

A Changing Role During WW2

Written by Gerv Leyden

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Peoples College:

A changing role during WW 2

Soon after the outbreak of WW2 People's College re-opened with a new role as an Evening Institute in October 1939. The curriculum and teaching arrangements were revised to focus on technical training for HM forces. In March 1940 this was extended to separate courses for carpenters, joiners, fitters and turners. Most courses lasted for 16 weeks. The War Office provided funding directly to Nottingham Education Authority at a 'fixed rate per student hour'.

The institute was well equipped with lathes and drilling machines. It also worked day and night shifts to reflect wartime conditions. (*Director of Education Report to Committee 1939 – 40*)

The number of students on roll in 1939 was 1,069 – although it was not clear where they were all housed. Women students who successfully completed the training were immediately absorbed into the War Industry. "Courses were planned in conjunction with the Nottingham University College, and provided additional training for Aircraft Personnel in English and Mathematics".

The seeds of the Junior Technical School for the Building Industry were to be seen in Government Circular No.1582 (1941). This resulted in a 'new Peoples College school' to be formed on the original premises, to admit 35 boys age 13+ each term. At that time the leaving age for non Grammar Schools was 14. The new Peoples College ran a two year fulltime course of training, followed by a third year of part-time instruction *'for which the boys will be released from work without loss of wages. No tuition fees would be payable during the third year of the course.'* (*Director of Education Report to Committee, 1940 – 41*)

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By 1943 the first group of People's College school leavers went into industry, while responsibility for technical education moved from Nottingham University College to the three local educational authorities (Nottinghamshire, Leicester and Derbyshire). (*Director of Education Report, 1943 – 44*)

In the 1945 – 46 Report to Committee the Director commented that '*the school for the building industry is now well established and has secured full confidence of the industry.*'