

# The Changing World

Paul R. Hanna

## THE TASK OVERDUE

TODAY MOTHER EARTH is red with blood of her human children. Before peace is restored, global war will stain many, many surfaces with this precious blood. And these bloodstains will not wash out with the spring rains.

This blood-letting is not the work of some supernatural evil force beyond our control. On the contrary, we are fighting this global war because of previous shortcomings of human insight and action. The tragedy could have been avoided if twenty-five years ago we had been wise enough to look closely at the changing world and had acted intelligently to direct the changes along desirable lines.

A generation ago, following World War I, we could have unleashed two great forces that might have prevented

further bloodstains—one, a worldwide political framework, and, two, universal education designed to create in men's minds and hearts the desire for a world community of peoples. But we failed to see and to act then; so we must pay an exorbitant price for our folly now.

Today we must ask ourselves whether we can prevent a repetition of such a catastrophe in the long future.

So much is being said currently about the necessity for establishing a worldwide economic and political union after this war that nothing more need be said here—except to urge all educators to add their strength to the growing insistence that we not fail this time to forge instruments of lasting peace.

But prodigious effort must be made by educators and statesmen in creating an education that will support the goals of such international economic and political structure. Schools and the other mind-forming agencies must prepare for this reconstruction. Narrow and chauvinistic teaching must be cast out and in its place we must give our children and youth, the citizens of tomorrow's "One World," the intellectual and spiritual substance necessary for the task.

Our school histories must build understanding of and respect for other peoples. Our psychological and genetic instruction must truthfully present the

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*The shifting fortunes of mankind are a professional, as well as a personal, concern of educators. In addition to meeting changes in their personal lives, teachers must be prepared to help children understand and cope with the new demands of a changing world. Before they can fulfill this obligation to young people, educators themselves must be aware of the forces which are shaping our lives. It is hoped that this department of Educational Leadership may serve to focus the attention of educators upon some of the situations and problems which are arising today. Paul R. Hanna, who will conduct "The Changing World" department, is Professor of Education at Stanford University.*

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facts that all races and nations possess great capacity for growth and improvement. Our literature, music, and art curricula must develop in the pupil an appreciation of the worth of creative expression of other peoples. Our science teaching must bridge all artificial nationalistic barriers. Our human geography, economics, political science, and all other social sciences curricula must develop sound concepts of resources and institutional realities. Our language teaching must aid isolated people who want to communicate but have no facility. A great educational overhauling is overdue.

Will we in the teaching profession be wise enough and courageous enough to meet these demands? In a democracy we do not wait for the "event-making" hero who senses the problem, devises a solution, and then forces the rest of us to cooperate to achieve his program.

Rather, we act on the assumption that potentially all of us are "event-making" heroes and, therefore, each of us strives to see clearly and act wisely. Teachers throughout the democracies must struggle with this problem of educational reform. Through our national educational organizations, through state teachers' associations, in local school-building groups, and even working alone in isolated rural schools, teachers must dig into the subject matters of science, social sciences, and humanities. Then, equipped with new concepts, educators need to put them together into patterns of instruction that give greater assurance of providing children and youth with skills, understandings, and attitudes commensurate with living in a world community. Such a task will take "sweat and tears," but it is *sine qua non* to prevent further bloodstains on old Mother Earth.



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