

# The Changing World

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## THE GROWING INTEREST IN LANGUAGE AND COMMUNICATION

ONE OF THE SIGNS of the current social-intellectual revolution is the growing effort to develop ever more effective communication skills.

The need for such skills is felt and voiced in many directions. Eleanor Roosevelt, speaking before the national meeting of ASCD in New York in February, described some of the communication difficulties that were encountered during the development of the Universal Declaration of Human Rights. One of her anecdotes is especially useful in this connection. Representatives of several of the smaller nations objected to the statement "all men are created equal." In explaining their objection it was pointed out that in certain countries *men* meant *men only*. When the proposed wording was changed to read "all human beings," Article Number One was then acceptable. Mrs. Roosevelt stated that difficulties of this sort were encountered at each step in the writing of the Declaration.

"Word Trouble" is encountered in practically all areas of human relations: in collective bargaining, in advertising, in politics, in education, in religion, in economics, in international relations.

Now what are the indications that constructive steps are being taken toward improving our communication skills? There are numerous signs of such an effort. There is the growing interest in the field of *semantics*. Schools and colleges are giving increasing attention to communication, language arts, and the like. Of late years

there has been a growing use of the forum as a means of dealing with public problems and a corresponding decline in use of the debate. There is the experimental project now being sponsored by the Philosophy of Education Society in which representatives of differing philosophic viewpoints are endeavoring to create a "philosophic consensus that might serve as bases for a common educational, social, and political policy." These are some of the straws in the wind.

As the social sciences throw ever more light on the problem of human relations, it is becoming increasingly clear *that it is only in genuinely cooperative relations that adequate communication skills can be developed.*

The current effort to develop ever more effective communication skills may thus be seen as a factor in the larger effort to create a genuinely cooperative One World.

### Suggested References

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