The development of nursery schools and child welfare policies and practices in Bradford from the 1890s to the 1950s with particular reference to the work of Miriam Lord


Abstract

This thesis analyses the life and work of Miriam Lord in Bradford, West Yorkshire between 1885 and the 1950s. The main investigative research for the thesis was carried out at the Bradford Archives where the voluminous collection of private papers, documents and other records which she bequeathed to the Margaret McMillan Memorial College on her death in 1968 are now domiciled and which have been ordered and collated by the archivist there. Throughout her working life Miriam Lord campaigned for nursery education: from her position as a nursery school Superintendent, through her involvement with the N ursery School Association and the Bradford branch of the Froebel Society, and not least, via the publication of written articles and the delivery of numerous public lectures. She also gained an international reputation by both working and travelling abroad, and by receiving many visiting foreign education experts at her Bradford nursery school. Principally due to parental influence Miriam Lord was a disciple of Margaret McMillan from an early age. She utilised much of Margaret McMillan's methodology in her nursery school work and imitated many of her innovations in child care. Like Margaret McMillan she was a socialist, but not a paid-up party member. She did, however, have close connections with the Independent Labour Party, a legacy handed, down by her father, Hird Lord. She also inherited from him the stamina and determination to work tirelessly for the poor and deprived of Bradford's slums, advocating the expansion of nursery education and introducing the concept of community centres as an antidote to the social and physical deprivation caused by those slums. Her final project was the establishment in Bradford of a college for the training of nursery school teachers - this was dedicated to the memory of her mentor, Margaret McMillan. Proceeding on a chronological basis and examining the background to these many activities, this thesis analyses the interaction between Miriam Lord and the developments, both in Bradford and at a national level, in the fields of nursery education and child welfare during the latter years of the nineteenth century and during the first half of the twentieth century.

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