



HAVEN'T WE BEEN HERE BEFORE?

What can we learn from ACE's past going forward?



John Benseman

Walking into history backwards

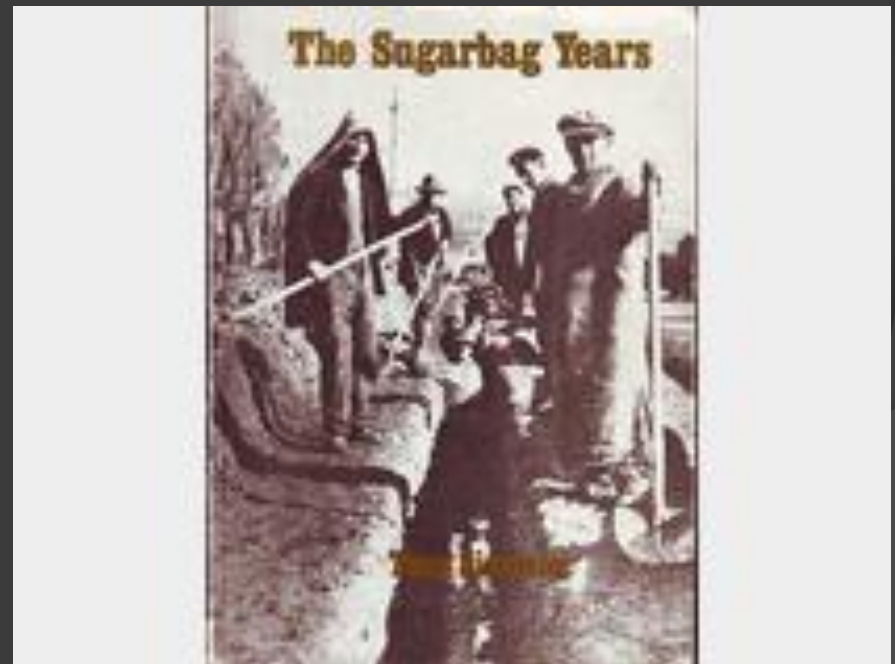
- ◎ 1930s
- ◎ 1980s
- ◎ 1990s
- ◎ 2010s



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1930s

● The Great Depression



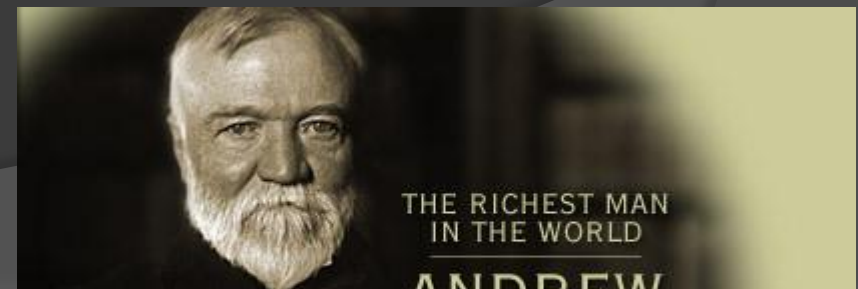
1930s

- Unemployment rose from 6,000 in 1929 to 50,000 in 1933
- No Welfare State
- Severe hardship



1930s: adult education as a 'fair-weather luxury'

- WEA lost all govt. funding
- Local govt. & trade union funding stopped
- Universities hard pressed
- Reliance on volunteer tutors
- Carnegie Foundation as 'fairy godmother'
- "Adult education came close to extinction"
- "The State had given, the State had taken away" (Thompson, 1945, p. 114)



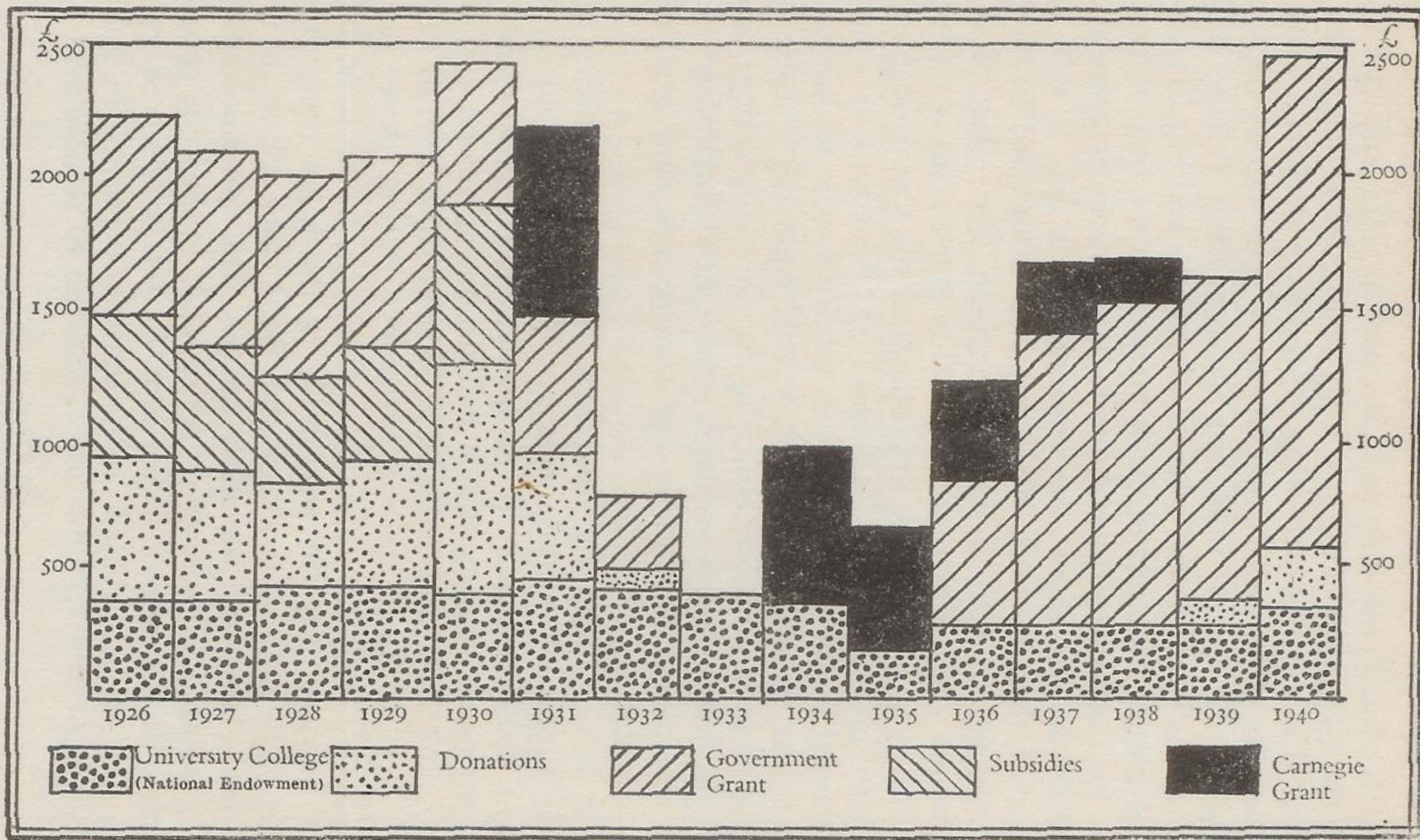


Fig. II Main Sources of Income for Tutorial Classes, Auckland, 1926-40

**Robert David
Muldoon**



Mervyn Langlois 'Merv' Wellington



1980s



- 1982 - first major oil price shock
- 'Think Big' built on heavy govt. borrowing
- All WEA funding withdrawn
- NCAE funding drastically cut
- CAP in Wairarapa and NCES dis-established



AUCKLAND
STAR



**WEA FUNDS
RESTORED
WELLINGTON
RESIGNS**

"You can see it all in the Star."

**NEVER TRY TO TEACH
A PIG TO SING....**



**IT WASTES YOUR TIME
AND IT ONLY MAKES
THE PIG ANGRY.**

1988-92

- Ruth Richardson's 1991 'Mother of all budgets'
- CLANZ funding reduced by 60% and advisory role removed
- All (of the restored) WEA funding withdrawn
- Trade Union Education Authority also dis-established



2010



- ⦿ Schools' ACE provision reduced; tertiary ACE to follow...
- ⦿ Watch this space....?

Peak times?

- Late 1930's – Peter Fraser
- Early 1970's OECD's *Education Permanente* and UNESCO's *Lifelong Education*
- Early 2000's Lifelong Learning



So what can we learn?



- Even though lifelong learning has become a reality, AE is still peripheral, a 'nice to have'
- Adult education last to be funded, first to be chopped
- AE still struggles to get past the 'Appalachian Clog Dancing' image



But wait, there's more...

- ⦿ Economic crises/ govt. austerity do not augur well for AE
- ⦿ Individual Ministers make a difference (Fraser, Gandar, Mallard)
- ⦿ Importance of international bodies
- ⦿ Lack of a research base to make the argument for AE



A word about public servants

- In 'content-free management' few have strong commitment or good understanding of AE; Denny Garrett & Bill Renwick the exceptions
- High turnover/low institutional memory
- Totally driven by government policy



And some more...

- Want research that 'speaks' to their issues, not a researcher's personal agenda
- Have little time for 'esoteric' research



ACE research



- Can you identify a piece of research that has:
 - Shaped what you do as a practitioner?
 - Informed/shaped New Zealand ACE?



The power of research

- Rigorous research can progress a field e.g. IALS and Adult Literacy
- Can 'make the case' for decision-makers – but must be relevant to their work-plans
- Informs good practice
- Tells us what we don't know
- May confirm what we intuitively know



Input



- ⦿ What do you see as the key topics/questions in New Zealand ACE that research should address?



Core issues for ACE research

- ◎ Changing people's lives:
 - As individuals
 - As families
 - As community members
 - As a jump-start for lifelong learning
 - 'wider benefits' – e.g. health
- ◎ Recruiting non-traditional learners
- ◎ The intrinsic value of adult learning



How to progress ACE research agenda?

- Need for an active research strategy
- Role of critical literature reviews – make better use of existing research
- Quality is more important than quantity
- Diminishing pool of research capacity
- Importance of research that speaks across the AE sector
- Has a degree of impartiality



Where to from here?