

Broadening Our Horizons

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THOSE WHO truly believe in American education and who want to see it become an even greater force for democratic progress are faced with the opportunity to do the hardest thinking and to take the boldest action of all time. If they are to have a hand in making the kind of America and world that children deserve, they must begin now to plan and to conduct schools which work definitely toward this objective.

Schools alone, of course, cannot solve the many local, national, and international problems of the war and postwar periods. Yet they can be of immeasurable assistance in bringing about the best possible solution to these problems through the democratic way.

Problem Number One for the schools as well as for other American institutions is the winning of the war. In the months just ahead, our nation is launch-

ing an extremely tough and costly campaign in its military invasion from the West of Hitler's European fortress. During this year and until the final defeat of Japan, it will continue and step up its military efforts in the Pacific area. While these campaigns are under way, our country and our people must make even more important living adjustments and even greater sacrifices.

Already many schools throughout America have made great contributions to our nation's war program. Nearly every school has taken part in one way or another—in war stamp and bond drives, in price control and rationing activities, in salvage campaigns, in Red Cross training, in civilian defense, and in pre-induction training for our armed services. In the immediate future, schools must intensify their efforts to do what they can to make both the home front and the military front as strong as possible. Many of the things they have done have been important, but schools have failed to meet squarely a number of the problems most vital to winning the war and the peace.

While schools are giving their attention to America's war program, they can and should begin now to consider the problems of transition—from a world at war to a world at peace, from a world of uncertainty to a world of security, from a world of want to a world of plenty, from a world marked by slavery to a world of freedom, from

"Build a new world in your own community" might well become the slogan of school people concerned with making this a happier land. The opportunities for educators to take a lead in such a program are innumerable. Already groups of people—not necessarily forums, but often gatherings of only four or five persons—find themselves talking about problems of the war and post-war and discussing ways of solving them. We should like to suggest that such groups may wish to use the questions presented here as a basis for discussion. The author of this article was formerly Educational Director of the Institute for Consumer Education and is now with the Office of Price Administration.

a world of authoritarianism to a world of democracy.

To start building this new world at home and abroad, schools can organize study-action programs which deal with such problems as the following, each group of which presents a series of questions:

► *The Problems of Winning the War*

1. How can American civilians do their full part in helping win the war? What contributions can they make to speed the United Nations along the hard road to victory and a free world?

2. What are the war aims of the United Nations and the Axis? What are the main provisions of the Atlantic Charter, and of the Moscow, Cairo, and Teheran declarations? What are the major features of Germany's New Order and of Japan's Greater Asia Co-Prospersity Sphere?

3. What are the wartime policies and practices of the United Nations in areas liberated or to be liberated from Axis domination? What are the United Nations doing to encourage the development of democratic governments in North Africa, in Sicily, and in Southern Italy? What are they doing with reference to such governments-in-exile as those of Norway, Poland, France, Yugoslavia, the Netherlands, and Greece? And how are they dealing with people of the underground who are fighting the Nazis within France, Yugoslavia, Greece, and elsewhere?

4. What are the United Nations doing to maintain and extend the Four Freedoms—freedom from want, freedom from fear, freedom of speech, and freedom of religion—within their own boundaries consistent with the war ef-

fort? within the areas of the world (territories, possessions, and colonies) which they dominate or influence?

5. What are the United Nations doing to provide relief and rehabilitation for the peoples in areas freed from Axis control? What are they doing to help combat starvation and disease and to help promote reconstruction of devastated areas, public education, and other public services?

6. What is the United States doing to strengthen the home front in the following fields? Economic stabilization (price control, taxation, etc.) to prevent inflation during the war and post-war periods. Extension of the franchise (abolition of the poll tax and establishment of a Federal provision for voting by men and women in the armed services). Financing the war through an adequate and equitable tax program. Education and jobs for men leaving the military services.

► *The Problems of Winning the Peace*

1. What are the United Nations doing to prepare for the establishment of a world government, such as a strengthened League of Nations with a world police force? What are they doing toward helping the peoples of all lands to develop governments which are truly democratic? What specifically is being done toward setting up independent democracies in such colonies as India and Burma, Algeria, and the East Indies?

2. What are the United Nations doing toward planning the development and use of the world's resources so that the world's peoples are as adequately fed, clothed, and housed as possible? What is planned regarding international

regulation of cartels, monopolies, patents, trade barriers, and critical resources such as quinine, rubber, tin, and petroleum, so that these serve the general public rather than private groups?

3. What can the United Nations learn from the world's experience during "the long Armistice" between World Wars I and II? What were the strengths and weaknesses of the Versailles Treaty? of the League of Nations? How can the United Nations avoid the mistakes of the past in planning the future?

4. How can conditions which might lead to World War III be eradicated?

► *The Problems of Creating World-Mindedness*

1. How can Americans be educated to understand that they, together with the peoples of other nations, live in "One World"—a world made one by trade, aviation, instantaneous communication, science, and the common wants and aspirations of the common man?

2. How can the peoples of the United States and of other countries avoid the development of the attitudes and practices of isolationism, aggression, and imperialism which lead directly to international wars?

► *The Problems of Postwar Production and Employment*

1. How can the United States convert most effectively from war production to peacetime production?

2. To what extent can private enterprise provide for full production and full employment? To what extent can the Federal Government provide public financing, public works, public services, and public employment to help guarantee full production and employment?

3. How can our American people and their Government best provide employment for the men and women in the armed services? for those in war production and war agencies?

► *The Problems of Racial, Nationality, and Religious Groups*

1. How can the people of the United States provide the Negro population with economic, social, and educational opportunities so that this group enjoys the full rights to which its members should be entitled as citizens in our American democracy?

2. How can Americans overcome prejudices against such groups as Jews, Catholics, or other religious sects which are a minority in the nation as a whole or in a particular community?

3. How can Americans change their attitudes toward the Chinese, the people of India, and other darker-skinned races of the world so that these races are treated not as inferiors but as equals?

4. What shall our attitudes be toward "enemy" peoples after the war?

► *The Problems of Developing a Consumer-Oriented Economy*

1. How can the American business system take further steps to make consumption rather than profits the primary end, purpose, and measure of production?

2. How can Americans change their attitudes toward their incomes so that they consider not only the dollar value of these incomes but also the buying power of these incomes? How can they learn to plan the use of their incomes so that they best meet present and future living requirements?

3. How can Americans learn the

facts about the goods and services available on the market so that they spend their incomes to best advantage?

4. How can Americans work out the best possible relationship and balance between private and personal efforts and public and social efforts to provide for the satisfaction of the basic needs and wants of all consumers?

► *The Problems of Education*

1. How can America best finance its schools so that every child will have full opportunity to develop and use his abilities and to become a socially useful citizen? What can be done further by the local community? by the State? by the Federal Government?

2. How can the schools make education more functional in the present-day living of children and youth? in their ways of living after leaving school?

3. How can the schools become a more effective agency for the improvement of living in the local community? in the nation as a whole? in the world at large?

4. How can the schools of all nations—all nations, including those living under governments we now consider our enemies as well as those who are our friends—contribute to the peace, freedom, and security of the world?

The foregoing are only a few of the many and varied problems which American schools can help solve in the days ahead. If schools come to grips with such problems, they will substantially aid the citizens in their communities to make a happy transition to the postwar period.

Yet to be solved, of course, are numerous problems in the field of edu-

cational finance, administration, curriculum development, supervision, and the like.

Keeping Schools Open Is Basic to Solving Education's Problems

Basic to the solution of these educational problems is that of providing an adequate financial foundation for our nation's schools. During the war period, literally hundreds of communities have found it difficult to obtain the funds necessary to keep their school doors open and their teachers on the job. Many have had to close because they lacked the money to operate and because they could not pay salaries high enough to prevent teachers from seeking better-paid employment, say in war industries.

To help meet this situation, a bill was introduced before the Congress last autumn which would have granted some \$300,000,000 for one year to assist the states in greatest need and to raise teachers' salaries. (This \$300,000,000, by the way, equals what America is now spending for war in a day and a third.) While this particular bill was sidetracked, the problem of Federal aid to education remains; this appears to be one of the major ways by which the position of states least able to support education can be improved.

Schools That Are Democratic

In the field of educational administration, there is the continuing problem of how to operate the schools on a democratic basis. More and more school systems are finding it essential that teachers be given a greater voice in school affairs including such matters as salary schedules, tenure provisions, and

curriculum planning. Teachers in turn are encouraging their pupils to participate more fully and freely in decisions related to the conduct of courses, classes, student government, and other school activities. Furthermore, closer relationships between school and community are being fostered.

Also in the field of curriculum development and supervision, much constructive work remains to be done. While considerable progress has been and is being made, school people must constantly evaluate what is taught and how it is taught and search for ways to meet the needs and wants of children and youth. An even greater emphasis in the curriculum must be placed upon the problems of living in the present-day community, nation, and world.

Further attention should be given to the school as an agency for improvement of community living. This means that remaining barriers between the school and life around it must be broken down so that in a real sense the school goes into the community and the community comes to school.

Our Eyes on New Horizons

These new educational horizons and other new horizons go hand in hand. The future of our schools, for example, depends upon the economic future of our nation. An insight into America's economic potential is revealed in its

records of production during the war period. Only a few years ago, the experts estimated that the United States could produce, at practical capacity, about \$100 billion worth of goods and services. In 1943, figures show, our nation had a gross national production of nearly \$190 billion, of which about \$90 billion went into military goods and services and an equal amount into civilian goods and services. If our nation can maintain production at this peak level during peacetime and distribute democratically the goods and services produced, our people can enjoy a standard of living which is far above anything the common man has ever hoped for.

Whether American education and the American way of life go forward during the years to come will in no small part depend upon our nation's school people. They can work for a return to the good old days of "the three R's" and of "the splendid isolation" of the school from the living world. If they do so, they can best be described as R. H. Tawney so graphically referred to the ruling class of Europe after the French Revolution: "They walked reluctantly backwards into the future, lest a worse thing should befall them." Or—school people can work now for the kind of education that leads our children and youth toward the new horizons of a better world.

LAST APRIL, a month when schools were in session, one out of every eight children aged 14 and 15 years in the United States was employed at full- or part-time work. Between 1940 and 1942 the number of certificates granted to 14- and 15-year-olds to leave school and go to work increased 214 per cent. Figures for 1943 to date indicate that this rate of increase is being rapidly accelerated.—*Defense Bulletin No. 7*, National Commission for the Defense of Democracy Through Education.

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