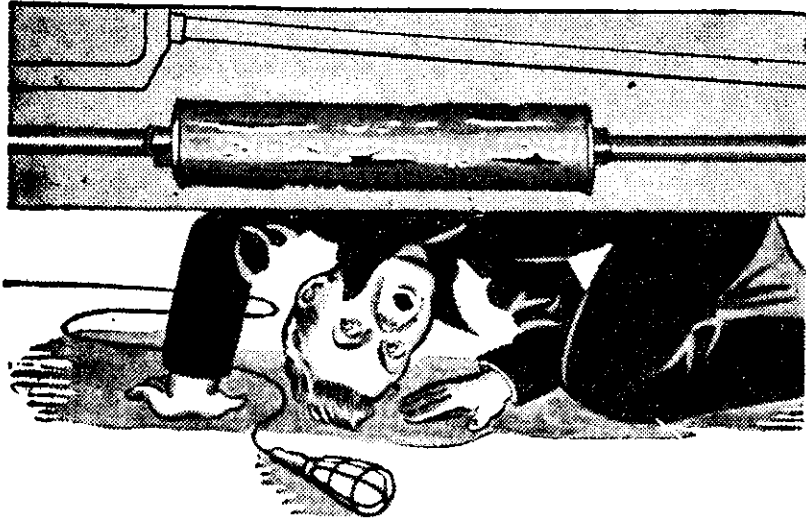


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UNESCO Will Lay the Foundations of Peace

LAST week Dr. C. E. Beeby, Director of Education, left New Zealand on his way to Paris where he will attend, in November, the Conference of UNESCO. As many of our readers probably know, those initials stand for United Nations Educational, Scientific, and Cultural Organisation; but UNESCO is better described as "the specialised agency for international co-operation in things of the mind." That is how it is described in this talk (broadcast recently in the Pacific Service of the BBC) by DR. JULIAN HUXLEY, who is executive secretary of the preparatory commission for UNESCO.

THE first beginnings in international co-operation in the things of the mind were made after World War 1 when the Institute of Intellectual Co-operation was set up in Paris, under the League of Nations, in 1925. However, there's a big difference to-day. The Institute had very little money, it was hardly allowed to touch education because that was supposed to be a matter for domestic concern, and it didn't bother itself with anything so popular as the wireless. To-day's UNESCO's provisional budget for next year is nearly seven-and-a-half million dollars, education is included in its title, and not only am I talking about it on the wireless, but its constitution expressly lays down that it shall use the wireless together with all other means of mass communication, like press and films, to advance mutual knowledge and understanding amongst people.

Peace is Defended in the Mind

Its constitution sets forth various aims and purposes for it of a sort that had never previously found their way, so far as I know, into international documents. The preamble begins with Mr. Attlee's sober words that since wars begin in the minds of men it is in the minds of men that the defences of peace must be constructed. It goes on to lay down that the wide pursuance of culture, and the education of humanity for justice and liberty and peace, are indispensable to the dignity of man and constitute a sacred duty which all the nations must fulfil; that the peace based exclusively upon the political and economic arrangements of governments would not be a peace which could secure a unanimous, lasting, and sincere support from the peoples of the world; and that the peace must therefore be founded, if it is not to fail, on the intellectual and moral solidarity of mankind. All the states which have signed the constitution thereby affirm their belief in full and equal opportunities of education for all, and in the free exchange of ideas and knowledge.

At Copenhagen, Sir John Boyd Orr said that the FAO through the new World Food Board was out to combat hunger and poverty throughout the world. I think we can sum up the task of UNESCO in one phrase by saying that it is out to combat spiritual hunger and mental poverty throughout the world. In pursuance of this aim we have already in the few months of our existence started work on a number of concrete projects. For instance, since UNRRA is debarred from providing relief in the educational and similar spheres, we are trying to get money raised for these aims and starting to organise relief in this in all the war-devastated countries—both in Europe and the Far East.

In the course of this we have already found out that the lack of standardisation in scientific apparatus—especially for teaching—is a serious handicap, and we're preparing recommendations to remedy this. Again, since UNESCO can hardly be expected to work well in a world about half of whose inhabitants are illiterate, we have already prepared a factual and critical survey of various methods used by different countries in anti-illiterate and mass education campaigns—by Mexico, China, Russia, Turkey, and by British, French and other colonies. Every nation seems to have its own special methods and we hope that each will find that they can learn something from the other.

Educational Broadcasting

Then we are already taking steps to hold a conference to draft a new copyright convention. This is of great importance since, for one thing, neither of the two most powerful nations in the world—the U.S.A. and the U.S.S.R.—have so far adhered to the Byrnes convention on copyright, and, secondly, the whole position of copyright in radio, films, and works of art is in a chaotic state. We are now setting out on a study of text-books, especially in history, geography and physics, to see what can be done to remove causes of international friction, and misunderstanding, and misrepresentation in this sphere. We are preparing a conference on educational broadcasting in Europe and we are starting an ambitious survey on the whole of art and general education—art, that is to say, not in connection with training professional artists, but the value of the arts in developing the personality and possibilities of the ordinary child. And, finally, since language is one of the barriers which keep different parts of the world in ignorance of each other, we are starting to organise a better system of translation, partly by preparing lists of books, old and new, which we think ought to be translated, and partly by organising a panel of first-class translators in different languages.

History of UNESCO

But perhaps I ought to go back for a moment and say a little about our history. UNESCO really grew out of the conference of allied Ministers of Education which met in London during the worst years of the war. They worked out various projects and these finally took form at the San Francisco Conference in 1945, where it was definitely decided to set up a United Nations organisation to deal with education and culture, with permanent headquarters in Paris. Then last November a big conference was held here in London to draw up the Constitution and decide on the future organisation and general outline. Among other things it put the S in