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A window open on the world
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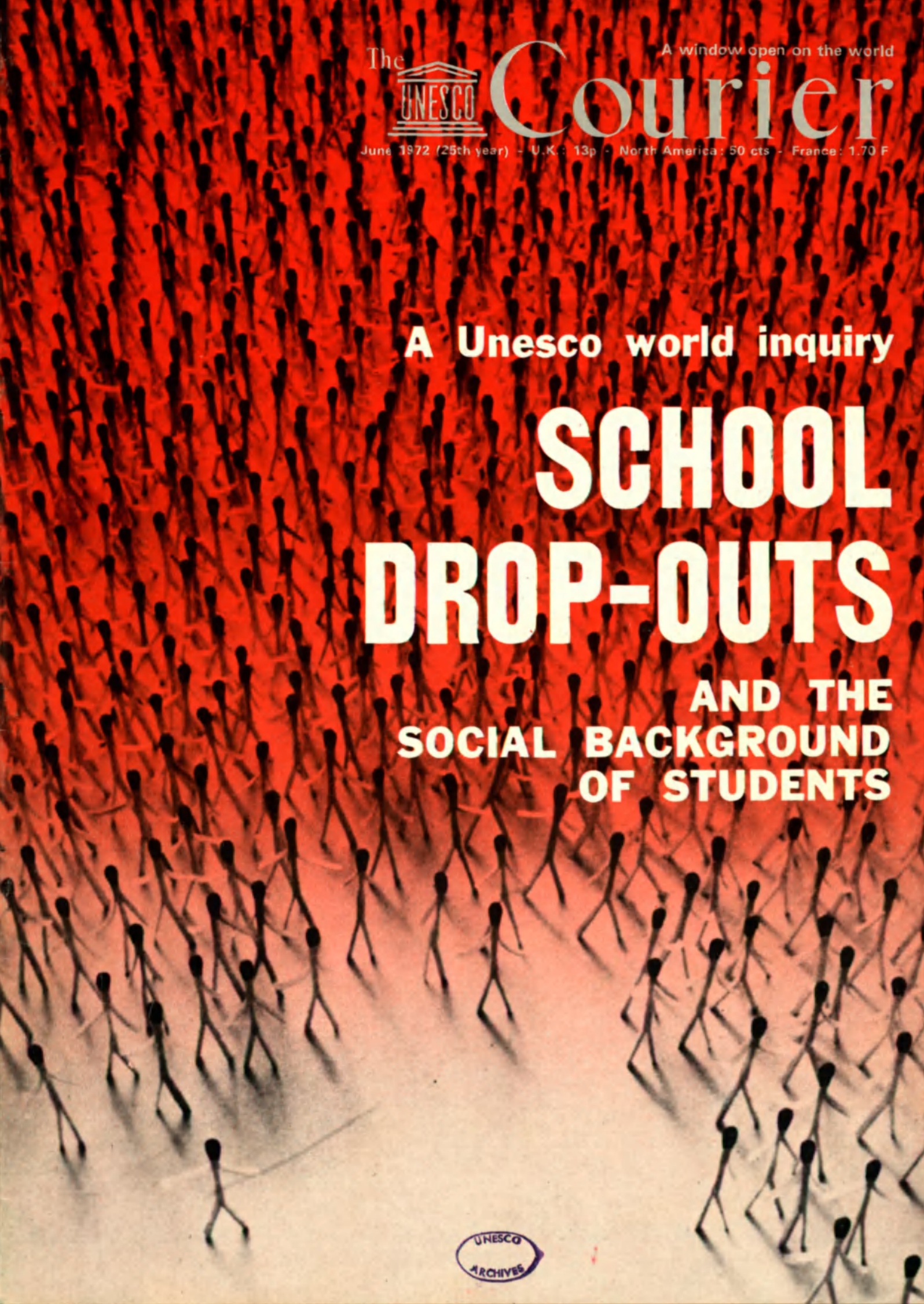

A Unesco world inquiry

SCHOOL DROP-OUTS

AND THE SOCIAL BACKGROUND OF STUDENTS

TREASURES
OF
WORLD ART

67

AFGHANISTAN

Inner Serenity

This Buddhist monk's head, the epitome of inner serenity, is one of a host of figures surrounding effigies of Buddha discovered some 40 years ago at Hadda, near the capital of Afghanistan, Kabul. Excavations beneath the ruins of Hadda brought to light thousands of statues and carved reliefs that graced the city's temples and monasteries during the first four centuries of our era. The sculptors of Hadda modelled their works in lime plaster or stucco while those of Gandhara to the east, carved their sculpture from shale. Both places saw the development of an original Greco-Buddhist school of art that flourished for several centuries, producing masterpieces of sculpture in which the artistic concepts of Orient and Occident harmoniously intermingled.

From "L'Afghanistan et son Art", by Jeannine Auboyer;
Editions Cercle d'Art, Paris

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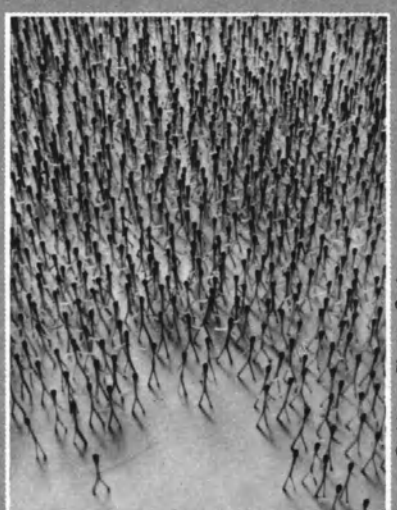

Photo © Missi Photo, Paris

FAILURE IN SCHOOL

This issue deals with a crucial educational problem of our time: school drop-outs and failure in school. It examines this question in terms of the relationship between the student's social background and his chances of success at school. Much of the material in this issue draws on data gathered by Unesco during a world inquiry on the subject and an international conference organized by Unesco's International Bureau of Education, in Geneva, last year.

A Unesco world inquiry

FAILURE IN SCHOOL AND THE SOCIAL BACKGROUND OF STUDENTS

by Leo Fernig

Photo © Claude Vénézia, Paris

HOW far do factors in a young person's background—his home, the economic status of his parents, the kind of neighbourhood he lives in—affect his chances of benefiting fully from the education he receives?

This question of the social background of students and their chances of success at school was the main subject of an International Conference on Education convened by Unesco at Geneva in September last year and attended by delegates from 90 Member States. In preparation for the Conference, the International Bureau of Education, now an integral part of Unesco, had undertaken an inquiry into how governments see the problem and what measures they take to deal with it (see also page 20).

The right to education is no longer a vague ideal; it is incorporated into the Universal Declaration of Human Rights, adopted in 1948 by the United Nations, and governments now recognize that they have a duty to ensure that their peoples have equal opportunity to enjoy this right.

Yet, for a number of complex reasons, our systems of education still fail to achieve the results we expect from them. The record of the past decades, and particularly of the 1960s, has shown that a number of problems arise when countries attempt to put educational policies into effect without

LEO FERNIG *has been director of Unesco's International Bureau of Education in Geneva since 1970. He was previously director of the Department for the Advancement of Education at Unesco, where from 1948 to 1970 he played a leading role in the elaboration and execution of Unesco's education programme.*

due regard to the social, economic and political context of the system of education.

Official reports submitted to the International Bureau of Education speak of a number of problem areas which may be summed up briefly. Several countries have multi-racial populations, like Malaysia, where differences of culture and tradition may have a direct influence on school performance by the children. In other countries, ethnic minorities pose a similar problem; such minorities are constantly being created, as the current history of migrant workers and the recruitment of foreign labour in Western Europe has shown.

Again, the difficulties of rural areas, and of urban slums are frequently recognized. A more recent form of the problem is the "inner-city" on which the United States provides evidence: "Concentrations of socio-economically disadvantaged Americans and rapidly increasing populations of minority groups are clustered in the central city areas... the resulting impact upon the schools has been intensified by a corresponding movement to the suburbs by the more affluent citizens and by business and industry. The decline of property values occasioned by these changes has resulted in a reduction of funds for education in the cities..."

More broadly, most of the industrially developed states remark on the educational problems associated with groups who are socially and economically disadvantaged i.e. below the national norm.

The list of problems, difficulties and shortcomings must, however, be read against the record of measures taken

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to produce solutions. These cover an extremely wide range, from concerted action by the central government agencies to local experimental projects. A few examples may suffice to demonstrate the variety of these measures.

An integrated approach is to be found in France, where the 6th Plan stresses the need to develop equality for opportunity; reforms in the organization and content of schooling, the extension of pre-school education in rural areas, increased provision for special education and the education of adults—these are some parts of the integrated programme.

With the central planning approach of the U.S.S.R., it is relevant to quote the 1958 law adopted by the Supreme Soviet, which provided a series of educational and administrative measures to offset unsatisfactory results that might arise from family conditions, place of residence and from the school system itself.

Although expressed differently, legislation over the past two decades in the U.S.A. has led to a vastly increased involvement of the U.S. Government in educational matters, with Federal support for many programmes designed to strengthen the education of socially and economically disadvantaged students.

Again, Israel reports a comprehensive series of measures designed specifically for schools and children "in need of nurture". These were institutionalized in 1963 with the establishment of a centre which serves as the co-ordinating agency. A characteristic of the programme is the constant feedback from experimental work, which has led to the general adoption of measures found to be effective, while at the same time policies and plans are reviewed on the basis of objective evidence.

A study of failure among working class children in Rotterdam led to the setting up of a socio-educational project which embraces six infant and ten primary schools. Essentially the project aims to draw schools, families and cultural institutions of the district closer together, while making extensive reforms in the form and content of school work so that it may be more meaningful to the community.

In the U.S.A., under the impulse of Federal funding, a host of local projects have developed, most of them in disadvantaged neighbourhoods. Characteristic features are the involvement of the local community and a greater attention to individual differences between pupils.

Although experimental work seems to be common for children at pre-primary and even secondary levels, much less appears to be done to study the problems of, or satisfy the needs of, adolescents who have left school.

The International Conference on Education represented a wide range of countries. The problems connected with equality of educational opportunity do not occur everywhere with the same intensity, and the national strategies for ensuring equality will obviously vary. In this regard, it may be noted that many developing countries are more concerned to extend their school systems, improve access in other words, and less concerned about success at school. Indeed, participation in the existing schools is often more democratic than it is in developed countries.

The Conference drew attention to two practical considerations of considerable importance. The improvement of educational equality is a means of increasing efficiency of the school system. And measures designed to democratize education, since they consider individual differences, are likely to be the most effective means for achieving quality in education.

As the problems involved are complex, with a number of inter-acting factors, educational policy by itself is not enough. All aspects of a government's action in the political, social and economic fields, have a bearing on equality of opportunity, and should be planned with this in mind.

In terms of the education sector by itself, the Conference outlined forms of desirable actions. The organization of the system of education should be reviewed to take account of the needs of underprivileged groups. In this context, provisions for pre-school education (or failing that, improvements in the early primary grades) are particularly important.

At the administrative level, the siting of schools across the national territory is a means of overcoming regional differences. Still more essential are measures to ensure community participation in school affairs. For at the origin of educational inequality lies the fact of a separation between the school and the community it serves.

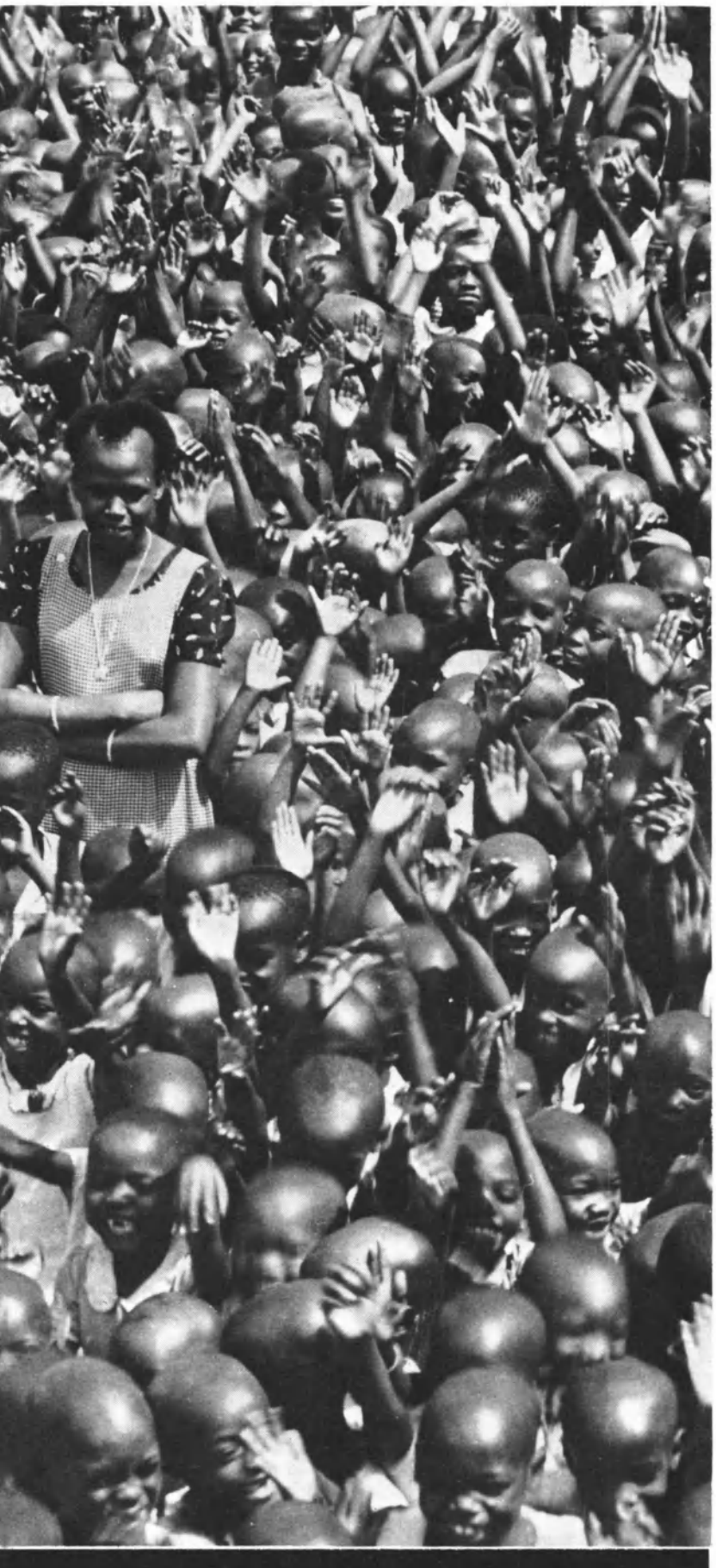
The reform of curricula and of teaching methods follows from changes in the organization of schooling.

The Conference dwelt at length on the important role of teachers. If equality of educational opportunity is to be achieved, certain clear principles can be stated about the recruitment, training and appointment of teachers. Thus, for example, teachers in training should learn about the various components of the social background and should have practical experience of social work in the community. Likewise, means should be found to attract and keep good teachers in schools in disadvantaged areas.

Finally, admitting the complexity of the question and our present lack of information about the factors at work, the conference made a strong claim for more research work—or rather, for a combination of experimentation and action. Both national and international resources should be diverted to this objective so that the schools can progress further and really give every child the educational opportunity that is his due. ■

Photo © Vivante Afrique, Namur, Belgium

LITTLE WOMEN
BIG PROBLEM



All the children in this picture are girls. Despite the growth of Women's Lib movements in many countries, girls and women are the world's largest under-privileged group in the field of education. But these happy schoolgirls from the Republic of Zaire are more fortunate than millions of their sisters throughout the world who are still denied education merely because they are girls.

Ten major obstacles to success in school

by Harry Passow

A child's chances for success in school—success as measured by how well he does in various examinations, his staying on in school beyond the age required by law, his continuing on to some form of higher education or training—are rather directly related to his social background. In most nations, this relationship is so direct that schools have been accused of simply sorting pupils and maintaining the *status quo* rather than developing individual talents and aptitudes.

In the past quarter of a century or so, there has been a dramatic democratization of education. This trend has been marked by sharp increases in numbers of pupils enrolled in schools, in the variety of educational programmes provided, and in the resources invested in schooling. Yet, equality of educational opportunity is a goal still to be

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reached by most of the nations of the world.

Despite a public commitment to universal schooling by most governments, in fact, large numbers of children seem unable to profit fully from the opportunities provided them. Many are prevented from entering various programmes, and many schools seem unable to design programmes or provide services which meet the needs of the children and youth they are meant to serve.

Children from lower social and economic classes, those from racial or ethnic minorities, residents of inner-city slums or isolated rural areas, migrants, pupils whose mother tongue differs from the language the school uses in teaching, children from religious and cultural minorities—these are the groups from which students come who are less likely to succeed in school.

Such groups are not homogeneous —that is, members of such groups are not all alike—nor are all children disadvantaged simply because they are members of such groups.

There are various factors which are likely to hinder or obstruct learning from the time the child enters the classroom.

1

A child may be disadvantaged if he comes from a family which is poor.

Poverty may affect the child's chances for success in school. A child who is constantly hungry will have difficulty giving his full attention to the lessons to be learned in school. A child whose parents cannot provide him with the clothing he needs may be physically uncomfortable as well as being embarrassed by being with classmates who are better clothed.

A child who comes from a home which is overcrowded, in which food is in short supply or not well balanced, where poor sanitary conditions increase the possibilities of his contracting various diseases is less likely to be successful in coping with school tasks. A child who observes that the grownups around him are either without jobs or in poorly paid jobs is likely to develop limited ideas about his own chances for the future.

2

A child may be disadvantaged if he has only limited opportunities for developing his mental abilities and language.

The opportunities for the poor child to develop his mental abilities and language are more limited than of his middle-class peers. Differences in styles of thinking between lower- and middle-class children can often be traced to the ways their parents, especially mothers, talk with them and the kinds of family interactions which take place.

Among the most important things which a child brings to the classroom is effective language. Lower-class homes provide children with a variety of stimuli and help develop many skills and abilities but they often fail to provide the kinds of experiences which help the child to cope with the demands made on him by the teacher.

Children from poor families often have more problems with discriminating or observing differences between visual symbols or sounds, with handling general ideas as contrasted with concrete tasks, and with other skills which are necessary for success in school-related work. Thus, the school may make demands on the young child for which the experiences in infancy and early childhood have not prepared him so that he often fails from the beginning.

3

A child may be disadvantaged if there are sharp differences between the values of his home and neighbourhood and those of the school and the classroom.

Values, attitudes, concepts of self, and drive to achieve are related to social class. The values or ideals which are important and meaningful to the child and his family may be different from those which guide the actions of teachers and other school personnel. Behaviour which is accepted and even rewarded in the home and in the neighbourhood may be rejected and punished by school authorities.

The value attached to formal education and the importance of succeeding in school differs with various cultural and ethnic groups. As a result, the goals of the school may or may not receive support in the home. Frequently, the child is confused by differences in what is "acceptable" or "appropriate" behaviour in the home or neighbourhood in contrast with what is accepted by the school.

As the child grows and matures, the values and the standards of behaviour of his peers become more and more important to him. In fact, the peer culture may so dominate the behaviour of youth that the student may reject or ignore the values which his family or the school are trying to teach him when they are at odds with what his peers believe are important. Values, attitudes, and feelings all contribute to a prevailing climate of a school and this climate has a strong impact on what it is that students learn and what they believe is significant.

4

A child may be disadvantaged if he is a member of a racial or ethnic minority group or a lower caste.

Especially when they are visible and identifiable, children who are members of racial and ethnic minorities or of lower castes which are discriminated against by society at large may be at a disadvantage in school. The child's feelings about himself and his own worth, his pride in his race or ethnic group, his drive to achieve, and his beliefs about his chances for success are all affected by the discrimination he encounters or thinks he encounters.

The low expectations teachers and other school personnel have for lower class or culturally different children often strengthen and reinforce the low expectations for success the child has for himself. Not expecting that such pupils will succeed, teachers may not provide effective instruction so that when the students do fail, the school's prediction for failure is fulfilled.

Schools often provide lower quality education for racially or ethnically different groups. Children are discriminated against in the opportunities provided them as a result of prejudices of school personnel. In some instances, groups strive to enrich and preserve their own culture and view the school's efforts as aimed at its elimination. Discriminatory practices contribute to the failure of some students to achieve in schools.

5

A child may be disadvantaged if he is a migrant.

Children whose parents are farm labourers travelling with crop harvest seasons, members of nomad tribes, gypsies, or itinerant workers may move about steadily. The migrant child has not known the same kind of stability as his non-mobile peers. The migrant child may have had a variety of experiences and learning opportunities but these are often either not recognized by the school or not viewed as being important.

In many instances, the migrant child is viewed as a burden by the school and by other public agencies. Because

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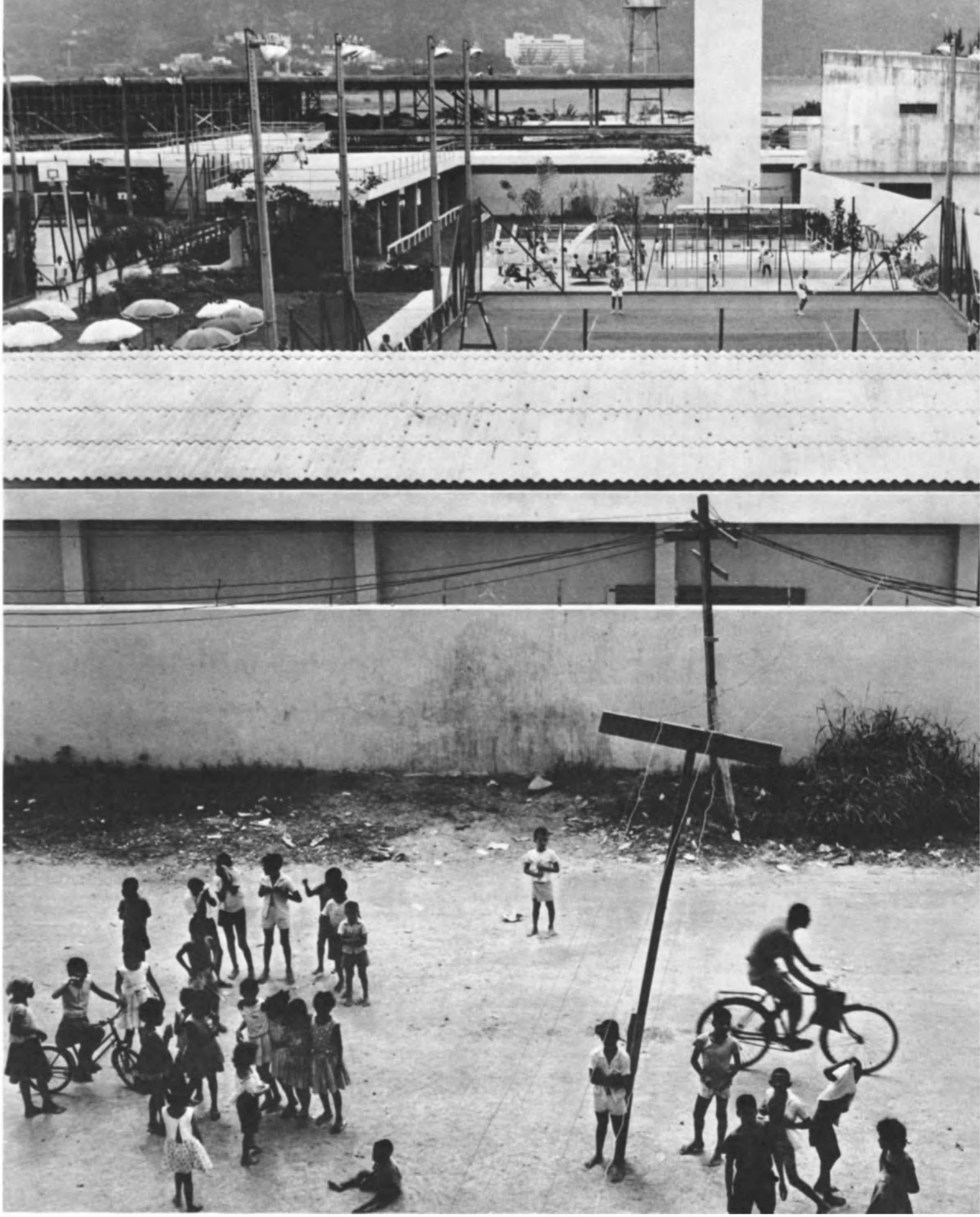


Photo © CIRIC, Geneva

WORLDS APART. Social and cultural differences can seriously affect a child's chances for success in school or even his (or her) chance of being enrolled. A child living in a city slum may be as geographically isolated as one living in a remote village, in the sense that he may have little or no contact or experience outside his immediate neighbourhood. Here, contrasting worlds are captured in one blink of the camera's eye. Children like those in the foreground are often isolated by social barriers as rigid as the wall around the sports club and children's playground (in background) at Rio de Janeiro, Brazil.

Photos © J.F. Schiano, Paris

A NEW KIND OF EDUCATION IN RURAL NIGER

Geographical isolation means educational deprivation for hosts of school-age children. Playtime is fun, but are these carefree boys (right), at play in a village in northern Niger, among the privileged few who attend school (top right), or are they to be counted among the vast army of outsiders looking wistfully in on a wonderland whose doors are closed to them (above)? In 1962, only 7 per cent of Niger children were enrolled in schools. Today the position has greatly improved.

he attends school irregularly, many teachers simply do not know how to cope with the migrant child and simply tolerate such children until they move on. The mobile child is at a disadvantage because of the inability or unwillingness of the school to arrange programmes which take into account his constant moving and particular cultural style.

6

A child may be at a disadvantage if the language of instruction is not his mother tongue or dialect.

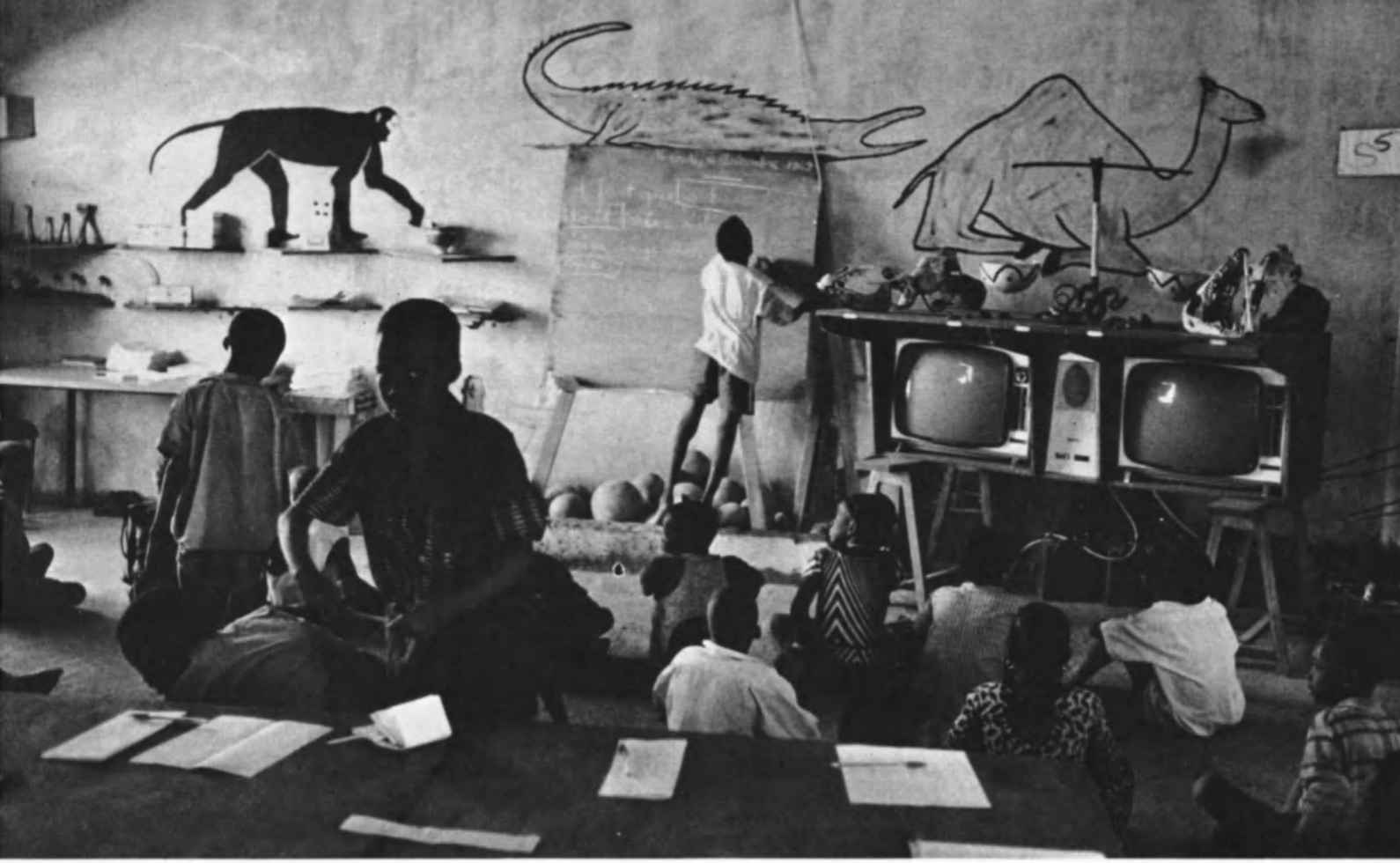
The language which the child learns as an infant and the one he uses at home—his "mother tongue"— is often different from the language which is used by the teachers and the one found in the books and materials he uses. Thus, in addition to the other knowledge and skills the school requires the child to acquire for success he may have to learn another language.

If he has a non-standard dialect or speech pattern, the child may be at a disadvantage. Where the language used by teachers differs from the language of the home, the child must learn to understand the instruction in an unfamiliar tongue and to acquire ability to use it if he is to succeed. If his own language or dialect is rejected or ignored by the school, or if teachers take punitive action towards children using non-standard language, the child's feelings about himself and his family can be adversely affected.

7

A child may be at a disadvantage if he lives in a geographically isolated area.

A child who lives in an isolated rural region or a very small hamlet may be at a disadvantage in terms of the schooling provisions which can be made for him, his ability to take advantage of educational opportunities because of the physical barriers, and the existing attitudes toward the value of schooling which may exist. His parents, for example, may view education as relatively unimportant in preparing him to work at home.



but in the rural areas only I out of 10 children is admitted to the rare schools that have been established in the bush. The school pictured above is equipped with two battery-powered television receivers on which the pupils, under the guidance of a supervisor, can follow two quarter-hour educational programmes, broadcast morning and afternoon, from the capital Niamey. Produced under a Franco-Niger co-operation scheme and planned to fit into a four year elementary school cycle, the broadcasts accelerate the learning of reading and mathematics and include educational programmes on a wide variety of subjects. Between 1967 and 1972, 20 bush schools have benefited from these broadcasts. In the future, more schools will be built and the broadcasts will be extended to reach the village schools of the Ivory Coast. But for a long time to come, thousands of children, like this young Niger boy (left) will have little hope of receiving the education they need to cope with the changing life in the developing world.

Cultural and language differences between rural and metropolitan regions can affect the child's chances for success in school. Even a child living in an inner-city ghetto may be geographically isolated in the sense that he may have little or no contact or experience outside his immediate neighbourhood except through radio or television. Thus the gap between the slum dweller's curriculum and the materials provided for him and his experiences may be no less than that of the isolated rural child—with equal chances for failure in school.

8

A child may be at a disadvantage if a girl or if a member of a particular religious group.

The value of an education for a girl differs with various cultures. The expectations as to the number of years of school necessary for girls, the kinds of educational programmes they should be provided with, and the desirable levels of attainment are different for various cultural groups.

In some cultures, girls are only expected to attain a minimal level of literacy or to do poorly in certain areas of study, such as mathematics or the sciences.

Some groups resist sending girls to school at all, especially if such schools are co-educational

In some societies, religious groups differ in the value they place on education and the extent to which schools are viewed as altering one's life chances. Some religious groups, for example, do not view schools as contributing to the social and economic mobility of the child and, therefore, do not put much emphasis on success in school.

9

A child may be at a disadvantage due to a variety of school factors.

The teaching personnel, programmes, services, instructional materials, organization, testing procedures, and relations to the community of which the school is part all affect the child's chances for success. Teachers who are poorly prepared and unqualified, curricula

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which are irrelevant, materials and equipment which are inadequate and inappropriate, personnel with unrealistic or low expectations for student achievement, grouping or streaming procedures which limit the chances for some students, selective schools and programmes which discriminate against children of the poor and those of racial or ethnic minorities —all these affect the student's success.

The educational processes in most schools and in most societies are dominated by the majority group so that the opportunities for those with different backgrounds are generally restricted. Social backgrounds and the consequent segregation affect the academic achievement of students. By the kind of climate for learning created, the curriculum designed, the resources made available, teachers and administrators can promote cultural conflicts which put some youngsters at a disadvantage and reduce their chances for success in school.

10

Social background and success in school.

In nations all over the world, developed and developing, more or less urbanized and industrialized, significant numbers of children enter school at a disadvantage. They experience initial failure or only limited success in school in the early years and their academic failure continues and becomes more intense as the years go by.

Such students tend to come from families which are poor, are members of racial or ethnic minority groups or lower castes, may speak a language or a dialect which differs from the standard of the majority group, may live in a geographically isolated area, may be a female or a member of a religious group which holds education in low esteem, and may be a migrant child (*). In part, the disadvantage stems from the student's background and environment. In part, the disadvantage may stem from the school itself. The combination of social background and institutional factors is related to the student's success in school.

Equality of educational opportunity is a concept with educational, social, political, and economic implications. Recognition of the relationships which exist between the student's background and his success in school is a first step toward understanding the kinds of changes which will have to be made to improve the chances for success for those who are now disadvantaged for various reasons. ■

(*) *Refugees, victims of war and political upheavals, are another disadvantaged group. They often suffer abrupt deprivation of rights and facilities, including education, in the countries where they seek asylum—Editor.*

'LETTER TO A TEACHER'

We publish below extracts from an unusual document voicing the protest of a group of young children against the school system. Throughout the world the school is under attack, along with the curriculum, teaching methods and the inequality of opportunities open to children from different social backgrounds. This protest was originally written by a group of boys from Barbiana, a tiny hamlet in Tuscany, Italy. All the boys were pupils in a school founded by a young priest, Don Lorenzo Milani, for children who were drop-outs from the State-run schools. Published in 1967 in Italian as "Lettera a una Professoressa" (Libreria Editrice Fiorentina, Florence) the book immediately became a cause célèbre and has been published in many languages including English ("Letter to a Teacher", Random House, New York; Penguin Books, London, 1970). Italian and other educators

Photo Barbiana school

Father Lorenzo Milani, who founded the Barbiana school in the Tuscan hills about 30 miles from Florence, with four of his pupils. When the school started in 1954 it had 10 pupils aged from 11 to 13, but later the number of pupils doubled and included boys up to 18 years old.

and sociologists, it is true, had previously voiced concern over the plight of culturally disadvantaged children, especially in the rural areas in Italy and other countries. One of the most common criticisms was that the school was élite-orientated rather than trying to give youngsters real preparation for life. Since the creation of the Barbiana school in 1954, many changes have taken place in Italy. According to Unesco statistics, 9 pupils out of 10 complete primary school (see page 21) and 8 students out of 10 who enter the "second cycle" of secondary education finish the course. The number of university graduates has risen sharply, and where parents' income is below a set level, the State now even pays certain college students a "pre-salary" to study. "Letter to a Teacher" is written in the style of an impassioned manifesto yet it nevertheless retains its full value as an important human document on a problem of universal import today, which is the subject of this entire issue. Don Milani's correspondence, just published in Italian under the title "Lettere" (Mondadori, Milan, 325 pages) completes and complements "Letter to a Teacher."

Translated by Nora Rossi and Tom Cole.

Dear Miss

YOU won't remember me or my name. You have failed so many of us.

On the other hand I have often had thoughts about you, and the other teachers, and about that institution which you call "school" and about the boys that you fail.

You fail us right out into the fields and factories and there you forget us.

Compulsory school. After the five elementary years I had the right to three more years of schooling. In fact, the Constitution says that I had the obligation to go. But there was not yet an intermediate school in Vicchio (The intermediate school—*media inferiore* —covers the ages twelve to 14)*. To go to Borgo was an undertaking. The few who had tried it had spent a pile of money and then were thrown out as failures like dogs.

In any case, the teacher had told my family that it was better not to waste money on me: "Send him into the fields. He is not made for books."

My father did not reply. He was thinking, "If we lived in Barbiana, he *would* be made for books."

Barbiana. In Barbiana the boys were going to school. The priest's school. From early morning until dark, summer and winter. Nobody there was "not made for school".

Barbiana, when I arrived, did not seem like a school. No teacher, no desk, no blackboard, no benches. Just big tables, around which we studied and also ate.

There was just one copy of each book. The boys would pile up around it. It was hard to notice that one of them was a bit older and was teaching.

The oldest of these teachers was sixteen. The youngest was twelve, and filled me with admiration. I made up my mind from the start that I, too, was going to teach.

The favourite. Life was hard up there too. Discipline and squabbles until you didn't feel like coming back.

But there a boy who had no background, who was slow or lazy, was made to feel like the favourite. He would be treated the way you teachers treat the best student in the class. It seemed as if the school was meant just for him. Until he could be made to understand, the others would not continue.

The rules of good writing. After three years of schooling at Barbiana I took, in June, my exams for the intermediate diploma as a private-school candidate. The composition topic was: "The Railway Waggons Speak".

At Barbiana I had learned that the rules of good writing are: Have something important to say, something useful to everyone or at least to many. Know for whom you are writing. Gather all useful materials. Find a logical pattern with which to develop the theme. Eliminate every useless word. Eliminate every word not used in the spoken language. Never set time limits.

That is the way my schoolmates and I are writing this letter. That is the way my pupils will write, I hope, when I am a teacher.

The knife in your hands. But, facing that composition topic, what use could I make of the humble and sound rules of the art of writing in all ages? If I wanted to be honest I should have left the page blank. Or else criticized the theme and whoever had thought it up.

But I was fourteen years old and I came from the mountains. To go to a teachers' school I needed the diploma. This piece of paper lay in the hands of five or six persons alien to my life and to everything I loved and knew. Careless people who held the handle of the knife completely in their own grasp. So I tried to write the way you want us to.

The trap-complex. The French exam was a concentrate of irregularities.

Examinations should be abolished. But if you do give them, at least be fair. Difficulties should be chosen in proportion to their appearance in life. If you choose them too frequently, it means you have a trap-complex. As if you were at war with the boys.

What makes you do it? Is it for the good of the students?

Owls, pebbles and fans. No, not for their good. You gave an A— in French to a boy who, in France, would not know how to ask the whereabouts of the toilet.

He could only have asked for owls, pebbles and fans (in French *hiboux*, *cailloux* and *éventails*, all words with an irregular plural form), either in the singular or the plural. All in all, he

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* *Today each commune (district) is obliged to have at least one intermediate (lower general secondary) school, and in fact even villages with 1,000 inhabitants now have one. —Editor.*

Using makeshift equipment, the pupils at Barbiana worked eight hours a day, six or seven days a week, the "stronger" pupils helping the "weaker" ones, under the supervision of Father Milani (seen at extreme left of photo above left). In fine weather classes were held in the open air. Instruction at Barbiana went up to the end of the lower secondary cycle of education and all these so-called "duffers" did well in their studies.

LETTER TO A TEACHER *(Continued)*

knew perhaps two hundred words picked carefully for being exceptions, not for being commonly used.

The result was that he hated French the way some people hate maths.

The children they lose. Schools have a single problem. The children they lose.

The only incompetents in the matter of school are you who lose so many and don't go back to find them. Not we: we find them in the fields and factories and we know them at close range.

Gianni's mother, who doesn't know how to read, can see what the problems of the school are. And so will anybody who knows the pain endured by a child when he fails, and who has enough patience to look through statistics. Then these figures will begin to scream in your face. Every blow is a creature going off to work before being equal.

Let's try to follow one class of children throughout their eight years of compulsory schooling.

First year. Let us drop in on a first-year class on the first day of school, in October. Thirty-two students are there. At a glance they all seem alike. In reality there are five amongst them who will sit their exams again and again.

Seven years old, aprons and ribbons, yet already stamped "retarded", which will cost them dearly later on in the intermediate school.

Shooting into a bush. Three children are missing even before the school term begins. The teacher doesn't know them, but they have been in school earlier. They tasted their first failure and they have not come back.

We do not include in our count those children who never started school.

In June the teacher fails six children. To fail someone is like shooting into a bush. Perhaps you get a boy, perhaps a hare. We'll find out in time.

Second year. In the following October the teacher of the seven to eight year olds again finds thirty-two children in her classroom. She sees twenty-six familiar faces and feels at home again among *her own*, whom she has come to love.

A bit later she spots the six new students. Five are repeating the year. One of these has already repeated it twice; he is almost nine years old.

The sixth new face is Pierino, the doctor's son.

Pierino. The doctor's chromosomes are powerful. Pierino could write when he was only five. He has no need for a first year. He enters the second at age six. And he can speak like a printed book.

Only a fraction of equality. At the end of the five elementary years, eleven children have already disappeared from the school, and it is their teacher's fault.

"Schools are open to all. All citizens have a right to eight years of school. All citizens are equal." But what about those eleven? Those eleven boys who went to work during the five elementary years ranged in age from seven to fourteen*.

They were mostly peasants or, in any case, children living in isolated communities where even the smallest can be given something to do.

First intermediate year. In the first intermediate year there are twenty-two children. For the teacher they are all new faces. She knows nothing of the eleven who were lost. She is truly convinced that no one is missing.

At times she allows herself to grumble: "Now that everybody comes to school it's impossible to teach. We get quite illiterate students."

The oldest and the poorest. She would also have to study the ages of the students on her class list. Every one of these children ought to carry a big placard: "I am 13. Do not fail me."

And the instructors look at the marks in their register books, not at the birth dates.

Some of them may act in good faith. Some may even want to save the older students. Then, facing a pupil's paper full of mistakes, they forget all their good intentions.

The facts show that the oldest are always the ones who fail. Those who have a job within easy reach.

By failing the oldest of the children the teachers manage at the same time to hit the poorest.

Second intermediate year. By the second year of the intermediate school, the average age of the students is lower, since the oldest are missing. The distance between Pierino and the others grows less.

It can be said that the classes grow older all through the elementary years because of the boys who are repeating years. Then in the intermediate school they become younger again because the oldest have dropped out to go to work.

Who is she talking about? Whether it's a matter of the age or the social status of the students, the teacher starts breathing freely when they reach the second intermediate year.

She looks forward to June. Then she will get rid of her last four thorns and will finally have a group worthy of her.

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* *Schooling in Italy is free and compulsory up to the age of 14, and check-ups on school attendance have become increasingly strict. —Editor.*

Photos Barbiana school

"When they came into the first intermediate class, they were truly illiterate. But now, ah, their papers are all correct."

Who is she talking about? Where are the boys she received in the first form? The only ones left are those who could write correctly to begin with; they could probably write just as well in the third elementary year. The ones who learned to write at home.

The illiterate she had in the first year are just as illiterate now. She has simply dumped them out of sight.

Compulsory. And she knows it well. So well that in the third intermediate year she fails only a few. Seven failures in first, four in second and only one in the third. Just the opposite of what she ought to do.

In the compulsory school system, the compulsoriness ought to carry all the students through to the third intermediate year. Then at a final examination the teacher could release her selective instincts.

We wouldn't say a word about that. If a boy has not learned to write by then she would do well to fail him.

Summary. In eight compulsory years of schooling, this class has lost forty children. Sixteen went to work before they had completed their compulsory years of school. Twenty-four are repeaters. Altogether, fifty-six children have passed through this class. By the third year of the intermediate school we find only eleven out of the thirty-two original students entrusted to the teacher of the first elementary class.

Born different? You tell us that you fail only the stupid and the lazy.

Children born to others do appear stupid at times. Never our own. When we live close to them we realize that they are not stupid. Nor are they lazy. Or, at least, we feel that it might be a question of time, that they may snap out of it, that we must find a remedy.

Then, it is more honest to say that all children are born equal; if, later, they are not equal, it is our fault and we have to find the remedy.

Who profits? Let's try to see who profits from schools kept to a minimum number of hours.

Seven hundred and twenty hours per year means about two hours of school per day averaged out over the year. But a boy stays awake another fourteen hours. In well-to-do families these are fourteen hours of cultural improvement.

But to the peasants they are fourteen hours of loneliness and silence, good only for deepening their shyness. To the sons of workers they are fourteen hours at the school of the hidden persuaders. Advertising is called hidden persuasion when it convinces the poor that unnecessary things are necessary.

Summer holidays, in particular, seem virtually designed for the benefit of the rich. Their children go abroad and learn even more than they do in winter. But by the first day of school the poor have forgotten even the little they knew in June. If they have to take any make-up exams they can't afford a tutor to prepare for them.

Pierino's home. Perhaps the life story of "Pierino" can give us a key. So, let us try to take a loving look at his family.

The doctor and his wife are up there on top of things. They read, they travel, they see friends, they play with their child, they take time to keep close track of him and they even do it well. Their house is full of books and culture. At five I had mastered the shovel; Pierino, the pencil.

One evening, as if the decision has been brought about by the facts themselves, they say half-jokingly. "Why place him in the first grade? Let's put him straight into the second." They send him to take the tests without giving it another thought. If he fails, who cares?

But he does not fail. He gets all 9s. Serene joy fills the family, just as it would have mine.

Pierino, then will become a professor. He will find a wife much like himself. They will produce another Pierino. More of a Pierino than ever.

Thirty thousand such stories every year.

Selection reaches its goal. "Daddy's boys" constitute 86.5 per cent of the

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Scene at Father Milani's funeral in 1967. On his death the Barbiana school closed down, but a number of his ex-pupils carried on their former teacher's work, creating part-time courses for secondary level pupils and a special school for invalid children at Calenzano, near Florence, where Father Milani had started a night school for working people before going to Barbiana.

university student body; labourers' sons, 13.5 per cent. Of those who get a degree, 91.9 per cent are young gentlemen and 8.1 per cent are from working-class families (Italian Statistical Yearbook 1963, tables 113-14) *.

For the good of the child. "After all, it's for the child's own good. We must not forget that these pupils stand at the threshold of high school ", pompously cried the headmaster of a little country school.

It was immediately clear that only three of the thirty children in the class would go on to the upper years: Maria, the daughter of the dry-goods merchant; Anna, the teacher's daughter; and Pierino, of course. But even if more of the children went on, what difference would it make?

That headmaster has forgotten to change the record on his record player. He hasn't yet noticed the growth of the school population. A living reality of 680,000 children in the first year. Most of them poor. The rich, a minority **.

It's not a question of a classless school, as he calls it. His is a one-class school, at the service of those who have the money to push ahead.

In Africa, in Asia, in Latin America, in southern Italy, in the hills, in the fields, even in the cities, millions of children are waiting to be made equal. Shy, like me; stupid, like Sandro; lazy, like Gianni. The best of humanity.

The real test. When I passed my exams and left the intermediate school I went to England. I was 15. At first I worked with a farmer in Canterbury; later on with a wine merchant in London.

Cockney. In London they are worse off than on the farms. We worked below ground in the City unloading trucks. My co-workers were English, but they could not write a letter in English. They often asked Dick to write for them. Dick sometimes would ask advice from me; I who had learned my English from records. He, too, speaks only Cockney like the rest of them.

The reforms that we propose.

1. Do not fail students.
2. Give a full-time school to children who seem stupid.
3. Give a purpose to the lazy.

The turner. A turner at his lathe is not allowed to deliver only those pieces that happen to come out well. Otherwise he wouldn't make the effort to have them all turn out well.

But you, you can get rid of the pieces that you don't like whenever you wish to. So you are happy taking care of those who are bound to be successful for reasons that lie outside the school.

Aptitudes. Every child has enough "aptitude" to reach the third year of the intermediate school and to get by in all subjects.

It is so convenient to tell a boy, "You are not cut out for this subject." The boy will accept this; he is just as lazy as his teacher. But he knows that his teacher does not consider him an Equal.

It is not good policy to tell another child. "You are clearly cut out for this subject." When he has too much fondness for just *one* subject, he should be forbidden to study it. Call his case "specialized", or "unbalanced". There is so much time, later on, to lock oneself up in a specialized field.

By piecework. If all of you knew that, by any means possible, you had to move every child ahead in every subject, you would sharpen up your wits to find a way for all of them to function well.

I'd have you paid by piecework. So much for each child who learns one subject. Or, even better, a fine for each child who does not learn a subject.

Then your eyes would always be on Gianni. You would search out in his inattentive stare the intelligence that God has put in him, as in all children. You would fight for the child who needs you most, neglecting the gifted one, as they do in any family. You would wake up at night thinking about him and would try to invent new ways to teach him—ways that would fit his needs. You would go to fetch him from home if he did not show up for class.

You would never give yourself any peace, for the school that lets the Giannis drop out is not fit to be called a school.

Agrarian culture. Glancing through the pages of a school textbook we see plants, animals, the seasons. It seems that only a peasant could have written it.

But no, the authors are products of your school. It's enough just to glance at the pictures: left-handed farmers, round shovels, hooked hoes, blacksmiths with tools used in Roman times, cherry trees with the leaves of plum trees.

Standing by a plum tree, my first-year teacher told me one day, "Climb that tree and pick some cherries for me." When my mother heard this, she said, "Whoever gave her a teaching licence?"

You gave her a teaching licence but you deny me one, when I know all my trees, each by each.

All alone, like dogs. You know even less about men than we do. The lift serves as a good machine for ignoring the people in your building; the car, for ignoring people who travel in buses; the telephone, for avoiding seeing people's faces or entering their homes.

I don't know about you, but your students who know Cicero—how many families of living men do they know intimately? How many of their kitchens have they visited? How many of their sick have they sat with through the night? How many of their dead have they borne on their shoulders? How many can they trust when they are in distress?

Human culture. A thousand motors roar under your windows every day. You have no idea to whom they belong or where they are going.

But I can read the sounds of my valley for miles around. The sound of the motor in the distance is Nevio going to the station, a little late. If you like, I can tell you everything about hundreds of people, dozens of families and their relatives and personal ties.

Whenever you speak to a worker you manage to get it all wrong: your choice of words, your tone, your jokes. I can tell what a mountaineer is thinking even when he keeps silent, and I know what's on his mind even when he talks about something else.

This is the sort of culture your poets should have given you. It is the culture of nine-tenths of the earth, but no one has yet managed to put it down in words or pictures or films.

Be a bit humble, at least. Your culture has gaps as wide as ours. Perhaps even wider. Certainly more damaging to a teacher in the elementary schools.

Philosophy. Any philosopher studied out of a handbook becomes a bore. There are too many philosophers and they say too many things.

My philosophy teacher never took a stand for or against any of them. I could not work out whether he liked them all or simply didn't care.

If I have to choose between two teachers, one a nut on the subject and the other totally indifferent, I'll take the nut—the one who has a theory of his own, or prefers a particular philosopher. He is certain to talk only about that philosopher and to attack all the others, but he would make us read the original writings of that philosopher during all of our three years of school. We would come out knowing that philosophy can fill an entire life.

Pedagogy. The way pedagogy is taught today, I would skip it altogether —although I'm not quite sure. Perhaps if we go deeper into it, we could decide whether or not it has something to say.

We might discover that it says one thing, and one thing only. That each boy is different, each historical moment is different, and so is every

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* *See also tables on pages 21, 22, 23—Editor.*

** *Today there is only one type of intermediate (lower general secondary) school open without distinction to all children—Editor.*

WHERE LESSONS ARE OPTIONAL

A school completely different from Barbiana in its approach to teaching yet which like Barbiana is a clean break with traditional methods is Summerhill School, north-east of London, founded 50 years ago by A.S. Neill. Pupils are free to attend class or not as they please. "A school that makes active children sit at desks studying mostly useless subjects is a bad school" says Neill. "It is a good school only... for those uncreative citizens who want docile, uncreative children who will fit into a civilization whose standard of success is money." Summerhill has pupils aged from 5 to 15, including youngsters who are unable to adjust to traditional schooling. "There is a lot of learning in Summerhill," says its director. "Perhaps a group of our 12-year-olds could not compete with a class of equal age in handwriting, or spelling or fractions, but in an examination requiring originality, our lot would beat the others hollow." A.S. Neill (above with some of his pupils) has written several books about his school, the latest entitled "Summerhill" (Penguin, London, 1971). Photos on this page are by the English photographer John Walmsley and are published in his pictorial study "Neill and Summerhill: A Man and his Work" (Penguin Education Special, 1968).

Photo © Paolo Koch - Photo Researchers, New York

Photo © Look Magazine

Photo © Louise Condit - Cleveland Museum of Art

AN EQUAL CHANCE FOR ALL?

In most countries, it is now recognized that a new type of education is needed at all levels to bridge the gap between the cultural life of disadvantaged areas and that of the school, and to give all children an equal chance for a proper education. Certain lucky children, coming from upper income families or families with a good cultural background, get off to a high-powered start (photo above), while millions of less fortunate children never get started at all on the road to education (top photo) or if they do start, find themselves on an un-merry-go-round and never complete even the first cycle of schooling (photo far right). One of the most challenging educational problems of our time is how to make education directly relevant to the lives and interests of children, to arouse their interest and enthusiasm (photo top right) through direct experience and participation learning (photo right).

Photo © Wakimo Komatsu, Tokyo

Photo © Photo Researchers, New York

STARK PROFILE OF WASTAGE IN EDUCATION

In order to get a picture of school drop-outs and repeaters in the world, Unesco undertook, in 1969, a world-wide inquiry on this subject, carried out by its Office of Statistics. Special questionnaires were sent to 148 countries. The difficulties of this kind of global research in education are shown by the fact that only 58 of the countries were able to provide data complete enough for analysis. The results have been published in a detailed report, "The Statistical Measurement of Educational Wastage", presented to the International Conference on Education, in Geneva, in 1970. Below Gabriel Carceles Breis, of Unesco's Office of Statistics, presents a brief analysis of these findings. Data in his article relating to social disparities and access to education are taken from "Group Disparities in Educational Participation and Achievement ", a 1970 report by the Organization for Economic Co-operation and Development (O.E.C.D.) in Paris. A special Unesco report on this subject, "The Social Background of Students and their Chance of Success at School", was the main item of discussion at last year's International Conference on Education, in Geneva (see page 4). The Unesco report points out that "because of variations in educational systems and still more so because of differences in the way occupations and social groups are defined for national purposes... statistics on this question need to be used cautiously, and inter-country comparisons are to be avoided."

by Gabriel Carceles Breis

DESPITE enormous efforts by educational authorities in most countries of the world, access to basic education is still far from universal in the developing countries.

PRIMARY SCHOOLS

In 1967-68, nearly 70 per cent of children of primary school age were enrolled in schools throughout the world. But whereas in the industrially developed countries enrolment reached nearly 100 per cent (North America 98 per cent, Europe and the U.S.S.R. 97 per cent, Oceania 95 per cent), in the developing countries it was much lower (70 per cent in Latin America, 55 per cent in Asia and 40 per cent in Africa).

Even more significant is the breakdown of the figures of children who were not enrolled. Thus, taking the 6 to 12 age group during 1967-68 in various parts of Africa, we find that 9 out of 10 children in Mauritania and 8 out of 10 in Mali and Chad were not enrolled, whereas in Algeria and Botswana the proportion was only 5 out of 10 and in Zambia 4 out of 10.

These figures refer to children enrolled, not to those who attend school regularly. In some areas in the developing countries, there is seen to be a big difference between the number of children enrolled and the number actually in class. Children very often drop out during the school year to help their families, particularly with the crops at harvest time.

In Latin America, 4 out of 10 children were not enrolled in Salvador and Nicaragua, 3 out of 10 in Colombia, the Dominican Republic and Peru, 2 out of 10 in Chile and Mexico and 1 out of 10 in Argentina.

Figures available for Asia show that 9 out of 10 children were not enrolled in Saudi Arabia, 5 out of 10 in Iran, 3 out of 10 in Thailand and Syria, whereas in Singapore the figure was only 1 in 10 and in Japan 1 in 20.

SECONDARY SCHOOLS

The proportion of children of secondary school age enrolled at all levels in 1967-68 throughout the world was 40 per cent. The gap between the developed and the developing countries was thus even greater than for primary education. In North America 92 per cent of secondary school age children were enrolled, followed by the U.S.S.R. and Europe with 65 per cent and Oceania with 60 per cent. Then came Latin America with 35 per cent, Asia with 30 per cent and Africa with 15 per cent.

REPEATERS

A very large number of children fail to make progress in school and sometimes spend several years in one class repeating the work that they did in previous years. These repeaters occupy places in schools and block entry for others coming along behind them.

In 1967-68, the first grade of primary school was repeated by 1 out of 2 children in Chad, Togo and Gabon, by 1 out

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Drop-outs in primary school

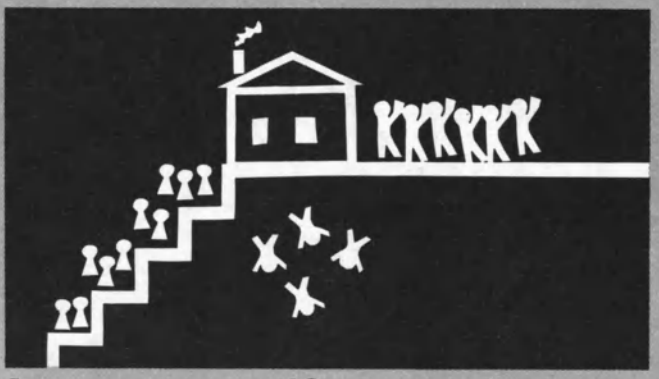
Drop-outs from primary school in 49 countries, based on a Unesco survey published in 1970. The drawings show how many children out of every 10 who start to climb the educational ladder actually complete the primary cycle and how many fall by the wayside.

Source : "The Statistical Measurement of Educational Wastage", Unesco, 1970. Drawings "Unesco Courier" — Asdrubal Salsamendi

1 DROP-OUT FOR **10** PUPILS: Greece, Hungary, Italy, Koweit, Poland.

2 DROP-OUTS FOR **10** PUPILS : Bulgaria, Czechoslovakia, Iran, Portugal, Romania, Thailand, Turkey.

3 DROP-OUTS FOR **10** PUPILS: Jordan, Mali, Togo, Tunisia, Uruguay.



4 DROP-OUTS FOR **10** PUPILS: Bahrein, Costa Rica, Ivory Coast, Morocco, Panama, Yugoslavia.

5 DROP-OUTS FOR **10** PUPILS: Argentina, Congo (People's Rep. of), Dahomey, Gabon, India, Libya, Malta.

6 DROP-OUTS FOR **10** PUPILS: Algeria, Brazil, Burundi, Ecuador, El Salvador, Mexico, Qatar, Khmer Rep., Upper Volta, Venezuela.

7 DROP-OUTS FOR **10** PUPILS: Colombia, Dominican Rep., Guatemala, Madagascar, Paraguay.

8 DROP-OUTS FOR **10** PUPILS : Botswana, Central, African Rep., Chad, Rwanda.

of 3 in the Central African Republic, the People's Republic of the Congo, the Ivory Coast, Mali and Tunisia, by 1 out of 4 in Botswana and Morocco and by 1 out of 10 in Algeria. The percentage of repeaters was even higher in the last year of primary school which was repeated by at least half the pupils enrolled in the above countries with the exception of Algeria where only 2 out of 10 repeated.

In Latin America the number of repeaters is generally lower but even so 1 out of 3 children repeat the first year in the Dominican Republic and Uruguay, 1 out of 4 in Colombia, El Salvador Guatemala, Panama and Paraguay, and 1 out of 5 in Mexico and Venezuela. One pupil out of 10 repeats the final year in Colombia, the Dominican Republic, El Salvador and Uruguay. In Mexico, Panama, Paraguay and Venezuela the proportion is 1 out of 20.

In Asia during 1967-68, 2 out of 5 first year pupils were repeating in the Khmer Rep., 1 out of 4 in Thailand and 1 out of 6 in Iran. But fewer pupils repeat the final year : 1 out of 4 in the Khmer Rep., 1 out of 6 in India and 1 out of 10 in Iran.

DROP-OUTS

A much more serious problem is the number of school drop-outs. In some countries it reaches alarming proportions in view of the relatively few children enrolled in the first place.

In some countries drop-outs from primary education amount to over 80 per cent of those who enrol. In a country in which only 10 per cent of children between the ages of 6 and 12 have been enrolled in school, it means that only 2 per cent of children who should normally have access to education pursue their studies to the end of the primary school programme.

In Africa, of 100 pupils enrolled in 1960 in the People's Republic of the Congo, Dahomey, Gabon and Libya, 50 had dropped out of school before the end of the primary cycle. In Algeria, Burundi and Upper Volta, drop-outs numbered 60 out of 100, over 70 in Botswana, the Central African Republic and Madagascar, and over 80 in Rwanda and Chad.

During the same period in Latin America, 50 per cent of children enrolled dropped out in Salvador and Panama, over 60 per cent in Brazil, Ecuador, Mexico, Paraguay and Venezuela, and over 70 per cent in Colombia and Guatemala.

In Asia, over 50 out of 100 school-children dropped out in India and Quatar and over 60 out of 100 in the Khmer Republic.

Relative chances of studying in a university of upper and lower stratum youth

	DATE	UPPER-STRATUM : LOWER STRATUM
Austria	1965-66	40 :1
Belgium	1962-63	7 :1
	1966-67	8 :1
Denmark	1964-65	16 :1
France	1959-60	84 :1
	1964-65	30 :1
Germany (Fed. Rep.)	1952-53	82 :1
	1958-59	61 :1
	1961-62	58 :1
	1964-65	48 :1
Greece	1959-60	8 :1
	1963-64	8 :1
Ireland	1961	20 :1
Italy	1953-54	44 :1
	1960-61	36 :1
	1964-65	34 :1
Japan	1952	20 :1
	1961	30 :1
Luxembourg	1964-65	65 :1
Netherlands	1958-59	73 :1
	1961-62	56 :1
	1964-65	45 :1
Norway	1964-65	7 :1
Portugal	1963-64	129 :1
Spain	1956-57	173 :1
	1958-59	91 :1
	1962-63	87 :1
Sweden	1960-61	26 :1
Switzerland	1959-60	23 :1
United Kingdom	1961-62	8 :1
United States	1958	5 :1
Yugoslavia	1951-52	7 :1
	1957-58	5 :1
	1960-61	6 :1
	1965-66	4 :1

84 :1 means that the chance of a young person from the upper stratum of society in France in 1959-60 entering university was 84 times greater than that of someone from the lower stratum. It was only 30 times greater in 1964-65.
Source : Organization for Economic Co-operation and Development, Paris

URBAN AND RURAL AREAS

The proportion of drop-outs in rural areas is much higher than in urban zones. The following examples taken from four Latin American countries for which comparative statistics are available give a clear idea of the situation:

	Percentage of drop-outs		
	Total	Urban zones	Rural areas
Colombia	72.7	52.7	96.3
Dominican Republic	69.6	48.1	86.1
Guatemala	74.7	50.4	96.5
Panama	37.7	19.3	54.7

It is clear that in predominantly farming communities the chances of completing primary school are very small. As a result, agricultural modernization is hindered and migration to the towns may increase.

SOCIAL AND ECONOMIC DISPARITIES

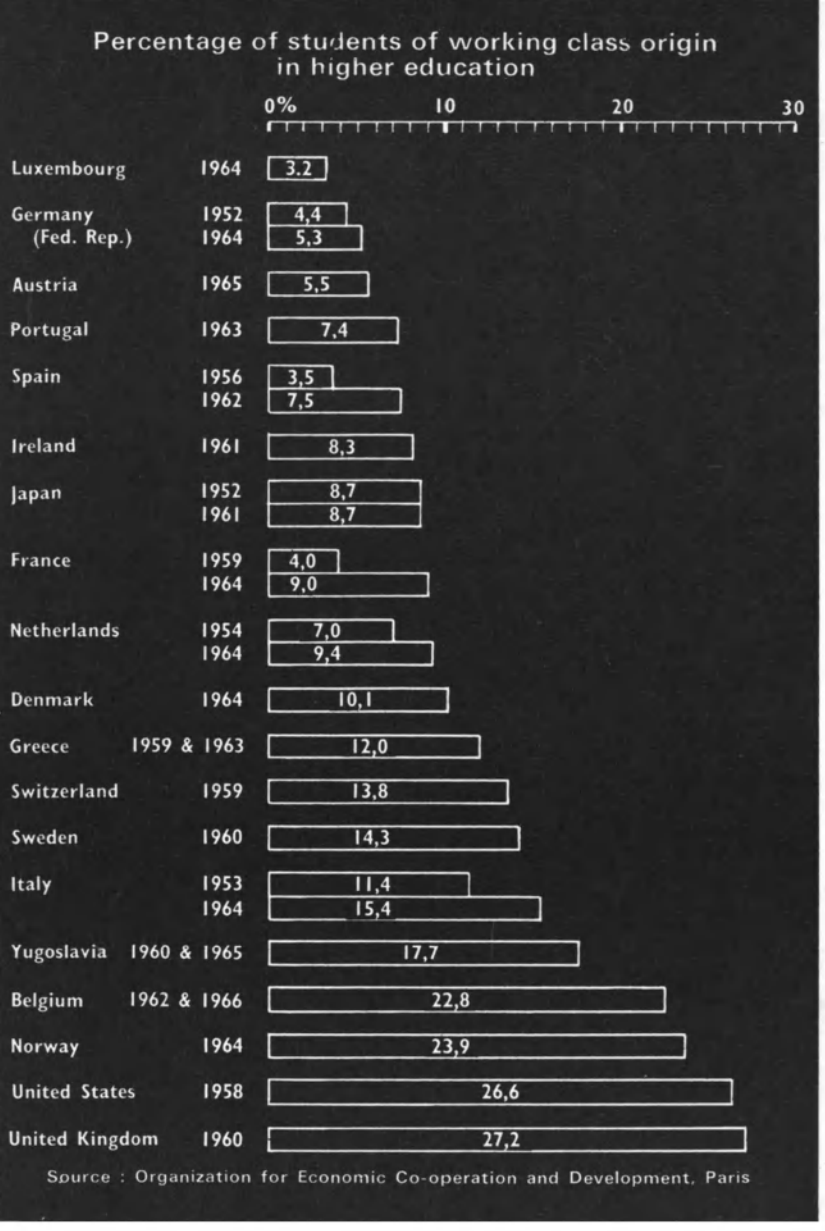
Few studies have been made concerning social and economic disparities in access to and participation and success in secondary schools in the developing countries.

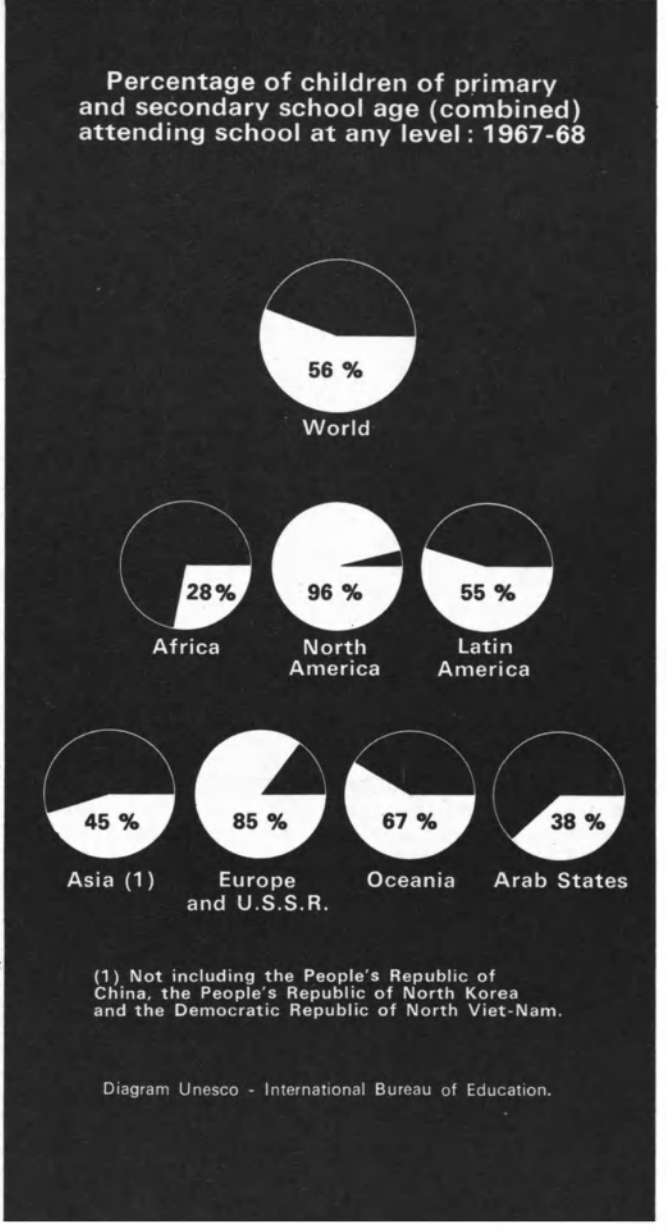
A study made by the Organization for Economic Co-operation and Development, in Paris (Background Study No. 4, "Group Disparities in Educational Participation", 1970), shows, however, that in industrially developed countries, a form of social selection appears to take place during the transition from primary to secondary education and, more noticeably, from secondary to higher education.

ACCESS TO SECONDARY EDUCATION

In the Netherlands, for example, the ratio of grammar school admissions to 12-year-olds was found to vary considerably among social classes. In 1960, 67 per cent of upper stratum boys, 25 per cent of middle stratum boys and 7 per cent of lower stratum boys were admitted. The figures for girls were comparable but somewhat lower at 63, 19 and 4 per cent respectively. Similar trends were noted for England and Wales.

In France in 1963, 55 per cent of children who had completed their primary schooling were admitted to secondary education, as compared with only 30 per cent in 1953. But the gap among social groups was still





quite substantial: 32 per cent of agricultural workers' children (13 per cent in 1953), 45 per cent of workers' children (21 per cent in 1953) and 94 per cent of children of higher level employees and members of the liberal professions (87 per cent in 1953) who had completed primary schooling were admitted to secondary education.

Furthermore, dropping out from secondary education was much more marked among children from the underprivileged classes. In 1963-64 in France, workers' children represented 24 per cent of the school population at the beginning of the secondary cycle, but only 12 per cent at the end.

ACCESS TO HIGHER EDUCATION

The same O.E.C.D. study shows a very wide disparity in the social and economic background of students according to the country considered. A clearer idea of the proportion of students of working class origin entering higher education is given by the graph on this page. But it should be remembered that the definition of what constitutes "the working class" may vary from country to country.

The table below shows the problem in another way.

		Lower Stratum	Upper Stratum
France	1964-65	27.1	629.0
Japan	1961	32.0	565.0
Netherlands	1961-62	10.6	359.0
Portugal	1963-64	5.3	440.0
Spain	1962-63	3.9	151.0
Yugoslavia	1960-61	66.0	465.0

It compares the number of students per 1,000 active males in the 45-54 age group (in other words, the students' fathers' generation) in the different social and economic groups in six countries.

Further striking evidence of disparity becomes apparent when the statistical chances of young persons from different social backgrounds entering higher education are compared. This can be done by comparing the ratios of upper stratum and lower stratum students with the active labour force, using the latter as a standard.

The O.E.C.D. study shows that lower stratum youths in Yugoslavia (in 1965-66) had 1 chance of entering higher education against 4 for those from the upper stratum: In the United States (in 1958) the ratio was 1 to 5, in Norway (in 1964-65) the ratio was 1 to 7. At the other extreme, the ratio was 1 to 65 in Luxembourg (in 1964-65), 1 to 87 in Spain (in 1962-63), and 1 to 129 in Portugal (in 1963-64). See table on page 22.

The report concludes that social differences in educational participation are widespread. In the O.E.C.D. countries at least, "the chances of being in school are distinctly superior for those with higher social origins, somewhat advantageous for those with 'middle class' backgrounds, and inferior for those from the lower strata or with agricultural backgrounds. Only the magnitude of the difference varies among countries."

In short, says the report, social group differences in educational participation appear to be a persistent characteristic of educational structures in all O.E.C.D. countries, and any change that is taking place is gradual in the extreme. ■

Do-it-yourself schools in the Philippines

by Pedro T. Orata

THERE is a saying that if Mohammed cannot go to the mountain, the mountain must go to Mohammed. This principle has been applied in the Philippines during recent years to help make education at all levels available as quickly as possible especially to children living in the most remote villages, and at little or no extra cost to the government. The aim has been to provide children with the kind and quality of education which they can afford and which is most relevant to their needs.

These self-help innovations comprise barrio (village) high schools, pre-schools, community colleges, and multigrade schools, on the one hand, and on the other, science teaching and social studies for better living, teaching learners to think, to weigh values, to work and to earn money to pay their tuition fees and other school expenses, and training educational leaders to do action research.

The projects were started in 1945, immediately after World War II, with the establishment of the first high school outside a provincial capital, at Urdanata, Pangasinan, in a roofless church and without books, pencils or paper, or money to pay teachers' salaries.

The aim was to give every boy and girl a chance to go to school by bringing the school to within walking or commuting distance of their homes, and to help them and their parents (as part of their education for daily life) to earn more by improving the productivity of their farms or plots of land and through the acquisition of new skills to enable them to help support their own schools.

We started from where the people were, with what they had, with existing school facilities, equipment and personnel, and proceeded one step forward—or even half a step—at a time, the people themselves (children and adults) helping to make the decisions, formulate the plans, carry them out and assess their performance, on the basis of which they helped revise the programme.

If we had waited until all was well provided—buildings, textbooks, science equipment, well qualified teachers, etc.—the 250,000 children and young people who are now enrolled in some 1,500 barrio high schools, 45 community colleges and 500 pre-schools would still be waiting for a chance to go to school.

We began with a survey of the situation in order to find out what was good about it; what, in fact, should and could be continued and extended? We did not start by asking for additional funds, equipment and personnel, but did what we could to make better use of what was available. In some cases, we had nothing with which to begin but the will to do what we believed needed to be done, and so we went ahead the best we could.

The purpose of this positive approach was to avoid the all too common practice in the Philippines, and perhaps elsewhere as well, of starting with a recital of a long list of problems and difficulties, after which everybody is discouraged and no one dares make a start.

The way we did it, the people were generally encouraged to go ahead further after learning that they had done many things that were worthwhile and good. This approach may have its limitations, but it has also its advantages. People are encouraged to go on and they feel better able to do so than if they start with a feeling of frustration and despair.

We looked at each situation to find out what knowhow (local and foreign), facilities, and resources were available with a view to using them to the full as a means—partial or total—of putting up additional classes, or undertaking experiments, or improvising needed equipment, conducting seminars and workshops, and so on.

Where rooms were used only for five or six hours a day, it was possible, by rearranging the schedule of classes, to add one or two high school, pre-school, or community college classes, which were scheduled to meet when the rooms were free.

The home economics cottage, the shop and garden tools and equipment, the school garden itself, could be used when not needed by the regular classes, which occupied them for only part of the school day.

IN the Philippines there are many qualified teachers who are unemployed. We used them to teach the additional classes. There are also many teachers who are qualified, or who can qualify with little additional training, to teach these classes, for which they receive a modest fee to supplement their small regular salary. So we gave them the extra job, which required one or two additional hours a day, and which they invariably welcomed.

Existing elementary or high school libraries were used for the time being, with a supplement of books.

In schools, in hospitals, in chemists' shops, and in the homes of students there are innumerable objects that are discarded and thrown away: burned-out electric bulbs, empty cans and bottles, worn-out tyres and inner-tubes, broken glasses, corn husks, bamboo and wood. These were used to improvise science equipment for

CONTINUED PAGE 26

PEDRO T. ORATA *is the founder of the barrio (village) education movement in the Philippines which he describes in this article. He received the Magsaysay Award this year for his 26 years of public service as an educational innovator.* (These awards, made by the Ramon Magsaysay Foundation in the Philippines, and often called the "Nobel Prizes of Asia", are given to Asian leaders in recognition of public service.) *Dr. Orata was a member of Unesco's Department of Education from 1950 to 1960, and is now an honorary special assistant to the Secretary of Education of the Philippines. He has written extensively on the problems of education in the developing countries.*

Photos Unesco - P.A. Pittet

The Philippines has been making an enormous effort to expand education in recent years. In seeking to give more children access to schools, Philippine educators have come up against two major problems: low family income (annual average $150 per person) in a country that is rich in natural resources but insufficiently industrialized; and the large number of isolated communities in this mountainous archipelago which comprises 11 big islands and 7,000 small ones. Eight million children and teenagers are still unable to attend school regularly, according to an official of the Philippines Department of Education. This situation applies as much to rural schools (above a village hidden away in the tropical forest of northern Luzon) as to those in small towns such as Dagupan, north of Manila where horse-drawn cabs (below) are a familiar part of the street scene.

Photos Philippine Barrio Schools

This little piggie went to market, this little piggie went to school...

high school and college classes and play equipment for pre-school children.

The principal of the school or the district supervisor served, with token payment, as assistant principal or officer-in-charge of the high school, pre-school or college, to administer the additional classes. This resulted in a process of inter-relation (at no extra expense) between the elementary and even high school and college, which is one of the most pressing aims of school administrators everywhere, in the Philippines and in other countries.

Equally important was to make use of other countries' experience in dealing with similar problems. What have educators done in Switzerland, in Israel, and in Singapore to deal with the language problem? What has been done and is being done, and with what success, in Burma, in Thailand, in Fiji, in India, in Australia to relate the content of instruction at the various levels to the problems and needs of the people, especially in the villages?

Foreign experience was not copied, but adapted to problems as they arose. Unless this is done, what is likely to happen—and is happening in some places now—is for a country to repeat the mistakes made elsewhere instead of learning from such mistakes.

What about teachers' salaries, textbooks, library books, and other essentials? Again, we looked around to see how private schools and colleges, starting from scratch, have been able to establish, operate, and maintain their institutions with substantial profit to themselves. If they were able to do so, why—with all the facilities already available—could not the new classes be operated on a non-profit basis?

Before a high school class is opened in a barrio (village) elementary school —this applies also to pre-school and community college classes—the parents and would-be students sign an agreement that they will, by working more to earn extra income, support the barrio high school, community college or pre-school classes, pay the teachers' salaries, buy the textbooks or pay the rentals on them, purchase additional library books or equipment (that cannot be improvised), etc.

The students and their parents are assisted in their effort to earn more by raising the productivity of their plots of land and farms or to start a new business or project to earn extra cash. This is not extra-curricular, but is made part of the school curriculum to prepare the students for life and self-employment, and to give their parents, who may be awarded a certificate of proficiency in recognition of their newly acquired competence, useful continuing education. The students are given high school or college credit for doing these things to help themselves and each other.

The extension workers of the Bureau of Plant Industry, the Bureau of Animal Industry, PACD (Presidential Assistance for Community Development), NACIDA (National Cottage Industries Development Administration), and other government entities are consulted and asked for help so that students and their parents will acquire the new skills and aptitudes that they need. Invariably the help is given gladly and free of charge.

If, for example, a student is given a piglet to take care of and later on to sell at a profit, out of which he pays his tuition fees and other expenses, he is guided in the work, as part of his education. He is shown how to take care of the piglet, how to raise its food, what to do if it becomes ill, how to have it injected to prevent it becoming ill, and after he sells the pig, to return the initial amount used to buy the piglet, with the legal interest of 6 per cent to the revolving fund or to the person who bought it for him.

We have been fortunate, from the beginning and as we went along, to get a little help from outside, including foreign agencies—the Barrio Book Foundation, the Asia Foundation, UNICEF, Unesco (through its Gift Coupon scheme), PACD, and others—in the form of limited funds with which to purchase textbooks to be resold at low cost to the barrio high schools and community colleges, to improvise science and play equipment; to provide teaching guides, etc.

IN this way, it has been possible within the last seven years to enrol, at little or no additional government expense, more than a quarter of a million children and youths in barrio high schools, community colleges, and pre-schools. These projects were started in 1964, 1966 and 1969, respectively.

This year we expect to open "multi-grade schools" (schools with first to sixth grade classes under one teacher) for the most remote villages of the Philippines. If fully implemented, this project will benefit over a million young people who either do not go to school at all or remain in school for a very short time.

'BARRIO' SCHOOLS

Since 1945, schools at every level in the Philippines have mushroomed thanks to a nationwide campaign based on ingenuity and imagination. Undaunted by lack of ideally suitable buildings and specialized teaching material, educators and teachers have helped communities in all parts of the country to set up classrooms that are used in rotation throughout the day for primary, secondary and higher education. The network today comprises 1,500 barrio (village) schools attended by 160,000 pupils, one-third of whom are teenagers. Far left, nursery school children stage an impromptu show. Left, primary schoolgirl plays with a piglet, contributed by the local community fund. In school she learns how to rear the piglet, the sale of which will pay for the school materials she needs for one year. Right, a village home economics classroom for intermediate grade girls. "Multigrade" schools, with first to sixth grade classes under one teacher, are now being opened to bring education to a million more youngsters.

Photo Unesco - Bonos

This should not be taken to mean that money—as much of it as may be available—is not necessary. Of course it is, and the more the better. But money is not all that is required. Imaginative, selfless, and dedicated leadership is necessary to do better what is being done with existing resources, facilities, equipment and personnel.

Furthermore, the extra money that is needed may be raised and contributed by the people themselves as part of their continuing education for life. And if by any chance the Government has money to spare, it may be used to provide revolving funds to establish work projects for the students and their parents.

Many so-called innovations are very expensive, and what is more, after the equipment is installed, it is often not used because nobody has been trained to operate and repair it if it should get out of order. In education, every effort should be made to encourage innovations that are not expensive, which the country can afford. It is better if some of the machines or equipment that may be needed can be improvised. We did this, first in science and then in the social studies, in pre-school, in practical arts, in home economics, etc.

In improvising such equipment, the children not infrequently did some of the work at home where, invariably, the parents and other children took part to their own benefit. Indeed, some of the equipment, such as lamps, weighing devices, etc., are useful in the home. Very often, housewives are cheated in the market where weighing machines and measuring sticks are tampered with.

We started by doing things that were possible with existing facilities and personnel, after which there was ample time to do the other things that required more money, time and effort. We found that the best preparation for the more elaborate operations is success in undertaking simpler projects requiring little or no extra funds or training abroad. Once simple projects have been undertaken successfully, the more difficult ones are more easily handled than would at first have seemed possible.

WHAT about improving the relevance and quality of education? We have not gone far on this either, but we have taken a few steps forward.

We extended the teaching of science beyond the learning or memorizing of scientific facts and discovering principles by the so-called "process" or "discovery approach". We asked the question: "After the discovery of a scientific principle, what follows?" We went two steps further; first, we made an effort to lead the pupils to apply the principle in very simple and practical ways—to select seeds for planting or to lay out a bamboo irrigation scheme from an artesian well; and second, we guided them to share what they knew and the benefit of what they did to apply scientific principles, with their classmates and neighbours.

We guided science students to improvise scientific equipment, to save money, which was not available, and more importantly, to make science learning more meaningful and interesting, as well as useful, to them. This is not without precedent. In Switzerland, to give one example, watch-making students devote the first year of a four-year course to making the tools with which to construct a watch as part of their "on the job" training.

The social studies courses were designed to prevent students from ever becoming criminals or victims of crime. They not only learned what was good, but they practised doing it as well. Furthermore, they shared their knowledge with their classmates and neighbours.

We tried to teach them from the first grade or even pre-school to think, to weigh values, and to act accordingly. We made use of real life situations in the classroom and in the community, on the bus or the sidewalk, etc., and we used the situations abundantly described in all the textbooks to stimulate them to think and to act accordingly.

We still have far to go. But we feel that selfless, dedicated, and imaginative leadership is needed as much or, in many cases, more than money. If money was available, well and good, but we did not wait until we got it. If we had, we would still be waiting.

As it happened, when the government saw the good that resulted from our efforts, it offered to provide funds. And, paradoxically enough, there is now an effort to make high school education free. This would be a mistake, first because the government cannot afford it; and second, because it would result in the students and their parents being deprived of the means of working harder to help themselves, as part of their education and preparation for life and self-employment.

To sum up, we undertook the many projects which we thought were needed, without funds, by the simple expedient of helping the children and their parents to help themselves in opening and supporting their own schools and colleges, by improving the productivity of their plots and farms by the use of better methods and more effective skills. This is a very important part of their "education for life," and why not as part of their preparation for higher studies, as well? ■

A Unesco youth forum on democratization of education

by
Thierry Lemaresquier

FRANK face-to-face discussions between teachers and schoolchildren, education administrators and students have long been a familiar feature of school and university life. But until the International Conference on Education organized by Unesco in Geneva, in September 1971, no international conference had ever provided a forum for a dialogue between students and those responsible for national education policies.

The Geneva Youth Forum brought together conference delegates from some hundred countries and schoolchildren and students of different nationalities. Its aim was to bring the dialogue "into the public arena" through a confrontation of views on the major theme of the Conference—the effect of students' social background on their chances of success in school.

Although the views of educational planners and administrators often coincide with those of school-children and students as regards the facts of today's educational problems, there are numerous points of disagreement as to the basic causes and to the remedies proposed by one side or the other.

Opening the debate, the students declared that making education more democratic means not only providing more education for more people, but also giving more persons a say in how it should be run. "Traditional education cannot be adapted to the needs of increasing numbers of people," they affirmed; "it must be remade."

But who is to remake it? Not only education officials and administrators, but the people as a whole. Only they know what their needs and aspirations are. The question of "democratizing" education should be discussed at every level of the population. Let the process of making education more democratic begin with a truly democratic act, said the students: the participation of the greatest number in the remoulding of education.

From this standpoint, the problem of education and in particular its democratization is inseparable from the national and international social and political context. Conference delegates and students agreed that one cannot hope to make radical changes in a country's social structure through education while continuing to regard education as an isolated instrument for development.

The aims of education are not ends in themselves but the means through which all peoples can fulfil their highest aspirations. Children should study in order to develop their minds rather than to pass examinations and collect diplomas, said a background paper prepared by the students, which quoted the words of the French writer Paul Valéry : "Diplomas are the worst enemy of culture."

Education should not be a "funnel". It should be an instrument that reveals the need for changes as these arise: it would be absurd to develop education while maintaining a social structure that is almost universally unjust. Teaching, said the students' paper, should seek to promote a worker's personal and social development and not simply his productivity.

The students also criticized the reasoning that problems of democratizing education should be approached in one way in industrially developed countries and quite differently in developing countries. The idea is a fallacious one that too often serves to screen the real problems.

Indeed, while it is not easy to establish the exact relationship between a country's economic development and the increase in the number of young people entering school, it is more and more difficult to see a direct link between the kinds of education now being exported from the industrialized countries to the developing countries and the real needs of the peoples concerned.

Some students said frankly that while the democratization of education gives the mass of the people a fuller awareness of their situation and problems, it is quite clear that with few exceptions education in the developing countries has been made only superficially democratic. According to one student, most attempts by young people to press for reforms in the developing countries inevitably lead to the exclusion of these students from the educational system.

Quite often the very idea of school is alien to the cultural environment in which students live. Thus the process of making education more democratic is bound to spark off conflicts over values between parents and children, city-dwellers and rural communities, the wealthy and the under-privileged. Education and educational institutions patterned after those of industrialized countries become instruments of social segregation instead of a means to mobilize national effort based on the goals and aspirations of the developing peoples.

PROGRAMMES for making education more democratic affirm that each person has an equal chance of success, but in reality lead to greater inequality, since an educational system open to all inevitably reflects the existing social structure. In other words, education has given rise to aspirations based not on the real needs of its "consumers", but on the objectives of educational administrators.

Students taking part in the forum felt that the problem of equal chances in school could not be dealt with rationally without first examining the question of pre-school education. Research has shown the importance

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of parental influence at this stage of childhood when receptivity is at its greatest. During his pre-school years, a child gradually acquires a rich intellectual, cultural, social and emotional heritage which will largely determine his behaviour during his entire life.

Among other factors, growth disorders due to undernourishment or malnutrition are often a cause of failure in school. Students stressed the importance of nutrition and especially the need to ensure a balanced protein-rich diet for under-privileged children.

The students were opposed to the principle of competition which they saw as the pivot of most educational systems. "The school must redefine its purpose and the content of education, and bring about a transition from competition to solidarity," they declared in their background paper for the Unesco Geneva Forum.

This applies particularly in trade and technical education which is often regarded as being reserved for the "half-failures", and which always recruits its students from the poorer sections of the population. While stressing the need for this type of education in the developing countries, the students found it regrettable that leaders in these countries are too often inclined to accept the myth of the "humanities" and Western scholastic tradition, thereby tending to lower the standing of manual work in the eyes of their own citizens.

This theme, which many analysts have developed in the past, is part of a broader criticism of education for its failure to open up sufficiently to the outside world and its scorn of the information and knowledge that the communications media can bring to young people.

Studies have been made of the proportion of information school-age children receive from school as compared with that reaching them through press, radio, television and other mass media. They show that in a highly-industrialized society, some

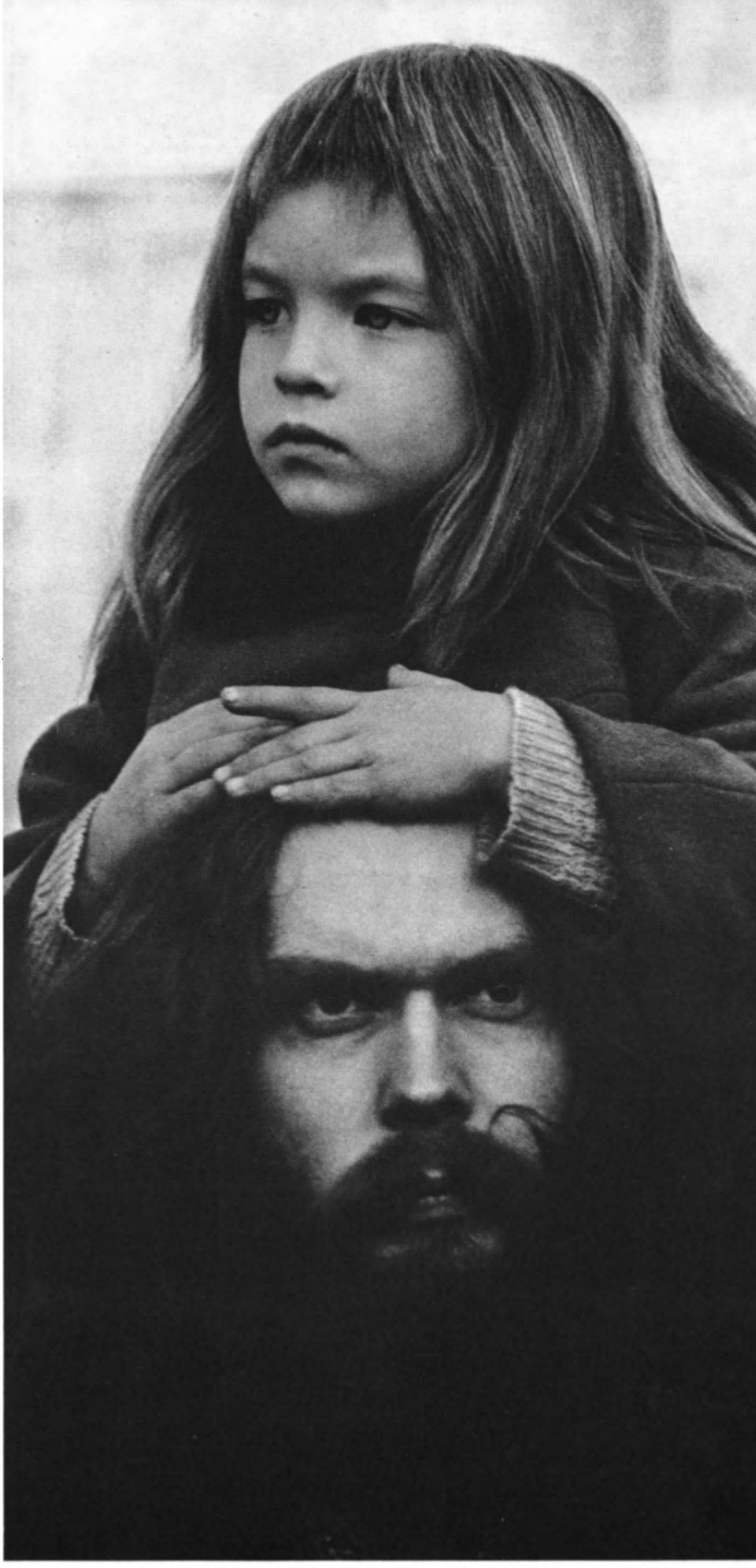

Photo © M.L. Frimer, Vancouver

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Schools

In the 1920s and '30s, in the Soviet Far North (right) migratory schools followed the nomads and their reindeer herds, travelling from camp to camp. In the 1940s and '50s, they were replaced by boarding-schools. Schools were non-existent in these immense icy wastes 50 years ago. Below, two Koryak herdsmen break the monotony of the long polar day with a game of chess.

Photo © L. Gorkavi, APN

Photo © Y. Trankvillitsky, APN

THE Arctic, with its hundreds of thousands of kilometres of tundra and taiga, its rivers and lakes, ice-bound almost throughout the year, its long polar nights, severe climate and harsh living conditions, is the home of the "small peoples" of the North—the Chukchi and the Koryaks, Canadian Indians, Eskimos, Nentsi, Evenks, Khanty, Mansi, Itelmen, Yukagirs, Selkups, Lapps, Saami, Kets, Aleuts and many other tribes, who live mainly on the shores of the Arctic Ocean.

The icy waters of that ocean wash the coasts of U.S.S.R., Canada, U.S.A., Norway, Greenland and Iceland. For centuries, the hunters, fishermen and reindeer-breeders, living on and near these inhospitable shores have fought the cruel environment with varying success.

Like all other small peoples, the Arctic nationalities found themselves in a paradoxical situation at the turn of the century. They had become objects of keen interest, and their customs were studied by scientific societies, scholars and even laymen interested in the exotic, yet there were few who seriously worried about their future, about the fact that these ancient peoples, with their patriarchal way of life now being drawn into the world economy, were totally unprepared for it and helpless.

Not assimilation, but extinction threatened them. The Yukagirs who once had been numerous and about whom ancient legends told that the glow of their many campfires had put the Aurora Borealis in the shade, were dying out—by 1917 there were just 300 of them left.

Alcohol, various diseases brought by the white newcomers against which the Arctic peoples had no immunity, cruel exploitation and plunder by heartless traders and indifferent governments had by the turn of the century ruined many of the small northern peoples physically and spiritually.

Roald Amundsen, the great Norwegian explorer, who knew these people well, said in one of his books: "The best I can wish our friends, the Netchili Eskimos, is that 'civilization' should bypass them."

At the beginning of this century the small Arctic peoples still lived under the tribal system, and in some places they continue to do so. In the 1920s, when the first Russian teachers came to the Siberian taiga and tundra, the local nomadic tribes had never heard of schools.

There were no words for "school" and "learn" in the northern languages. In the Chukcha language, for example, the word "to discover" was used for "learn", the word "to look at speckles" for "read". The people there did not think education necessary.

Another formidable obstacle to schooling was that the languages of the small nationalities were primitive

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YURI RYTKHEU *is well known as an author in the U.S.S.R. He was born into the family of a Chukcha nomad sea-hunter on the shores of the Bering Strait on the Chukotka Peninsula. His books on the Soviet Far North have been translated from Chukcha into Russian and many national languages of the U.S.S.R., and have appeared in 20 foreign languages.*

of the Soviet Far North

by Yuri Rytkheu

in many respects and that most of the Arctic peoples had no written language.

Their word stock was rich as regards terms to describe their natural environment and their occupations; at the same time, however, there were few words to describe less habitual concepts. There were no words for the various mineral resources, for crops and implements used in agriculture, no words to express abstract concepts.

An interesting example of the inability to draw generalizations is given in the reminiscences of Pyotr Skorik, a Russian teacher, who came to faraway Wellen, on Dezhnev Cape, some 60 miles from Alaska in 1928:

"I remember a lesson in arithmetic I had prepared using local examples.

'One hunter,' I told them, 'killed five seals, another killed three. How many did they kill altogether?'

"Suddenly questions were being fired at me from all sides.

'When did they kill the seals?'

'Yesterday,' I replied without thinking.

'Yesterday nobody went hunting, the weather was bad.'

'Who killed the five seals?'

'Lenle,' I gave the first name that came to my mind.

"There was an uproar of contagious laughter, and I involuntarily joined in. Lenle was probably the most unsuccessful of all the hunters in the camp."

Geographic isolation was another aggravating factor. The northern peoples generally lived in small groups, dozens or even hundreds of kilometres apart; they often migrated from place to place in pursuit of animals and in search of better pastures for their herds.

It was therefore extremely difficult to establish equal educational opportunities in practice (formally they had been proclaimed by the Constitution of the Russian Federation in 1918) in the extreme north where nature was so uncharitable that even some animals were unable to subsist.

A Committee for Assistance to the Peoples of the Northern Borderlands was set up in 1920. It played an important role in advancing the economy and culture of the small northern peoples. In the early 1930s national areas were formed throughout the Siberian tundra and taiga in order to enlist the participation of the local population in matters of state administration. Thus, the approach to the development of education in the northern areas was of necessity a comprehensive one—palliatives, half-hearted measures could not resolve the problem.

The idea underlying that approach was to preserve national traditions, to develop and enrich them. Letters of recommendation were given to young people sent from the Far North to schools in central Russia. The following letter was issued in August 1926 to Tevlianto, a Chukcha from Anadyr, who later became the first representative of the Chukcha people to the Soviet Parliament:

"At the proposal of the Kamchatka Regional Revolutionary Committee the bearer of this letter, Tevlianto, a Chuk-

CONTINUED NEXT PAGE

Like a time machine into the future

cha from Anadyr, has been sent for schooling to Soviet Russia.

"Tevlianto has spent all his life in the inhospitable, severe tundra, in conditions found only in the Polar North. The land he visits does not resemble Anadyr at all. The Revolutionary Committee is afraid that he, not knowing the Russian language and local customs, may encounter difficulties he will be unable to cope with. Besides his specific psychological make-up, his vulnerability, excessive impressionability and so on, may aggravate matters.

"We ask those to whom he may apply to give Tevlianto every possible help. He deserves it, for even though he does not know how to read and write, he is one of the most gifted and inquisitive young Chukchas in the whole area. There is much in Tevlianto a Russian school can bring to the surface, and which will help him to advance his people."

In the 1920s the Institute of the Peoples of the North in Leningrad became the main teaching centre. The first 19 students (of 11 different northern nationalities) enrolled in 1925. By 1930 it had a student body of 195 (including fifty girls). Naturally, the students were drawing government grants.

With the help of their Russian colleagues the first students of the North worked out alphabets for their languages to enable them to write in the vernacular.

AT the end of the 1920s and in the early 1930s, so-called cultural bases were set up throughout the Soviet Far North. They did much to transform the economy and change the way of life of the people there. Each cultural base had a boarding-school, factory, hospital, bakery, repair shops for the fishing fleet, mobile medical and veterinary teams.

These "bases" became the meeting ground between the old and the new, between age-old traditions and the material, social and spiritual innovations introduced by the new life. In these cultural centres the local people learned about modern life. They saw unusual things and heard new ideas, and their children were taught to read and write.

I was one of them. When I was a little boy and left my yaranga to go to school in the morning it was as though I made a journey with a time machine into the remote future.

In the evening when I returned it took me back thousands of years. I would sit on a sealskin with my books doing my homework, while my relatives next to me perused a piece of fur submerged in a pot filled with sea water to divine the currents in the bay, to predict the approach of seals to the shallows, and many other things. They muttered their invocations and their voices blended with mine as I was learning a poem by heart. Putting my copybook aside for a minute, I had to bow my head to my elders to have my forehead rubbed with sacrificial blood...

In 1930 universal, compulsory, primary education was introduced into the national areas and districts of the North. The "migratory schools" for the children of nomad reindeer breeders provided many thousands with primary education. The number of schools grew from 123 in 1930 to over 500 in 1936.

Early in the 1940s an almost complete set of textbooks in the vernacular of the various Arctic peoples was published for the first and second school years, and some textbooks for the third and fourth, and also some suggested teaching methods as well as children's literature for extra-mural reading. At the same time some 60 titles of books on different subjects appeared in the vernacular.

At present all the basic types of schools provided for by the Soviet educational system—primary (eight-year) and secondary (ten-year) schools—operate in all the national areas and districts of the Soviet extreme north.

The conditions in the North make for the spread of boarding and day-care schools. In the 1967-68 academic year there were 523 schools in the northern national areas, with a pupil population of 90,000 (including 23,000 children of the "small nationalities"). There are also over 100 children's music schools, 21 children's artistic schools, 34 specialized secondary schools (general, musical, theatrical and choreographic) in the Soviet north.

It should also be pointed out that the peoples of the north do not have to spend a single penny on the education of their children. The state takes care of them from the day of their birth. Creches are open to them at state expense; after that they go on to kindergartens and boarding schools, where they are fed, clothed and provided with textbooks; during vacations they travel free of charge to their parents' domicile and back again.

The programme of secondary schools in the extreme north is the same as that for schools in any other part of the Soviet Union. In the initial stages at primary school they are taught in the vernacular, so that the Chukcha, Eskimo, Nenets, Mansi and other children will be able to read and write in their own language. In the final stages of their primary education they learn the Russian language in parallel with their own.

This basic knowledge in his own language helps the pupil to master the three R's and, hence, also spoken and written Russian, which he needs for his secondary education, for the systematic study of the rudiments of the sciences. The Russian language is particularly important for the northern peoples since it unlocks to them the door to culture and knowledge.

I know that from personal experience. Acquaintance with the best works of Russian literature did us a world of good. In those days we considered even the books by foreign authors as part of Russian culture, for they came down to us through the Russian language.

The Russian language greatly influenced the languages of the Soviet "small nationalities". They kept their figurative speech, their phonetic system and their basic word stock, but it was filled with a new content.

THE modern development of the North has created the need for people with varied specialities—executives, mining engineers, physicians—and the young people there are now being trained for the many professions needed by their rapidly growing economy.

The government helps the northern peoples in many ways and in particular by giving them top priority in admission to all educational establishments in the U.S.S.R. So it is hardly surprising that they number a high percentage of persons with a specialized education.

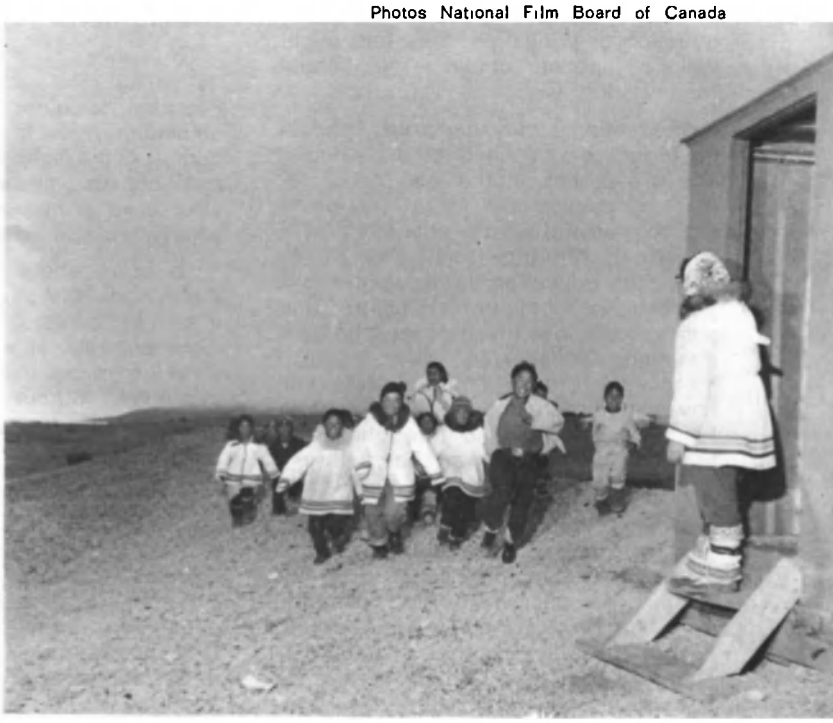
But the conditions responsible for the former economic and cultural under-development of the northern peoples (primitive economy, geographic isolation and so on) are found not only in the ice-bound Arctic but also in the world's jungle and desert areas. So in helping to pass on the educational experience of the Arctic, Unesco will also aid peoples in many other parts of the world. ■

THE SNOWS OF CANADA

Photo © Paul Almasy, Paris

For Canadian Eskimo children, the school bus is a sledge drawn by a team of husky dogs. Below right, school is a pleasure for these Eskimo children, at Resolute Bay. During their playtime, the younger children indulge in the traditional amusements of dancing (above), hunting-games or building miniature igloos; the older children also play baseball and build model aeroplanes. Canada has 16,000 Eskimos and over 230,000 Indians. Left, an Indian pupil in a school in Alberta, western Canada. Indian children, note their teachers, are often very good at mathematics and manual work.

Photos National Film Board of Canada



'LETTER TO A TEACHER' *(Continued from page 16)*

moment different for each boy, each country, each environment, each family.

Half a page from the textbook is all that is needed to explain this; the rest we can tear up and throw away.

History. There are several different history surveys. I would like to get the figures on those most in use.

In general they are not history at all. They are narrow-minded, one-sided little tales passed down to the peasants by the conqueror. The sufferings and struggles of the workers are either ignored or stuck into a corner.

In the best, most "modern" book, Gandhi is disposed of in nine lines.

Civics. Civics is another subject that I know something about, but it does not come up in your schools.

Some teachers say, as an excuse, that it is taught by implication through other subjects. If this were true, it would be too good to believe. If that really is such a great way to teach something, then why don't they use it for all subjects, building a sound structure in which all the elements are blended together and yet can be extracted separately at any time?

Admit that in truth you have hardly any knowledge of civics. You have only a vague notion of what a mayor really is. You have never had dinner in the home of a worker. You don't know the terms of the pending issue on public transport. You only know that the traffic jams are upsetting your private life.

You have never studied these problems, because they scare you. As it also scares you to plunge into the deeper meanings of geography. Your textbook covers all the world but never mentions hunger, monopolies, political systems or racialism.

Tests in the classroom. While giving a test you used to walk up and down between the rows of desks and see me in trouble and making mistakes, but you never said a word.

I have the same situation at home. No one to turn to for help for miles around. No books. No telephone.

Now here I am in "school". I came from far away to be taught. Here I don't have to deal with my mother, who promised to be quiet and then interrupted me a hundred times. My sister's little boy is not here to ask me for help with his homework. Here I have silence and good light and a desk all to myself.

And over there, a few steps away, you stand. You know all of these things. You are paid to help me.

Instead, you waste your time keeping me under guard as if I were a thief. ■

UNESCO YOUTH FORUM *(Continued from page 29)*

80 per cent of all information obtained by children aged between 12 and 15 comes from outside school, and, moreover, that 80 per cent of the information imparted by schools is largely irrelevant.

Many students criticized schools for basing learning on essentially abstract data which could often equally well be acquired out of school, instead of providing an education that links training to the practical needs of everyday life.

Since the school is part of a backward system which can almost never avoid reproducing a given social structure in a caricatural form, the question of education, they felt, might well be posed outside the school framework.

"Education," they declared, "should no longer be confined to a particular age group, but should last for a lifetime, constantly opening up new paths before men and women and, even more important, offering fresh chances to all. With education as an uninterrupted process, notions of failure and success will lose much of their present meaning. Those who fail at a particular age or at a particular task will have other chances. They will no longer be condemned throughout life to the consequences of their failure."

The purpose of lifelong education, said the students, is to enable each person to master the rapid changes of modern life, though it is by no means certain that all those responsible for drawing up educational policies accept this idea. The principle of lifelong education could even be surreptitiously transformed so as to become an instrument of lifelong indoctrination. History, unfortunately, offers plenty of examples for those who might find such a prospect tempting.

The problem of social background raises fundamental issues concerning the role of the entire community in the definition and running of education. It is wrong for parents to relinquish their role in favour of a teacher caste made all-powerful as education becomes more and more institutionalized. Nor is it normal for the teacher to be relieved of his original task and to become merely an overseer enjoying an immunity conferred on him by the school's monopoly.

The school itself should not abdicate its social role within the community. Founded to meet the needs of the community, which daily become more complex, the school has grown into a monopolistic system whose rigidly structured principles are an obstacle to any realistic social action.

To bring about radical changes in the school, the students propose that it should "adapt its action to the development rate of each child; take the child's personal motivation as its starting point, without however excluding personal effort; reject all trends and constraints that run counter to these objectives; enable each child consciously to choose his future instead of forcing him blindly to adapt to existing conditions; let him learn by personal observation, reflection and experiment; develop joint research activities; introduce a method of work that allows for the expansion and deepening of knowledge already acquired."

The community—parents, children and teachers—should work together to break down the barrier between the school and everyday life. This naturally implies that the purpose of democratizing education is to decentralize rather than to standardize, that the development of personality should become at least as important an objective as striving for "productivity", and that educational change should be part of an overall process leading to a democratic society.

If, as is said, the educational budget in many countries has reached its ceiling in relation to national economic resources, it is surely disquieting to find in the same overall national budget evidence of completely contradictory policies and expenditure.

How can a developing country conceivably go on spending more of its resources on arms than on education? How can budgets for peace and budgets for war continue to expand side by side? And is it reasonable for some of the fruits of education to be destroyed because resources needed for a country's equipment are being spent on defence material imported from wealthy countries?

In a broader context, is the goal of education to give a country's working population better training so that it may serve the interests of other countries more efficiently? Should not its real aim be, to use the words of the students at the Geneva Forum, "the emergence of a society in which each person will be capable of taking his destiny and his future in his own hands?"

Thierry Lemaresquier

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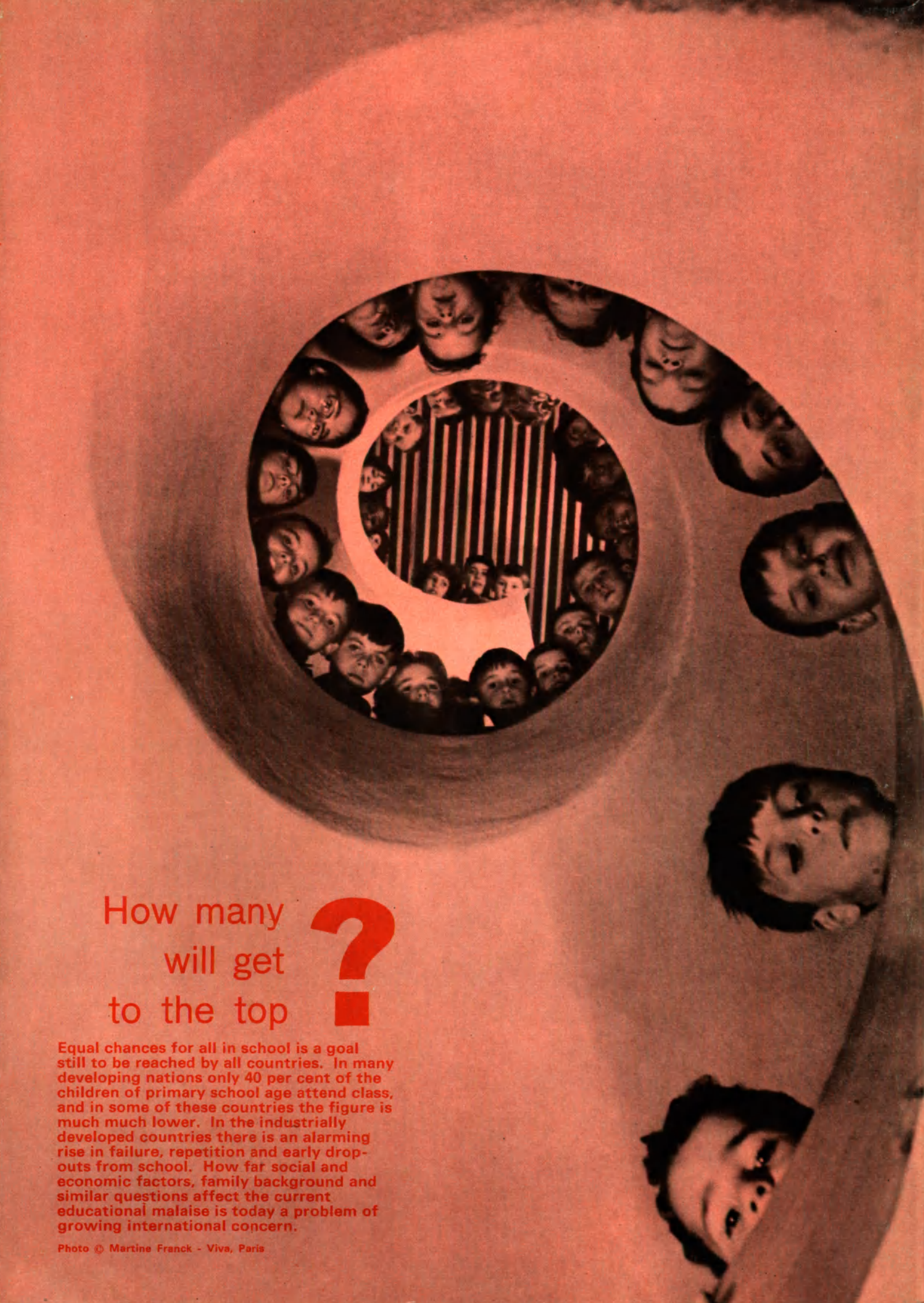

How many will get to the top ?

Equal chances for all in school is a goal still to be reached by all countries. In many developing nations only 40 per cent of the children of primary school age attend class, and in some of these countries the figure is much much lower. In the industrially developed countries there is an alarming rise in failure, repetition and early drop-outs from school. How far social and economic factors, family background and similar questions affect the current educational malaise is today a problem of growing international concern.