

Tools for Learning

READING FOR TEACHERS . . . Sprouting our Functional Literacy

ROMA GANS

NO GREATER TRIBUTE has been paid the teaching profession than the one implied by those who ask that the future and enduring peace be assured through effective education. But to understand our responsibilities we need specific knowledge in many fields in which at present we may be novices. Such important focal fields as international planning, race relations, Russia, labor-management needs, and full employment are all interwoven in the concept of enduring peace.

The regular reading of a good daily newspaper with adequate national and international coverage seems a necessity—even if this means subscribing for one by mail and reading it several days later. Because few of us were given help on interpreting reports of current affairs in newspapers as a part of our education, to be astute readers we need the help of such books as Edgar Dale's *How to Read a Newspaper*.¹ Our newspaper reading might well be supplemented with regular listening to radio commentators. A series of articles by Dixon Wecter beginning in the June 1945 issue of the *Atlantic Monthly* will serve as a guide to appraisal of commentators.

Through magazines we can gain added interpretation. Especially do we need to read such liberal magazines as *The Nation* and *The New Republic* for information written from an outlook differing from that of the majority of our newspapers. *News*

Week and *Time* which have wide coverage of news are good for information.

In addition to current reading many of us feel the need for a background in specific fields. To add to our information on inter-group relations, we can read with profit special books and pamphlets such as *Probing our Prejudices*² by Powdermaker and Storen, *A Monthly Summary of Events and Trends in Race Relations*,³ *The Races of Mankind*⁴ by Benedict and Weltfish, and *Overcoming Anti-Semitism*⁵ by Solomon Fineberg. *South Today*⁶ and *Common Ground*⁷ might appropriately be included in our regular magazine reading list for the growing teacher's library.

Securing a better understanding in labor-management problems demands a background which may be gained from Leo Huberman's *Labor Spy Racket*.⁸ The contents are based on the Senate Civil Liberties Committee Investigation. Going back to this book may seem like an exhumation process; the Wagner Act has altered much of the national situation described in the testimony. Yet, the labor-management field, like all significant fields, must be understood through its history. Other helpful readings are *Labor in the Post War World*⁹ and *The Forward March of American Labor*.¹⁰

Perhaps an area in which one will meet greatest difficulty in getting dependable information and therefore increased under-

¹ Scott Foresman and Company.

² Harpers Brothers.

³ Prepared for Julius Rosenwald Fund by Social Science Institute, Fisk University, Nashville, Tenn.

⁴ Public Affairs Pamphlet No. 85.

⁵ Harpers Brothers.

⁶ Published at Clayton, Ga., Lillian Smith and Paula Snelling, Editors.

⁷ Common Council for American Unity, 222 Fourth Avenue, New York 3, N. Y.

⁸ Modern Age Books, Inc., 155 East Forty-fourth Street, New York, N. Y.

⁹ Workers Education Bureau, New York, N. Y.

¹⁰ L.I.D. Pamphlet Series, 112 East Nineteenth Street, New York 19, N. Y.

Introducing "Tools for Learning" with an article on Reading for Teachers is Roma Gans of Teachers College, Columbia University, New York, N. Y. Miss Gans points out major areas in which school people, both as individuals and as teachers, will want to keep posted and suggests books and periodicals which would give readers an introduction to the various fields.

standing is the one regarding Russia. Joseph Davies' *Mission to Moscow*,¹¹ although several years old, is still of great value. *The People of the U. S. S. R.*¹² can serve as a brief introduction. *Russia Is No Riddle*¹³ by Edmund Stevens is on my list to read next.

Closely related to these broad fields is the all important professional field of the changing curriculum, changing more rapidly and more fundamentally in some places because of important consideration given to the responsibility of educating for permanent peace. Reports of outstanding curricular revisions and readings related to this immediate need of our schools at this time are *musts* on a teacher's reading list. Also related and of utmost importance is the need for increased understanding of children and youth based upon the deeper insights coming from the field of mental hygiene, a phase of human understanding well developed in the past years, but about which most of us

¹¹ Simon and Schuster.

¹² The East and West Association, 40 East Fortyninth Street, New York, N. Y.

¹³ Greenberg Publishing Company.

who were formerly educated to teach as yet know very little.

Perhaps the thought of keeping informed on these big issues is too discouraging especially if we feel woefully out-of-date at this time. Therefore, a planned program of reading must be included in our already busy lives, even at the cost of other worthy pursuits. The effect will permeate the quality of our curriculum revision, our activities in organizations, our interests in local, national, and international affairs, yea, and even the ultimate status of the profession.

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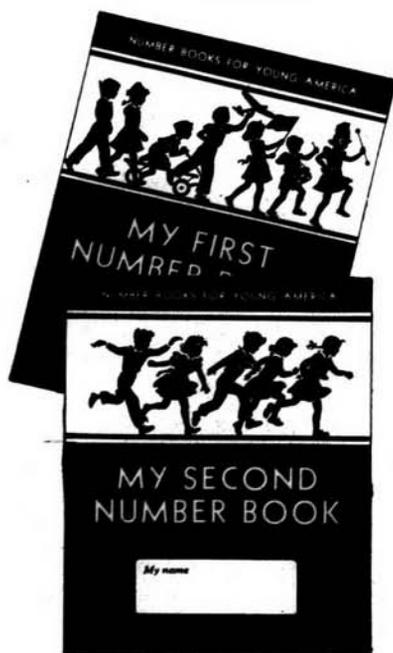
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