>

In Helsinki, the developments related to the models were different but also reveal the suspicions aroused by the Swedish workers' institutes.<sup>1005</sup> The folk high school courses had been initiated in 1892 by the Society for Popular Enlightenment<sup>1006</sup>, the major actor in the folk high school movement at that time. When the initiator handed these courses over to the local workers' association, it imposed a strict condition that the successor was not allowed to change the folk high school nature of the courses or turn the courses into a workers' institute after the Swedish model. According to an early twentieth-century writer, the principle of the freedom of science and the requirement to avoid religious and political questions had probably worried those involved in the folk high school movement. However, from the end of the 1890s, the Swedish workers' institutes became the principal model in the discussion about the institutionalization of workers' education in the capital, which finally took place in 1914.<sup>1007</sup>

Confining oneself to the Swedish or the domestic models was not due to lack of information. The English university extension, for example, was mentioned by Renström but he regarded the idea of 'a university entering among the people to deliver the treasures of knowledge as a dim future dream' in Finland. He was also doubtful whether such education would even be suitable in the country and preferred the example of the Swedish workers' institutes.<sup>1008</sup> *Tampereen Sanomat* also published an article covering the university extension in 1894 but the writer did not even suggest its model be followed in Tampere since such education would presumably not directly benefit the masses. According to him, university courses required independent initiative and intellectual maturity that ordinary workers did not possess and as they were not practised in writing, they were not able to take notes at lectures. Such courses could nevertheless have a valuable indirect influence through

1004. Dahlberg 1894, 45, 49–50.

1005. Ahonen 1992, 62–63.

1006. *Kansanvalistusseura*. Its modern English name is Kvs The Finnish Lifelong Learning Foundation.

1007. Bök 1911, 10–11; Ahonen 1992, 62–66, 68–70; *HKVPAK 1907* No. 15, 15.

1008. TKA, TTY Db:1, *Vuosikertomus 1892*, 5.



elementary school teachers attending them and being able to disseminate what they had learnt either at school or by giving lectures to adults.<sup>1009</sup>

Even if the promoters of workers' education were familiar with other options, they may have found them too grandiose for the circumstances of Tampere. *Kansalainen* introduced in 1893 a Parisian institution to some extent similar to the Finnish folk high schools but being nevertheless a much larger educational system. Along with history, literature and foreign languages it offered workers vocational evening classes forming one- to three-year courses in fields like commerce, technology and arts and crafts.<sup>1010</sup>

### ABSENCE OF VOCATIONAL EDUCATION

As the above Parisian example indicates, the notion of workers' education could also have covered other fields than elementary and liberal education. Yet practical and vocational education was never discussed seriously by the advocates of the workers' institute although there would have been examples close at hand in the form of the women's sewing courses and vocational courses organized by the Tampere Workers' Association and its trade unions. In spring 1898, after Tampere city council had decided to establish the workers' institute, a writer in a local paper suggested that different kinds of courses planned by associations and trade unions should be combined with the activities of the new institute. The writer nevertheless explained that the reason for this suggestion was purely pragmatic since he believed that organizing various courses under the same roof would be economical.<sup>1011</sup>

Accordingly, the idea of workers' education discussed in Tampere at end of the nineteenth century was similar to the conception of adult education prevailing long into the twentieth century, excluding practical and vocational teaching.<sup>1012</sup> Neither did the model of workers' education designed by Anton Nyström contain that.<sup>1013</sup> Interestingly, the Finnish folk high schools held in high esteem by E. S. Yrjö-Koskinen had incorporated practical instruction into their curricula, partly by reason of governmental subsidy as mentioned earlier.<sup>1014</sup> This part of the folk high schools was not, however, referred to when the exemplary nature of these institutions was highlighted.

1009. *Tampereen Sanomat*, 'Yliopistojen kansankurssit IV' 11 July 1894.

1010. *Tampereen Sanomat (Kansalainen)*, 'Työväenopetuksesta Pariisissa' 19 July 1893. The article was written by a correspondent of the Helsinki paper *Päivälehti*.

1011. *Tampereen Uutiset*, 'Kirje Tampereelta' by Koukku 23 April 1898.

1012. E.g. Ginner 1988; Fieldhouse 1998, 44–45; Merricks 2000; Merricks 2001.

1013. Nyström 1880b, 14–19, 24–25.

1014. Karttunen 1979, 40–44.

The goals of vocational education, on the one hand, and liberal or civic education, on the other, were of course different and educating citizens was the priority in the discussion on workers' education. In addition to this, the undeveloped state and structures of vocational education probably also contributed to its exclusion from the curriculum of the workers' institute. At the end of the nineteenth century, there was no actual school-like and institutionalized vocational training of workers either in Finland or in Sweden. Skill was acquired at work and it was not until 1899 that the first Finnish full-time vocational school for young boys started in Helsinki.<sup>1015</sup> As regards adult workers, practically the only opportunity for vocationally oriented learning were vocational evening schools offering theoretical supplementation to practical skills acquired at the workplace. Subjects serving this end were usually limited to technical drawing and bookkeeping while the curriculum otherwise consisted mainly of elementary school subjects. Thus these schools functioned largely as substitutes for lacking elementary education or as repetition of elementary school subjects.<sup>1016</sup> Although vocational evening schools were aimed at young people under eighteen years, it was not exceptional that students older than twenty also attended, making these schools partly institutions of adult education.<sup>1017</sup> The discussion in the Finnish Diet in 1891 raised specifically these evening schools teaching basic skills as one opportunity for organizing general education for adult workers.

Along with the evening schools, vocational courses were organized sporadically like the courses of the trade unions mentioned above. In Tampere, the local technical school also offered evening courses training technicians and foremen.<sup>1018</sup> However, such temporary arrangements could apparently not serve as a model of practical education for the workers' institute. It also seems that in the absence of vocational schools for the young, there was no impetus, comparable to elementary school, to create forms for either remedial or further education. Moreover, institutional settings providing teachers, classrooms and equipment were lacking.

The question of vocational education had nevertheless become topical in Finland at the end of the 1890s. The proposal for the above-mentioned full-time

1015. Klemelä 1999 passim; Ahonen 1992, 11–14, 21.

1016. Heikkinen 1995, 99–104; Larsson L. 1989, 6, 9; Nilsson L. 1981, 56–58; Nilsson, A. 2008, 85–96.

1017. In 1890–1891, the age of the students in the Finnish vocational evening schools ranged from 11 to 51 years and in 1894–1895 from 12 to 35 years. *Suomen teollisuushallituksen tiedonantoja*, Vol. 15 (1892), 96–97 and Vol. 24. (1896), 68–69, 72–73.

1018. On the evening courses of Tampere technical school (*teollisuuskoulu*), see Talvitie 1962, 32.

vocational school for boys was made in 1896 and, as regards adults, a suggestion for an institution upgrading the skills of craftsmen and small entrepreneurs was made in 1898 but this yielded no results before the 1920s. The model for this technological institute, or ‘industrial museum’ as it was initially called, came notably from Germany. In addition to training in different trades, such institutes also maintained a permanent exhibition of new inventions, machines, tools and industrial products (hence the name) and also offered a library services and counselling for craftsmen.<sup>1019</sup> The aim of the industrial museum was to serve skilled craftsmen and their further education, not the rudimentary training of unskilled workers. The situation was actually similar to the early stages of liberal workers’ education, when popular scientific lectures were aimed at craftsmen, not at unskilled workers, domestic servants and the like.

The ideas related to liberal adult education, on the one hand, and to vocational adult education, on the other, emerged and were developed in entirely different environments and did not usually converge. These ideas were also promoted by different people. While liberal and general education was advocated by teachers, journalists, academics and students, vocational education was the concern of the professionals in the field and thus, in the case of crafts and industry, of engineers, technicians and entrepreneurs. There was one exception, V.J. von Wright, whose interests covered both liberal and vocational education and who in this regard is a remarkable figure in the history of Finnish adult education. In addition to promoting workers’ institutes and popular scientific lectures, for instance in the Diet, and by being involved in the establishment of the Helsinki Workers’ Institute, he was the driving force in the attempt to create an industrial museum in Finland.<sup>1020</sup>

In spite of the favourable attitude towards vocational education expressed by the Tampere Workers’ Association at the beginning of the 1890s, vocational courses were the concern of the trade unions and their professionals, not of the workers’ association, with the exception of sewing courses for women.<sup>1021</sup> The advocates of the workers’ institute were educated middle-class people and they were obviously not familiar with or even interested in questions related to vocational or practical teaching. The lukewarm attitude

1019. Ahonen 2009, 92–95; Paaskoski 2012, 25–33. The technological institute (or ‘the institute for promoting occupations’), *Ammattienedistämislaitos*, was founded finally in 1922 and education became its principal activity. It remained for several decades the only institution of vocational adult education in Finland. Ahonen 2009, 99; Ahonen 2011, 440–442.

1020. Ahonen 2009, 94–95; Ahonen 2011, 440; Ahonen 1992, 69–70; Nyström, S. 2014, 24; Paaskoski 2012, 26ff.

1021. See Chapter 4.1.1.

towards vocational education shown by the 'Tampere Workers' Institute was illustrated by Verner Malin's comment on the changes the institute's board made in the rules to get permission from the Senate. Even though a few words about vocational education were added, in practice these became a dead letter 'first and foremost because the board did not find this kind of education to belong to the curriculum of the institute at all'. The half-heartedness of the measure was also shown by the fact that subjects of vocational education were not added to the curriculum.<sup>1022</sup>

## 4.2. Status, Nature and Sphere of Influence of the Institute, 1899–1939

### 4.2.1. Early Municipal Adult Education Policy in Terms of Ownership, Funding and Frames of Action

Adult education with its different forms was not considered an entity either in Finland before the last decades of the twentieth century and it did not constitute a special sector of education policy. Even the forms of liberal adult education – folk high schools, workers' institutes and lecturing activities – were not understood to form a field of their own until the 1920s although sometimes a parallel was drawn between the two first mentioned.<sup>1023</sup> Government intervention in liberal adult education was also minimal before the mid-1920s, when laws on the state subsidies to folk high schools and workers' institutes were enacted. At the beginning of the century, no strategies were framed and the role of central government was limited to granting discretionary subventions to institutions established on local initiatives and to formulating conditions on these subsidies. Workers' institutes, however, received state subsidies only twice before the 1920s.<sup>1024</sup>

Since hardly any policy documents revealing the intentions of the authorities were produced, the attitudes towards adult education in Finland, too, must largely be traced from the actions of decision-makers. The local level functioning as the actual arena of the activities offers information concretizing such attitudes. When analysing the outcome of the process discussed in the

1022. Malinen 1924, 6; Lammi 1949, 107–108 (the rules); *Aamulehti*, 'Puhe' by E.S. Yrjö-Koskinen, 17 January 1899.

1023. Zachris Castrén, the director of the Helsinki Workers' Institute, discussed principal matters common to different fields of liberal adult education in his report (Castrén 1929). On the parallels, see e.g. the applications for state subsidies to workers' institutes: *Valtiopäivät 1907*, Appendices 6, 'Anomusedotus No. 19', 22–24, *Toiset valtiopäivät 1908*, Minutes 13 October 1908, 1101, 1105.

1024. Karjalainen 1970, 76–77, 95, 149; Huuhka 1990, 109–111, 174.

previous chapters, the focus is first on the nature of the workers' institute in terms of ownership, control, funding and other frames of action as in the Gothenburg case. The way these questions were resolved can in modern terms be called early municipal adult education policy, albeit covering one activity only. More comprehensive study of local adult education policy has not been feasible in the case of Tampere either since the activities and expenses of adult education, such as vocational courses, cannot usually be distinguished from the expenses of the regular activities of the schools providing such courses.

### MUNICIPAL OWNERSHIP

When the Finnish Club had made its proposal for the workers' institute, it had suggested that the institute should be municipal, maintained and controlled by the city council. This solution was simply reported without any arguments for it and neither did the documents of the city council contain any reasons.<sup>1025</sup> Thus the question of ownership did not give rise to any discussion among the decision-makers of Tampere whereas municipal versus private ownership of urban services and infrastructure was debated not only in big European cities but also in Helsinki. Although this debate focused especially on the water, gas and electricity works and tramways, regarded as lucrative business both for municipalities and private companies, in Helsinki it also involved the workers' institute at the beginning of the twentieth century.<sup>1026</sup>

The advocates of the workers' institute in Helsinki did not, however, focus on economic questions in this discussion on the municipal versus private nature of the institution.<sup>1027</sup> The basic reason for opposing a municipal institute was the conviction that private actors were superior in organizing education due to the flexible nature of private enterprise. There were two sides to this flexibility: on the one hand, private associations were considered more capable of adapting to changing educational needs than were municipal authorities and, on the other, the municipality would have the freedom to direct subsidies to actors it valued and redirect them if necessary. A special concern related to a municipal institution was the status of its director as an office-holder, considered a threat to the institute should an appointed person

1025. TKA, Kaupunginvaltuusto, Minutes (microfiche) 11 March 1898, item 96, Appendix 'Työ' (the proposal of the Finnish Club 1 March 1898) and Appendix 'Opisto' (committee report 8 March 1898); *Aamulehti*, 'Työväen-opiston asia (Alustus Suom. Klupissa) 5 February 1898; *Aamulehti*, 'Työväen-opiston asia' 4 March 1898.

1026. Hietala 1987, 148–178; Pöyhönen 1992, 218 ff; Ahonen 1992, 64–70.

1027. The reluctance by the municipality to maintain a permanent institute was nevertheless one of the factors delaying the establishment of the workers' institute in Helsinki until 1913. Ahonen 1992, 64–70; Nyström S. 2014, 14–20.

prove unsuitable for the assignment.<sup>1028</sup> In addition to flexibility, proximity to working people and commitment to educational work were highlighted as the assets of associations.<sup>1029</sup> The opponents of a municipal institution also referred to possible political and social disputes into which the local government and authorities could be drawn if the institute were municipal.<sup>1030</sup>

Moreover, the Tampere Workers' Institute was actually the only municipal institution known by those planning the organization of workers' education in Helsinki. Thus, adult education seemed to inherently lend itself to being conducted by private actors, which was also supported by the example of other countries.<sup>1031</sup> Such reliance on the private actors of adult education was a typical attitude in European countries long into the twentieth century. In this way, a practice originally determined by circumstances, where the initiative had been in the hands of individuals and associations while the authorities had lacked interest, was elevated into a principle.<sup>1032</sup> In Helsinki, however, the decision-makers finally decided on a municipal institute and emphasized that the continuity and regularity of education, competent teachers and suitable premises could only be safeguarded by municipal ownership. They also believed that the arrangement could guarantee workers' trust in the institute as the municipality represented different ways of thought whereas private associations had not proven capable of this. The fact that five municipal workers' institutes had been established in Finland after the example of Tampere also encouraged them.<sup>1033</sup>

As the municipal workers' institute in Tampere in 1898 was the outcome of a speedy process, there was practically no time for discussion on matters of principle such as the advantages of a municipal institution over a private one or for detailed reports on the matter. Public discussion on the question seems to have been limited to the earlier mentioned article in *Tampereen Sanomat*, which criticized a municipal institution largely with arguments similar to those expressed in Helsinki, albeit containing a reference to the local politics.<sup>1034</sup> Thus the urge to take control over workers' education, strengthened by the role of the Finnish Club in the local government, obviously outweighed other possible ideological perspectives on the ownership of the institute.

1028. *HKVPAK 1903* No. 30, 2–3, 6; *1904* No. 8, 22; Nyström S. 2014, 16–17.

1029. *HKVPAK 1899* No. 18, 2; *1907* No. 15, 17. Cf. Titmus 1980, 139.

1030. *HKVPAK 1903* No. 30, 3; Ahonen 1992, 68.

1031. *HKVPAK 1904* No. 8, 22.

1032. Titmus 1980, 137–138.

1033. *HKVPAK 1913* No. 3, 7–12; Ahonen 1992, 70; Nyström S. 2014, 19.

1034. *Tampereen Sanomat*, 'Työväenopisto Tampereelle' 9 March 1898. See Chapter 4.1.4.

## PRIMACY OF MUNICIPAL FUNDING UNTIL THE 1920S

When a new kind of institution like the Tampere Workers' Institute was established, it was not certain that it would prosper and even survive although it was supported by the municipality.<sup>1035</sup> As decided by the city council in 1898, the funding of the institute came at first from the municipally controlled revenue from alcohol sales and not from the municipal budget.<sup>1036</sup> Economic insecurity overshadowed the first years of the institute since it had to apply yearly for funding for its activities as well as for accumulating a base fund, established to provide financing later in the form of interest. The situation improved in 1908 as the institute's funding was included in the municipal budget, which can also be considered a sign of its more established position in the municipality.<sup>1037</sup>

This improvement was the achievement of E. S. Yrjö-Koskinen, who as a member of parliament also actively promoted state subsidies at that time, thereby continuing the efforts of the 1890s and those made in the last Diet of the Estates in 1905–1906. When the unicameral parliament convened for the first time in 1907, he was among the representatives putting forward a proposal for state subsidies for workers' institutes. This initiative was significant since the Tampere Workers' Institute was still the only such institution in the country but, by the spring of 1908, five others had been founded.<sup>1038</sup> Even though parliamentary memoranda emphasized that the developing and funding of the workers' institutes should primarily be left to municipalities, Parliament decided to grant a subsidy in 1908. As Finland was a part of Russia, the parliamentary resolutions had to be validated by the Emperor, who rejected the subsidy, obviously on the governor-general's advice. Folk high schools nevertheless maintained their funding, decided simultaneously, since the decision did not apply to institutions subsidized earlier. Before the independence of Finland in December 1917, it was only in 1913 and in the autumn of 1917 that state subsidies were granted to workers' institutes but in 1917 subsidies were not paid due to the political turbulence.<sup>1039</sup>

1035. Seven of those fifty-five Finnish workers' institutes established before 1927 were closed down by 1938 but all were located in smaller towns and most of them were maintained by associations. Huuhka 1990, 78–79, 210–211.

1036. As in Gothenburg, this meant that some of the working-class residents contributed to funding since they formed a significant clientele of licensed premises. Cf. *Tampereen Sanomat*, 'Kirje Tampereelta' 25 May 1894.

1037. Lammi 1949, 95–96, 205–206; Virtanen 1975, 32–33.

1038. On the establishment of the institutes, see Huuhka 1990, 70–78, 108.

1039. *Toiset valtiopäivät 1908*, Documents Part 5 Vol. 2, 'Sivistysvaliokunnan mietintö No. 7', 2–3; 'Anomusmietintö No. 25', 2–3; *Aamulehti*, 'Sivistysmäärärahat v. 1909' 6 October 1909 and 'Määrärahat sivistystarkoituksiin' 10 October 1909; Huuhka 1990, 109; Karjalainen 1970, 95.

From 1919, the state subsidy was granted regularly but its amount was still discretionary, depending on the yearly parliament decisions, and only covered approximately 25 to thirty 30 per cent of the expenses. From the beginning of 1927, the state subsidy for workers' institutes became statutory, which can be regarded as recognition of this form of adult education by the government as it pledged itself to provide support on a regular basis. The law, which had come before Parliament for the first time in 1925, was enacted relatively soon after Finland became independent, indicating that adult education was considered important. The legislation was of course not only recognition for the workers' institutes but also provided stability and continuity as the level of the subsidy was stabilized at 50 per cent of the actual expenses.<sup>1040</sup> Therefore, the Finnish system differed from the Swedish system, where the state subsidy an institute could get was capped. Nor could the Swedish system provide similar stability since the yearly sum granted by the government to be paid to different institutions could vary and in the 1930s this amount actually decreased dramatically because of the economic depression.<sup>1041</sup>

The workers' institutes were not the first Finnish popular adult education institutes to receive statutory state subsidies for the law on folk high schools came into force one year earlier in 1926. Thus it seems that the folk high schools were given some kind of priority, especially as the total state subsidy granted to them was many times that of the workers' institutes while the number of their students was significantly smaller. For instance, at the turn of the 1930s, the state subsidy per student received by the folk high schools was twenty-eight times that of the workers' institutes.<sup>1042</sup> The difference is mainly explained by the greater expenses of boarding schools with full-time teaching but nevertheless the government's investment in the folk high schools was remarkable.

With regard to local funding, the municipality was practically solely responsible for the expenses of the Tampere Workers' Institute during its first two decades and for a quarter of a century it was the principal source of finance (Table 8). From 1919 until the mid-1920s, the proportion of the state subsidy was less than one third of the municipal funding, as elsewhere in Finland, and it was only after the state subsidy became statutory that its proportion increased

1040. Huuhka 1990, 174–175, 196–199, 206; Karjalainen 1970, 149–150.

1041. *SOU 1924:5*, 76; *SOU 1946:68*, 43–45.

1042. The number of students in the folk high schools in 1930–1931 was 2,869 and in the workers' institutes 14,852 while the state subsidies were 13,441,168 marks and 2,509,450 marks, respectively (Finnish marks of this year). *STV 1940*, Table 185. 'Kansanopistot lukuvuosina 1909–1939', p. 222; Table 186. 'Työväenopistot työkausina 1928–1939', p. 222.



considerably. In 1929, for instance, the state subsidy almost reached the level of the municipal funding, which had been the intention of the law. In this respect, too, the development was different from that in Gothenburg, where the role of the government subsidy was more significant at the beginning and decreased by the 1930s while municipal support became more important.<sup>1043</sup>

**Table 8. Funding of Tampere Workers' Institute 1909–1934.\***

	Expenditure	Income		
		Municipal funding	State subsidy	Other income
1909–1910	8 367	7 857	–	510
1914–1915	10 863	10 500	–	914
1919**	26 548	22 082	6 000	1 207
1924	120 446	88 852	29 000	2 594
1929	224 391	110 396	108 280	5 715
1934	286 989	150 012	124 855	12 122

\* In Finnish marks of these years. \*\* From 1919, calendar year.

Sources: KTK, TTO 1909–1910, 15–16; 1914–1915, 3, 10–11; 1919–1920, 11; 1924–1925, 14; 1929–1930, 23; 1934–1935, 33.

Income from other than public sources was never substantial in Tampere although during the early years, when there was no state funding, it could be important, forming five to ten per cent of the budget.<sup>1044</sup> This category consisted mainly of student fees, which were collected in the form of an enrolment fee for the entire term covering lectures and as separate course fees from elementary course students. In the mid-1920s, the board decided to abandon enrolment fees but continued to charge for classroom teaching and even raised these fees. Other sources also included such occasional income as a donation in 1934 from the local shoe factory owner, Emil Aaltonen. He also made a significant donation in 1919 to a building planned for the municipal library and the workers' institute.<sup>1045</sup> In general, donations from companies or private citizens were not typical. Instead of direct funding, the institute received other kinds of modest local support, of which the advertisements published free of charge in the newspapers were perhaps the most important and regular form from the start. Associations and companies might also assist,

1043. See Chapter. 3.3.1.

1044. See also Virtanen 1975, 97.

1045. KTK, TTO 1924–1925, 3–4; 1934–1935, 33; Jutikkala 1979, 638–639.

for example, by providing premises for social evenings and festivities. From 1920, a local savings bank donated funds to reward students.<sup>1046</sup> Although big donations were exceptional, this kind of practical support showed that local enterprises took a benevolent attitude towards the workers' institute.

Compared with the expenses of elementary schooling, the heaviest educational duty of the municipality, those of the workers' institute only formed a tiny fraction. In 1909, 1919 and 1929, for example, Tampere expended on the workers' institute a sum that was roughly two per cent of the municipal costs of the elementary schools.<sup>1047</sup> When it comes to adult education, there were in fact no other institutions specifically for that purpose but the funding of vocational evening school<sup>1048</sup> can offer some perspective. The students of this school were in general somewhat younger—although students in their early twenties appeared regularly—but since they studied alongside their work, their position was similar to that of the students of the workers' institute. Furthermore, their instruction before the mid-1920s consisted mainly of elementary school subjects rather than subjects more directly connected with vocational skill.<sup>1049</sup> Both at the turn of the 1910s and the 1930s the municipal funding for the workers' institute was about the same size as that of the vocational evening school.<sup>1050</sup> However, as the number of students in the workers' institute could be tenfold compared that of the vocational evening school, the municipal expenses per student were much smaller at the workers' institute.<sup>1051</sup>

The primacy of municipal funding until the mid-1920s reveals that the local authorities had more interest in supporting adult education than the government, which had also been the case in Sweden. In Finland, the question

1046. *KTK, TTO 1908–1909*, 16; *1909–1910*, 16; *1910–1911*, 8; *1911–1912*, 11; *1912–1913*, 12; *1913–1914*, 10; *1914–1915*, 11; *1915–1916*, 16; *1916–1917*, 16; *1918–1919*, 13; *1919–1920*, 12; *1922–1923*, 12; *1927–1928*, 13–14; *1930–1931*, 25, 30.

1047. In 1909, the proportion was 2.4 per cent, in 1919 1.6 per cent and in 1929 1.7 per cent. On the expenses of the elementary schools, see *KTK, Kansakoulu 1909–1910*, 95; *1919–1920*, 39; *1929–1930*, 58–59.

1048. The school had different names: until 1924 the name was *käsityöläiskoulu* (craftsmen's school) and after that *yleinen ammattilaiskoulu* (general vocational school). Boys' vocational school also organized a few courses for adults from the 1920s but hardly any information on them exists.

1049. *KTK, Käsityöläiskoulu 1921–1922*, 5; *KTK, Yleinen ammattilaiskoulu 1924–1925*, 4; *1930–1931*, 13–14.

1050. *KTK, Kaupunginvaltuusto 1910*, 52; *1930*, 37 (expenses, elementary school), 65 (income, educational institutions).

1051. During the 1920s, the number of students at the vocational evening school exceeded 100 only exceptionally while there were usually more than one thousand students at the workers' institute in the latter half of the decade. *KTK, Käsityöläiskoulu 1921–1923*; *KTK, Yleinen ammattilaiskoulu 1925–1929*; *KTK, TTO 1925–1929*.

of government subsidies was nevertheless more complicated since until 1917 the Russian Emperor was the supreme authority and could thus reject parliamentary decisions, as in 1908.<sup>1052</sup>

### **CONTROL THROUGH THE BOARD AND SUBSIDIES**

In a municipal institute, the city council exercised its power and control through the board, which supervised education and economy and recruited the director and other teachers. The guidelines for this control were laid down in the rules, defining the forms of education, the subjects and the qualifications required of the director and teachers.<sup>1053</sup> Therefore, the selection of board members, whose number varied from seven to ten in different times, was naturally important.

Since the majority of the board members were chosen by the city council, which until 1918 was manned by wealthier residents due to municipal suffrage based on income and property, it could have been expected that the social composition of the board would be similar to that of the council. Directors, businessmen, small entrepreneurs, civil servants and academically educated professionals accounted for almost 90 per cent of the council members whereas only one or two councillors were workers.<sup>1054</sup> The composition of the institute's board was nevertheless more miscellaneous. Twelve of the twenty-nine members on the board before 1919 were workers or former workers who had risen to become officials in the workers' movement or businesses related to it. This is partly explained by the representation of the local workers', temperance and youth associations, the aim of which was to ensure that students' voices would be heard.<sup>1055</sup> A few cross-sections made of the composition of the board nevertheless reveal that the city council also elected board members of working-class origin and even active Social Democrats before 1919 although these were evidently rather exceptional.<sup>1056</sup> One such was Heikki Lindroos, a factory worker who had advanced to become a foreman and a shop manager in the workers' co-operative, and another, K. J. Jokisalo, a painter who became the treasurer of the local social democratic newspaper. Both were members

1052. The role of the reports and opinions of the Finnish authorities and politicians in the preparation of subsidy applications is nevertheless an interesting question. Cf. Kalela 1978, 144.

1053. Lammi 1949, 107–108 (the rules); Virtanen 1975, 31.

1054. Jutikkala 1979, 167–170.

1055. Lammi 1949, 108, 325–326 (list of board members).

1056. Research data 'Board members'. See Appendix 1.

of the city council, which explains why they were selected for the board.<sup>1057</sup> Although the majority of the board members during the entire period before 1919 were teachers, academically or technically educated professionals and journalists, the cross-sections show that members with a workers' background might already then occasionally be in the majority.<sup>1058</sup>

With regard to political affiliation, the original predominance of the Old Finns soon gave way to greater political diversity represented by the Old Finns, the Young Finns and the Social Democrats. This naturally reflected ongoing political changes both in Tampere and nationwide. For example, one of the founders of the workers' institute and a long-time board member, Verner Malin, defected from being an Old Finn to a Young Finn.<sup>1059</sup> Although the local Swedish Party was still a significant actor in local politics, it evidently had no representatives on the board.<sup>1060</sup> It was clearly not interested in matters of adult education in a locality where working-class population was practically entirely Finnish-speaking, also shown by the fact that workers' education in Tampere had from its inception been connected with the pro-Finnish movement.<sup>1061</sup>

The boards acting before 1919 usually included two or three Social Democrats but not all working-class members, like some representatives of the institute's students, the youth association and the temperance society, were obviously politically active, or if so, not always socialists.<sup>1062</sup> Workers' representation on the boards was also a question discussed when the state subsidy was under consideration in Parliament in 1908. Some Social Democrat members of Parliament demanded that various local workers' organizations, not only socialist ones, be guaranteed representation in the boards. Thus workers may

1057. Kanerva 1986, 157–158; Koivisto 1999, 73, 138; Voionmaa 1935, Appendix II, 6–18. Lindroos was also elected to the Diet 1904–1905 in the Estate of Burgesses and to the first unicameral parliament in 1907.

1058. Elementary school teacher Risto Kuosmanen was an exceptional figure, since he had worked as a farmhand for several years and later went to the university and took a masters' degree. *Kuka kukin oli 1900–1950*, 270; Lammi 1949, 325–326 (list of board members).

1059. KA, E.S. Yrjö-Koskisen arkisto, archive unit 4, folder 16: 'Muistelmia Tampereelta', subheading '20 vuotta Tampereella' (undated but must be from the turn of the 1910s, see footnote 915). Malin was a board member 1898–1917. Lammi 1949, 325.

1060. Jutikkala 1979, 162–166.

1061. See Chapter 4.1.1. In 1890, seven per cent of the population of Tampere were Swedish-speakers and many of them tradesmen and civil servants. Rasila 1984, 574–575.

1062. These are exemplified by Lydia Saikka, a student of the institute but probably politically not active and a non-socialist Ernst Linko, chosen by the youth association. Lammi 1949, 314, 326; *Aamulehti*, 'Ernst Linko vanhempi kuollut' 27 May 1928.

have influenced the content of education, which the prevailing municipal suffrage otherwise usually limited.<sup>1063</sup>

The universal and equal municipal suffrage implemented in 1918 changed the political and social composition of the city council profoundly. The Social Democrats became a significant group and this brought new forces into local politics as manual workers constituted approximately one third of the council members from the early 1920s until the mid-1930s. While the small elite consisting of businessmen, directors and academically educated professionals had composed nearly 60 per cent of the council during the decade preceding the reform, their proportion fell to one third in the 1920s and 1930s.<sup>1064</sup> Since the institute's board had been somewhat heterogeneous from the start, the suffrage reform did not bring about a total change in its nature.<sup>1065</sup> The reform was naturally reflected in the composition of the board as the proportion of workers and former workers increased, constituting the majority with 60 per cent of the members selected during the entire period between 1919 and 1935.<sup>1066</sup> The cross-sections show that the proportion of Social Democrats likewise increased, constituting approximately half of the board members.<sup>1067</sup> Not surprisingly, their number on the institute's board seems to have corresponded roughly to their power on the city council, where their share varied from 45 to 60 per cent until the mid-1930s. During the 1920s, the Left also included Communists, having one to five councillors and at least one representative on the board of the institute.<sup>1068</sup>

Whereas the Social Democrat and working-class representatives had earlier been appointed mostly by the associations, from 1921 the city council selected all board members and the political and social diversity of the board became dependent on the relative strengths of the parties. In this way the institute also became even more clearly a municipal institution, controlled entirely by the local government.<sup>1069</sup>

The change in the electoral system obviously impacted more profoundly on the selection of the board chairman. Headmaster E. S. Yrjö-Koskinen, who

1063. *Toiset valtiopäivät 1908*, Documents Part 5, Vol. 2, 'Sivistysvaliokunnan mietintö No. 7', 5–7; Minutes 13 October 1908, 1107–1108, 1114.

1064. Jutikkala 1979, 167–171, 494, 501–502.

1065. Pärnänen 1924, 68.

1066. Lammi 1949, 325–326 (list of board members).

1067. Research data 'Board members'. The academic year 1919–1920 was obviously an exception, which must have been due to the recent Civil War and its impact.

1068. Jutikkala 1979, 498.

1069. One of the board members was selected by the students but became an advisory member at the end of the 1920s. Virtanen 1975, 54; Lammi 1949, 158.

was a baron as his father had been raised to the nobility, held this post until his death in 1916 and it would not have been conceivable to appoint a Social Democrat before the suffrage reform. The first chairman affiliated with the workers' movement started in 1922. Emanuel Lammi was a self-educated man and thoroughly familiar with the institute having been its student from 1905 onwards. He had originally been a painter by profession but had advanced in the tasks of the movement and acted in the leadership of the local Social Democrat organizations, for instance as the secretary of the Tampere Workers' Association from 1919.<sup>1070</sup> However, selecting a Social Democrat as chairman at the beginning of the 1920s was also significant as Lammi had been involved in the Finnish Civil War of 1918 on the defeated Red side. The war broke out between the socialist Red Guards and the White Army soon after the country had gained its independence, emerging from internal social and political contradictions but also as a part of the First World War and the disintegration of the Russian Empire. Almost 40,000 people were killed and the tensions between the winners and defeated remained strong after the war.<sup>1071</sup> Since the Social Democrats nonetheless became a powerful force in local government, it was possible to appoint their representative but Lammi's earlier educational pursuits certainly also contributed to this. His term as a chairman was exceptionally long, lasting thirty-four years, and he was active in the national workers' institute movement as well.<sup>1072</sup>

Consequently, the board which had originally been manned by the representatives of the Finnish Club and mainly by middle-class professionals became more diverse both in terms of political affiliation and social background when the proportion of working-class people and Social Democrats increased. In this way, the control of the institute transferred into the hands of actors closer to its students. This shift obviously contributed to the development of the curriculum, which is the subject matter of the following chapter.

While the ordinary operation of the institute was under local supervision, the central government authorities also controlled the content of education when granting subsidies. The Tampere Workers' Institute had nevertheless already encountered such steering in 1898, when it had been compelled to revise its curriculum. When the state subsidy was granted for the first time in

1070. Research data 'Municipal decision-makers'; Kanerva 1986, 463–464, 613 (list of board members); Koivisto 2003, 451; Virtanen 1975, 302 (list of board members). Lammi was the writer of the institute's history published in 1949.

1071. Tepora and Roselius 2014, 1–6.

1072. Virtanen 1975, 302 (list of board members). On Lammi's involvement in the national workers' institute movement, see Huuhka 1990, 156, 224–225, 227, 239.

1913, the instructions of the National Board of Education contained a list of the subjects permitted in the curriculum. This curriculum was confirmed by the Senate, which had emphasized that the workers' institutes should only provide general education extending the elementary school course and generally useful technical knowledge but not touch upon social questions at all.<sup>1073</sup> When the instructions were reviewed in 1924, such a detailed list was omitted and replaced with a broad guideline stipulating that the workers' institutes should mainly focus on civic education and provide general knowledge. This increased the freedom of the institutes but the liberties had limits since the principle of neutrality in political and religious questions was written into the conditions of the state subsidy. This was actually not the first time the issue was raised since political and religious neutrality had already been mentioned in the rejected parliamentary resolution of 1908.<sup>1074</sup> From the beginning of the 1920s, the Tampere Workers' Institute decided subjects yearly at the director's proposal and its board also seems to have participated in the preparation of the curriculum.<sup>1075</sup>

The legislation on state subsidy taking effect in 1927 continued the earlier liberal line by emphasizing the autonomy of the workers' institutes. These regulations did not specify which subjects were permitted but contained a fairly broad guideline outlining social sciences and economics as the principal fields although humanities and natural sciences were also mentioned. Such an education policy has been described as 'echoing', referring to a passive role of the government in the face of initiatives taken by the actors of liberal adult education.<sup>1076</sup> Such a liberal attitude towards workers' education seems to have been typical of the Swedish government measures from the start as there were no specific requirements regarding the content of education.<sup>1077</sup> It seems that before the mid-1920s the Finnish workers' institutes, at least in principle, were controlled more strictly although it is not apparent how the government regulations impacted on the practical educational work as the state subsidy was only delivered once before 1919.

1073. Huuhka 1990, 109–111. The 1913 instructions also stated that workers must have representation on the boards.

1074. Huuhka 1990, 175–176, 228. Neutrality was not a precondition for the state subsidy in the 1908 resolution as stated in parliamentary documents of 1911 but it was a general characteristic of adult education in this resolution. The precondition in the 1908 decision was that education should be based on scientific research. *Toiset valtiopäivät 1908*, Documents Part 5 Vol. 2, 'Anomusmietintö No. 25'.

1075. Lammi 1949, 130–131; Virtanen 1975, 59.

1076. In Finnish, *myötäilevä*. Huuhka 1990, 199, 228; Alanen 1992, 10–11; Sihvonen and Tuomisto 2012, 276–276.

1077. Bolin 1930, 67–68; *SOU 1924:5*, 76–78. See also Chapter 3.3.1.

Neutrality of instruction had not been included in the rules of the Tampere Workers' Institute but the state subsidy legislation of 1927 changed this. The National Board of Education had prepared national model rules and these included the requirement that instruction should be 'free of political agitation', thus defining neutrality in political terms only. The board of the Tampere Workers' Institute did not consider such a statement necessary but still accepted the formulation whereas the city council omitted it following the example of the authorities in Helsinki. These had argued that political was not the only conceivable form of agitation since national or religious agitation might also occur. Tampere city council had finally to accept this formulation because otherwise the workers' institute would have been deprived of the state subsidy.<sup>1078</sup> The question how political neutrality was interpreted is discussed in the following section.

### **SMALL ORGANIZATION AND RENTED PREMISES**

Due to modest funding, the Tampere Workers' Institute emerged as a small institution and remained so for several decades. The director was the only staff member, whereas lecturers and the teachers of elementary courses were hired on a temporary basis. When the institute started with the director, one lecturer and a singing teacher in 1899, the number of teachers was actually smaller than in the earlier courses arranged by the Tampere Workers' Association. The number of teachers nevertheless increased and in 1919 there were eight visiting lecturers and four other non-permanent teachers.<sup>1079</sup> Resulting from the small number of teachers, the director had a heavy teaching load. In the academic year 1915–1916, for instance, he gave seven series of lectures consisting of 105 lectures in total while other lecturers delivered seven series with altogether 38 lectures.<sup>1080</sup> At the turn of the 1920s the director raised the question of employing another permanent teacher. In addition to the burden of teaching, one of his arguments was that a directress was necessary because of the female majority among the students, so as to be able to communicate and interact more easily with female students.<sup>1081</sup> In spite of the board's efforts, it was only in the 1950s that another permanent teacher was employed.<sup>1082</sup>

There were eight directors, including three deputies, serving before the end of the 1920s and all of them were university educated as the rules

1078. Lammi 1949, 157–158; Huuhka 1990, 219, 270–271.

1079. Lammi 1949, 282–283.

1080. *KTK, TTO 1915–1916*, 7.

1081. *KTK, TTO 1919–1920*, 12; *1924–1925*, 15–16; Lammi 1949, 283, 288–289.

1082. Virtanen 1975, 117, 305 (list of directors and full-time teachers).



required.<sup>1083</sup> The term of the first director, Severi Nyman, remained short. He was dismissed by order of Governor-General Bobrikov after somebody had informed the authorities in 1902 of his lectures on nihilism and he escaped to the United States. Obviously, this former journalist and director of a folk high school, who was also a poet and a translator, fitted the religious and patriotic ideological framework Yrjö-Koskinen had outlined for the workers' institute, just as anticipated. In a booklet published in 1899 Nyman regarded religion as the most important subject and, in general, the foundation of popular adult education, accompanied by Finnish history and geography. Yet his political ideas became more radical in regard to Russia. Having been an Old Finn in the 1890s, he turned into a Young Finn at the beginning of the twentieth century and in his writing and discussions at the institute expressed his constitutional views against Russian attempts to bind Finland more tightly to imperial Russia.<sup>1084</sup>

The question of the reactions evoked by directors' political affiliations can be raised particularly in the case of Eino Pekkala, acting director from 1910 to 1911, since he later became a left-wing politician and in the 1940s also a minister. However, when he was elected, he was obviously more famous as an athlete. Pekkala became politically active at the end of the 1910s but seems to have been a member of the Social Democratic Party already before his short period at the Tampere Workers' Institute. At the turn of the 1910s, he wrote articles on sports in the publications of the workers' movement and, after his departure from the institute, became the chairman of the social democratic student association.<sup>1085</sup> How well his political affiliation was known by Yrjö-Koskinen and other board members is not evident. In notes written probably before Pekkala's appointment, Yrjö-Koskinen stated that none of the directors and only few of the lecturers had been Social Democrats. He was also sceptical about a Social Democrat as director since he thought that love of science and serious study required a talent different from that needed in debate and

1083. Lammi 1949, 327; Virtanen 1975, 305 (list of directors).

1084. Nyman 1899, 6–8; Lammi 1949, 109–110; Virtanen 1975, 29–30; Kalemaa 2006, 205; *Kuka kukin oli 1900–1961*, 363–364. Nyman returned to Finland in 1905, continuing his career as a journalist and teacher. He was also the director of the Finnish Workers' Institute of Turku from 1909 until 1919. Nyman finnicized his surname to Nuormaa in 1906.

1085. Virtanen suggests that his political affiliation was known. Virtanen 1975, 31; Hanski 2006, 592–593; Tuomioja 2006, 78–80, 373; *Tampereen Sanomat*, 'Urheilua' 31 August 1910; *Työmies*, 'Vapunviettoa Uudellamaalla' 28 April 1910; Pekkala 1910, 106–111; *Sosialisti*, 'Ylioppilaiden sosialidemokraattinen yhdistys' 18 October 1911.

‘in arrogant and empty speeches’.<sup>1086</sup> Moreover, Yrjö-Koskinen was obviously not aware of the religious attitudes of the long-serving director J. A. Pärnänen from 1908 to 1929, who as a student at the University of Helsinki had belonged to the Prometheus Society advocating free thinking.<sup>1087</sup>

The Tampere Workers’ Institute soon became a prestigious institution both locally and nationwide but its somewhat marginal position was apparent even after funding had been secured in 1908 by including it in the municipal budget. This marginality was seen especially in the question of its premises. For a quarter a century, adult education was arranged in rented lecture halls and classrooms before special premises were placed at its disposal by the municipality. The reason seems not to have been indifference on the part of the municipality since as early as in 1899 the city council set up a committee to prepare the construction of a building for the municipal library, the workers’ institute and the vocational evening school.<sup>1088</sup> However, this project was obviously not a priority among the municipal educational building projects as it did not progress before the 1920s. Such an educational centre was completed in 1925, accommodating the library and the workers’ institute. The building was located centrally and was within a few minutes’ walking distance of the main factories of the city. These premises likewise soon proved inadequate for the expanding institute, but a building for the sole use of the institute was only opened in 1962.<sup>1089</sup>

Although the institute operated in rented premises for a long time, it nevertheless had a centre for its activities right from the start in the building housing the Tampere Workers’ Association. Director Nyman considered the location advantageous since the building was the headquarters of the local workers’ movement and thus full of potential students.<sup>1090</sup> Therefore, workers’ education had returned to its origins but with the difference that it was no longer controlled by the workers’ association, which had turned socialist, but by the municipality. In spite of this, the workers’ association was also pleased with the arrangement and welcomed the institute to ‘its real home’ and expected that workers would utilize the education the institute offered. Education was not, however, the only benefit for the association but rent was necessary for it

1086. KA, E.S. Yrjö-Koskisen arkisto, archive unit 4, folder 16: ‘Muistelmia Tampereelta’, subheading ‘20 vuotta Tampereella’ (undated but must be from the turn of the 1910s, see footnote 915).

1087. Pärnänen 1924, 66; Klinge 1989, 903.

1088. KTK, *Kaupunginvaltuusto 1899*, 6; Virtanen 1975, 57.

1089. KTK, *TTO 1925–1926*, 15; Jutikkala 1979, 638–640.

1090. TKA, TTY Ca:2, Minutes 20 November 1900, item 15; 15 January 1901, item 9; *TTO Da:1*, Vuosikertomus 1900–1901.

to cover the construction costs of the recently completed building.<sup>1091</sup> In the course of the years, however, satisfaction with this arrangement decreased. There were not enough classrooms for the increasing number of courses and premises had to be rented from schools. The shortage of lecture halls and classrooms actually impeded the development and expansion of the institute as it was not possible to introduce new courses. Since the premises had to be used effectively, lectures and courses were organized at inconvenient times considering the working hours and early mornings. Moreover, the building had become unsuitable and too noisy for educational purposes. Along with practical reasons, there was a matter of principle involved. Operating in a building owned by a political party was not regarded as acceptable since the intention was to serve all townspeople impartially, which was emphasized especially after the Civil War.<sup>1092</sup>

The willingness to establish the first workers' institute in the country as a municipal institution showed broad-mindedness in this relatively small city, albeit one of the major urban centres in Finland. The municipal responsibilities of Tampere were not very numerous in the 1890s, seen in the fact that in 1898 the city council had twenty-one major issues on its agenda.<sup>1093</sup> From this perspective, the commitment made in 1898 to maintain the institute also reveals the importance of adult education in the minds of the local decision-makers, although the prospect of control was without doubt a crucial factor. It is also likely that the founders had expected state subsidies to play a more substantial role because of the efforts made since the early 1890s and because of the success of the folk high schools in this respect. Still, the municipality managed with a rather modest investment to create a notable educational and cultural institution operating within a small organizational framework. This nevertheless contained a mixture of appreciation and slight marginality, which could be seen in funding and the premises available to the institute. Thus the initial status and challenges of the municipal institute in Tampere did not differ much from those of the 'semi-municipal' institute in Gothenburg. Given the undemocratic nature of the municipal electoral system until the end of the 1910s, practically excluding workers from local administration, it is noteworthy that the local government in Tampere nevertheless maintained the workers' institute.

1091. TKA, TTY Db:1, *Vuosikertomus 1900*, 44; Ca:2 Minutes, 8 August 1900, item 7; 19 August 1900, item 8.

1092. KTK, *TTO 1918–1919*, 12; *1922–1923*, 12; Lammi 1949, 216–218.

1093. *KTK 1898*.

## 4.2.2. Diversification of Forms and Content of Education

When the Tampere Workers' Institute was opened in January 1899, it started as a lecturing institute like its Swedish counterparts. Although some of these, like the Gothenburg Workers' Institute introduced elementary courses into the curriculum, the Stockholm institute remained the purest representative of the lecturing ideal with language teaching as the only exception.<sup>1094</sup> This institute was also the target of the study trip made by the first Tampere director, Severi Nyman, in 1899.<sup>1095</sup> However, as early as in 1901 the board of the Tampere institute began to consider the necessity of more practically oriented education, which was incorporated into the programme in 1904. Therefore, the nature of the institute soon started to develop in a direction not originally regarded as its actual goal as in the case of the Gothenburg Workers' Institute. Another significant change took place twenty years later, when study circles affording students a more active role started and, along with teaching in practically oriented subjects, gained ground at the expense of lectures. After three decades, the institute had distanced itself rather far from the original outlines although some elements of continuity can be perceived.

### **PREDOMINANCE OF HUMANITIES AND SOCIAL STUDIES IN LECTURES**

The subjects finally listed in the rules of the institute were Finnish history, economics, general and cultural history, church history, geography and ethnography, natural sciences, hygiene, geometry, drawing and singing—the last three added to ensure the Senate's approval. In spite of the remarks about enhancing vocational skills, also added to the rules, the curriculum at first sight seems in many ways to have resembled that of the secondary schools, as also in Gothenburg. Apart from mathematics and languages, theoretical subjects at Finnish secondary schools at the turn of the twentieth century consisted of history, religion, geography and natural sciences.<sup>1096</sup> The similarity is understandable since most of the advocates of the workers' institute had secondary school as their educational background and some of them, like E. S. Yrjö-Koskinen and Verner Malin, even were secondary school teachers by profession.

1094. Bolin 1930, 15–16, 26; Leander 1955, 76 and passim; *Aamulehti*, 'Ruotsin työväenopistoista II' by S[everi] N[yman] 10 February 1900.

1095. *Aamulehti*, 'Ruotsin työväenopistoista I-IV' by S[everi] N[yman], 6, 10, 20 and 22 February 1900.

1096. Lammi 1949, 95, 107; Kiuasmaa 1982, 55–78.

Statistics on the lectures given during the period 1899–1922, compiled by Emanuel Lammi, reveal that the curriculum written into the rules was not followed systematically as the subjects appeared rather randomly in the programme.<sup>1097</sup> Given that Yrjö-Koskinen had emphasized the model of the folk high schools with their patriotic and religious spirit when making his proposal, it is not surprising that historical subjects and humanities had a dominant position in the programme of the first years. More than 40 per cent of the lectures between 1899 and 1906 can be classified into this group if the combined subject of geography and ethnography is included.<sup>1098</sup> Approximately half of the humanities covered Finnish history and almost 15 per cent were about religion and church history. Roughly one fifth of all lectures during the first years were related to natural sciences, including hygiene. Although the importance of civic education had been one of the arguments for the workers' institute from the early 1890s, the proportion of social studies and economics was striking, about one third, especially considering that the subject had been removed from the curriculum at the request of the Senate. Importantly, social studies and economics became a subject of adult education in particular since these were not yet taught at secondary schools.<sup>1099</sup>

When the entire period 1899–1922 is examined, the proportions remain similar to those of the first years: humanities formed around 45 per cent, social sciences, economics and law 30 per cent and natural sciences 20 per cent.<sup>1100</sup> Therefore, the Tampere Workers' Institute differed from Anton Nyström's institute as the role of natural sciences was less significant while the position of humanities, social sciences and economics was stronger. The importance of social studies also distinguished it from the Gothenburg institute and seems to have been typical of the Finnish workers' institutes in general.<sup>1101</sup> However, these figures do not reveal which lecture topics actually attracted students and thus they show the preferences of the organizers rather than the expectations of the students. Choices were also related to the expertise of the directors as these were in charge of the overwhelming majority of lectures. Almost without

1097. Lammi 1924, 26–27 (table of lecture subjects). The numbers for 1901 are missing because the annual report for that year has not survived.

1098. Geography often covered cultural questions and it was combined with ethnography in the rules of the institute.

1099. Kiuasmaa 1982, 55–78.

1100. Lammi 1924, 26–27 (table of lecture subjects). Virtanen (1975, 69–70) offers the percentages of lecture topics in different groups for the period 1899–1924 (obviously based on the annual reports), which are close to those of Lammi's: humanities 42 per cent, social sciences and economics 37 per cent and natural sciences 19 per cent.

1101. Karjalainen 1970, 96–97.

exception the directors had degrees in humanities, which is why they preferred humanities but sometimes also lectured on social questions. The teachers of natural sciences had to be recruited separately, which was expensive and often difficult because there were not so many local experts willing to teach.<sup>1102</sup>

If the curriculum was not followed methodically, neither were lecture series systematic in the sense of introducing the rudiments of a subject but, instead, often more like special courses. This characteristic enabling various and sometimes topical themes distinguished the lectures of the workers' institute from secondary school teaching in the same subjects. Probably this characteristic also made the lectures more interesting from the perspective of adult students.<sup>1103</sup>

Although the share of lectures classified as social sciences was striking, their approach was often historical, presenting at length the earlier developments of the phenomena in question. Lectures under the heading of social or political science might also introduce the societies or governments of foreign countries with a historical account and the lectures in economics often consisted of economic history.<sup>1104</sup> Nevertheless, social sciences might include lectures on current issues like labour rights, the new Parliament Act and electoral law of 1906, wintertime unemployment and 'municipal socialism', referring to the social political measures of municipalities.<sup>1105</sup> Even though social studies had been removed from the curriculum, the board must have considered the subject too important to ignore. Workers were becoming politically more active and the 1906 suffrage reform in the parliamentary elections gave them power. Lectures on social questions carried a risk of intervention by the authorities but, with the exception of the episode leading to the dismissal of Severi Nyman in 1903, these seem not to have interfered in instruction, either in social sciences or in any other subjects. This was obviously partly due to the caution exercised at lectures and in discussion clubs.<sup>1106</sup> Even the fact that social studies was not mentioned as a permitted subject in the

1102. Virtanen 1975, 18, 30–31, 63–64, 305; *KTK, TTO 1906–1907*, 18–19; *1919–1920*, 12.

1103. Annual reports often contained fairly precise descriptions of lecture series. TKA, *TTO Da1:1, Vuosikertomukset kevät 1899, 1899–1900 and 1905–1906*; *KTK, TTO 1906–1907–1934–1935*. These annual reports also form the source material for this chapter and references are only given to the specific examples mentioned.

1104. *KTK, TTO 1912–1913*, 4–5; *1913–1914*, 4; *1914–1915*, 4–5; *1917–1918*, 6–7; *1918–1919*, 6.

1105. TKA, *TTO Da1:1, Vuosikertomus 1905–1906*; *KTK, TTO 1906–1907*, 4; *1914–1915*, 5; *1915–1916*, 9; *1916–1917*, 12.

1106. Lammi 1949, 109–110, 143; Virtanen 1975, 29–30; Huuhka 1990, 60–61; TKA, *TTO Hc1:1, 'Tampereen työväenopiston 40-vuotis-muistojulkaisu 16.1.1939'*, Emanuel Lammi, 'Vuosien kätköstä'.

preconditions for the state subsidy in 1913 did not hinder lectures on such topics in Tampere.<sup>1107</sup>

History—including Finnish, general and cultural history—was the most frequently lectured subject during the period 1899–1922, amounting to almost a quarter of all topics addressed. After the first years, the emphasis in this subject was no longer on national history but the proportion of general and cultural history increased. In addition to this, there were two other trends suggesting that the workers' institute distanced itself from the folk high school ideal: religion and church history were lectured only once after 1902 and, during the period 1899–1922, history of literature contained three times more lectures on world literature than on Finnish authors and their works.<sup>1108</sup> Moreover, cultural history could offer broader perspectives on religious questions by introducing topics like the historical development of religious freedom, although this was only after Yrjö-Koskinen's death, in the academic year 1916–1917.<sup>1109</sup> The theory of evolution was no longer considered an unsuitable topic in popular adult education and it was also a subject discussed in cultural history.<sup>1110</sup> Lecture series in history were often long. Those by Director Pärnänen in particular might contain more than thirty sessions addressing, for example, the history of the Swiss people, economic life during the French Revolution, the Dutch war of independence and the Czech nationalist movement. The outlines of these long and specialized courses give the impression that they may have been based on a single book.<sup>1111</sup>

The proportion of lectures in geography was surprisingly small at only just over one per cent of all topics. It was still a school subject with a substantial number of lessons at secondary school and could in adult education have offered a means of delivering knowledge about the attendees' own country. On the other hand, descriptions of foreign countries and exotic cultures might have been an attraction—these were offered at the Gothenburg Workers' Institute, where geography was one of the regular subjects.<sup>1112</sup> While in Tampere there were not so many lectures on geography and faraway parts of the world, it is possible that history lectures may occasionally have been entertaining with stories and anecdotes of historical events and people. In

1107. On the preconditions, see Chapter 4.2.1.

1108. Lammi 1924, 26–27 (table of lecture topics).

1109. *KTK, TTO 1916–1917*, 10–11. Yrjö-Koskinen died in January 1916. Vares 2007, 797.

1110. *KTK, TTO 1906–1907*, 8; *1908–1909*, 9; *1914–1915*, 4–5.

1111. *KTK, TTO 1908–1909*, 5–7; *1911–1912*, 5–6; *1912–1913*, 5; *1914–1915*, 5; *1916–1917*, 5–8.

1112. See Chapter 3.3.2.

the academic year 1908–1909, an archaeological lecture on Pompeii attracted more than 400 listeners as outsiders were also admitted for a small fee.<sup>1113</sup>

As in Gothenburg, lectures in such natural sciences as chemistry and physics seem to have been fairly practical by nature. Instruction covered topics like soap-boiling; fabrics and dyeing; plant nutrients and chemical fertilizers; explosives; temperature and its measurement; electricity and its practical applications; motors and telegraph.<sup>1114</sup> Practicality was also favoured by students and in 1911 they appealed to the board for more lectures in practical technological subjects. This appeal possibly contributed to the selection of topics since a number of lectures in technology or mechanics were organized thereafter. These lectures introduced, for example, aviation, railways, steam turbines, internal combustion engines and iron production.<sup>1115</sup> Physics, chemistry and technology composed more than 40 per cent of the lectures in natural sciences and another practical subject, hygiene, more than one fifth. Nutrition and diseases were the most regular themes in this subject.<sup>1116</sup>

Practical topics in natural sciences and in social policy would probably have been counted as themes close to students in the sense of being relevant to their interests, sphere of life or cultural values. These qualities were emphasized in a programme drafted by the first national assembly of the workers' institutes in 1917.<sup>1117</sup> Such a recommendation challenged the curricula compiled mainly from the perspective of directors and teachers and considered the students' interests, which to some extent had already been taken into account in Tampere.

However, the nature of lectures started to change in the 1920s, which was partly connected to the declining interest in this form of education. Seminars and study circles were emerging as the methods for more systematic studies and lecture series were thus shortened and single lectures on varying topics were offered more frequently. This diversified the lecture programme, which without doubt became more attractive as, for instance, topical questions of international politics and the latest scientific theories could be introduced by recruiting external experts. However, such programme consisting of miscellaneous

1113. In 1905–1906, distinguished men and their lives were introduced, including not only their achievements but also human interest stories. TKA, TTO Da1:1, Vuosikertomus 1905–1906; KTK, TTO 1908–1909, 10.

1114. KTK, TTO 1906–1907, 4; 1912–1913, 7; 1914–1915, 6–7; 1915–1916, 10; 1916–1917, 11; 1919–1920, 8.

1115. Lammi 1924, 23; KTK, TTO 1911–1912, 9; 1913–1914, 6; 1914–1915, 7; 1915–1916, 9; 1917–1918, 9.

1116. Lammi 1924, 26–27 (table of lecture subjects).

1117. Huuhka 1990, 119.



themes did not even aim at methodical study but rather at providing information and stimulating interest for further studies. The fact that humanities and social questions still dominated indicates continuity although the emphasis within this group shifted more to current cultural and international phenomena and Finnish social policy. Interestingly, adult education itself and its significance was a recurring topic. The number of lectures in natural sciences decreased but hygiene and health care were still often in the programme.<sup>1118</sup>

The novelties of the new educational methods were the more active role of students and interaction with other students and teachers. Instruction also became more systematic as these courses were structured and followed textbooks. The first attempts were made from 1916 in the form of seminars but it took the entire 1920s before the study circle method, where the leading role was given to students' own presentations and to discussion based on them, became established. These new methods, the study circle in particular, reveal another continuity since they combined elements from the older practices: knowledge offered by lectures and the exercises on expressing opinions and public speaking already practised in the discussion meetings. The first seminars, inspired by English and German models, were more like lecture courses with students' presentations but soon turned into exercises where students could choose the topics of their talks fairly freely. The first study circles were organized in 1924 in economics and rhetoric but the range of subjects extended to the history of literature, physics and chemistry, history, temperance education, social studies, municipal administration and Finnish language. The early study circles might also include some entertaining activity along with students' presentations based on textbooks but, by the early 1930s, they seem to have assumed a form where the focus was on the subject matter in question. In many study circles, students took alternately the roles of chairperson and secretary and some circles also produced a handwritten paper.<sup>1119</sup>

Directors had high hopes for study circles and O. U. Järvinen in the early 1930s even regarded them as a means of developing workers' institutes into workers' universities.<sup>1120</sup> He may have been referring to people's universities, which had been established, for instance, in Germany, Norway and Denmark

1118. After the academic year 1920–1921 there was less information about the lectures in the annual reports: the topics were only listed without descriptions of their content and they were no longer classified. *KTK, TTO 1920–1921–1934–1935*; Virtanen 1975, 69–72; Lammi 1949, 144, 160.

1119. *KTK, TTO 1916–1917–1934–1935*; Lammi 1949, 160–165; Virtanen 1975, 80.

1120. *KTK, TTO 1924–1925*, 15; *1925–1926*, 15–16; *1926–1927*; *1931–1932*, 28–30.

for the purposes of academically oriented adult education.<sup>1121</sup> Higher adult education was not only Järvinen's vision but the national assembly of the workers' institutes in 1917 had also accepted it as the direction in which Finnish institutes should be developed. This was an ambitious goal and reminiscent of Anton Nyström's old vision of higher workers' education. Järvinen nevertheless admitted that study circles were the most demanding form of study, requiring both perseverance and enthusiasm. Therefore, study circles were not a form of education appealing to large audiences and they established themselves rather slowly at the Tampere Workers' Institute.<sup>1122</sup>

Adopting the study circle as a method of education together with many other Finnish institutes reveals a difference between the Finnish and Swedish workers' institutes. While in Tampere study circles were incorporated into the activities of the workers' institute, in Sweden they were usually organized by educational associations like that of workers (ABF). The Swedish workers' institutes did not adopt this form but continued with lectures, sometimes accompanied by classroom teaching in school subjects.<sup>1123</sup> In Gothenburg, for instance, the local branch of the ABF organized almost eighty study circles with more than one thousand members in the academic year 1922–1923. Subjects likely to attract adult students included foreign languages, literature, history, philosophy, political science, socialism, communism, economics, municipal administration and trade union education.<sup>1124</sup> In Tampere, the popularity of the new form was seen in the fact that the workers' institute was not the only organizer but the municipal library and trade unions under the local branch of the Finnish Workers' Educational Association (*Työväen sivistysliitto*) also arranged their own study circles.<sup>1125</sup>

### USEFULNESS OF SOCIAL STUDIES AND NEUTRALITY IN TEACHING

Even though some of the lectures given during the first two decades also offered practical knowledge, their nature was mainly theoretical. Like the workers' education of the late nineteenth century, the usefulness of general education was obviously taken for granted by organizers and therefore it is difficult to ascertain how the benefits were supposed to manifest themselves

1121. Törnqvist 1996, 50–51.

1122. *KTK, TTO 1931–1932*, 28–30; Virtanen 1975, 81; Huuhka 1990, 117.

1123. Kalela 1978, 153–153, 180; Huuhka 1990, 235–236; Leander 1955, 76; Leander 1978, 182, 433.

1124. Jonsson et al. 1923, 890–892.

1125. Jutikkala 1979, 640; TKA, Tampereen jalkinetyöntekijäin sos.dem. osasto E:3, *Tampereen seudun työväen sivistystoimikunnan toimintakertomukset 1930–1931, 1932–1933, 1934–1935*.

concretely. At the turn of the century, Severi Nyman emphasized that the fundamental purpose of popular adult education was character building and creating a world view with moral principles together with respect for justice and truth. Developing a steadfast character had probably something to do with the habit of studying itself, supposed to instil orderliness and self-discipline, and with content such as the biographies of notable and exemplary historical figures, a lecture topic recommended by Nyman.<sup>1126</sup> Moral principles and respect for justice and truth were obviously promoted by subjects like history and religion, liable to emphasize the values of the organizers. From their perspective, developing an appreciation of bourgeois culture and society in working people could have been an important outcome of such general education, intended to integrate workers into that society. The targets of education were supposed to benefit from the middle-class habits and virtues believed to result from education and assumed as such to improve workers' conditions.

The usefulness of general education was not, however, always self-evident to the workers. Director Nyman noted in 1900 that the workers did not derive any material benefit from these studies when pointing out the necessity of advertising lectures to attract workers to the institute.<sup>1127</sup> Although studying did not offer direct material benefit, Nyman thought that subjects like economics would help poor people to improve their material conditions and recommended topics like the co-operative movement, providing information they could utilize.<sup>1128</sup> The question of usefulness was also considered worth pondering in a discussion held at the institute in 1904 with the title 'Does general education improve workers' economic conditions?' Both the programme of the institute and the issue of how to develop lectures were debated several times in these gatherings.<sup>1129</sup> Some kind of certificate of studies might have been useful but, at least in the case of lectures, it was practically impossible since no exams were organized. In 1917, Emanuel Lammi, representing the students of Tampere at the national assembly of the workers' institutes, strongly opposed all kinds of certificates since in his opinion they would be detrimental to the free study he regarded as essential.<sup>1130</sup> Thus he emphasized the ideal of learning for its

1126. Nyman 1899, 6–8, 11–12.

1127. Lammi 1949, 141; *Aamulehti*, 'Ruotsin työväenopistoista IV' by S[everi] N[yman] 22 February 1900.

1128. Nyman 1899, 6–8.

1129. TKA, TTO Da1:1, Vuosikertomus kevät 1899; *KTK, TTO 1908–1909*, 12–13; *1915–1916*, 10–11; *1920–1921*, 7–8; Lammi 1949, 134, 141–143.

1130. Virtanen 1975, 39; Huuhka 1990, 425. Certificates from elementary courses were discussed at least in 1915–1916. *KTK, TTO 1915–1916*, 16.

own sake in contrast to education providing qualifications, which nevertheless could have contributed to the improvement of students' economic conditions and social advancement.<sup>1131</sup>

The subject considered particularly necessary and useful to workers was social studies, a view already expressed in the 1890s by the advocates of the Tampere Workers' Institute. Aukusti Dahlberg had stressed that educating responsible citizens was the purpose of the institute—but not preparing workers to become decision-makers. The emergence of the socialist workers' movement at the turn of the century, the parliamentary reform with universal and equal suffrage in 1906 and the success of the Social Democrats in the first parliamentary elections the following year emphasized the importance of civic education among workers, who had become a significant political force.<sup>1132</sup> This without doubt extended the idea of responsible citizens from those acting in associations to both voters and working-class politicians. As stated in the annual report of the workers' institute written in spring 1906, the significance of education should not be forgotten in times 'when the entire population had to determine the destinies of the nation'.<sup>1133</sup>

The discussions of the 1890s implied that the purpose of civic education was to benefit society as a whole whereas the perspective of working people and the workers' movement became more typical by the 1920s. The reform of the municipal electoral system taking effect in 1918 no doubt contributed to this since it brought considerably larger numbers of working-class people into the sphere of decision-making than had the earlier parliamentary reform. Moreover, the reform of municipal suffrage also consolidated workers' role on the boards of the workers' institutes. The periodical *Työväenopisto* (Workers' Institute), a national forum for the activists of the workers' institute movement, in the 1920s published several articles on the significance of social studies. Social studies and economics were considered the core of civic education for citizens and voters to increase their understanding of society and economy by offering information on the structure of society, different ideologies and political actors. These subjects were also regarded as essential in training not only the officials of the workers' movement and organizations but also the members of municipal councils, boards and administration as well as those becoming politicians on the national level. Social studies would

1131. Cf. Merricks (2000, 287–288) on British adult education.

1132. Huuhka 1990, 67–70; Nyström 2014, 17. The importance of social studies was also stressed in other forms of adult education, for instance in the Society for Popular Enlightenment. Männikkö 2001, 56–60.

1133. TKA, TTO Da1:1, Vuosikertomus 1905–1906.

improve both the expertise and judgement of these decision-makers, whose mission was to build a better society and improve the economic conditions of the working class.<sup>1134</sup> In these considerations, the usefulness of social studies was connected to the collective interests of working people or the workers' movement rather than to individual benefits or self-improvement.<sup>1135</sup> At the end of the 1930s, the priority of collective interests was also emphasized by the student activists of the Tampere Workers' Institute.<sup>1136</sup>

The status of social studies and economics in the curriculum of the workers' institutes was consolidated in the legislation on state subsidies in 1926, where these subjects were defined as the most important.<sup>1137</sup> Their significance was also emphasized by the Finnish workers' institute movement from its beginning in 1917. The board chairman of Tampere Workers' Institute, Emanuel Lammi, was one of the advocates of socio-economic education and the board also supported this policy, as shown by the position of social questions in the curriculum during the 1920s and 1930s. Lammi himself was a long-serving instructor of the study circle in social studies.<sup>1138</sup> In school education, by contrast, the role of civics was still insignificant, and its minor role in secondary schools in particular raises the question of what the basis of knowledge about society was supposed to be among those having a longer education than working-class people.<sup>1139</sup> In this regard adult education conducted by the workers' institutes appeared fresh and topical in comparison with the schools for young people.<sup>1140</sup>

Social questions were nevertheless to be treated in an unbiased way because of the principle of neutrality in political and religious issues. A strict interpretation of this principle meant that political and religious questions were totally excluded from the institutes, which was nevertheless criticized by pointing out that in this way large sections of culture and human life were ignored. According to a loose and more common interpretation, workers' institutes as institutions should not be associated with any political or religious movement but could allow these topics provided they were discussed objectively.<sup>1141</sup>

1134. *Työväenopisto* 1925 No. 2, 21; 1925 No. 7, 104; 1925 No. 9, 133–134; 1926 No. 9, 8; 1927 No. 5, 9, 11.

1135. Cf. Titmus 1996, 14; Arvidson 1985, 68–70; Arvidson 1989, 156–157; Quinney 1983, 66–67, 74–75; Goldman 1999, 92–93.

1136. TKA, TTO Hc1:1, 'Tampereen työväenopiston 40-vuotis-muistojulkaisu 16.1.1939', Kaarlo Suursara, Toivo Tuominen.

1137. Huuhka 1990, 199.

1138. Virtanen 1975, 59, 77, 83; Huuhka 1990, 118, 243–245.

1139. On social studies as a school subject, see Arola 2001, 1–3.

1140. Cf. *Työväenopisto* 1925 No. 2, 21.

1141. Huuhka 1990, 219–220.

Although no governmental requirements for neutrality existed before the 1920s—social studies was not even an approved subject although religion was—the Finnish workers’ institutes adopted the principle from early on.<sup>1142</sup> The rules of the Helsinki Workers’ Institute from 1914 included a requirement for religious and political neutrality.<sup>1143</sup> The founders of the Tampere Workers’ Institute had not considered this formulation necessary in the rules but neutrality was emphasized by E. S. Yrjö-Koskinen when announcing that the institute would not become a breeding ground for any political ideology.<sup>1144</sup> As for Yrjö-Koskinen, the Finnish conception of neutrality at the beginning of the twentieth century referred primarily to political neutrality. It certainly meant the absence of socialist bias but perhaps other biases were not so well recognized since the institute sometimes came in for criticism among socialists during the first decades of the twentieth century.<sup>1145</sup> In point of fact, the workers’ movement itself had earlier called for the political neutrality of the workers’ institutes. This had obviously two aims, preventing the dissemination of anti-socialist attitudes in teaching and securing the establishment of municipal institutes, which the workers’ movement supported, by excluding the troublesome socialist ideas from them in advance.<sup>1146</sup>

The Tampere Workers’ Institute adhered to the loose interpretation of neutrality as its lectures introduced various political ideologies and movements long before social studies became an officially approved subject and the requirement for neutrality was written into the law and into its rules in the 1920s.<sup>1147</sup> The majority of the lectures in social studies were given by the directors. In 1924, J. A. Pärnänen assessed that the permissive line had been right and referred to his own lectures on socialism, communism, anarchism and fascism, which could be regarded as politically controversial topics. He stressed that he had been aiming at scientific objectivity and had avoided imposing his opinions on his students. Therefore, he assumed that he had not made anyone a follower of these ideologies or alienated anyone from them.<sup>1148</sup> In addition to the director, from the turn of the 1910s, even social democratic journalists and members of parliament gave lectures on the workers’ movement and socialism. One such was Anton Huotari, the editor of the local social

1142. Ibid.

1143. Nyström, S. 2014, 31–32.

1144. *Aamulehti*, ‘Puhe’ by E.S. Yrjö-Koskinen 17 January 1899.

1145. Turunen 2012, 101–102.

1146. Huuhka 1990, 44–47.

1147. Political neutrality was written into the rules approved in 1928. Lammi 1949, 157–158.

See also Chapter 4.2.1.

1148. Pärnänen 1924, 70.

democratic newspaper *Kansan Lehti* and also a member of parliament.<sup>1149</sup>

It is of course impossible to know how objectively such visitors presented their topics but if the lectures had been politically loaded and contained outright socialist propaganda, the board of the institute would most likely have known it. Moreover, E. S. Yrjö-Koskinen as the board chairman often carried out inspections of lectures.<sup>1150</sup> It is equally impossible to assess the neutrality of lectures by other teachers. How the questions were treated was one aspect of neutrality but there were others, among them the selection of topics since what was included and what was excluded had a connection to the world view presented by the institute as a whole. Perhaps it was this kind of general character of the institute the local trade union activists meant when they criticized the workers' institute for being a bourgeois educational institution.<sup>1151</sup> The student activists of the institute, Emanuel Lammi among others, actually regarded the requirement for political and religious neutrality as unnecessary, evidently because they were afraid that it might suppress topics of interest to workers.<sup>1152</sup>

The rapid social and political changes from the turn of the century and the workers' increasing presence on the board influenced the curriculum, widening the range of subjects and bringing elements closer to workers' values and sphere of life. Although the principle of neutrality was essential, such a development shows the impossibility of steering the content of education in the way E. S. Yrjö-Koskinen had intended.

#### **PRACTICAL INSTRUCTION: ELEMENTARY, VOCATIONALLY ORIENTED AND RECREATIONAL SUBJECTS**

When the question of practically oriented teaching was considered by the board at the beginning of the twentieth century, the focus was first on vocational education. This was natural given that the advancement of professional skill had been added to the aims of the institute. Still, as mentioned earlier, actual vocational education was never organized as the board regarded the primary mission of the institute to be general and citizenship education.

1149. *KTK, TTO 1908–1909*, 10; *1912–1913*, 5; *1913–1914*, 4; *1914–1915*, 5; Virtanen 1975, 28–29.

1150. The histories of the institute mention one occasion when Yrjö-Koskinen intervened in a visitor's lecture. A journalist and social democratic member of parliament, Santeri Nuorteva, was supposed to lecture on idealism and materialism but changed his topic in midstream and started to talk about liberation movements in Russia. Lammi 1949, 118–120; Virtanen 1975, 29.

1151. Turunen 2016, 38–39.

1152. Virtanen 1975, 39–40.

Other explanations were the lack of suitable premises and teachers.<sup>1153</sup> Practical training for different trades was naturally out of the question. However, as vocational education at that time usually consisted of theoretical subjects common to different trades while practical training mostly took place on the job, finding classrooms and teachers would hardly have been an insurmountable impediment to teaching subjects like technical drawing and trade mathematics. Such subjects did not require specific equipment or classrooms and teachers from the local technical school, commercial college and boys' vocational school could perhaps have been available.<sup>1154</sup>

The reason for excluding vocational courses was obviously not only the organizers' preference for liberal and citizenship education but, as discussed earlier, also the fact that liberal and vocational education were understood to form entirely separate domains with different goals. Yet the borderline between general and vocational education was not so sharp, as seen below in the content of teaching. Moreover, it seems that the authorities and representatives of economic life made occasional suggestions for developing the workers' institutes in a more practical direction with vocational education as one of their tasks.<sup>1155</sup>

In the opening years of the twentieth century, the pressure for practically oriented instruction came from the students of the institute and classes in bookkeeping and Swedish language were started at their request.<sup>1156</sup> Mere lectures did not satisfy all; students also demanded subjects found directly useful. As in Gothenburg, the board had to take such wishes into consideration since attracting students had become necessary as the number of participants had declined.<sup>1157</sup> The board and student activists nevertheless remained rather reserved regarding practical instruction. Emanuel Lammi suggested in 1919 that only the practical subjects necessary for citizenship education should be included in the curriculum.<sup>1158</sup> Accordingly, when students demanded practical instruction in the curriculum they actually supported views confining workers' education to basics and practicalities while the leaders and activists saw

1153. Lammi 1924, 19–21, 23, 44; Malinen 1924, 6; Lammi 1949, 126–127; Virtanen 1975, 29.

1154. The technical school (*teollisuuskoulu*) was established in 1886, the commercial college (*kauppaopisto*) in 1890 and boys' vocational school (*poikain ammattikoulu*) in 1912. Rasila 1984, 655–656, 658–659; Jutikkala 1979, 260–261.

1155. Lammi 1949, 126. The role of practical instruction surfaced in Tampere again in 1950, when the Technical Society in Tampere set up a committee to explore the possibilities of adding vocational instruction to the curriculum of the workers' institute. Seppälä 1983, 23–24.

1156. Lammi 1924, 21; Lammi 1949, 116, 122.

1157. See Chapter 3.3.2.

1158. Huuhka 1990, 227, 239.



themselves as the advocates of workers' right to higher learning in the form of liberal and citizenship education. The demand for practical instruction can also be regarded as an expression of individual interest in self-improvement while activists like Lammi emphasized workers' collective interest as manifest in citizenship education.

The nature of the practical instruction given from the beginning of the century until the mid-1930s can be illustrated by dividing subjects into three groups—elementary, vocationally oriented and recreational—although these overlap (Figure 4).<sup>1159</sup> Moreover, the subjects classified as elementary and vocationally oriented could also promote skills needed in civic activities and politics just as vocationally oriented subjects could be useful for all citizens regardless of their occupation.

Elementary	Vocationally oriented	Recreational
		Singing 1899
Spelling 1904 Composition writing 1904	Bookkeeping 1904 Swedish 1907	Elocution 1904 Choir 1908  Drawing 1918
Arithmetic 1905/1921* Finnish 1929	Business correspondence 1921 Typewriting 1929  Stenography 1931	English 1921 Esperanto 1922 Theory of music 1923 Physical education 1925 Orchestra 1928 German 1929  Painting 1931 Home economics 1931 Handicrafts 1933

\* regularly

**Figure 4. Practically oriented subjects at Tampere Workers' Institute, 1899–1935.**

Sources: TKA, TTO Da 1:1, Vuosikertomukset 1899, 1905–1906; KTK, TTO 1906–1907–1934–1935; Lammi 1949, 114, 117, 122–126.

1159. The nature of practical instruction has been explored by reference to the annual reports of the Tampere Workers' Institute 1906–1907–1934–1935, to which no specific references are made in the following.

Elementary instruction was intended to fill the gaps in the very basic skills and focused especially on writing. Spelling was one of the first practical subjects, taught with the help of dictation and reproduction exercises but after a few years grammar was also incorporated into its programme. The exercises became more diverse and practical, containing at the end of the 1920s the drafting of small news items, stories, letters and minutes of meetings. This change was obviously due to improved elementary school education, and the subject was replaced by more comprehensive Finnish language in 1929, also including composition writing. Composition exercises had also been in the curriculum from an early stage on and, in addition to their actual goal, they had trained students in writing about the topics of lectures, thus also supporting their learning from theoretical courses. Along with grammar, spelling and composition, Finnish language included literature in the form of the epic *Kalevala* and the works of Aleksis Kivi and exercises, for example, in writing simple documents, job applications and newspaper advertisements. Surprisingly, arithmetic became a regular subject only in the 1920s. The focus in instruction was first on the repetition of the elementary school course but in the 1930s the programme extended to geometry and exercises started to contain examples from business life.

The above skills were also important from the perspective of working life, but there were subjects more clearly vocationally oriented like bookkeeping, business correspondence, stenography and typewriting. Bookkeeping was also one of the first practical subjects, starting with the basics applied to private life but soon turning to accounting in small enterprises, co-operatives and associations doing business. The two latter must have been important for the actors of the workers' movement, some of whom were employed by such enterprises. Business correspondence was one of the subjects introduced in the 1920s, extending from commercial to more general business documents useful not only to those employed in trade but to individual citizens and the officials of associations. Lessons entailed writing documents such as letters of authorization, debentures, wills, estate inventories, references, invoices, various applications, contracts and documents related to municipal elections. After the courses in typewriting and stenography were added to the curriculum at the turn of the 1930s, vocationally oriented instruction had become distinctly commercial in nature. In the mid-1930s, student activists expressed their concern that the institute was transforming into a commercial school.<sup>1160</sup>

1160. Huuhka 1990, 223.

The Swedish language can also be classified as a vocationally oriented subject since it was considered important for shop assistants. Although the overwhelming majority of residents in Tampere were Finnish-speakers, even rudimentary knowledge of Swedish was regarded as an asset for those employed in shops.<sup>1161</sup> When the classes in Swedish began in spring 1907, 130 students took part, showing considerable interest in this language. In subsequent years, students appealed for increasing the number of lessons, thereby irritating the pro-Finnish board chairman, Yrjö-Koskinen. He advised students to turn to the Swedish Club, which, according to him, had more money and teachers.<sup>1162</sup> It was probably not interest in Swedish language itself that displeased some other board members but the fact that the students of Swedish did not attend the other courses or lectures of the institute. The organizers disapproved of picking single subjects with the intention to promote personal interests, finding this incompatible with the idea of the workers' institute as such students shunned the subjects related to liberal and civic education regarded as the core of education. This kind of attitude foreshadowed the view Lammi expressed a few years later, emphasizing that a connection between practical instruction and citizenship education was necessary. Similarly, vocational instruction, considered to promote personal career only, was excluded from the educational work of the Swedish Workers' Educational Association ABF in the 1930s.<sup>1163</sup>

The third group of practical subjects can be defined as recreational, including music, elocution, drawing, physical education, handicrafts and foreign languages. Singing was part of the routines of the institute from its beginning as lectures began and ended with songs until the mid-1920s. This practice had been adopted from the folk high schools and a songbook made for these was also used at the Tampere Workers' Institute. Starting and ending lectures by singing was considered important due to its alleged ability to open the mind and encourage community spirit among students.<sup>1164</sup> Instruction in singing was also organized, a choir was established and later theory of music was added to the curriculum. An orchestra was active from the end of the 1920s, performing at the festivities of the institute, thereby having a task in serving the social activities of the institute, similar to that of the choir and the students practising elocution.

1161. Virtanen 1975, 29.

1162. Lammi 1924, 21–22; Lammi 1949, 122–124.

1163. Arvidson 1985, 131.

1164. Lammi 1949, 144.

In contrast to music and elocution, which had been on the curriculum from the beginning of the century, other recreational subjects emerged in the 1920s and 1930s. However, instruction in drawing began somewhat earlier and it was artistic in nature from the beginning instead of having been vocationally oriented technical drawing. Art education also included presentations of contemporary and industrial art and instruction in painting. Handicrafts, like home economics, was a subject aimed at women, and at least the latter had been a long-held wish of female students. Home economics and handicrafts could also be classified as vocationally oriented subjects since they offered skills and knowledge useful for housewives, like sewing and mending clothes, theoretical knowledge about foodstuffs and cooking demonstrations. In fact, training in sewing and domestic tasks was among those few skills taught to girls at contemporary vocational schools.<sup>1165</sup> Incorporating such subjects into the curriculum of the workers' institute nevertheless necessitated explanations as the director emphasized that from the perspective of students and society as a whole home economics could be as important as theoretical studies.<sup>1166</sup> This view was obviously easy to accept particularly during the economic depression, when instruction in cooking and domestic work was also organized for unemployed women.<sup>1167</sup>

The foreign languages taught at the institute were English, Esperanto and German. The interest in Esperanto, which nevertheless only lasted for a decade, petering out in the early 1930s, was explained by expectations of its prospective role as the lingua franca of the working class. The most advanced students actually used it in international communication by corresponding with Swedish and other foreign Esperantists. Starting teaching in foreign languages with English (Swedish was not counted because it was and continues to be an official language in Finland) is interesting given that German was the dominant language in secondary school instruction.<sup>1168</sup> The pattern in Sweden was similar; German was also the first foreign language at secondary school but English was preferred in the classes of the Workers' Educational Association.<sup>1169</sup>

1165. Kaarninen M. 1995, 72–84, 104–108.

1166. *KTK, TTO 1930–1931*, 29.

1167. Ahonen 2009, 86–87.

1168. Kiuasmaa 1982, 202–209. Instruction in Russian, German and English was available at the commercial college for external students provided they could take part in daytime lessons. *KTK, TTO 1919–1920*; *KTK, Kauppaoppilaitos 1920*, 3–4.

1169. Arvidson 1985, 146.

The developments by which practical and recreational subjects emerged by the mid-1930s actually reveal a trend which continued during the subsequent decades. Foreign languages, art and music, vocationally oriented and other practical skills as well as recreational subjects constituted the greater part of instruction in Tampere as at other Finnish workers' institutes.<sup>1170</sup> A similar trend was discernible in the study circles of the Swedish educational associations from the end of the 1920s, shifting the emphasis to foreign languages, aesthetic subjects and, in general, on instruction related to recreation.<sup>1171</sup> While practical instruction also became popular at the Gothenburg Workers' Institute, it nevertheless seems to have become more school-like. Thus the education of the Tampere Workers' Institute, like that of Finnish institutes in general, developed in a direction resembling more the Swedish educational associations than the Swedish workers' institutes of the twentieth century. Flexibility in forms of education and diversification of content may be one explanation for the longevity of the Finnish workers' institutes compared with the Swedish institutes, which for the most part were closed down by the late twentieth century.<sup>1172</sup>

The changing nature of the workers' institute is illustrated by the way the ratio of the hours used for practical instruction to the hours for lectures changed over three decades. In the academic year 1905–1906, the numbers were approximately the same but, in 1911–1912, the number of practical lessons was twice that of lectures. In 1921–1922, there were roughly four times more practical lessons than lecture hours and, finally, in 1931–1932, the number of practical lessons was approximately fourteen times that of lectures. The number of lecture hours had remained at the same level from the beginning of the 1910s, whereas the number of practical lessons had increased sixfold. Likewise, the rising significance of study circles can be discovered from the ratio of study circle lessons to lectures, which was roughly four to one at the beginning of the 1930s.<sup>1173</sup> Although the number of lessons used for different forms of education is connected to the intentions of the organizers,

1170. Virtanen 1975, 162 (Table 19); Huuhka 1990, 237, 411 (table 15).

1171. Arvidson 1985, 78–90, 144–155, 318–319; Arvidson 1989, 156.

1172. Kalela 1978, 152, 180; Leander 1965, 180; Leander 1980, 35; Huuhka 1990, 39.

1173. TKA, TTK Da1:1 Vuosikertomus 1905–1906; KTK, TTK 1911–1912, 4–9, 10–11; 1921–1922, 4, 7; 1931–1932, 5–12, 16–20. The hours of practical instruction have been counted on the basis of information on the numbers of groups and lessons on the assumption that the institute operated for 28 weeks in the academic year. The hours used for lecturing are counted on the basis of the number of lectures on the assumption that one lecture was equal to one lesson. The same applies to study circles.

it is evident that the board had to consider the students' wishes and actually adapted to these by increasing the number of practical lessons.

The increasing importance of practically oriented instruction actually reveals how the scope of adult education was expanding from the original ideal, where theoretical and general education had dominated. This was partly due to women's active participation and their interests, which raised issues related to the private sphere to relevant topics of adult education alongside the older content of citizenship education connected with the public sphere.<sup>1174</sup>

Another factor contributing to this development was related to the undeveloped structures of vocational education. Although the board stressed that such education was not the mission of the workers' institute but should be provided by specialized schools, the young had only few opportunities and working-class adults only occasionally. While Finnish liberal adult education in the form of folk high schools and workers' institutes became institutionalized in a relatively short time, the same did not happen in vocational adult education, which for a long time remained sporadic and irregular. If the Technological Institute opened in 1922 in Helsinki is excluded, vocational adult education aimed at working-class people started to become established only after the Second World War in the form of evening courses organized by the vocational schools and commercial institutes of larger urban centres.<sup>1175</sup> Although the question about vocational courses for adult workers had been raised in Tampere as early as in 1909 and again in the 1920s, the first experiments were only conducted in the 1930s. These were single courses training carpenters, painters, print workers and janitors.<sup>1176</sup>

While the opportunities for vocational adult education were few, grown-ups utilized evening schools intended for the young. A former student of the vocational evening school described how 'bearded fathers in their thirties' had studied together with younger students at the beginning of the century but the situation had not changed much in thirty years. Students over eighteen regularly attended the vocational evening school. At the beginning of the 1930s, they accounted for approximately one third of all students

1174. Cf. Rydbeck 2001, 30–37; Rydbeck 2013, 52–57.

1175. Ahonen 2012, 249, 251–252. On the Technological Institute (*Ammattienedistämislaitos*), see Paaskoski 2012. The technical school in Tampere occasionally arranged evening courses intended for technicians and foremen, whose social status nevertheless differed from that of ordinary workers.

1176. Ahonen 2009, 95, 99. *KTK, Yleinen ammattilaiskoulu 1925–1926*, 10; *1934–1935*, 11; *1935–1936*, 4–5, 15; *1936–1937*, 5–7; *KTK, Poikain ammattikoulu 1929–1930*, 5; *1932–1933*, 5. The courses in the boys' vocational school were arranged by outside organizations.

and students older than twenty-five or even older than thirty could still be found.<sup>1177</sup> The evening school for shop assistants also attracted adults, and at the beginning of the 1930s students older than eighteen years accounted for almost 20 per cent of the students.<sup>1178</sup> Since the instruction in the vocational evening school had been of a rather general nature, it had functioned as a supplement to inadequate elementary education. Attempts at more specialized vocational education were made from the mid-1920s, but this school still mainly maintained its general orientation.<sup>1179</sup>

Practical and to some extent vocationally oriented instruction was also offered by the extension of elementary school with its evening classes, intended for the young who had finished their six-year course of study. These classes appealed especially to young women. At the end of the 1920s, 40 per cent of female students were sixteen years or older, which is remarkable given that elementary school was usually completed at the age of thirteen. Observations about 'over-aged' students prompted discussion on an upper age limit, suggested to be either seventeen, eighteen or twenty years. The reason for the presence of such over-aged students was the eagerness of young women to attend these classes not only for the intended period of two years but for several years by studying handicrafts, home economics and commercial subjects.<sup>1180</sup>

In the economic depression starting in Finland at the end of the 1920s, vocational training with pay was also organized for special groups of the unemployed as a means of financial aid. Women, boys or young men and white-collar workers became a problem for the authorities because relief work, the typical form of assistance, could not be arranged for them and this was resolved by organizing training with pay for these groups. In Tampere, between 1929 and 1934 altogether 46 courses were arranged for unemployed women by the municipality, teaching basic skills in domestic work and sewing with the intention to train them to become domestic servants or seamstresses or to improve their skills as housewives.<sup>1181</sup> From 1931 to 1936, eleven courses in construction work were organized for boys and young men between sixteen and twenty years.<sup>1182</sup> Since white-collar workers were also afflicted by

1177. KTK, *Yleinen ammattilaiskoulu 1921–1922–1933–1934*. Sulo Heiniö's recollection in the report of 1926–1927, 30–32.

1178. KTK, *Kauppa-apulaiskoulu 1923–1924–1933–1934*.

1179. KTK, *Yleinen ammattilaiskoulu 1925–1926*, 9–10; *1931–1932*, 6.

1180. Kaarninen M. 1995, 93–101; KTK *Kaupunginvaltuusto 1930*, 140–146.

1181. Ahonen 2009, 82–83, 86–89.

1182. KTK, *Kaupunginvaltuusto 1931*, 221–226; *1932*, 219–223; *1933*, 198–200; *1934*, 180–181; *1935*, 215–216; *1936*, 195–196; KTK *Työnvälitystoimisto 1931*, 5; KTK, *Yleisten töiden lautakunta 1931*, 35; *1936*, 52.

unemployment, the municipality arranged a few courses for clerical workers and shop assistants in bookkeeping, arithmetic, typewriting and other commercial subjects.<sup>1183</sup> In the aftermath of the economic depression, the municipal housekeeping consultancy organized courses in cooking, making preserves, sewing and weaving. These courses were aimed at helping townspeople of limited means and attracted hundreds of participants.<sup>1184</sup>

#### 4.2.3. The Institute's Sphere of Influence: Numbers and Backgrounds of Students

As in the earlier cases, the significance of the Tampere Workers' Institute is assessed by exploring the number of people it attracted to its activities and what kind of people these were. Fortunately, its student registers contain substantially more information about the actual number of participants, their ages, previous education and occupations, thus making it possible to describe the main features of the students.<sup>1185</sup> However, the registers do not reveal which courses students attended or whether they participated in lectures or elementary courses (classroom instruction), or both, since all participants were registered without differentiation.<sup>1186</sup> As an institution not offering qualifications or issuing diplomas, the institute only recorded students' background information but not their attendance; thus the registers do not reveal whether students stayed the whole term or discontinued earlier.

#### **INCREASING STUDENT NUMBERS AND A PREPONDERANCE OF WOMEN**

Inspired by the new educational institution, 511 people registered for its first term in spring 1899. This was obviously a fairly good result in an urban centre with approximately 31,000 inhabitants, also considering the fact that it was primarily 'the elite' or 'the intelligentsia of working people' who were supposed to participate.<sup>1187</sup> Enthusiasm soon waned and the numbers dropped, only regaining the level of the first term at the end of the 1910s. The upward trend was nevertheless disrupted by the Civil War in 1918 but, in spite of the tragic circumstances, the disruption was temporary. In the mid-1920s, the yearly

1183. KTK, *Kaupunginvaltuusto 1933*, 201–203; *1934*, 185–186; *1935*, 214–215.

1184. KTK, *Kotitalouslautakunta 1935*, 3–5; *1936*, 4–5; *1937*, 4.

1185. TKA, TTO Ab:1, Oppilasluettelo 1899–1924.

1186. Nor the register cards collected in the 1920s and 1930s usually contain the names of courses. TKA, TTO Bd:1–2, Oppilaskortisto 1924–1937.

1187. Virtanen 1975, 312–313 (Appendix V, number of students); *Aamulehti*, 'Ruotsin työväenopistoista IV' by S[everi] N[yman] 22 February 1900.



number of students exceeded one thousand and remained on that level during the 1930s. In the last academic year before the Second World War there were more the 1,700 students at the institute (Table 9).<sup>1188</sup>

**Table 9. Tampere Workers' Institute. Student numbers 1900–1939.**

	All	Women	Men
1900–1901	134	49	85
1905–1906	137	57	80
1910–1911	310	198	112
1915–1916	407	259	148
1920–1921	458	316	142
1925–1926	1 441	1 084	357
1930–1931	1 191	844	347
1935–1936	1 260	915	345
1938–1939	1 734	1 368	366

Source: Virtanen 1975, 312–313.

When the yearly registrations are compared with the number of inhabitants of fifteen years or older, the proportion of students seems at first sight to be rather small: in 1910 1.1 per cent, in 1920 1.3 per cent and in 1930 2.5 per cent of the townspeople. The whole population was of course not the target group. However, given that working-class people made up approximately two thirds of it in 1920, the proportion of students still hardly exceeded roughly 2 per cent of the target population.<sup>1189</sup> Such yearly figures are nevertheless cross-sections illustrating certain points of time and cannot reveal the entire sphere of the institute's influence. In the course of years new people found their way to it, raising the number of those who had been students there to thousands. Moreover, one institution with meagre resources could not have served a much larger clientele and it must also be kept in mind that students attended on a voluntary basis. What is also noteworthy is that the proportion more than doubled from 1910 to 1930.

1188. Virtanen 1975, 312–313 (Appendix V). Between 1899 and 1924 students registered both for autumn and spring terms and the student numbers of this period given by Virtanen concern autumn terms. From the autumn term 1924 students registered once in an academic year and the numbers hereafter contain those registered by 1 February.

1189. The percentages have been calculated on the following bases: *SVT VI, Väestötillastoa 44:4*, 'Tampere 1910', Table VII, p. 46–49; *SVT VI, Väestötillastoa 54:4*, 'Tampere 1920', Table VII, p. 34–35; *SVT VI, Väestötillastoa 71:4*, 'Tampere 1930', Table VII, p. 28–31; Virtanen 1975, 312–313 (Appendix V); Jutikkala 1979, 30–31.

The most striking feature was the majority of women practically throughout the period. From 1908, women made up at least 60 per cent of students and from the turn of the 1920s usually more than 70 per cent.<sup>1190</sup> The workers' institute was not the only local educational institution witnessing young women's interest in voluntary education since the earlier mentioned extension of elementary school also functioned as a form of adult education for many.<sup>1191</sup> One explanation for the female majority at the workers' institute could be the fact that women were also in the majority in the population. In 1905 for instance, there were 122 women per 100 men and in 1920 the corresponding figure was 131 women.<sup>1192</sup> Yet the female majority in the workers' institute was not only a feature peculiar to Tampere as from the 1920s it was typical that women formed approximately two thirds of students at workers' institutes in other towns as well. In rural folk high schools women were also in the majority.<sup>1193</sup> Girls' and young women's interest in education seems actually to have been a typical feature of Finnish society since secondary schools and universities also attracted them. Girls already outnumbered boys at secondary schools in the 1910s. The number of female university students started to increase rapidly at the end of the 1920s and in the early 1930s they amounted to one third of students, the highest proportion in the world.<sup>1194</sup>

The female majority at the Finnish workers' institutes from the early 1920s onwards can partly be explained by the subjects offered. Foreign languages and such practical skills targeted at women as handicrafts and home economics were among the courses appearing most frequently in the programme. As in Tampere, the workers' institutes responded to the hopes of the already registered female students with these subjects but evidently such courses also attracted new students.<sup>1195</sup> As discussed in the previous chapter, the practical instruction at the Tampere Workers' Institute was developing in a commercial direction in the 1920s, improving skills useful for clerical workers and thus serving the purposes of women's vocational education. In the early twentieth century, commercial schooling was actually one of the few opportunities for girls and young women while boys and young men in Tampere, as in other towns, could more often utilize on-the-job training, vocational school or

1190. Virtanen 1975, 312–313 (Appendix V). There were three years between 1899 and 1906 when men were in the majority.

1191. See Chapter 4.2.2.

1192. For the female majority, see Jutikkala 1979, 15–16, 28–29.

1193. Ahonen 2011, 446.

1194. Kaarninen M., 1995, 150, 221–222.

1195. Huuhka 1990, 236–238.

vocational courses. Since adult education did not serve young school-leavers only but adults wishing to improve their deficient education, the commercial courses probably attracted young women, working for example in factories, with hopes of becoming clerical workers or shop assistants. The workers' institute and an evening school for shop assistants were the only opportunities for those compelled to work for their living.<sup>1196</sup>

When explaining the female majority at the Tampere Workers' Institute, a reason peculiar to the locality is the role of factory work among women, shown by the fact that in 1910, for instance, more than sixty per cent of working women were employed in industry.<sup>1197</sup> This was reflected in the institute: both in 1899 and 1909, half of the female students were factory workers.<sup>1198</sup> Industrial work can also explain why women were already in the majority in the early years of the century, when the subjects mentioned above were not yet on the programme. Enthusiasm for studying could probably diffuse more easily in work communities such as factories with a large number of fellow workers, often other women. It must have been easier to enter the institute with friends or acquaintances, which is also suggested by the student register of the first term. The names in it are not in alphabetical order and several of its pages contain clusters of female factory workers, whose names have clearly been recorded one after another in the order they had registered.<sup>1199</sup>

#### **AN INSTITUTE FOR THE YOUNG AND YOUNG ADULTS**

In 1927, the legislation on state subsidies defined sixteen years as the minimum age for students but before that there were no age limits at the Finnish workers' institutes, with the exception of Helsinki. This institute had set the minimum age at eighteen years but nonetheless admitted sixteen-year-olds who had completed elementary school.<sup>1200</sup> In 1899, the national assembly of the Finnish workers' associations had suggested the minimum age to be as low as fourteen years, implying that workers' institutes were also intended to form

1196. School-like vocational training opened up earlier to boys than girls, for example a municipal vocational day school for girls started in Tampere in 1926, fourteen years later than its counterpart for boys. Kaarninen M. 1995, 85–91, 94, 105–108, 115–118, 123, 142.

1197. *SVT VI, Väestötilastoa 48*, 'Väestön ryhmitys ammatin ja elinkeinon mukaan 1910', 9–11, [https://www.doria.fi/bitstream/handle/10024/67276/vael48\\_1910.pdf?sequence=1&isAllowed=y](https://www.doria.fi/bitstream/handle/10024/67276/vael48_1910.pdf?sequence=1&isAllowed=y), accessed 1 February 2022.

1198. TKA, TFO Ab:1, Oppilasluettelo 1899–1924.

1199. *Ibid.*

1200. Huuhka 1990, 101, 200.

a component of further education of the young workers who had recently left elementary school.<sup>1201</sup>

Even without any age limits the number of students under sixteen years remained small at the Tampere Workers' Institute during its two first decades. In a city like Tampere, adolescents had good opportunities for attending elementary school and its extension already before education became compulsory in 1921. Although such very young people were absent, the institute was distinctly a study place for the young and young adults. Age grouping varies in the statistics of the annual reports and, after the mid-1920s, those over 21 years were combined into a single group, but closer examination of three years—1899, 1909 and 1921—on the basis of the student register provides a more detailed picture of the age distribution (Table 10).

**Table 10. Tampere Workers' Institute. Ages of students in 1899, 1909, 1921.**

Age	1899 %	1909 %	1921 %
-15	1.0	1.1	5.6
16-20	23.3	23.1	26.8
21-25	29.6	20.3	28.1
26-30	18.2	17.8	14.7
31-35	7.3	7.1	10.5
36-40	4.3	2.1	7.7
41-45	1.6	1.1	2.6
46-50	1.0	1.1	1.3
50-55	0.6	0.3	0.2
55-			0.6
No information	13.1	26.0	1.9
Total %	100.0	100.0	100.0
	N=511	N=281	N=620

1899: Spring term, age at the beginning of 1899

1909: Autumn term, age at the end of 1909

1921: Autumn term, age at the end of 1921

Source: TKA, TTO Ab:1, Opiskelijaluettelo 1899-1924.

The vast majority of students, as many as three quarters, were 30 years or younger. The groups of 16-20 and 21-25-year-olds were the largest.<sup>1202</sup>

1201. *Kolmannen yleisen Suomen työväenyhdistysten edustajain kokouksen pöytäkirja*, 123, 126; Ahonen 2011, 433.

1202. In 1899 and 1909 a substantial proportion of students had not reported their age (in 1909 as many as 26%).

The position of working-class youth belonging to the former age group did not differ from that of adults in the sense that they had to earn their living in daily work. For them the workers' institute, like evening schools such as vocational evening school, school for shop assistants and the extension of elementary school, was a place where they could continue their studies in their free time. There was still a difference between these educational institutions since the workers' institute was outside the school system and could not provide qualifications.

During the 1920s and the early 1930s, the proportion of those under 21 years even increased slightly, forming one third of the students. However, only the minority of these belonged to the youngest group consisting of 16 and 17-year-olds; for instance in 1930, their proportion was 10 per cent of all students.<sup>1203</sup> This proportion, smaller than the average of the Finnish workers' institutes, indicates that the Tampere Workers' Institute maintained its adult education character.<sup>1204</sup> The age structure of the Finnish folk high schools differed even more clearly from that of the workers' institutes as a substantially larger part of their students belonged to the youngest age groups. In 1910 and 1920, roughly 70 to 80 per cent of the students at folk high schools were under 22 years.<sup>1205</sup>

Due to the scarce and differently compiled information on the students at the Gothenburg Workers' Institute comparisons are difficult. The only information on students attending lectures before the mid-1880s in Gothenburg suggests that they may have been older than the students of the Tampere institute whereas the information on elementary courses in Gothenburg shows a rather similar pattern of youth and young adults participating in instruction.

However, the Tampere Workers' Institute cannot be regarded as school for youth only because at least half and sometimes as many as two thirds of its students were over twenty and those in their thirties were not exceptional. Thus the institute brought together people of various ages and created an educational environment different from elementary schools, which often formed the basis of students' school experiences. Homogeneity characterized secondary schools as well, but the working-class students of the institute seldom had experiences of them.

1203. KTK, *TTO 1929–1930*, 23; *1934–1935*, 32.

1204. Huuhka 1990, 213–214 (Table 5); Ahonen 2011, 445.

1205. Ahonen 2011, 445.

## ELEMENTARY SCHOOL – THE TYPICAL EDUCATIONAL BACKGROUND

The information on students' earlier education in the student registers and in the statistics compiled from them is more ambiguous. A significant part of students (in 1899 and 1909 about one third) had not reported their earlier education and this leaves open the question whether they had no schooling at all or if the information is just missing.<sup>1206</sup> Moreover, it is not clear how uncompleted studies at educational institutions other than the elementary school were classified in the statistics. Notwithstanding such ambiguity and the fact that the figures in Table 11. are only approximate, the statistics can still shed light on students' educational backgrounds.

**Table 11. Tampere Workers' Institute. Students' educational backgrounds in 1909, 1914, 1921 and 1924.**

	1909	1914	1921	1924
	%	%	%	%
Secondary school or higher education	3	1	3	3
More than elementary school	6	11	6	4
Elementary school or upper vocational evening school	38	63	73	81
Part of elementary school or lower vocational evening school	6	12	9	4
Smaller amount or no schooling	16	13	9	8
No information	31			
Total %	100	100	100	100
	N= 280	N=270	N=620	N=1035

The information concerns the autumn terms.

Source: KTK, TTO 1909–1910, 15; 1914–1915, 10; 1921–1922, 9; 1924–1925, 14.

The most typical background was elementary school or upper vocational evening school<sup>1207</sup>, considered equivalent to elementary school in the statistics of the institute. The proportion of students who had completed this education nevertheless changed significantly within only fifteen years. In 1909 they were in the minority but by 1924 the proportion doubled and reached the level of 80 per cent. Conversely, the proportion of those with incomplete elementary school, smaller amounts of schooling or no schooling at all declined. In 1909, this group was probably larger than the figures would suggest since obviously

1206. Missing information does not necessarily mean that a person had not attended any school since information on occupation and year of birth might also be missing. TKA, TTO Ab:1 Oppilasluettelo 1899–1924.

1207. Before 1924, vocational evening school (*käsityöläiskoulu*) was divided into lower and upper divisions.

some of those not reporting their earlier education had no schooling or incomplete schooling. By 1924, this group had shrunk to approximately one tenth of students.

For the most part, inadequate education can be explained by migration as in the rural areas elementary schools were not within everybody's reach. Only about one third of the first students at the workers' institute in spring 1899 had been born in Tampere.<sup>1208</sup> Although the opportunities for elementary education in urban centres were relatively good, in 1910 almost thirty per cent of 20 to 30-year-olds born in Tampere had not completed elementary school.<sup>1209</sup> However, uncompleted elementary school in towns, compared with that in rural areas, probably still meant more years at school. In towns, one reason for interrupted schooling could have been work. Child labour had diminished but at the turn of the twentieth century there were still around 400 factory workers between the ages of twelve and fifteen in Tampere.<sup>1210</sup>

Students with secondary or longer education were exceptional and neither was the proportion of students with other further education after elementary school usually much more substantial. This kind of further education could have been the evening school for shop assistants, commercial school, technological school or vocational school.<sup>1211</sup> Although the reported formal education was mainly limited to elementary school, this does not exclude the possibility of self-educated people, suggested by a student who had informed the institute in spring 1899 that his earlier education was 'from here and there'.<sup>1212</sup>

Insufficient basic education was clearly a reason for attending the elementary courses of the workers' institute and insufficient elementary education in a rural setting, more typical among girls, may also have contributed to women's majority at the institute. Even before education was made compulsory in 1921, there was practically no difference between boys' and girls' school attendance in towns. In rural areas, by contrast, the majority of elementary school pupils were boys from the 1870s although the difference diminished towards the 1920s.<sup>1213</sup> This difference can also be perceived in Tampere. In 1910, 60 per cent of those women between 20 and 30 years born

1208. TKA, TTO Da1:1 Vuosikertomus kevät 1899. More detailed conclusions on the relationship between insufficient education and birthplace among the students of the workers' institute are difficult to draw since much information on earlier schooling is missing in the registers of the first years.

1209. *SVT VI Väestötilasto 44:4*, 'Tampere 1910', table VII, p. 46–49.

1210. Rasila 1984, 266–269.

1211. In Finnish, *kauppa-apulaiskoulu, kauppakoulu, teollisuuskoulu, ammattikoulu*.

1212. TKA, TTO Ab:1 Oppilasluettelo 1899–1924.

1213. Rahikainen 2011, 373–379 (Tables 11a–11c).

outside Tampere had not completed elementary school whereas the proportion of similar men was 48 per cent. There was a notable difference in the younger age group as well: for 15 to 20-year-olds the corresponding figures were 42 per cent and 32 per cent. Moreover, there were twice as many women as men in these age groups because young women formed the majority of those migrating from the rural areas.<sup>1214</sup>

### **NOT ONLY SKILLED WORKERS AND CRAFTSPEOPLE**

According to the annual reports and histories of the institute, until the end of the 1930s the clear majority of the students at the Tampere Workers' Institute were workers but the statistics provide hardly any more specific information on them.<sup>1215</sup> Students' occupations were classified in different ways in the annual reports of the first years and by the 1920s the institute had adopted the practice of grouping manual workers in one category only. In addition, the occupations of women and men were not recorded separately. For this reason I chose three years – spring 1899, autumn 1909 and autumn 1921 – to scrutinize in more detail and made similar classifications as in the case of the Gothenburg Workers' Institute.<sup>1216</sup>

Starting with women, who were in the majority in Tampere (Table 12), the four categories of workers – craftswomen, skilled workers, unskilled workers and domestic servants – formed a clear majority of female students, ranging from two thirds to three quarters. This shows that female students' occupations did not differ from the general picture of all students given earlier in the annual reports and histories of the institute. Of the other groups, those who had not reported any occupation stood out at the two first timepoints examined here and possibly included housewives and young girls involved in domestic tasks since the proportion of women at home was otherwise rather small. This is suggested by the figures for 1921: while the category of 'at home' was the third largest of all with 16 per cent of the students, only one per cent had not reported any occupation. Since these two groups must also have contained working men's wives and daughters, the proportion of working-class women was without doubt larger than the job titles suggest. The proportion of other

1214. When comparing people born in Tampere, uncompleted elementary school in these age groups was more typical among men than women but the difference was smaller than in the case of those who had moved to Tampere. *SVT VI, Väestötilasto 44:4* 'Tampere 1910', table VII, p. 46–49; Rasila 1984, 223; Jutikkala 1979, 15.

1215. Lammi 1949, 273; Virtanen 1975, 24, 86 (Table 7). Lammi (1924, 52) classified workers into three groups, factory workers, craftspeople and outdoor workers.

1216. For the criteria and problems of classification, see Chapter 3.3.3.



groups remained insignificant and even the category of clerical workers and shop assistants was small. Middle-class women like teachers were absent but this was not unexpected with regard to elementary courses having not much to offer those with some schooling. Interestingly, however, neither did the lectures of the institute attract them.

**Table 12. Tampere Workers' Institute. Occupations of female students in 1899, 1909 and 1921.**

	Spring 1899 %	Autumn 1909 %	Autumn 1921 %
1. Craftswomen	8	15	22
2. Skilled workers	4	1	8
3. Unskilled workers	48	51	37
4. Domestic servants	7	1	8
5. Clerical workers, shop assistants	6	5	6
6. Teachers etc.	4	3	
7. Pupils/students	2	1	1
8. Housewives/at home	7	6	16
9. Other	1		1
10. No information	13	17	1
Total %	100	100	100
	N=270	N=173	N=423

Source: TKA, TTO Ab:1, Oppilasluettelo 1899–1924.

Focusing on the four workers' categories, the group of unskilled or unspecialized workers was the largest. Because this category consists mainly of factory workers (with no specific titles), its size is not at all surprising in Tampere. In the factories women were placed in jobs requiring less skill and offering less pay than the tasks of men. However, it is still possible that the title 'factory worker' (*tehtaalainen*) was either the choice of the registrar or a general manner of referring to women's factory work no matter if they were specialized or not as the skills of women were probably not acknowledged similarly to those of men.<sup>1217</sup> Thus some of those named as factory workers may have been skilled or specialized workers.

Since the number of female students at the Tampere Workers' Institute was substantial, craftswomen and skilled workers have been classified here as separate groups. However, the percentage of skilled workers was noteworthy in 1921 only and the number of craftswomen exceeded them in all these

1217. On women in the factories of Tampere, see Rasila 1984, 264–265 and Kaarninen M. 1995, 130–131. On the understanding of men's and women's skills, see Teräs 2001, 12–16.

years. The relatively small proportion of these groups that could have been anticipated to form the core of female students as in Gothenburg can without doubt be explained by the fact that they were overshadowed by factory workers in the local workforce. The proportion of craftswomen was more substantial only in 1921. If craftswomen and skilled workers are treated as one group, this group becomes more notable especially at the last timepoint. The increase in their proportion was probably not only due to changing educational interests but obviously also reflects women's broadening job opportunities, shown by the larger number of job titles in the register. The majority of these groups, however, consisted of seamstresses and weavers.

The proportion of domestic servants in 1899 and 1921 is worth mentioning even though it could not be compared with that of factory workers. Their proportion was also substantially smaller than their share of the local female workforce. It seems that the working hours of domestic servants living in their employer's household made it difficult to participate regularly in lectures and courses.<sup>1218</sup> Similar problems may have been faced by housewives. One of them, a long-time student of the institute since its beginning, wrote that she had attended lectures as often as she could free herself from household duties. Such breaks had been important to this woman who had not even attended elementary school in her childhood, creating a thirst for knowledge and offering intellectual nourishment for her hard daily work.<sup>1219</sup>

As regards male students, the three groups of workers formed a clear majority, which is consistent with the information provided by the annual reports and the histories of the institute. These even exceeded eighty per cent in 1921 (Table 13).<sup>1220</sup> The class 'no information', which was significant in the two earlier years, probably also included workers and would thus increase their numbers among the students. Of the other groups, only clerical workers stood out at the two latter timepoints.

1218. In 1920, domestic servants living in the household of their employer accounted for 14 per cent of the female workforce in Tampere. Kaarninen M. 1995, 142.

1219. TKA, TTO Hc1:1, "Tampereen työväenopiston 40-vuotis-muisto-julkaisu 16.1.1939", Ida Järvinen.

1220. In contrast to the Gothenburg case, male workers were divided into only three groups since no caretakers, drivers etc. appeared.

**Table 13. Tampere Workers' Institute. Occupations of male students in 1899, 1909 and 1921.**

	Spring 1899 %	Autumn 1909 %	Autumn 1921 %
1. Craftsmen	24	30	35
2. Skilled workers	11	6	14
3. Unskilled workers	36	25	31
4. Foremen, technicians etc.	4	1	3
5. Shopkeepers	2	2	1
6. Clerical workers, shop assistants	2	5	9
7. Minor officials			2
8. Teachers etc.	3	1	1
9. Pupils/students	1		1
10. Other	3	1	2
11. No information	14	29	1
Total %	100	100	100
	N=241	N=108	N=197

Source: TKA, TTO Ab:1, Oppilasluettelo 1899–1924.

Focusing on the three categories of workers, unskilled or unspecialized workers formed about half of them in 1899 while craftsmen were later in the majority. These two groups were also the largest groups among all male students. Factory workers constituted a notable part of unskilled workers but the range of occupations in this group was broader than among women, consisting also of those who called themselves general handymen.<sup>1221</sup> The relatively modest share of skilled or specialized workers is probably partly due to the classification criteria since in the early twentieth century many of those in traditional craftsmen's occupations had in reality a status similar to that of skilled workers. When craftsmen and skilled workers are combined, these two groups accounted for approximately fifty to sixty per cent of all workers. This is also in line with the examples provided by the Gothenburg Workers' Institute. Therefore, vocational skill seems to have been connected with the desire for self-improvement and to acquiring further skills. The idea of attending lectures and classes was perhaps more familiar to those who had attended, or had at least been expected to attend, vocational evening school.

Given the notable proportion of both female and male unskilled workers, it is evident that not only the better-off workers took part in the activities of the workers' institute. This is a significant finding considering the view

1221. In Finnish, *sekatyöläinen*. TKA, TTO Ab:2, Oppilasluettelo 1899–1924.

that adult education aimed at workers has often failed to attract them and has benefitted middle-class, or lower middle-class, people instead, which may to some extent have applied to the lectures at the Stockholm and Gothenburg workers' institutes.<sup>1222</sup> The participation of unskilled workers naturally reflects the local conditions and the demographic characteristics of Tampere as an industrial centre.

The insignificant proportion of groups other than workers indicates, together with the information concerning later years, that it was not before the 1950s that the Tampere Workers' Institute became that kind of 'citizens' institute' attracting the broader range of townspeople E. S. Yrjö-Koskinen had envisaged.<sup>1223</sup>

#### 4.2.4. The Workers' Institute and Active Citizenship

In this section, the effects of adult education are discussed by exploring the connection between the workers' institute and participation in local decision-making. Given the difficulties in exploring the effects of adult education of the past discussed in Chapter 1.3.3., I have chosen an inverse strategy by starting from the decision-makers and examining how typical it was for them to have studied at the workers' institute. Looking at the effects from this perspective is also justified since education for citizenship played an important role in the arguments for establishing the workers' institute. The groups of Tampere decision-makers examined here consist of city councillors and members of municipal boards, whose involvement in the Tampere Workers' Institute has been investigated with the help of its student registers. The methods and principles of collecting the data are explained in Appendix 2.<sup>1224</sup> This data contains councillors and board members from two periods, 1919–1923 and 1935–1939, of which the first coincides with the early years of democratized local government.

Municipal self-government has been an important element of the Finnish representative and participatory democracy. Many of the decisions impacting on people's everyday lives are taken at the municipal level, including issues related to education, health care and the maintenance of infrastructure. Councillors elected by residents exercise the highest authority but members

1222. See e.g. Törnqvist 1996, 89–90 and Chapter 3.3.3.

1223. For information on the development of students' occupational status, see Virtanen 1975, 180 (Table 23).

1224. Research data 'Municipal decision-makers'.

of different boards and governing bodies of municipal institutions also act in commissions of trust. The latter manage the operations of various municipal activities and take part in the preparation of decisions. The number of board members is substantially higher than that of councillors and they are chosen by the town council either from among councillors or from other citizens. Therefore, municipal boards have extended the circle of citizens involved in decision-making and governance. Since board members are usually recommended by local party organizations, it is typical that these have also been politically active even if not council members.<sup>1225</sup>

The reform of municipal elections taking effect in 1918 was a significant turning point in making local decision-making democratic in Finland. The reform extended political citizenship to the entire adult population, both men and women, also at local level. This took place more than a decade later than the reform of the parliamentary elections. Income or property no longer determined the right to vote and the right to stand for election.<sup>1226</sup> Because of the Civil War fought from January to May 1918, the first elections according to the new legislation were postponed until the December of that year, which was nevertheless only seven months after the fighting had ceased. A decisive battle had been fought in Tampere and therefore the first democratic municipal elections there were held when the city was still badly suffering from the aftermath of the war.<sup>1227</sup> Local democracy nevertheless played a significant role in reconciliation as in the subsequent years the Finnish town councils and municipal administration were among those institutions providing opportunities for co-operation between former adversaries.<sup>1228</sup>

As discussed earlier, the reform changed the social composition of the city council fundamentally. For the first time, workers formed a significant element in the council with approximately 30 per cent of seats during the 1920s and 1930s. Along with social composition, the balance of power between political parties also shifted. In the elections of 1918, the Social Democrats won more than half of the votes and during the 1920s and 1930s their group was the largest, consisting of 20 to 25 councillors. In the 1920s, the left also included the Communists, with one to five councillors.<sup>1229</sup>

1225. Kallenautio 1984, 220–224, 233.

1226. Suffrage and eligibility were denied e.g. to residents in poorhouses and others maintained regularly by the municipality. Hakalehto 1984, 129.

1227. Jutikkala 1979, 494; Tepora and Roselius 2014, Tikka 2014, 100, 102–104.

1228. On the role of local government in reconciliation after the Civil War, see Katajisto 2018.

1229. Jutikkala 1979, 167–171, 494–502.

The first period under examination starts in 1919, in the aftermath of the Civil War. Many members of the Social Democratic Party who had fought in the defeated Red Guards were still in prison camps. However, it is possible that even some of these appeared among the decision-makers of the period 1919–1923 since one third of the councillors changed yearly and those released from the camps could stand for election in the subsequent years. In general, the Civil War shocked the leading figures of the workers' institute movement and gave rise to reflections about the failure of adult education.<sup>1230</sup> In Tampere, too, the city council of 1918 found it sad that 'the majority of the students at the workers' institute had been among the first to threaten the lives and property of those who had assisted them on the path of education'.<sup>1231</sup> The work of the institute had been interrupted by the war in January 1918 but life returned to its normal routines astonishingly soon and the institute opened again at the beginning of the autumn term. The number of students nevertheless decreased temporarily. There must also have been serious tensions between the victors, to which local educated middle-class people belonged, and the vanquished. In addition, the spirits were low among the Reds and their adherents as most of the dead had fought on their side.<sup>1232</sup> A female student of the institute described an atmosphere of hopelessness, which was nevertheless alleviated when students could meet at the institute. According to her, it was like coming out of darkness even though the gathering was still funereal and students had hardly any strength to start discussions.<sup>1233</sup>

During the early 1920s and the latter part of the 1930s, a significant proportion of decision-makers in Tampere had a connection to the workers' institute. Approximately a quarter of all male and female councillors and members of municipal boards had studied at the Tampere Workers' Institute either before being elected or when acting in commissions of trust (Table 14). Looking at the smaller group of councillors, the proportion of those who had studied at the workers' institute increases to one third during both periods.<sup>1234</sup> There was a clear difference between women and men. The proportion of

1230. Jutikkala 1979, 496; Huuhka 1990, 128–131; Nyström, S. 2016, 72–74.

1231. KTK, *Kaupunginvaltuusto 1918*, 70.

1232. KTK, *TTO 1918–1919*, 12; *1922–1923*, 12.

1233. TKA, *TTO Hc1:1*, 'Tampereen työväenopiston 40-vuotis-muistojulkaisu 16.1.1939', Ida Järvinen.

1234. These estimates can be regarded as rather conservative because of the possibility that not all decision-makers were perceived in the student registers and because a few councillors or board members with the same name had to be excluded as it was not possible to identify them with the person in the student register (see Appendix 2). It is also possible that some decision-makers had studied elsewhere at a workers' institute.

female councillors and board members having studied at the institute was substantially higher and among the small group of female councillors students or former students of the institute even formed the majority. This is not surprising given the preponderance of women at the institute.

**Table 14. Councillors and members of municipal boards in Tampere in 1919–1923 and 1935–1939 and those who had studied at Tampere Workers’ Institute.**

	1919–1923			1935–1939		
	All	Women	Men	All	Women	Men
Number of councillors and board members	457	62	395	477	74	403
Those who had studied at the workers’ institute	111 (24%)	28 (45%)	83 (21%)	121 (25%)	25 (34%)	96 (24%)
Number of councillors	97	11	86	81	5	76
Those who had studied at the workers’ institute	34 (35%)	8 (73%)	26 (30%)	26 (32%)	3 (60%)	23 (30%)

Source: Research data ‘Municipal decision-makers’.

Roughly one third of the decision-makers during these two periods were still directors, businessmen and academically educated professionals not belonging to the target group of the workers’ institute. As shown in the previous section, these also did not attend its activities. To form a more appropriate picture of the connection between the workers’ institute and decision-making, I focused on the actual target group, workers, together with the lower-middle-class representatives. Therefore, I excluded directors, businessmen and academically educated people from that number of councillors and board members from which the proportion of decision-makers with studies at the institute is counted.<sup>1235</sup> Within this group consisting of working-class and lower-middle-class decision-makers, the proportion of students and former students of the workers’ institute increases to one third (Table 15). When focusing on the group of councillors alone, the proportion is even higher, roughly half during both periods.

1235. The remaining group of working-class and lower middle-class decision-makers includes for instance foremen, clerical workers, shopkeepers and elementary school teachers. The group also involves people who were in executive positions in workers’ associations and the co-operative business. The classification of women was difficult because of missing occupational titles.

**Table 15. Working and lower middle-class councillors and board members in 1919–1923 and 1935–1939 and those who had studied at Tampere Workers' Institute.**

	1919–1923	1935–1939
Number of working and lower middle-class councillors and board members	304	336
Those who had studied at the workers' institute	111 (37%)	121 (36%)
Number of working and lower middle-class councillors	61	56
Those who had studied at the workers' institute	34 (56%)	26 (46%)

Source: Research data 'Municipal decision-makers'.

The difference between the group including councillors and board members, on the one hand, and the group including councillors only, on the other, suggests that connection with the workers' institute became more typical when the level of political activity increased. Councillors had studied at the institute more often than had board members, who may have been party activists but not candidates in elections. Board members could also have been chosen from candidates who had not been elected to the council, which might suggest that there was some kind of connection between success in municipal politics and studies at the workers' institute. This does not of course mean a causal relationship but the connection could have been related to higher political and other civic activity among the electives, extending to adult education as well.

Interestingly, the differences between these two periods were small and show that the situation in the early 1920s with the recent reform in the electoral system was not exceptional. Although new educational opportunities emerged, the Tampere Workers' Institute continued to be a place of education for many municipal decision-makers acting in the latter part of the 1930s.

However, the registers do not reveal how active students the decision-makers were as it is possible that they had attended lectures and courses irregularly or even discontinued courses. Often the length of their attendance seems not to have been very long as more than half of the decision-makers of the first period had been registered for one or two terms only. Still, one third had participated in instruction from three terms to five years and there were even eight people who had stayed for over a decade, which can be characterized as a way of life.<sup>1236</sup> Moreover, the length of studying does not necessarily

1236. Research data 'Municipal decision-makers'.



reveal its significance and it is likely that even brief participation could have been one of the few experiences of organized education of people without schooling or completed elementary school course.

With regard to the chronology between studies and participation in decision-making, the majority had studied either before their term as councillors or board members or had started before their election but continued after it (Table 16). When the period 1935–1939 is considered, only a fraction had started their studies when already holding commissions of trust. It therefore seems that the new forces in municipal decision-making, consisting of the members of the social strata where short schooling was typical, were not in general inspired by their new positions to commence studies at the institute. This kind of chronology also makes one ponder what extent studying at the workers’ institute encouraged these people to take part in municipal politics but the source material used in this study cannot answer the question. For some of them, the workers’ institute may have been one impetus among others, of which participation in local political organizations was naturally the most obvious.<sup>1237</sup>

**Table 16. Chronology of studies and participation in decision-making among council and board members 1919–1923 and 1935–1939.**

	Studies preceding %	Partly simultaneous* %	Simultaneous %	Total %	N
Electives of 1919–1923	62.2	32.4	5.4	100.0	111
Electives of 1935–1939	79.3	19.0	1.7	100.0	121

\* Studying had begun before service as a councillor or board member but also continued thereafter.

Source: Research data 'Municipal decision-makers'.

There were also other opportunities for politically active workers to acquire knowledge, albeit not as regular as those offered by the workers’ institute. The social democratic Tampere Workers’ Association arranged education especially in the opening years of the twentieth century. Between 1902 and 1907 it organized lecture courses on social questions, covering, for example, different aspects of socialism, the status of the church and religion, education, suffrage, women’s role in the workers’ movement, temperance, co-operatives and savings funds. Lectures were principally given by the actors of the workers’ movement but at least two workers’ institute directors, Severi

1237. On the encouragement provided by the workers’ institute, see Chapter 4.2.5.

Nyman and I. V. Kaitila, also lectured there. Separate courses were arranged for adolescents on social questions and the women's section, the youth sections and some trade unions offered lectures to their members.<sup>1238</sup>

Political action and agitation therefore seems not to have totally replaced educational work within the Tampere Workers' Association at the beginning of the twentieth century, which has been the impression given regarding the early Finnish socialist workers' movement.<sup>1239</sup> However, a special agitation committee functioned within the association between 1903 and 1905, with the purpose of training speakers and organizing talks. These talks introduced the party's platform and the suffrage question but also covered similar more general topics like the above lectures, indicating that at least the organizers considered this kind of civic education important. The lecturing activities obviously dwindled but reading circles and discussion clubs functioned during the 1910s in different sections and trade unions operating within the workers' association.<sup>1240</sup>

Although the workers' institute was sometimes criticized by socialists, they usually seem to have regarded it as a complementary form of education to be utilized since workers and their associations lacked the resources to organize similar general education.<sup>1241</sup> Moreover, until the mid-1920s the institute was located in the building of the workers' association. From the 1920s, the educational work of the workers' movement was mainly conducted by the Workers' Educational Association (TSL)<sup>1242</sup>, which was established in 1919. The association and its local branch also organized courses, lectures and study circles in Tampere.<sup>1243</sup> The Finnish Workers' Educational Association, however, did not develop into a similar provider of general education as its Swedish model with study circles but focused more on the topical questions of the workers' movement.<sup>1244</sup>

1238. TKA, TTY Db:1 *Vuosikertomukset* 1902, 44–48; 1903, 44–49; 1904, 42–44; 1905, 43, 59–63; 1906, 50–56; 1907, 25; 1909, 106–108; 1912, 77–78; 1913, 40.

1239. Railo 1939, 43; Soikkanen 1961, 137–140; Kalela 1978, 152.

1240. TKA, TTY Db:1, *Vuosikertomukset* 1903, 15; 1904, 35–38; 1905, 33–35; 1906, 8; 1908–1917. Even the courses organized by the Social Democratic Party at the beginning of the 1910s in Helsinki included general education. Ehrnrooth 1992, 225–226, 238–241.

1241. Turunen 2012, 101–102; Turunen 2016, 38–39.

1242. *Työväen Sivistysliitto*.

1243. TKA, TTY Db:1 *Vuosikertomukset* 1923, 5; 1924, 5; Tampereen jalkinetyöntekijäin sos.dem. osasto E:3, *Tampereen seudun työväen sivistystoimikunnan toimintakertomukset* 1930–1931, 1932–1933, 1934–1935.

1244. Kalela 1978, 153, 180–181.

Predictably, most of the city councillors who had studied at the workers' institute represented the Social Democrats but the political affiliations of those acting merely as board members cannot be ascertained.<sup>1245</sup> During the period 1919–1923, altogether 34 councillors had studied at the institute and 29 of them were Social Democrats, three Communists and two represented a coalition of non-socialists. In the latter period, the role of the Social Democrats was even more emphasized since communist organizations were forbidden in the 1930s. Of 26 councillors having studied at the institute, 24 represented the Social Democrats and two were elected from the list of a non-socialist electoral alliance.<sup>1246</sup>

Active citizens who had studied at the workers' institute are exemplified by two sisters, Ida Vihuri (1882–1929) and Kaisa Hildén<sup>1247</sup> (1891–1977). Their background also aptly exemplifies the female students of the institute. Vihuri and Hildén were born near Tampere as the daughters of a farm labourer and both had worked as domestic servants before starting in Finlayson's cotton mill. In the student register of the institute, Vihuri reported that she had attended evening school for two years, by which she probably meant vocational evening school. Hildén had attended elementary school but had not completed it. Both were long-time students at the workers' institute. Vihuri took part in instruction between 1901 and 1921, although not yearly but was registered for eighteen terms, while Hildén started at the institute in 1909 and, by 1924, had been registered as a student for twenty-one terms. They entered local administration after the reform in municipal suffrage, Hildén in 1919 and her sister two years later. What is interesting considering their short formal education is that Hildén was opted onto the vocational evening school board and Vihuri onto the elementary school board. Both were also activists in the social democratic labour movement and Vihuri at least was a member of a study circle organized by the women's social democratic organization in Tampere. However, serving on the school boards was just a beginning for their political careers. Vihuri was a member of parliament from 1922 until 1929, when she died in a steamboat

1245. This information is not recorded in the municipal documents of the period. Neither is the political background of councillors but it can be examined by referring to lists of candidates. Even though the lists of the early 1920s did not include the names of parties, these can be deduced on the basis of people featuring in the lists since many of them were well-known figures in local politics.

1246. TKA, Kunnallisvaalien keskus- ja vaalilautakuntien arkisto Ca:1, Minutes 1918–1922, Files I, II, IV Valitsijayhdistykset ja ehdokaslistat 14 November 1918, 23 January 1920, 7 November 1921; Ca:2 Minutes 1922–1925, Files V–VI Valitsijayhdistykset ja ehdokaslistat 7 November 1922, 7 November 1923; J:2 Ehdokaslistat 1930, 1933, 1934, 1936.

1247. She later changed her name to Hilelä.

accident near Tampere. Hildén was elected a city councillor in 1923 and a member of parliament in 1930, in which position she continued for almost three decades.<sup>1248</sup>

#### 4.2.5. Resources Generated by Adult Education

What was the significance of studying at the workers' institute from the perspective of active citizenship? Given the difficulties in examining the effects of adult education in the past, I have chosen the strategy of discussing potential effects and focused on the resources such studies could generate for acting in civic society and in local government. Drawing on the notions of human capital and social capital, I have divided these resources into two parts, knowledge and skills on the one hand, and social resources on the other. By analysing these resources, it is possible to shed light on the significance of this kind of adult education not only from the perspective of active citizenship but also more generally.

##### **KNOWLEDGE AND SKILLS: ASSETS AND CULTURAL CITIZENSHIP**

At least two thirds of the councillors and board members of the period 1919–1923 with studies at the institute had no more than elementary school as their basic education. Some decision-makers of this group had not completed elementary school and there may even have been some without formal schooling.<sup>1249</sup> Thus, in many cases their earlier education had not equipped them with the skills needed in the tasks of local government and even elementary courses had something to offer them. Even if they had mastered the basics of spelling, extra practice was doubtless useful. Better skills in spelling and grammar were necessary for the secretaries of associations, councillors and board members drafting various documents and for all those writing letters as this was an important means of communication. Of the more specialized skills, bookkeeping was indispensable, for example, to the treasurers of associations. The above-mentioned Ida Vihuri acted as the secretary of the Tampere Workers' Association and Kaisa Hildén as its

1248. Research data 'Municipal decision-makers'; Kanerva 1986, 264; Voionmaa 1935, Appendix II, 9; Koivisto 2003, 443; Turunen 2016, 38; Pikkusaari 2014, 79; Suomen kansanedustajat, <https://www.eduskunta.fi/FI/kansanedustajat/Sivut/911733.aspx>; <https://www.eduskunta.fi/FI/kansanedustajat/Sivut/910146.aspx>, accessed 1 February 2022.

1249. Research data 'Municipal decision-makers'. The proportion may even have been three quarters since not everybody reported earlier education, suggesting short schooling since longer schooling would no doubt have been noted.

treasurer.<sup>1250</sup> As noted, the elementary and practical courses at the institute were developed to cater for the needs of civic and business life, including practical exercises for these purposes.<sup>1251</sup> Moreover, skills, for instance, in bookkeeping and more advanced skills in writing and arithmetic were evidently assets for the officials of associations and candidates in elections since not everybody possessed such skills and some might even lack the basics. Although Finns have habitually emphasized how practically the entire population could read at an early stage, in 1920 almost 30 per cent of people over fifteen years old could still not write. In urban centres, where the situation was better, the proportion was nevertheless almost ten per cent.<sup>1252</sup>

The workers' institute also trained students in practical skills more directly linked to civic activity. Meeting procedures were practised in discussion meetings and study circles, where students acted in the roles of chairperson and secretary by turns. One of the subjects taught at the institute was rhetoric, which prepared students for public speaking.

As far as theoretical instruction is concerned, the strong position of social studies and economics ensured that lectures and later study circles could offer basic knowledge on how society and the economy functioned. Since the institute interpreted political neutrality loosely in teaching, it was possible to introduce topical social questions and various political ideologies. This obviously increased students' knowledge but must also have provided perspectives differing from those emphasized in political associations.<sup>1253</sup> As lecture topics diversified from the early 1920s onwards with presentations by experts in various fields, practical information relevant to politically active people and decision-makers could also be acquired. Lectures addressed topics such as municipal administration and municipal affairs in general, housing policy, social welfare, child welfare, healthcare and current economic questions. The more methodical and intensive studying in study circles with textbooks and students' presentations not only offered more profound knowledge but also accustomed students to writing and expressing themselves in public and, generally, to persevering work requiring initiative.<sup>1254</sup>

Nevertheless, it was still the humanities that dominated the topics of lectures. Historical topics often had political or social dimensions, but at first sight it can be difficult to realize how subjects like literature or cultural

1250. Koivisto 2003, 443; Kanerva 1986, 264.

1251. See Chapter 4.2.2.

1252. *STV 1940*, Table 20. 'Väestö sivistyskannan mukaan vuosina 1890–1930', p. 50–51.

1253. Cf. Ambjörnsson 1988, 220, 229.

1254. *KTK, TIO 1906–1907–1934–1935*.

history could contribute to participation in civic life. The role of general education should not, however, be underestimated. Theoretical instruction, in general, familiarized workers with the kind of language and expression used by educated people in public discussion.<sup>1255</sup> Humanities specifically offered people with short earlier education subject matter for intellectual development by opening up fields which differed from their daily surroundings.

General education and culture were connected with the upper classes but many workers had adopted the idea that they, too, had the right to gain access to these and familiarize themselves with the fruits of culture. Participation and inclusion in education and culture was understood to be a matter of social justice.<sup>1256</sup> One of the worker activists emphasizing this was Ida Vihuri, who called for workers' right to gain access to education, literature, newspapers, science and art.<sup>1257</sup> While the upper classes considered education a means of persuading workers to appreciate bourgeois culture, and thus a means of integrating them into society, workers for their part may have regarded education and culture as a bridgehead from which they could gain access to bourgeois society or a strategy for qualifying as decision-makers in it.<sup>1258</sup> Oscar Olsson, a Swedish adult educator, used the concept cultural democracy in the 1920s when emphasizing everybody's right to enjoy cultural heritage and to familiarize themselves with the achievements in science.<sup>1259</sup> Although a specific working-class culture was also developing, participation in the culture and education of the upper classes, considered by these the standard in society, could thus promote workers' cultural citizenship.<sup>1260</sup> Familiarity with this intellectual world could increase their experience of inclusion in society and boost their self-confidence.

The self-confidence of these new decision-makers could not, however, be enhanced by degrees and diplomas since the institute did not offer formal qualifications. Nor could the irregular programme produce a systematic basis of knowledge as could secondary schools. Due to the voluntary nature of

1255. Ambjörnsson 1988, 119–120, 219–220.

1256. Arvidson (1985, 72) has referred to the idea of inclusion in culture (*delaktighet*) in his study about the education of Swedish popular movements and Seitter (1990, 57) pointed to the aspect of social justice when writing about lecturing activities in Frankfurt.

1257. Vihuri quoted in Turunen 2016, 42. The idea that all citizens were entitled to education and culture (*sivistys*) had also been stated by A.H. Karvonen, an activist in the Finnish liberal workers' movement in Helsinki. Karvonen 1898, 65; *Kuka kukin oli 1900–1961*, 239.

1258. Seitter 1990, 24–27; Ambjörnsson 1988, 263.

1259. Olsson O. 1925, 10–11.

1260. On working-class cultural activities, see e.g. Rantanen 2016.

studying, students chose courses according to their interests, which nonetheless was obviously one of the benefits of adult education.

### **SOCIAL RESOURCES IN THE FORM OF RELATIONSHIPS, CO-OPERATION AND TRUST**

In addition to the resources in the form of knowledge and skills, the workers' institute could also create social resources such as relationships, interaction, co-operation and trust. These could be utilized in civic and political participation, in promoting the interests of the individual's own party or group and in acting in local government.<sup>1261</sup>

Social resources were partly accumulated with the help of the abovementioned educational arrangements for developing communicative competence and other skills necessary when acting in associations and public life. Such competence and skills in themselves, together with the learning situations, could foster the formation of relationships, co-operation and the sense of community among students.<sup>1262</sup> From its beginning, the Tampere Workers' Institute organized as a part of its educational activities discussion meetings training students in meeting techniques and appearing in public. Gradually the discussion meetings were divided into more serious ones concentrating on current societal issues and those with less demanding topics intended to teach students to express their opinions and deliver speeches. Every now and then the discussion meetings also inspired students to produce a hand-written journal. Along with these meetings organized by the institute, an unofficial discussion club run by students emerged in the 1910s and formed the basis for the later student organization.<sup>1263</sup>

Study circle was another form of teaching which trained specifically students to take part in discussion, give presentations and act in the roles of chairperson and secretary at study circle meetings, thus requiring active participation from students. One of the subjects organized in the form of a study circle was rhetoric, which in itself prepared students for acting in public life. In addition to the actual subject matter, the early study circles of the 1920s also included entertainments arranged by students. Such arrangements enabled the creation of social resources and the study circle as an educational form has actually been highlighted as an example of an activity, which, by maintaining networks, creates social capital. In this, pedagogic arrangements such as

1261. Cf. Schuller 2004; Schuller et al. 2004; Preston 2003.

1262. Cf. Szreter 2000, 65–77.

1263. TKA, TTO Da1:1, Vuosikertomukset kevät 1899, 1899–1900, 1907–1908; Da1:2 Vuosikertomus 1909–1910; Virtanen 1975, 25–28.

dialogue between participants and the roles of a teacher and a student differing from the traditional ones have been regarded as essential.<sup>1264</sup> Therefore, study circles, like the earlier discussion meetings, in many ways resembled association life and other civic activity.

However, it was not only the planned teaching arrangements that contributed to the formation of social resources by increasing communication and contact and by creating and extending social relationships and networks. Studying itself, whatever its form, is a social activity bringing people together in lecture halls and classrooms and thus creates social resources as an unintended by-product of these encounters.<sup>1265</sup> Hence, it was not only discussion meetings and study circles that bore similarities to civic activities and associations but the activities of the institute in general. In fact, the students and directors drew a parallel between participation in the activities of the workers' institute and in associations by calling students 'members' who 'belonged to the institute'.<sup>1266</sup>

A number of students described the significance of the institute in short essays intended to be published on its 40<sup>th</sup> anniversary in 1939.<sup>1267</sup> Most of them had started at the institute in the 1920s or 1930s but at least one had been involved from the beginning of the century. These writers were active citizens: many served or had served on the board of the institute's student organization, one was a city councillor and two served on municipal boards in the latter half of the 1930s.<sup>1268</sup> Their comments reveal the social aspects of studying and the importance of interaction and communication. The advantages of the institute were illuminated by comparing it with self-study, which, according to the writers, could not produce similar results as studying in a group. The study circle in particular was praised as a form of instruction by emphasizing the significance of co-operation in solving the problems discussed in the circle and in broadening the perspectives of students. The role of fellow students was also mentioned, for example in raising awareness of social questions or in cultivating relationships with people who had similar ambitions. Fellow students of different ages were seen as a resource: beginners could study together with those who had longer experience. Some students emphasized

1264. Rothstein 2001, 216–217; Rubenson 2003, 27–28, 30; Sundgren, G. 1998.

1265. Putnam (1993, 170) refers more generally to social capital which is generated as a by-product of other social activities.

1266. E.g. TKA, TTO Da1:1, Vuosikertomus 1907–1908; Hc1:1 'Tampereen työväenopiston 40-vuotis-muistojulkaisu 16.1.1939'; Lammi 1949, 313–315.

1267. TKA, TTO Hc1:1, 'Tampereen työväenopiston 40-vuotis-muistojulkaisu 16.1.1939'. The essays were not published because of lacking funds.

1268. Lammi 1949, 315–318, 328–330 (the board members of the student organization); Research data 'Municipal decision-makers'.



the interaction with teachers, either the discussion with lecturers or feedback received from study circle leaders. However, it was not only teachers who gave feedback, fellow students also offered valuable comments.<sup>1269</sup>

In addition to the social nature of participation in education and the arrangements promoting communication and contact, there were also more spontaneous manifestations of community spirit among students. From early on, they formed entertainment committees organizing festivities and social evenings with a programme consisting of talks, poetry readings and plays.<sup>1270</sup> These gave experience in co-operation and developed skills for performing in public, to which the recreational instruction like elocution and choir also contributed. The festivities and social evenings naturally offered an arena for creating relationships not only for student activists but for all students participating in them.

The actual student organization (*toverikunta*) was established in 1924 and continued the earlier activities based on students' own initiatives and creating a community spirit. Social evenings, festivities, sports, excursions as well as visits to museums, exhibitions and the theatre were typical forms of socializing. The student organization also bought a summer place close to Tampere, where the students of the institute could spend Sundays and even longer times during their summer holidays. The summer place was located on the lakeside and various outdoor hobbies like swimming, athletics and ball games were popular recreations along with party games and dancing but there was also a small library. However, the summer place was not only for recreation but students took part in its maintenance. Sundays could be busy as the average number of visitors ranged from sixty to seventy at the turn of the 1930s.<sup>1271</sup>

The purchase of the summer place itself was an effort requiring co-operation since funding had to be sought from different sources, including loans, donations and the money collected with the help of raffles and social evenings. One student emphasized that it was the summer place that made him realize the possibilities of co-operation. Another student described the student organization and its summer place as arenas for intensive contact with other people, requiring reconciliation, ability to reach agreements as well as learning to understand one's fellows. Acting in the student organization was also

1269. TKA, TTO Hc1:1, 'Tampereen työväenopiston 40-vuotis-muistojulkaisu 16.1.1939', accounts by Ida Järvinen, Tauno Sarjakoski, Kaarlo Suursara, Viljo Virtanen, Alli Ojansuu, Kalle Lindell, J. Frigård, Veikko Mäkinen, Sulo Lindholm.

1270. Lammi 1949, 137–140.

1271. TKA, TTO Db:1, Toverikunnan toimintakertomukset 1927–1928 and 1928–1929, Kesätoimikunnan kertomukset 1929, 1930, 1932; Virtanen 1975, 252–262.

considered an excellent school for young students to practise skills necessary in public life, to be utilized later in more demanding posts.<sup>1272</sup> Hobbies taking place outside classrooms without doubt created new friendships and strengthened mutual ties but the student organization also established relations with the student organizations of other workers' institutes thereby extending the students' networks. Contact with the other student organizations was maintained by correspondence and visits, whereby, for example, social evenings and excursions were organized.<sup>1273</sup>

In principle, all students of the Tampere Workers' Institute were members of the student organization but it was led by the board consisting of student activists. During the period 1924–1935, altogether 76 members served on the board and in the latter half of the 1930s at least ten of them were city councillors or members of the municipal boards. Moreover, two of them were later elected to Parliament.<sup>1274</sup> This clearly points to a connection between student and political activity.

When assessing what kinds of social relationships the workers' institute generated, a distinction between weak and strong ties is helpful. Weak ties link people to distant acquaintances who move in circles outside one's own, whereas strong ties link people to their relatives and friends. Therefore, for those acting in civic life and politics weak ties are regarded as more valuable because they enable co-operation with larger circles.<sup>1275</sup> The ties created at the workers' institute could be characterized as strong, not necessarily because students already knew each other but in the sense that these ties were formed between people whose social standing and educational background were rather similar as noted.<sup>1276</sup> Therefore, the students of the institute could only seldom extend contacts outside the working class. Since most of the councillors who had studied at the workers' institute were Social Democrats, the range of political commitment was also narrow. Yet workers as a group were not homogeneous,

1272. TKA, TTO Hc1:1, 'Tampereen työväenopiston 40-vuotis-muistojulkaisu 16.1.1939', Ida Järvinen, Toivo Tuominen, Pentti Ketonen, Alli Ojansuu. For the funding of the summer place, see Virtanen 1975, 256–257. Cf. Keskinen (2010, 12–15), who refers to similar benefits in his discussion on the learning experiences of the members of a Finnish workers' athletic club in the 1910s and 1920s.

1273. TKA, TTO Db:1, Toverikunnan toimintakertomukset 1927–1928 and 1928–1929; Virtanen 1975, 254–256.

1274. Virtanen 1975, 253; Lammi 1949, 316–317, 328–330 (the board members of the student organization); Research data 'Municipal decision-makers'.

1275. Granovetter 1973; Putnam 2000, 22–24. Putnam refers to bridging and bonding social capital.

1276. Kaufman and Weintraub (2004) discuss the nature of relationships enabled by an American nineteenth-century fraternal association on the basis of data collected from its membership lists.

as seen when discussing the occupations of the students. Given the stratification within the group of workers, there was actually potential for creating relationships crossing the boundaries of these subgroups. Moreover, the institute enabled contact between women and men and, as one of students observed, between younger and more mature students.

Strong ties, or bonding social capital, should not be underestimated. As one of the students mentioned above put it, the institute fostered relationships with people who had similar ambitions. Such relationships were also essential when a person stood for election because endorsement and votes were needed. Another student emphasized that the skills and experience acquired at the institute were necessary for the leaders and officials of the workers' movement for gaining the confidence of working people.<sup>1277</sup> Strong ties also offered support and solidarity when new decision-makers faced the previously unfamiliar methods of acting in local government and other decision-makers and officials, of which a significant part still belonged to the educated class. Lectures given by visiting politicians representing workers probably inspired and encouraged students' participation since such prominent figures served as role models. The power of an example can be regarded as one of the social resources generated by the institute, which is also shown in the comments of the student activists emphasizing that workers' institutes had been sites of learning for many notable actors of the workers' movement.<sup>1278</sup>

In encounters with people from other social classes, the training for public life was an asset since skilful representatives of the workers' movement could gain respect from different circles of citizens, as one student emphasized.<sup>1279</sup> Thus a good reputation creating trust could be a social resource for active citizens but the reputation of a studious student of the workers' institute was evidently beneficial for all citizens, implying that a person was decent and able to look into various matters.<sup>1280</sup>

For many students of the institute, its directors and teachers may actually have been the first encounters with educated people, at least on more egalitarian terms. E. S. Yrjö-Koskinen took an active part in the discussion meetings and thus students had an opportunity to debate with this baron.<sup>1281</sup> In addition to the director, lectures were given by the teachers of local secondary schools,

1277. TKA, TTO Hc1:1, 'Tampereen työväenopiston 40-vuotis-muistojulkaisu 16.1.1939',  
Alli Ojansuu.

1278. Ibid., Kaarlo Suursara, Viljo Virtanen.

1279. Ibid., Alli Ojansuu.

1280. Ambjörnsson 1988, 228–230.

1281. Lammi 1949, 133–137.

commercial and technical institutes as well as local government officials. Local school teachers also taught elementary courses. Visiting lecturers included professors, other academics and novelists.<sup>1282</sup> Discussion was also possible within the framework of lectures and such communication has been considered important since, in addition to clarifying matters, it brought lecturers and students closer to each other and increased mutual understanding.<sup>1283</sup>

Although encounters crossing social borders were mainly limited to the teachers of the institute, the borders could be crossed on the level of knowledge. The workers' institute opened doors to knowledge belonging to the education of upper classes and thus to realms not familiar to working people from their daily lives. This might also contain exposures to opinions differing from their own, which was useful for political action. Such intellectual mixing boosted self-confidence, which was emphasized by the students of the institute. Workers' social and economic position inflicted a feeling of inferiority, which was eliminated with the help of education. In this way, the workers' institute and its instruction contributed to the creation of identity resources and encouraged students to be active citizens.<sup>1284</sup>

1282. Lammi 1949, 331–345; Virtanen 1975, 65–69.

1283. Lammi 1949, 144.

1284. TKA, Hc1:1, 'Tampereen työväenopiston 40-vuotis-muistojulkaisu 16.1.1939', Pentti Ketonen, Kalle Lindell, J. Frigård, Leo Vesala. Cf. Schuller 2004, 19–21; Balatti and Falk 2002, 285, 292.

### 4.3. Summary of Chapter 4

The Tampere Workers' Institute was established in 1898 after a decade of discussion within the liberal workers' association and after a few unsuccessful attempts. While its first advocate, Kaarlo Renström, was a liberal, the later driving force, E. S. Yrjö-Koskinen, was a conservative, who managed to win the support of his party, the powerful local Finnish Club, for his plan. The reason for the willingness to create permanent structures for workers' education at the end of the 1890s was the anticipated shift in the political balance related to current developments increasing workers' political influence and independence as political actors. As workers were distancing themselves from their former ally, the Finnish Club, Yrjö-Koskinen tried to maintain control over workers' education with the help of a municipal workers' institute and to restore some of his party's former influence over the workers' movement. The question was not only about preventing socialism from spreading but also about educating workers to be responsible citizens in the terms the founders of the institute defined.

Education for citizenship constituted the principal publicly expressed argument for the workers' institute in Tampere. This differed from the Swedish cases and is partly explained by the passage of time, which had made workers' civic and political participation a more urgent question. To Renström, civic education meant creating active citizens who could take part in civic and political life whereas another advocate of the institute in the early 1890s, Aukusti Dahlberg, was more cautious as to what kind of civic activity was appropriate to workers.

The Swedish workers institutes inspired Renström at the beginning of the 1890s and, throughout the decade, these formed the point of departure for the discussion on workers' education, also encountering hesitation and finally outright opposition by Yrjö-Koskinen. He was an adversary of positivism and suspicious of the scientific emphasis of the Swedish workers' institutes since he thought that science could be misused to challenge religion. Therefore, he preferred the model of the folk high schools with their religious and patriotic spirit adapted to the needs of urban workers.

The Tampere Workers' Institute was a Finnish adaptation of the Swedish model providing popular scientific lectures in the form of evening courses but at first it also contained in its curriculum some elements of the folk high schools. Humanities dominated although social studies gradually gained a significant position. This was partly due to the legacy of the initiators' ideas

emphasizing civic education, partly a result of the increasing requirements for citizens as their political rights extended. Moreover, the educational ideal of the Finnish workers' institute movement emphasized the usefulness of social studies for workers and its status was also consolidated in the first legislation on state subsidy in 1927. As in Gothenburg, the necessity of elementary education was soon recognized and this gained popularity at the expense of lectures. Vocational education was excluded from the curriculum but by the 1930s various practical, vocationally oriented and recreational courses became an essential part of the curriculum. Thus the original lecturing institute with a few theoretical subjects turned into a more practically oriented adult education centre with a wider range of subjects and forms of teaching, including the study circle. Therefore, it resembled more the Swedish educational associations than the Swedish twentieth-century workers' institutes, which confined themselves largely to lectures and school-like instruction.

Establishing a municipally owned workers' institute was a significant decision at the turn of the twentieth century since the adult education of that time was usually conducted by private organizations. Municipal ownership enabled the control of workers' education but also manifested local interest in adult education at a time when the government did not support it. Municipal funding, which was the primary source of income until the mid-1920s, was nevertheless rather modest but even such investment enabled the development of a notable educational institution.

The Tampere Workers Institute was an institute for young adults and workers alike, although young people from 16 to 20 years also constituted a significant group, indicating the adult-like position of working-class youth in education. Roughly three quarters of the students were manual workers but, interestingly, it was not only the better-off craftspeople and skilled workers who participated. Unskilled workers including factory workers accounted for a substantial part of the students. The Tampere Workers' Institute was also an institute for women—there was a clear female majority from the early twentieth century onwards. This was partly due to the female preponderance in the local population, partly to the expanding scope of adult education with subjects attracting women. A female preponderance was also typical of the other Finnish workers' institutes and folk high schools.

Considering the intentions of the initiators, it was natural to explore the effects of adult education by focusing on how the institute contributed to active citizenship. Of the local decision-makers acting at the beginning of the 1920s and during the latter half of the 1930s, a significant part had

studied at the Tampere Workers' Institute, revealing that the institute actually contributed to preparing the actors of society. Approximately one third of the working-class and lower-middle-class decision-makers of these periods had studied at the workers' institute while roughly half of the smaller group of city councillors with similar background had attended its courses. The effects of the workers' institute can also be viewed from the perspective of knowledge and skills resources and of the social resources it had potential to create for the use of these decision-makers like all other citizens. The former consisted of practical skills, useful knowledge and general education creating assets for civic activity and promoting cultural citizenship. The latter is exemplified by the social relationships, co-operation and confidence which could be promoted by the teaching arrangements but which also emerged as a by-product of educational and student activities.

As the first of its kind in Finland, the Tampere Workers' Institute became a model for other institutes. The viability of the Finnish institutes is shown by the fact that in 2021 there were 177 workers' institutes in Finland, albeit most of them called 'citizens' institutes' (*kansalaisopisto*), which was the name Yrjö-Koskinen had already suggested in 1899. The Tampere Workers' Institute has nevertheless retained its original name.<sup>1285</sup>

1285. Kansalaisopistot, <https://kansalaisopistot.fi/kansalaisopistot/>, accessed 1 February 2022.

## 5. CONCLUSION: EDUCATING THE CITIZENS OF A MODERNIZING URBAN SOCIETY

### 5.1. Topicality of Adult Education in the Late Nineteenth Century

This study explored three adult education initiatives taken during the latter half of the nineteenth century in two Nordic cities, Gothenburg and Tampere and the significance of these in terms of expectations and outcomes. These three adult education initiatives originated in a period of transition and exemplified different aspects of modernization: the changing role of the citizen, the emerging questions of women's and workers' rights, the pursuit of religious freedom and the increasing importance of knowledge in the lives of individuals and society.

In Gothenburg Free Academy was an ambitious plan for adult education intended to serve the bourgeois residents of the city, introduced in 1864 by the editor S. A. Hedlund. It was never implemented as envisaged but ultimately resulted in a practice whereby Gothenburg University College as an institution committed itself to organizing public lectures. This was not typical of the Swedish academically oriented adult education of the late nineteenth and the early twentieth centuries characterized by the contribution of individual academics. The two other initiatives were the workers' institutes in Gothenburg and Tampere. The Gothenburg Workers' Institute was founded by the former officer, Edvard Wavrinsky, in 1883 in the spirit of radical liberalism to offer popular scientific education for workers and develop critical thinking among working people. Wavrinsky followed the example of the doctor and positivist Anton Nyström, who had founded a workers' institute in Stockholm in 1880, but the Gothenburg institute soon evolved into a more conventional institution of adult education also taking account of students' needs for elementary education. Nyström's model also inspired the journalist Kaarlo Renström in Tampere at the beginning of the 1890s to take the initiative in establishing a similar institute. The Tampere Workers' Institute was finally founded in 1898 as a result of the action of the secondary school teacher Baron E. S. Yrjö-Koskinen, whose view of workers' education was more conventional.



Nonetheless, this institute developed into a versatile adult education centre during the early twentieth century, also contributing to active citizenship.

Promoting the education of adults implied two kinds of changes in contemporary thinking. First was the recognition that children and adolescents were not the only ones needing education, or, in the case of academic education, not only formally enrolled university students. Second, just as attitudes towards the role of knowledge and education in society were changing, so also did the views on the groups to whom education should be offered. Most of the initiators discussed in this study were liberals and their initiatives arose out of the liberal view that everyone has a right to develop themselves, turning the attention to those outside the education system or those to whom this system had little to offer. In addition, the initiators raised an embryonic idea of continuing or lifelong education.

In Hedlund' opinion, the mission of higher education was not only to train civil servants and clergymen but also to benefit citizens and society more widely. He envisaged Free Academy to extend academic education beyond the circle of formally enrolled university students, to bourgeois women, who at that time had no access to university studies, and to men of that same class not qualified to study at universities. This vision also involved the idea that education should be offered to people already having an occupation and acting in various fields of society and economic life. The advocates of the workers' institutes thought that working people needed more profound education than elementary school could provide, based on the conviction that workers had the capacity for learning theoretical subjects and for utilizing such learning. Wavrinsky and Renström, like their source of inspiration, Nyström, wanted to offer education exceeding elementary skills to all strata of adult urban workers, both women and men, and to provide them with liberal and civic education. Thus, all these initiators promoted educational equality between women and men. Equality between social classes manifested in the idea of offering working people the kind of education available to the upper classes but was otherwise lacking as the academic lectures and the workers' institutes were associated with social environments of their own, the boundaries of which were usually not crossed.

What these initiatives also had in common was their attempt to meet the needs of expanding and modernizing urban societies by means of education although the needs and solutions differed according to social class. Hedlund introduced the idea of Free Academy, combining free research and adult education, at a time when the question of organizing higher education had

become topical in the commercial and industrializing city, which had no university. This was also a time when the Swedish universities had started to turn from teaching institutions into research universities, where the role of natural sciences as specialized disciplines was gaining momentum. Yet the new tightened admission criteria, which in practice necessitated passing an examination in Latin, debarred more practically oriented young men, who could have benefitted from higher education. Moreover, girls' and women's education and admission to universities was about to become a topical issue. Such developments prompted Hedlund to plan an academy disseminating scientific knowledge outside the universities and opening the doors of academic education to bourgeois men and women hitherto excluded from it.

When the first workers' institutes were established, social change was already visible in growing urban centres. Workers' role as citizens and employees was transforming and the first signs of their collective power appeared in the context of popular movements and in the labour market. Adult education with the intention of moulding the masses into responsible workers and citizens in an industrializing society was highlighted especially in the liberal, or non-socialist, workers' movement. Its actors, belonging to the educated class, were convinced of the feasibility of bringing about social improvements by changing individuals with the help of education. For this reason, they emphasized as the goals of education the improvement of workers' moral and intellectual condition and their understanding about society. The advocates of the workers' institutes acted in this intellectual framework and shared these aims. In spite of the liberal ethos emphasizing the role of the individual, education was not assumed to benefit only the individual but also society, and to an even larger extent, which is apparent in the arguments for workers' education.

Moreover, the initiators had more particular interests and expectations, revealing why they were willing to direct their energies in these projects and offering another perspective for why adult education in the suggested forms became important at that point. The development of the cultural life of Gothenburg was close to Hedlund's heart and his ambitions concerning Free Academy were connected with the fame and esteem the novel institution of higher education could bring to his home town. He believed that modern disciplines not found in the old universities and eminent scientists drawn to Free Academy by opportunities for free research would create the basis for such esteem. Hedlund also had high hopes of a medical faculty for female students which he intended to establish within Free Academy, being convinced that such pioneering women's education would be a credit for Gothenburg.

This study has also shown that, in addition to preparing responsible citizens and improving workers' intellectual condition, Wavrinsky's and Yrjö-Koskinen's motives for creating permanent structures for workers' education were related to their ideological interests and to workers' role in civic society. At the beginning of the 1880s the radical forces in Sweden were still represented by liberals like Wavrinsky and Nyström. These two shared the aim of enhancing religious freedom by way of education providing tools for critical thinking and challenging the status of the state church and religion in society. By targeting this kind of education at workers they hoped to find allies in their struggle for religious freedom from the social class with the potential to develop into a significant force in society, particularly as workers' political rights had become a topical issue. The first Finnish workers' institute opened in Tampere almost twenty years later than the first one in Sweden but the catalyst for its establishment was also related to workers' role as citizens and especially to their emerging political power. The perspective was nevertheless different from that of Wavrinsky and Nyström. Yrjö-Koskinen represented a party with a conservative orientation and found a permanent municipal workers' institute necessary in a situation where the workers' movement, having earlier functioned under the auspices of his party, was turning into an independent political actor with socialist aims. A municipal institution enabled control over workers' education and by way of this Yrjö-Koskinen intended to restore some of his party's former influence over the workers' movement.

## 5.2. Ideas Shaped by Motives, Processes Revealing Attitudes and Esteem

Early forms of adult education have often been regarded as compensation for the inadequacies of the existing education system. The plans for Free Academy and the workers' institutes were not, however, developed solely for this reason but also to create entirely new educational practices. Thus the idea was not only to open educational opportunities for those the education system did not serve but also to offer them something the existing institutions could not. This was also revealed by the criticism of educational institutions presented as an argument for the necessity of new institutions. Hedlund accused the universities of rigidity and lacking interest in society while the positivist Nyström criticized the strong position of religion in school education as well as theological and philosophical speculation at the universities, the latter of not being able to help in solving current social problems.

In this study, the theory of the innovation process with its phases and components has formed a loose framework for exploring educational ideas and their implementation. From this perspective, both Hedlund and Nyström were innovators outlining a new kind of institution with no antecedents in Sweden. It has also become evident that their motives and goals shaped their ideas and had an effect on their choices of models for their plans. As Hedlund pursued an institution of higher education with freedom and flexibility as its essential features, his Free Academy would have combined free research, without obligations related to students' exams, with adult education for part-time students who were not degree-oriented. He also wanted to include some of the emerging scientific fields and practically oriented subjects in the curriculum. Lectures to the educated public, however, were no novelty in Sweden and although combining adult education and research may have sounded extraordinary, models for this could be found abroad.

Nyström's workers' institute did not greatly differ from Hedlund's plan with regard to its educational side since both aimed at spreading scientific knowledge with the help of lectures but the target groups were nevertheless different. Nyström was inspired by Auguste Comte's positivism and developed the institute with the purpose of educating workers' to carry out their 'social mission', assisting positivist philosophers to reform society, which also included promoting religious freedom. The Stockholm Workers' Institute had a source of inspiration drafted by a Parisian positivist, the main features of which were systematic study for several years and a curriculum consisting of Comte's fundamental sciences, with natural sciences as an important component. Nyström consciously developed a model he wanted to diffuse and in this he succeeded. The Stockholm Workers' Institute not only inspired Wavrinsky and Renström; a number of institutes were founded in Sweden, Finland and Norway by the early twentieth century, albeit without positivist aims and adapted to the local circumstances. Evidently the common features of these societies and lively contact between them contributed to the adoption of the idea. Swedish was also a language mastered by educated Finns, enabling the diffusion of ideas.

This study also reveals how the processes whereby the adult education practices emerged and became institutionalized reflect the attitudes towards the initiatives and the esteem in which they were held. In the case of Free Academy, both support and ultimately a lack of willingness to pursue its implementation appeared. Although an institution like Free Academy never materialized, the notion should not only be regarded as a part of the history

of the origins of Gothenburg University College, as has been the case. As this study has shown, the idea itself had significance as an early manifestation of adult education thinking and adult education practices on a more modest scale developed from it in the form of popular scientific lectures. These lectures can be considered Hedlund's pilot project for Free Academy but the plan was never developed further. When sufficient funding was available in the latter part of the 1880s, a traditional university college was established since the advocates of more conventional higher education challenged Hedlund's plan and the local decision-makers were eventually not ready to found an academy focusing solely on free research and adult education. Even though adult education had a place in the new university college, it did not have the main role as envisaged in Hedlund's plan. The incorporation of public lectures into its curriculum at the turn of the 1890s just like the municipal funding of Hedlund's pilot project nevertheless indicate that the plan for Free Academy enjoyed strong support among the local elite for more than two decades.

When planning the Gothenburg Workers' Institute, Wavrinsky adopted Nyström's model in its entirety, with a very similar curriculum and lectures as the principal form of teaching. Because of the radical liberal connection, the institute aroused some suspicion and Wavrinsky likewise seems to have been on his guard against the alleged adversaries. This led to a furtive course of action, differing from the public discussion on Free Academy and the workers' institute was founded quickly, avoiding publicity and without the involvement of the local authorities. On the advice from Nyström and carefully chosen supporters, Wavrinsky managed to start up the institute as a private institution. In Tampere, the municipal workers' institute was established after a decade of discussion and failed attempts in which the Stockholm Workers' Institute had figured as a model. The project became successful only when the local conservative political force, the Finnish Club, became active in the question. A workers' institute had not previously been among its priorities but the changing political situation motivated an influential member, E.S. Yrjö-Koskinen, to take the initiative, also convincing the party of the importance of municipally controlled workers' education. As a Christian traditionalist opposed to positivism, he was suspicious of Nyström's model and emphasized the exemplarity of folk high schools with their religious and patriotic spirit. However, he shared the idea of developing responsible citizens by way of systematic evening courses, essential in Nyström's model.

The exploration of these processes also reveals that the outcomes were not self-evident. There were other models and existing practices that could

have contributed to their formation and the initiators, either innovators or adapters, made choices. The most obvious indication of this is the idea of Free Academy, resulting finally in a practice of adult education completely different from what Hedlund had initially envisaged. In the case of the Tampere Workers' Institute, the example of local vocational courses and the pressure from the authorities could have provided impetus for a curriculum with a more practical emphasis but the founders decided on a lecturing institute offering liberal and general education.

In the absence of formulated adult education policies, the attitudes of local governments towards the workers' institutes were traced from the actions of the authorities related to funding and other frames of action, which in modern terms can be called early municipal adult education policy. However, becoming an established institution in terms of stable funding and permanent premises took time and the success of the workers' institutes was not self-evident. Even though a private institution, the Gothenburg Workers' Institute was dependent on public and especially on municipal funding. Therefore, its status did not differ essentially from that of the municipal institute in Tampere. Municipal funding, which at first came from the proceeds of alcohol sales in both cities, nevertheless shows that these institutions were appreciated by the local decision-makers, who had more interest in supporting adult education than the respective central governments. Since the funding was still modest in comparison with other educational institutions, the municipalities could contribute to the development of these adult education institutions with a small investment. For this reason, the workers' institutes had a recognized but slightly marginal position as educational institutions in the community. The case of public academic lectures in Gothenburg differed from the workers' institutes as they were organized as a part of the activities of the university college, which was a private institution. The earlier popular scientific lectures had nevertheless received funding from a municipally controlled donation fund. If the time required for becoming an established institution is considered, all the examples discussed in this study nevertheless became institutionalized earlier and within a significantly shorter period of time than was required for the institutions and practices of vocational adult education.

The initiatives taken by private citizens to create institutions of adult education in their home towns reveal the significance of the action on local level for the formation of early adult education. The essential role of local funding and other support also indicates this.

### 5.3. Outcomes and Their Influence on Social Patterns of Education

All the three educational institutions or practices discussed in this study were eventually adaptations remoulding the original plan or models – either because of outward circumstances or because the institutions came to serve other purposes than those of the initiators. Funding finally determined the nature of the higher education institution in Gothenburg and the adult education part of Free Academy was implemented within a conventional university. Incorporating public lectures into the curriculum of Gothenburg University College and making them also a part of the studies of formally enrolled students nevertheless created an arrangement of an original nature. This can be characterized as university extension within a university by applying the term established to portray academic instruction targeted at non-regular students. In this way, the public lectures introducing the results of research had a close connection with the university college. During the early years, the nature of education was shaped by the university college's orientation to the humanities although natural sciences also figured on the curriculum as in the earlier popular scientific lectures. However, courses open to the public did not constitute systematic entities; attendees chose lectures according to their interests. There were actually similarities between the public lectures of the university college and those of the workers' institute. Even though the lectures of the workers' institute were more popularized at the end of the nineteenth century, the difference obviously became less significant later.

The Gothenburg and Tampere Workers' Institutes did not develop into workers' academies with established curricula and systematic studies, which had been Nyström's intention in Stockholm. Neither did the natural sciences have a very significant place in their curricula, which were dominated by the humanities and, in Tampere, also by the social sciences. Both institutes also soon realized that, due to workers' deficient schooling, theoretical education in the form of lectures in these smaller urban centres did not attract enough students as had been the case in Stockholm. Hence, elementary courses in basic skills were introduced into the programme. Thus Nyström's model was adapted to the local circumstances and more practically oriented instruction became a significant part of the activities even though it had originally been regarded as exceptional. Moreover, the institutes also combined older methods used in the workers' associations and their educational activities with the model of the workers' institute, thereby showing an aspect of continuity. The

nature of education naturally changed in the course of time. At the Tampere Workers' Institute, methods and content became more diverse than in Gothenburg, exemplified by study circles aiming at more methodical studying and emphasizing students' active role. Vocationally oriented and recreational courses also came to play an important role at the Tampere institute. Its founders had excluded actual vocational education notwithstanding the institute's origins but students' interests eventually impacted on the formation of the curriculum.

Although the Gothenburg and Tampere Workers' Institutes were similar in their early stages, their subsequent developments reveal differences characterizing Swedish and Finnish adult education more generally. Because of its versatile nature, the Tampere Workers' Institute was more like the Swedish educational associations, organizing courses with topics relevant and attractive to adult workers, than the Swedish twentieth-century workers' institutes, which usually confined themselves to lectures and school-like instruction as did the Gothenburg institute. Interestingly, in Finland the organizers of the mainstream workers' or adult education were municipal institutions while in Sweden these were actors of civic society.

In spite of such adaptation, the original ideas still left their mark on the institutions they inspired. Hedlund's legacy consisted of admitting the public to the university, whereas academically oriented adult education in Sweden, as in many other places, was conducted by academics giving lectures outside the universities. The workers' institutes inspired by Nyström's model maintained for long the ideal of popular scientific and liberal adult education excluding the idea of vocational education although instruction with other content and methods was incorporated into their curricula. In Tampere, the legacy of the local initiators emphasizing education for citizenship was apparent in the esteemed position of the social sciences. The original ideals also formed the background against which later adaptations and modifications were discussed.

As to the relation between theoretical and practical education, there was a difference between the Free Academy developments and the workers' institutes. Hedlund did not exclude practically oriented education as did the advocates of the workers' institutes since his plan included subjects such as medicine, technology and the science of commerce. The outcomes nevertheless show a reverse development: while elementary education entered the curricula of the workers' institutes and practically oriented instruction in Tampere, academic public lectures in Gothenburg confined themselves to theoretical education.



Social innovations are supposed to have effects changing social roles and practices. The new institutions discussed in this study influenced the social patterns of education with regard to educational opportunities and the sphere of influence of education. The academic public lectures and the workers' institutes increased adults' opportunities to take part in educational activities on a more regular basis than the adult education offered earlier. However, these lectures and courses were intended for free study and therefore they did not produce any qualifications in the form of certificates, as did the institutions belonging to the education system. This could have been important for advancement in working life but from the perspective of self-improvement such free education was probably more advantageous and attractive. Accordingly, adult education in these forms was outside the education system not only because it did not offer qualifications but also in terms of aims and content. As these differed from those of the education system, adult education widened the perspectives of schooling and offered alternative conceptions of education and practices according to them.

The new institutions extended the sphere of adult education as they attracted considerable numbers of townspeople to their activities. The lectures at Gothenburg University College and at the Gothenburg Workers' Institute were a visible part of the local cultural life and also mass events gathering dozens and at best several hundred listeners per lecture. The number of elementary course students at the Gothenburg Workers' Institute increased from a few dozen in the 1880s to several hundred by 1930. At the Tampere Workers' Institute, the yearly registrations rose to more than one thousand by the mid-1920s. Although these students seem to have constituted only a small proportion of the adult population of Tampere, 1.1 per cent in 1910 and 2.5 per cent in 1930, such yearly cross-sections hide the fact that in the course of years the number of people who had studied at the institute amounted to thousands.

It was not only the sphere of adult education which the new institutions extended but also the sphere of education in general. While the new adult education institutions generated alternative perspectives on traditional schooling, at the same time they offered education compensating that of the school system. The academic lectures and workers' institutes extended the sphere of further education to people who had lacked the opportunities for it or whose earlier education had been brief schooling. There is no detailed information about the attendees at the academic public lectures in Gothenburg but the audience seems to have consisted of a wide range of

local bourgeois people. Thus they were somewhat educated people but public lectures undoubtedly afforded a glimpse of the academic world to those who had not studied at university. This also indicates that not all nineteenth- and early twentieth-century adult education was targeted at workers or the common people.

The ability of the educational institutions aimed at workers to reach their target group has sometimes been questioned but it is obvious that the Gothenburg and Tampere Workers' Institutes succeeded in this. The information on the social backgrounds of people attending lectures at the Gothenburg Workers' Institute is limited to its first years only but then the majority of students were workers. The data I collected on the elementary course students in the 1880s and the first years of the twentieth century nevertheless shows that these were mostly working people, of whom the largest groups were craftspeople and skilled workers. Among the small number of female students, clerical workers and shop assistants also formed a notable group. This reveals that even better-off workers and clerical workers regarded complementary education in basic skills as necessary although it could have been expected that such people would have a more adequate basic education. While elementary courses attracted workers, it is probable that the popular scientific lectures of the Gothenburg institute also attracted lower middle-class people. At the Tampere Workers' Institute, the striking feature was the preponderance of women, which nevertheless has been typical of Finnish popular (or liberal) adult education more generally. In Tampere as well, the vast majority of students were workers but it was not only the better-off workers who participated. Among female students in particular, unskilled workers consisting mainly of factory workers constituted the largest group, which was not surprising considering female workers' role in the local industry.

This study also shows that participants in early adult education were not only adults. The majority of students at the Tampere Workers' Institute and on the elementary courses of the Gothenburg institute at the turn of the century were young people aged approximately 15 to 20 and young adults of up to thirty years of age although the proportion of more mature students was not insignificant. The workers' institutes attracted young working-class people because their educational opportunities did not differ from those of older workers. This indicates the adult-like position of working-class youth in education, as evening classes and evening schools partly outside the education system were practically the only opportunity for them to continue their studies after elementary school.

## 5.4. Active Citizenship and Resources Generated by Adult Education

The effects of adult education were explored in this study by using strategies that could be characterized as indirect and by being restricted to the case of Tampere as the only one to offer sufficient information. Given the intentions of the initiators related to civic education, it was natural to focus on how the institute contributed to active citizenship. The starting point was the connection between the local decision-makers and the workers' institute. When the decision-makers at the beginning of the 1920s and at the end of the 1930s were explored, it turned out that a significant part, approximately one third, of the members of the city council and municipal boards with a working-class or lower middle-class background had studied at the institute. This shows that the institute had played a role in preparing these individuals to be active in society. It also seems that the connection with the workers' institute became more typical when the level of political activity increased as roughly half of the city councillors belonging to the same group had studied at the workers' institute.

Another strategy has been to ponder the potential effects of the education offered by the workers' institute by focusing on the resources such studies could generate, in other words, on the way the institute prepared its students to act in civic society and in local government. This analysis, which can also shed light on the effects of adult education more generally, was conducted by examining the actual content of education. The resources were divided in two, knowledge and skills resources and social resources. The former include the mastery of such basic skills as spelling, grammar and arithmetic, which was evidently an asset in the early twentieth century, but also other practical skills such as bookkeeping and rhetoric. Furthermore, knowledge and skills resources were increased by lectures offering useful knowledge on social policy, municipal administration and other topical questions. The humanities and other theoretical subjects provided general education, which was important from the perspective of cultural citizenship and workers' inclusion in society.

Social resources included relationships, interaction, cooperation, mutual trust and the reputation of being a competent person, which were important for acting in civic society and in local government. Such resources could partly be accumulated with the help of planned educational arrangements, exemplified by discussion meetings, seminars and study circles, but studying itself, no matter its form, is a social activity and thus able to generate social

resources as an unintended by-product. The social activities organized at the institute and later by the student organization also offered an arena for creating social resources. Considering the relationships from the perspective of bridging and bonding ties, the workers' institute with its rather homogeneous student body could contribute little to the establishment of bridging ties with people from different backgrounds, regarded as useful for civic and political activity. Bonding ties, established with people from a similar background, could also be important in that they increased trust and political support among the individual's own group. However, the institute provided opportunities for crossing social boundaries in the form of encounters with teachers. Such crossings could also take place on the level of knowledge as the institute also opened doors to the education typical of the upper classes and thus to a world not familiar to working people from their daily lives.

\* \* \*

Viewing the institutions and practices of adult education discussed in this study from the perspective of the life cycle of innovations, they have proved to be long-lived. Hedlund's Free Academy initiative resulted in lecturing activities conducted for almost ninety years, of which Gothenburg University College organized public lectures for six decades as an established part of its instruction. The adaptations of the Stockholm Workers' Institute developed into important adult education institutions, if somewhat different in nature and role. While the activities at the Gothenburg Workers' Institute dwindled and it was closed down like its counterparts in Sweden after having functioned for more than a century, the institute in Tampere has continued its work together with almost two hundred others in Finland.

# APPENDIX 1. RESEARCH DATA ‘BOARD MEMBERS’

Consists of the board members of the Tampere Workers’ Institute in 1899, 1905–1906, 1909–1910, 1914–1915, 1919–1920, 1924–1925, 1929–1930 and 1934–1935 and contains information on their occupations, political affiliations and by whom they were nominated (city council or associations).

## Sources

### *Board members*

Virtanen 1975, 17; TKA, TTO Da1:1 Vuosikertomus 1905–1906; *KTK, TTO* 1909–1910, 3; 1914–1915, 3; 1919–1920, 3; 1924–1925, 3; 1929–1930, 3; 1934–1935, 3.

### *Political affiliations and occupations*

TKA, Kunnallisvaalien keskus- ja vaalilautakuntien arkisto Ca:1, Minutes 1918–1922, Valitsijayhdistykset ja ehdokaslista, file I (1918 vaalit), file II (1919 vaalit, 25 February 1920), file IV (1921 vaalit, 6 and 7 February 1922), Ca:2 Minutes 1922–1925, file V (1922 vaalit), file VI (1923 vaalit); J:2 Valtuutettujen ehdokasyhdistelmät 1930, 1933, 1934 and 1936.

TKA, Maistraatti, Hb1:1 Kunnallisvaalit 1945.

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Dahlberg 1901, 113–122 (list of members); Sinisalo 1932, 45–48, 177–178 and 187 (biographies), 201–220 (list of members); Lammi 1949, 324–326; Kanerva 1986, 155–162, 455, 463–464, 479, 610–614 (list of board members); Koivisto 1999, 138, 340, 385; Koivisto 2003, 439–463 (biographies); Jutikkala 1979, 309; Rasila 1984, 300; *Kuka kukin oli* 1900–1961, 240, 270, 272, 308, 325, 347, 363–364, 566; *Aamulehti*, ‘Ernst Linko vanhempi kuollut’ 27 May 1928; *Suomen sanomalehtimiehet* 1925, 124; *Suomen sanomalehdistön matrikkeli* 1937, 189.

## APPENDIX 2. RESEARCH DATA ‘MUNICIPAL DECISION-MAKERS’

This research data was compiled by gathering the members of Tampere city council and municipal boards during the periods 1919–1923 and 1935–1939, recorded in the annual municipal reports, and by examining whether these appear in the student registers of the Tampere Workers’ Institute. The data contains information on their registrations for the workers’ institute, on the years when they held commissions of trust and occupations given in the annual municipal reports. When available in the student registers, the year and place of birth as well as occupation given when registered were included. Additional information e.g. on their political affiliation or other activities was collected from the works mentioned below.

While the student registers usually include the year of birth and often occupation and address, the annual municipal reports only provide the occupation but Voionmaa (1935, see below) gives the year of birth of those who were councillors before 1934. The year of birth confirms that a person in the student register is the same as the councillor. If the year of birth was not available, I checked the address and trade calendars of Tampere to find out if there were several people of the same name. If there was only one, I assumed that the person in the student register was the one selected for the council or a board. If the student register only offered the initial of the first name or if there were more than one person of the same name in the address and trade calendar, I tried to confirm the identity with the help of a second name, occupation or address (found in the calendars). When this was not possible, the person in question was not included in the group of the municipal decision-makers having studied at the workers’ institute.

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TKA, TTO Ab:1 Oppilasluettelot (Student registers) 1899–1924; Bb:1–9 Oppilasluettelot (Student registers) 1935–1939; Bd:1–4 Oppilaskortistot (Student card files) 1924–1937.

In the identification of students, the following sources and literature has also been used:

Kanerva 1986; Koivisto 1999; Koivisto 2003, Voionmaa 1935 (list of city councillors until 1934); *Tampereen osoite-, kauppa-, ammattikalenterit*.

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