

## School Attendance at the World Town-Meeting

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*The importance of the schools' share in preparing American youth for successful living in the world of today is stressed in this article by Emily Taft Douglas, Congressman-at-Large from Illinois. In outlining briefly the status and functions of the International Organizations, Mrs. Douglas voices the belief that a better understanding of the purposes and activities of these groups evoked in the consciousness of the future citizens will do much toward achieving the goal of international unity.*

DURING THE LAST fifteen months, a cluster of international organizations has been brought into being. If the nations and peoples of the world will support these organizations with understanding and vigor they can foster a climate for peace. Then we will be spared a third war which this time might well destroy civilization and we can use instead our energies to raise the standards of living everywhere and to spread friendliness among the peoples of the world. If the nations, however, do not support these organizations any more effectively than they did the League of Nations, we might as well prepare for Armageddon and mutual destruction. Certainly, educators as well as community leaders share the responsibility for developing this climate of peace.

The schools *can* help the oncoming generation to understand the purposes, structure, and functions of these new international organizations. Since the United States is not only a loyal member of every one of these organizations, but is indeed, perhaps, one of their strongest supporters among the nations, the schools can do this with full loyalty to American institutions and ideals. For these organizations are merely attempting to do between nations what our government has been trying to do for the American people. International organization is the logical fulfillment of

the process of government which starts within the local level and then goes up through the counties and states to the nation. It is the keystone of man's struggle to find security and progress.

First in importance is of course the United Nations. Knowledge and understanding of the preamble to the Charter of the United Nations, as well as the preambles to the Declaration of Independence and the Constitution must be included in educational experiences. The text of the charter should be carefully studied. As is well known, the two main bodies within the United Nations are the Assembly and the Security Council. The first consists of all the members of the United Nations which at present number fifty-one. The Assembly is chiefly a forum and a world town-meeting. It may recommend to the Security Council and other bodies but it cannot take action except in three respects. These are the admission of new member nations and the suspension of existing members, the election of the non-permanent members of the Security Council, and the operation of the general trusteeship system. Each member nation may have up to five representatives to the Assembly but can cast only one vote. At its first meeting in London last winter, the Assembly carried through the organizational work of the United Nations. At its meeting in New York it will consider and debate some

of the vital issues involved in world peace.

### **The Security Council Functions Continuously**

Such real power as the United Nations has, resides in the Security Council. This has five permanent members, the United States, Great Britain, Russia, China and France, and six non-permanent members who are elected by the Assembly for two-year terms. At present, the six non-permanent members are Poland, Australia, the Netherlands, Mexico, Egypt and Brazil. Unlike the Assembly, the Security Council is to function continuously. It has as its main job the peaceful settlement of international disputes. If it so desires, it can directly use against aggressors both economic boycotts, as provided by the old League of Nations, and also pooled military force. If this system works, it will help to ensure peace in much the same way as a domestic police force.

The ability of the Council to take such action, is in practice weakened by the "veto" clause (Article 27, paragraph 3). This provides that on all matters which are other than "procedural", not only are the votes of seven of the eleven members required for a decision but what is far more important these seven must include each and every one of the five permanent members. This means that the objection of one of the Big Five can prevent the Council from taking action. As a practical matter this clause was inserted in the original Dumbarton Oaks draft and retained in a slightly modified form in the San Francisco Charter for two reasons. In all probability Russia would not have entered the United Nations without it and it was feared that the United States Senate

would refuse to ratify the charter unless it was included.

Two minor changes in the veto clause were made at San Francisco as the result of protests by small nations. These were (a) that on "procedural matters" the assent of any seven nations would be sufficient. If these seven votes were obtained for a procedural decision, then the fact that one or more of the Big Five disagreed, would not stop action. (b) in investigating disputes or attempting to settle them by mediation, conciliation, or arbitration, the parties to the dispute were to abstain from voting. In this way it was intended to prevent any one of the Big Five from barring just complaints against it by a smaller power.

### **Cooperation for the Future**

We must frankly admit that hopes for a reduction in the use of the veto have faded since the Council has started to function. The future of the United Nations hangs on the development of a cooperative rather than a unilateral spirit. Perhaps our function is to promote both firmness and patience while this new spirit is attempted.

While the Security Council is primarily intended to prevent war, the Social and Economic Council is designed to foster international cooperation, to raise production and standards of living and of health, and to win "universal respect for, and observance of, human rights and fundamental freedoms for all without distinction as to race, sex, language or religion." This Council has the possibility of becoming extremely valuable. It consists of eighteen members elected by the General Assembly to which it reports and adopts its recommendations by majority vote. It has set up subcommittees to deal with certain

specific questions such as the position of women, the promotion of human rights, and the achievement of maximum production and full employment.

The Court of International Justice is the judicial branch of the United Nations. It can offer advisory opinions to that body. While nations do not have to submit their disputes to the Court, if they do so, they are morally bound by the decisions. In the last days of the 79th Congress, the Senate approved compulsory jurisdiction of the World Court in international disputes involving this nation.

### **Intellectual Exchange Is Needed**

Educators are particularly concerned in the future of the United Nations Educational and Cultural Organization (UNESCO) which was set up last year. The main purpose of this body is well stated in its preamble: "Since wars begin in the minds of men, it is in the minds of men that the defenses of peace must be constructed." UNESCO aims to promote an intellectual exchange of students, teachers, books and ideas between nations and to promote true intellectual cooperation. The bill for American participation calls for the naming of advisors by a large number of American organizations.

With our own free press, we have everything to gain and nothing to lose by championing and universalizing a free flow of information between peoples. For this is one of the Four Freedoms and basic to democratic principles. The spreading of such accurate information will help to prepare a favorable climate for peace. This, therefore, is an idea and an organization which all who are educators will do well to support. For with man's new weapons sympa-

thetic understanding between nations is a necessity for survival. In fact, with the atomic bomb, a race began between the education of man and his extinction.

### **Economic Stability Is a Goal**

In addition to the organizations described, is a group dealing with more strictly economic functions. Two of these are the International Bank for Reconstruction and Development and the International Monetary Fund. The former underwrites private loans to countries for the purposes of reconstruction and long-term economic development. It will operate in much the same fashion as the Home Owners Loan Corporation has stimulated private investment in housing in this country. It should lead to a flow of capital for sound economic projects in countries which are in an early stage of development. This should lead to appreciable increases in the standards of living of the people of those countries. The Monetary Fund is intended to stabilize currencies and hence tide over temporary balance of payment difficulties. As Mr. Winant has said, "If the Fund had been established at the end of the last war, we might have escaped the serious international financial crisis in the early thirties which set in motion a chain of new restrictions on international exchange and the movements of goods across frontiers and which prolonged the widespread unemployment of the thirties."

Three other international economic organizations are deserving of at least brief mention. The International Labor Office is the sole carry-over from the prewar period, having been established at the Paris Peace conference of 1919. It has raised labor conditions in the so-called backward countries and has en-

abled the nations to take joint action to improve working conditions by lessening the pressure of international competition upon the nations which wish to pioneer and to advance in these fields.

The Provisional Civil Aviation Organization, with headquarters at Montreal, is seeking to make possible the effective expansion of civil aviation around the globe and to establish workable rules of fair competition between the various competing national airlines.

### **Hunger Breeds Violence**

Still another agency which can play a key part in stabilizing world conditions is the Food and Agriculture Organization. This is a worldwide clearing house for information about nutrition, agriculture and marketing. Wherever there is hunger, there is fertile soil for dictators and violence. And yet half of the world has never had enough to eat. In the past this was accepted as fate, but modern science makes it possible for man to conquer famine. Aside from humanitarian motives, the United States has a double stake in this project. We want to increase world stability, for the sake of our own security, and we also

want to raise living standards so that we can increase our own markets.

While FAO is fighting the long-run campaign against hunger and starvation, the immediate battle against starvation is being waged by the United States Relief and Rehabilitation Association. By the time it passes out of existence early next year, UNRRA will have distributed over four billion dollars of food and supplies. It has literally saved the lives of millions of people and aided the recipient nations back to some degree of health and welfare. Since some need will probably continue into 1947 and 1948, this work should not be allowed to lapse with UNRRA but should be carried on by such a body as the FAO.

These organizations thus briefly described have not been conjured up to enable diplomats to appear busy. They have sprung from the need for international action to prevent war and to improve man's lot. They can be made into powerful forces for good. But to do this, it is necessary that peoples of the various countries should understand them and be willing to work through them. The schools and their people can do much toward that end.

### **Watch Your Dates.**

GET OUT YOUR calendar now and reserve the dates March 23-26, 1947 for the annual ASCD meeting at the Sherman Hotel in Chicago. Plans are going forward and announcements will be made through the pages of EDUCATIONAL LEADERSHIP as well as in the *News Exchange* which is sent to ASCD members.

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