EDUCATION AT A CROSSROADS

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The series of lectures to be given this week in connection with UNESCO month deal with a central phase of civilised existence. The educational institutions and aims of a society are products of cultural conditions, and are affected profoundly by such social crises as that through which we are now passing. Education is a part of the cultural tradition which is now in jeopardy. At the same time education is prophetic of the future, for in its transmission of the cultural heritage to succeeding generations it inevitably modifies culture itself. Education is a part of 'the wave of the future'. It is obviously appropriate that lectures during this week should examine selected aspects of education. As you know, the lectures are to deal with child development, with the making of citizens, and with the character of secondary and higher education. In introducing the series, I should like briefly today to point out (1) certain factors which condition educational development in the immediate future (2) certain unresolved issues of an ideological character which force themselves today upon the attention of all who deal in educational matters, and then (3) to relate these factors and issues to certain of the problems and proposals of the infant international organisation, UNESCO.

1. FACTORS CONDITIONING CONTEMPORARY EDUCATIONAL PLANNING

In analysing education and determining what form educational institutions and activities should take, certain factors of special significance in these contemporary years must be considered. As has been suggested, education does not take place in a vacuum, but is part of the general social process. Certain conditioning elements inherent in the present social situation and in education should undoubtedly influence our thinking about education, and will certainly influence our educational action. Obviously it is impossible on this occasion even to tabulate the great variety of factors which influence so complex a process as education. However, there are four factors particularly characteristic of this middle decade of the twentieth century which I should like to describe. These four factors force themselves upon the attention of all who deal realistically with educational problems at any level of instruction and in any field of learning.

(I) The Devastation of War

The first factor which must be recognised is the effect of the war on the educational resources of mankind. It is a disquieting fact that today the world has fewer educational buildings, less educational equipment, and more alarming shortages of competent teachers that it has had for many decades past. Many of the installations which in the normal course of events would now be devoted to educational efforts are lost in the ashes of war.

One need not describe here the devastation that exists in all areas over which the battles of the last war raged. A report on educational rehabilitation recently issued by the Preparatory Commission of UNESCO summarises the situation in these terms:

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In every theatre of the war, from Great Britain through Europe and Asia to the Philippines, physical losses were enormous. Universities and colleges, schools and libraries, laboratories and research centres, radio installations and cinemas alike fell before bombardment and fire. Many such institutions not actually destroyed were used for military purposes and altered almost beyond recovery for their original use. Schoolroom and lecture hall equipment, printing presses and scientific apparatus were confiscated or plundered. Libraries and textbooks and museum collections were dispersed or looted or lost.

No educational planning for the present or the future can ignore this tragic reality. Two major wars have left our generation poorer in the physical resources by which culture can be sustained and transmitted than were the generations of our fathers and grandfathers.

Moreover, an account of the actual destruction in war-swept areas does not complete the picture of our present shortage of educational materials. During the years since 1939 the energies of most countries of the world have been devoted to the imperative work of modern warfare. Educational institutions have fallen into disrepair and educational thought and action have been neglected. The United States is commonly regarded as relatively untouched by the physical destruction of war, and yet the neglect of many of its educational establishments since 1939 has been pronounced. Few new school buildings have been erected to house a growing population. Laboratories have received only such equipment as was necessary for war research. Libraries have failed to add to their shelves publications that would normally have been available. Fewer studies have been made, fewer books published. A recent report of the National Planning Board indicates an immediate need in the United States for $9,000,000,000 worth of new school and college buildings. The story is the same throughout the world. Every nation has lost in the titanic disorder of war. We have lost many of our educational resources or have suspended their normal development.

And, of course, the effect of the war has been only in part a physical effect. All of our countries have lost to the god Mars and alarming proportion of the best young men and women of this generation and of the last generation. The human resources for sustaining and transmitting our culture are seriously impaired. For six years the young men and women now living have not been able to follow ordinary educational pursuits, and even our most frantic efforts in overcrowded classrooms today to compensate for their disordered years cannot repair the damage. This condition will leave its mark for several decades, even if further disorder can be avoided. In many areas of the world even the very young are handicapped in school by malnutrition; older pupils feel the fatigue resulting from war deprivations. And threatening to close in on all of us, like an ominous and choking fog, is a war-born legacy of hate and discouragement, of cynicism and suspicion and despair. Our psychological and moral losses are in many respects greater than the losses of material resources.

More need not be said to call to your minds this tragedy of our times, these losses which must condition our educational plans and aspirations. We must work with more efficiency than we have ever shown before, if the shortages of men and material are to be overcome. Far-sighted educational planning, even the development of a long-term educational programme such as that on which UNESCO is embarking, cannot be carried on without recognising the immediate problems of rehabilitation and reconstruction. Educational planning for the future cannot ignore an immediate crisis. Wise use of the educational resources left to us and their increase at the earliest possible moment are necessary even for the survival of what has been rather vainly referred to as our 'mature and glorious civilisation'.
(ii) Accumulated Knowledge about the Educative Process

A second factor to be considered is more encouraging in character. There exists today more accurate and detailed information about the educational process than any preceding generation has possessed. The existence of this body of technical information on how people learn, on the nature of human talents, on the tasks of teaching is too commonly ignored alike by ordinary citizens and by scholars in traditional fields. There has developed during the past few decades a professional study of the educational process and of educational institutions which has accumulated through research a body of learning of great potential value. Many professional students of education have made absurd mistakes and have grossly exaggerated the achievement of the ‘science of pedagogy’ during its early years, but nevertheless a sound foundation has been laid for the competent analysis of human beings and of their growth and education. In the emerging science of education lies great value for us, especially in the present situation, if we can develop it more adequately and use it with insight and understanding.

It is possible here only to allude to a few aspects of the science of education in order to demonstrate its existence. Psychology and psychiatry now give us new insight into the nature of human beings and the process by which they learn. Many of the basic laws of learning have been worked out, and some of the conditions of their application discovered. Studies of maturation, of the relation of emotion and intellect, of the effects of nutrition and fatigue on learning, of the conditions of memorisation, of the relation of interest or motivation to achievement, and of other similar fields have been carried out with considerable accuracy. Analyses have been made of the learning capacities and interests and drives of individuals at various stages in the life cycle. The literature on adolescence and its relation to education is now of considerable consequence. The delicate mechanism of the human personality has been dissected by the psychologist even as the intricate patterns of the entire culture have been exposed by the anthropologist. On the technical side we have learned how to measure many of the attributes of an individual. Stemming from the pioneer work of Binet here in France have come measures of intelligence, measures of capacity, measures of achievement which are now standardised and increasingly used, though with appropriate caution, in the schools and colleges of the world. Instruments for diagnosing individual achievement and predicting educational success and vocational capacity are now in the making.

I do not mean to over-emphasise our control over the educational development of individual personalities. There are many factors in human nature which we do not now understand and cannot now control, but I would emphasise the fact that one of the influencing conditions in modern education is that the study of the processes of learning and of teaching has proceeded to a point where we are more nearly enabled to educate with accuracy and efficiency than we have ever been before. I realise full well that the existence or even the possibility of a science of education is a matter of controversy within academic circles, and that many educational charlatans continue to produce misleading panaceas, but the hopeful fact remains that there are also many intelligent and even learned professional students of education. Their work is one of the encouraging, conditioning factors which educational planning cannot afford to ignore. It was said by a scholar of wisdom many years ago that ‘the proper study of mankind is man’. In the pursuit of that study we have learned much of what it means to be a human being, and of the circumstances and procedures which make his fullest education possible of achievement.

(iii) New Tools of Learning

A third factor conditioning educational endeavours today is the availability of new tools and instruments and institutions of education. For long centuries men depended for the development and dissemination of knowledge on words spoken by an individual to those with whom he was in immediate contact. The development of writing provided an immeasurably important aid for preserving learning and stimulating the minds
of those who could read. The invention of movable type and the series of developments that led to the modern rotary press brought new and increasingly powerful tools for the dissemination of the printed word. As this dissemination widened more people learned to read, and illiteracy was attacked around the world. Yet even today not more than 1,000,000,000 of the 2,000,000,000 people on the planet can learn directly from the printed page.

In recent decades new instruments for reaching people with information and ideas – reaching them effectively, quickly, powerfully, – have been developed. Radio and motion picture are as potent for our age as was movable type four centuries ago. In a sense we are today in the midst of a revolution in communication which is a fundamental conditioner of all educational work. The invention of radio and cinema, the division of the ether into waves and frequencies stimulated from miraculous broadcasting centres, the production of films and establishment of film theatres in a vast network of hamlets and cities, provide means of reaching and teaching – for good or for bad – a great proportion of mankind in a short space of time. These agencies thrust upon education and upon men’s minds a continuous synchronisation with the accelerating pace of human events. It is in some ways right to say that the centre of education as a driving force in human affairs has shifted from school and college platforms to the broadcasting station and the motion-picture studio. As Shaw has pointed out, a few men read with intelligence, a large number read – but virtually all of mankind hears and sees. So far as education in action is concerned, the radio and film condition – and perhaps revolutionise – our educational planning in the widest sense.

Even within schools and universities visual and auditory aids to instruction operate with increasing power. We have seen in recent military experience the effectiveness of new tools of learning. The showing of documentary and educational films in arts and sciences which is one of the manifestations of this first UNESCO month affords ample evidence of the power of films in teaching, especially in the natural sciences, in geography, and in the study of techniques extending from the use of precision drills to the making of tapestries. The use of statistical devices, of graphs and designs, of skilful combinations of pictures and words, of models, is becoming increasingly widespread and effective. It is not without significance that the governments of war devastated areas, in listing their educational needs, now emphasise the desirability of pictorial materials, of films and projectors, of radio receivers for use in their schools and colleges and laboratories. Even in libraries, formerly devoted to printed pages, the development of microfilm and other recording devices has profound effect. The whole range of technological developments connected with the recording of symbol or sound, and with the art of communication, now faces education with new responsibilities, new problems, and infinite potentialities.

I would not like to leave the impression that these technical aids to instruction and communication in any way diminish the importance of the individual who is responsible for teaching. The power of the personality remains – these devices but increase that power. Archibald McLeish in radio drama speaks to the world on a single occasion, as his published poem reaches a fraction of humanity and his unamplified voice speaks to the audience in a single hall or classroom. It is still fundamentally true, to quote an American proverb about a great college president, that ‘a university consists of Mark Hopkins on one end of a log and a student on the other’. The difference now is that Mark Hopkins has new tools for explaining his ideas, and the log may be very, very long. Today it is an inescapable fact that education is not limited to the traditional agencies of school and college and library, and that even systematic education is not stimulated alone by the unaided voice or by the printed page. New tools and institutions of learning, products of the scientific and industrial revolutions, must now be incorporated in all realistic educational planning. The revolution in communication, capable of destroying culture or of raising it to higher levels than we have yet dreamed of, is even now upon us.
(iv) Fluidity of Contemporary Education

A fourth factor conditioning education is the extraordinary ferment and fluidity in educational thought and action which is characteristic of these current years. Old moulds are being shattered; new goals are being sought. Conflicts of ideologies – political, economic, social, cultural, educational – reverberate about us. In these stirring and exhausting times, the ferment of ideas shakes old philosophies and values, raises new hopes and fears, makes us analyse again our assumptions. All the uncertainties and gropings and hopes of the broader social scene have their counterpart within educational thought. The aims and practices of education are under re-examination; there is an expectancy of new paths, a willingness to experiment, a search for improvement which is a healthy counter to the discouragement which, for many, is an aftermath of war.

In educational circles throughout the world today there are signs of vigour. In France the Longevin Commission is approaching the nation’s educational reconstruction with far-reaching proposals. In Great Britain an epochal Education Act is now being implemented, involving new educational goals and extensive educational readjustments. In Russia a series of educational reforms has proceeded apace in recent years. In the United States the Educational Policies Commission proposes drastic reforms in educational structure and curriculum, and the report of the Harvard faculty on General Education in a Free Society is but one example of an extensive search for a better adjustment of education to reality. Throughout the world committees and commissions are at work on educational stock-taking and analysis. The creation of such National Commissions as are suggested in the Constitution of UNESCO is a sign of the times. These Commissions may help broaden the horizons of education and unify the cultural forces within each nation’s life. Arguments and controversies abound, but the important fact is that education’s old rigidity is being shaken. The time for reform is at hand. Education, like all other social activity, is today at a crossroads in its own development. Educational planning, if we are wise, can be more comprehensive, more far-sighted, more ambitious. There is opportunity today to make education again – as it was once in a simpler day – a direct, powerful, moving force within the total society. This is no time for petty outlooks; it is a time for boldness. In the current crises the stakes are high; with wisdom and dispatch we have now an opportunity to build a comprehensive educational structure capable of preserving the best and discarding the worst that comes to us from the past, capable of cultivating the highest talents resident in each member of the human family, capable of adjusting itself to the accelerating momentum of social evolution. The possibilities of that goal are sufficient warrant for our most strenuous effort and our sanest wisdom.

2. Issues within Educational Thinking

Thus far I have described four factors which seem to me of unusual influence on the educational problems and possibilities of these troubled years. To a certain degree, the constructive influence of these factors is determined by the extent to which we are conscious of them, and our consciousness of their implications is an index of our own wisdom. I should like to turn to a brief description of certain issues which are central to educational philosophy and which are by no means as yet resolved. Again I should point out that it is impossible here even to list all the important issues which confront those who think about education. I should like to refer to only three issues which are old in many respects but which have particular reference to the situation in which we find ourselves at this midpoint of the twentieth century.

(i) Liberal versus Technical Education

Resounding arguments are now in progress all around the globe over the relationship which exists, or ought to exist, between liberal and technical, between general and specialised, education. Many of the strongest educational traditions today lie in a field loosely defined as the humanistic studies – literature, philosophy, history, the arts. These fields are regarded by many educational thinkers as the proper and
classical bases for the liberal education of all men, or at least of all men capable of being educated. Other educational thinkers, keenly sensitive to the effects of the industrial revolution and to the necessities of vocational and specialised competence in a society such as ours, look askance at traditional education and demand, at least for the great majority of mankind, a technical education. This technical education is often described as realistic and practical in contrast to the assumed impracticality of traditional academic life and the unreality and escapism of traditional cultural studies. Obviously each side to the controversy can marshal evidence and produce weighty arguments on behalf of its position. No little energy is spent in mutual cudgelling; extremists of each side assail the other; each year many tons of paper pulp are consumed in the wordy controversy.

The problem, however, cannot be easily resolved by a simple choice of one side or the other. It cannot even be resolved, without growing danger of social and cultural disunity, by willingness to allow two educational systems within each nation to exist side by side – one devoted to general studies unalloyed by specialised or technical education, and the other devoted to narrow specialisation untrammelled by a wider view of things. A social view of what is good both for the individual and for the wider society which nurtures him must be found. It is not the part of wisdom to deride technical or scientific or vocational efficiency for any man in a society such as ours; neither is it wise to abandon the liberal arts as means for enriching life, for acquiring social perspective, and as a common denominator in general education. There are many who take the position that there is no dichotomy dividing general and special, liberal and technical studies. They will argue that the education which most adequately frees man from the trials and shortcomings of so-called civilised existence is one which draws elements from both general and specialised studies. They will argue that the individual in a technical field – whether at the level of automobile mechanics or of atomic research – is a better specialist as he sees his speciality in perspective and in a framework of social relations. They will argue too that the broadly cultivated man has not reached adequate levels of understanding until he has competence in a specialisation in which his broad learning comes to a focus. And beyond this they will argue that every man needs both special and general training to discharge his duties as a citizen. Their point of view is of particular importance in a democracy, where an essential element of liberal living is vocational competence based on specialisation. That man is not free who cannot maintain himself; neither democracy nor a liberal education can exist on a dole.

It is not my purpose here to pursue further an exploration of the relationship between general and special education. The issue is, however, central to educational philosophy and to concrete educational planning. What seems to be needed is a new common denominator in education which will enable the bricklayer and the railway conductor, the seamstress and the secretary to understand one another. And at another level, a common core of education which will enable men in varied fields – from literary pursuits through scientific research to social engineering – to speak to one another with understanding and confidence and respect. At the lowest level of primary education and on through college years one should find a common core of instruction within which students of varied interest find common ground. The elements of this core-curriculum, drawn from specialised fields but utilised for general understanding, should be discovered and made the basis of instruction. On such a foundation of common understanding the agencies of higher education and adult education may then build an educational framework capable of housing the most varied specialisations. The common core is essential if the specialists (who are themselves essential to our society) are not to divide themselves into disparate groups and thereby bring down upon society the decay of social disunion.

(ii) Individualistic versus Social Aims in Education

A second issue which education and the larger society face and for which no answer has as yet been found is the conflict between individualistic and purely social aims in education. It is the old question, in its extreme terms, of whether the group exists for the individual or the individual for the group. The formulation of a tenable position in respect to this issue, and the determination of an educational course of action conforming
with the philosophical position, is a central and perhaps the most difficult problem faced by the educational
philosopher and the educational administrator.

Certain educational systems, emphasising the importance of individuals of superior talent, are predicated
upon the discovery and advancement of an élitist group. Too frequently the definition of talents for admission to
the élite is conceived in narrow and rigid terms, or the person of talent is taught, perhaps unintentionally, that
the talents which place him in the élite group relieve him of general social responsibility. Or in another setting,
pupils are made to feel, even in narrowly vocational schools, that the purpose of their education is
predominately self-aggrandisement, higher earning power, better preparation for ‘the bitter competition of
existence’. Certain educational systems or methods stressing the precious qualities of individuality seem to
succeed only in developing persons of cultivated idiosyncrasy whose whole system of values is framed with
exclusive reference to their personal lives. At the opposite extreme are certain educational practices which
submerge the individual and make him unsure of himself, continuously and servilely submissive to the total
group or to its leaders. […] Even unintentionally in the schools of democratic nations, the routine emphasis on
formal discipline and the inflexibility of school curriculum and administration often lead to the same
submissiveness. The ostracism or submergence of minority groups within educational institutions, […] leads in
the end to domination and aggressiveness as against withdrawal and submission.

The solution of the problem lies not in either extreme of the cultivation of individualism or the submission
of personality, if the broader interests of society are to be served. Few states have found for their own
populations an educational system which adequately promotes diversity within unity; few schools or teachers
have found the harmonious balance between group-mindedness and individual self-confidence in individual
pupils. In the light of social needs, educational influences – school, home, church, radio, press, motion picture
– must seek to help form individuals who are adequately independent of influence from the crowd, and who are
at the same time adequately sensitive to the needs and interests of others. To discover that every man is each
man’s brother but that even a brother has the right to his own personality and the responsibility for independent
judgment – and then to find the means of making such a position an effective driving force in education would be
an educational achievement perhaps too great to hope for.

(iii) A National Outlook in an International World

Closely related to the two issues already suggested is the problem of a national outlook in an
international world. Educational systems are national in their scope. The rise of public education was coincident
with the rise of modern nationalism. Educational systems are supported by national funds and are oriented
around national interests. The most commonly taught subject in the schools of virtually every country is the
history of that country. The symbolism and ceremonial attached to school life arises from the nation, its creed,
its flag, its law, its set of values.

On the other hand a detached view indicates that survival of our culture requires international action,
international understanding and co-operation. That we are so far from such understanding and co-operation
today is partly due to education which has become on occasion zealously nationalistic. ‘Wars begin in the
minds of men, and it is in the minds of men that the defences of peace must be constructed.’ The fact of ‘one
world’ is upon us – forced upon us by an economic and cultural interdependence which is world-wide in scope.
The problem posed before us is that of harmonising educational programmes of national citizenship with the
requirements of international existence. We have witnessed within our lifetimes two world wars which have
brought all nations to the verge of catastrophe. A third world war – and our interdependence is so great that no
war can avoid becoming a world conflict – may mean the end of civilisation as we know it. The urgency of
educational action in the interests of peace is attested both by the concept of ‘one world’ and by the
necessities of national survival.
Again the tenable position is not one of either extreme. Education in loyalty to one’s own country is good, for the loyalties which make life warm and pleasant and vigorous are local loyalties. Education in loyalty to the wider society is also good, for it rests on humane motives and a realistic sense of brotherhood. And fortunately the two – education for national interest and education for international interest – are not necessarily antagonistic. The problem is one of avoiding the excesses of nationalistic jingoism while preserving the values of group feeling rooted in common national experience and tradition. No diminution of intelligent loyalty to one’s own city is required for national loyalty; no diminution of intelligent loyalty to one’s nation is required for international understanding. Yet the task of finding the right path is not an easy one, and the path can be found only by the combined efforts of all the educational agencies – schools, radio, cinema and press. The tasks of removing unnecessary friction arising from inadequate education about the nations of the world, of deepening mutual respect and understanding, of promoting objective analysis of controversies and their causes, of focusing attention on the common interests and achievements of the populations of the world, of stimulating the free flow of information which is essential to friendly co-operation – these are tasks which must be assumed by national educational forces fully sensitive to the present moment in historical evolution. In these tasks UNESCO may be of special service to the nations and peoples of the world.

3. UNESCO’S Mission in Education

I have suggested briefly four factors of a relatively definite character which must be taken into consideration in educational planning today – (1) current shortages of men and materials, (2) an accumulated body of significant knowledge about the learning process, (3) the existence of new tools and instruments for stimulating the intellect and emotions, and (4) the extraordinary fluidity of education today along with all other social institutions in these times. In addition to these four factors, three unresolved issues complicate our educational thinking – issues centering (1) about the relationship of technical and general education, (2) about the desirable balance between individualistic and social aims of education, and (3) about the possibilities of education for membership in an international society through national systems of education.

With your permission, I should like to turn now to consideration of certain aspects of the educational programme of UNESCO in the light of these factors and issues. I make no apology for speaking directly about UNESCO. It is an international organisation of the utmost consequence now coming into existence as a central agency in the attempt of contemporary society to safeguard peace and preserve and advance human welfare. UNESCO itself is likely to become one of the conditioning factors in the further development of education, and I hope a constructive influence on the solution of education’s perplexing problems. Moreover, I feel impelled to speak of it today because during the past year it has occupied most of my working hours – and too many of my sleeping hours also – and because in the planning for UNESCO which is now coming to a climax, we have had to consider over and over again such factors and issues as have been briefly suggested today. It is fitting that certain aspects of the UNESCO programme should in this connection be brought to your attention.

You are aware that the Constitution of UNESCO was drawn up in London a year ago and that since that time a Preparatory Commission has been engaged in preparing a programme of action in the educational, scientific and cultural fields in which UNESCO has competence. Tomorrow, within the halls of this institution, the opening session of the first General Conference of UNESCO is to be held. At that General Conference recommendations and proposals from the Preparatory Commission are to be considered. Among the documents placed before the members of the Conference is a programme report suggesting lines of action for UNESCO in the fields of creative arts, the social sciences, philosophy and humanistic studies, the natural sciences, libraries and museums, media of mass communication, and education. The proposed programme is an ambitious and far-sighted one. It is not possible here today even to summarise its varied projects. I can only refer you to the programme report itself which is now available. On this occasion I should like to emphasise and
illustrate only certain qualities in the educational programme on which the Preparatory Commission and its Secretariat have worked.

(i) Broad Scope of Education

Education, as defined by UNESCO, deals with the whole of the person through the whole of his life, and is not confined to class rooms, to books, to schools, central and important as these are. The UNESCO programme in education is conceived in terms as varied as the attributes of human personality and as broad as the needs of modern society. It deals with the well-recognised periods of schooling in formal educational instruction – the nursery and primary schools, secondary schools, institutions of higher education, and centres of adult education. The field includes also such informal educational activities as youth organisations, youth serving agencies, and all the communication influences of modern society. The UNESCO programme is related to the educational responsibilities of the home and the church, and it embraces pertinent activities of trade unions, industries, and professional organisations. On its content side our educational programme involves instruction in the arts and sciences, in vocational training, in citizenship, in health, and in all the other fields which contribute to the development of well rounded responsible members of society.

As I have indicated, there is within the Secretariat of UNESCO a section devoted to the professional study of education. This section proposes the publication of certain journals and year books, the co-ordination of certain student organisations, a wide campaign against illiteracy, efforts for the improvement of textbooks and other teaching aids. It looks forward to the closest co-operation with international educational associations, and is likely to become a stimulation centre and clearing house for the collection and dissemination of information with regard to the educational procedures and the educational achievements of the nations. It would be a mistake, however, to think of the educational programme of UNESCO as exclusively the concern of this one section. There is a sense in which every member of UNESCO staff is an education officer. Education in the broad meaning in which we have discussed it here today is a function of total UNESCO. Work with libraries and museums, with radio systems and motion picture studios, with publishers and with public minded organisations is educational in its deepest nature. There is nothing petty or narrow in the UNESCO concept of education. Only by such a broadly conceived outlook can UNESCO discharge the responsibilities stated in its Constitution. These are not times for little measures but for co-ordinated action for the development of citizens who are capable of meeting the responsibilities of democratic society in an atomic age. UNESCO’s concept of education is as broad as these times demand.

(ii) Mutual Understanding and Respect

Many of the activities recommended by UNESCO in the field of professional education and in the other areas within which UNESCO is concerned are focussed upon the development of mutual respect and understanding among nations and all men. Reference has already been made to proposals for textbook analysis and revision. For three decades men of understanding have attempted to eliminate from the textbooks which are commonly used in schools and colleges references which are inaccurate and misleading or which arouse unwarranted prejudice in the minds of learners. The Institute of Intellectual Co-operation has a distinguished record in the development of tools of instruction which are not inimical to world peace. During the past few months we have had prepared an historical summary of the experience of organisations, nations and individuals in the field of textbook improvement, and on the basis of this historical survey have drawn up a programme of action for permanent UNESCO. It is believed that through the improvement of textbooks and other teaching materials the horizons of pupils can be widened, the study of history and other subjects can be made more accurate and objective, and that pupils of one area of the world may learn more of people in other areas. UNESCO proposes the publication of curriculum bulletins and guides to the increased study of world affairs. It expects to utilise the resources and information of radio and press and motion pictures to deepen the
mutual respect and understanding among peoples of the world. Through the presentation of music, literature, art, and the cultural achievements of all nations on world-wide networks of radio communication, it is hoped that deeper understanding of the common qualities of mankind may be developed. Anthologies of world literature, translations of great masterpieces, exchange of students and instructors – by these and many other means UNESCO seeks to strengthen the ties that bind the nations together.

(iii) Equalisation of Educational Resources and Opportunities

An underlying objective in the larger educational programme of UNESCO is reduction of the inequalities in cultural resources and educational opportunities which now exist among the world’s peoples. In the chapter of UNESCO’s programme report devoted to the natural sciences are analyses of the ‘bright zones’ and ‘dark zones’ of scientific research and understanding into which the world is divided. Proposed activities of UNESCO in the scientific field would brighten the dark zones and distribute more equally among all areas of the world the resources for scientific study and the opportunities for exchange of information among scientists. In the proposed activities concerned with libraries the UNESCO staff envisages a development of book resources which will make the printed page available to all of the increasing number of literate people. Bibliographical services, microfilm services, clearing house services, and the development of book exchange centres are a part of the improvement of the library resources of all the world. In the education section, as has already been indicated, plans are in hand for a world attack on illiteracy. During the past few months a group of some twenty specialists in the reduction of illiteracy have pooled their knowledge and offered their advice to UNESCO on the development of plans for a literacy campaign. There will be issued within the month as the first topical publication coming from UNESCO a book on *Fundamental Education: Common Ground For All People*. This volume summarises the background and the programme on behalf of literacy on which UNESCO hopes soon to embark. It should be added that in its work for rehabilitation and reconstruction in war devastated areas the UNESCO staff envisages not only relief for immediate needs but relief as a preliminary step in the further equalisation of educational resources and opportunities. The relief which at present flows to war devastated areas must in some degree ultimately flow into the less advantaged nations and regions of the entire globe. It is not only war destruction but educational inadequacies anywhere that UNESCO’s programme of rehabilitation and reconstruction combats.

(iv) The Goal of Educational Work

It would be possible to describe further the widely varied enterprises of an educational nature on which UNESCO hopes soon to embark, but description alone of even the immediate purpose of each individual project is insufficient to indicate the full goal in education toward which UNESCO operations are directed. UNESCO is an organisation working at an international level and devoted to the improvement of cultural existence. UNESCO is a bulwark against the discouragement and despair which are so easily accepted in a post-war period. UNESCO is based upon hope. It believes in the possibility of peace, in the desirability of advancing the frontiers of knowledge, in the necessity of disseminating on the widest possible scale knowledge pertinent to the affairs of men, in the possibility of applying information to the magnificent tasks of social engineering which stretch out before us in challenging vista. UNESCO believes in the perfectibility of human nature, but it is not a sentimental idealistic organisation indulging alone in wishful thinking. UNESCO believes in the common denominator of hope and aspiration which binds men of all the world together in a tie which, like a mystic cord, strikes the strong note of friendliness and good will. UNESCO is concerned with the advancement of a professional field of education, with the solution of the ideological and cultural problems which surround that field, with the widest possible distribution of educational opportunity, and with the use of education as an agency for lifting mankind to the level of its aspirations.
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**Biography of the Author**

**Howard E. Wilson**

(U.S.A.)

1923-1925 High school teacher in Stevens Point, Wisconsin.

1930-1945 Editor of the Harvard Educational Review.

1931-1945 Assistant Professor and Associate Professor at Harvard - training teachers in the Social Sciences.

1934 President of the National Council for Social Studies in 1934.

1945 Assistant Director of the Division of Intercourse and Education, Carnegie Endowment for International Peace in 1945.

Director of a study for the American Council on Education in which 100 books were analysed.

Deputy Secretary to the UNESCO Preparatory Committee and one of the most distinguished American leaders in the field of education.