



SEEDS FOR PEACE

The Role of Pre-School Education
in International
Understanding and Education for Peace



UNESCO

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Epigraph

Pax enim non belly privatio,
Sed virtus est. quae ex animi fortitudine oritur

For peace is not the absence of war,
But a quality that springs from spiritual strength

Spinoza
Tractatus Theologico-Politicus

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Preface

As education for international understanding and peace gradually developed, it became clear that education of this kind should begin at the earliest possible age, and that there was a need to find ways and means of bringing it about.

In recent years, experiments involving families have been carried out in pre-school establishments, many of them belonging to the Unesco Associated Schools Project, but so far very little has been published on the subject. Unesco has therefore decided to bring to public attention the experience acquired in this field, which is also the purpose of the present work. It is addressed to parents, educators and other professionals in the field of early childhood, and more generally to those who are called upon in a creative or decision-making capacity to deal-with young children.

The work was written by Madeleine Goutard, President of the World Organization for Early Childhood Education, and was based on a four-day international consultation which was organized by her in May 1982 in Sèvres (France). Collaborating-with her was Elizabeth Khawajkie, of the Education for International Understanding and Peace section at Unesco, who is responsible for the Associated Schools Project. Technical support was provided by the International Federation for Parent Education, whose President, Jean Auba, kindly offered the premises of the International Centre for Educational Studies in Sèvres as the seat of the consultation.

Using the texts and questions prepared by the author, as a starting-point, those taking part in the Consultation were instrumental in deciding the overall themes and plan of the work. At a later stage, they also provided specific examples and illustrations.

The following took part in the consultation:

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The quality of the present work was enhanced thanks to Annie Vallotton, a French illustrator, who offered gratuitously several illustrations for the text, and the Colombian painter, Antonio Roda, who generously authorized the reproduction of his work below.



INTRODUCTION

In all likelihood, there is no culture that cannot point, somewhere in the teachings of its wise elders, to maxims favouring peace or advocating non-violence. First and foremost, however, it is the terrible threat of the total destruction of humankind that has given rise to a worldwide movement to promote education for peace.

From the very beginning, Unesco has included international understanding - a condition for world peace - among its major goals, and the Associated Schools Project was set up by Unesco in 1953 to promote international understanding and peace through schooling.

In article 10 of the Declaration of the rights of the child,* it is stipulated that the child '... shall be brought up in a spirit of understanding, tolerance, friendship among peoples, peace and universal brotherhood and in full consciousness that his energy and talents should be devoted to the service of his fellow men'.

Gradually, awareness has developed that, over and above the educational programmes aimed at encouraging a spirit of solidarity and mutual understanding among young people all over the world, action at a deeper level is called for at the earliest possible age, i.e. in the years when a child's fundamental outlook and personality are formed.

The specific responsibility of the parents in this respect is emphasized in paragraph 24 of the Recommendation concerning Education for International Understanding, Co-operation and Peace and Education relating to Human Rights and Fundamental Freedoms adopted by the Unesco General Conference at its eighteenth session, 1974:

'As pre-school education develops, Member States should encourage in it activities which correspond to the purposes of the recommendation because fundamental attitudes, such as, for example, attitudes on race, are often formed in the pre-school years. In this respect, the attitude of parents should be deemed to be an essential factor for the education of children, and (the) adult education (...) should pay special attention to the preparation of parents for their role in pre-school education'.

In view of the increasingly rapid expansion of pre-school education in a large number of countries, and as a result of the inclusion, during the 1970s, of nursery schools in the Unesco Associated Schools Project, education for peace has begun to attract the attention of teachers and teacher educators concerned with pre-school education.

This has given rise in a number of instances to exciting experiments, and it is this initial exploration that is described in the present work, in the hope that it will inspire parents, teachers and all those interested in adult education to carry out further experiments.

* The Declaration was adopted by the General Assembly of the United Nations on 20 November 1959. (See Annex for the text).

The fact that the children are extremely young does not make it any easier to find solutions. Education for peace cannot take the form of 'lessons', for it cannot be equated with putting across ideas or knowledge. It has to take place at a deeper level, i.e. the formation of the child's character and his outlook on life. This level is difficult to attain in a controlled fashion, because, more often than not, adults affect it more or less unconsciously.

Writing a work on pre-school education for peace, is therefore not a matter of describing a specific subject to be taught to very young children. It means helping parents and teachers to become aware of their own deep-seated attitudes towards life and death, and showing them that the way they relate to others, and to children in particular, is an important factor contributing to peace or violence. It means pointing out ways in which they may act positively, and with greater awareness as agents of peace, capable of fostering peace at home and at work, and thereby passing on to the very young the essential ability needed to find peace within themselves and with those around them.

Very young children can have no inkling of what peace or war means, nor have they any knowledge of the world situation. They are nevertheless capable of sensing inside themselves feelings of peace or conflict, depending on the kind of life they lead in the family, at the nursery school, or in the surrounding community.

If we do not confine education for peace to action to resolve social conflict, but include the psychological dimension of inner peace, a number of problems arise which are all the more difficult in that very young children are involved.

Those who have recognized the need to avoid limiting education for peace to merely external actions, such as campaigning for disarmament, often advocate a psychological approach, but it is questionable whether the latter is equally valid for very young children.

If the objectives are peace and international understanding, it seems logical to recommend resistance to self-centredness and egotism in each and all of us. On the other hand, when one is dealing with individuals whose personality is still being formed, it is immediately obvious that such a principle cannot be applied without risk.

Whatever may have been said on the subject, a child's egocentricity is much less powerful and dangerous than the self-centredness of an adult. Over and above this, one must surely recognize that a child's egocentricity serves to develop his or her awareness, fosters self-assertiveness, and leads to the formation of a new personality which education is supposed to enhance rather than stifle. The so-called 'crisis of opposition' which occurs at approximately the age of three is surely nothing other than the expression of the child's realization that he has a mind of his own. It is, after all, important to learn how to say 'no', and in many instances society has evolved as a result of opposition to habits, rules and conventions when in due course they came to be regarded as bad. There can be no doubt that the present-day peace movement opposes the threat and the reality of war. A conflict of wills between child and parents can sometimes help the latter to become aware of the mistakes they make and thus to become better teachers.

Some specialists even go so far as deliberately to cultivate aggressiveness, regarding it as a major factor for success at every level, whether biological, psychological or social. Unquestionably, a somewhat robust attitude with regard to material obstacles, or the wishes, desires and ideas of others helps the individual to construct a strong personality by wrestling with reality. The point at issue is to decide whether this energy can be used for purposes that are not only constructive for the individual, but also beneficial to others and to the natural environment.

The individual has to grapple not only with the outside world, but also with himself, in order to meet the inner challenges that will enable him to achieve the kind of major human victory that leads to serenity and full self-possession.

In short, all children express -some more powerfully, others less - a personal energy which prompts them to assert themselves, and to oppose and fight others. It is important to be careful lest, under the pretext of education for peace, a particularly subtle form of violence is brought to bear on young children, i.e. one that stifles their vital dynamism by attempting to convert them into 'peaceful' individuals, meaning submissive and docile ones.

One should not, therefore, seek peace at any price, rendered dull and tedious through direct sedation or repression of energy. The reason that war has generally been more vaunted than peace stems from the fact that it has an energy-releasing component. It triggers powerful forces that carry us away. Often wars are started out of sheer boredom. A peace which took on the appearance of war would be no more than an imitation of war, a disguised form of it, a kind of imposture. The fact remains, however, that peace must appear as something other than a cessation of hostilities out of sheer exhaustion. The problem of how to give positive value to peace is an educational one.

This is no easy task, for in almost every society it is the warlike values that predominate and are the most highly praised and encouraged, i.e. courage, strength, endurance, resistance, fearlessness in the face of death, etc. Although war is the expression of antisocial attitudes and brings great cruelty in its train, it offers the compensation that, among those fighting on the same side, it arouses feelings of union, solidarity and glowing comradeship, often the subject of much nostalgia among war veterans. It is much more difficult to maintain this form of social cohesiveness in peacetime, and this explains why peace at home is sometimes sought at the price of wars abroad.

The values of peace are also asserted in various societies throughout the world. They form the basis of some religions, and, in the pantheon of certain peoples, the gods of peace are placed cheek by jowl with the gods of war. What makes the educational problem in question so difficult, however, is that peace-loving values are often associated with feminine virtues, while warlike values are by and large linked with masculine ones. In view of today's tendency to avoid observing any basic difference between the education of girls and boys, some people might raise the same objection against education for peace as was sometimes brought against certain religions, i.e. it leads to a feminization of humankind as a whole.

While it is true that gentleness, patience, tenderness and love are peaceable values, we must face the fact that it often takes great inner strength to ensure that they prevail, and it is well known that those who speak out for peace must sometimes show great courage. At a time when humankind is living under such a terrible threat, it should therefore be possible to give a dynamic and exciting image of peace, one that is capable of actively mobilizing people's energy while no longer mistaking supposedly feminine attributes for signs of weakness.

Another point worth noting is that things are learned through their opposites, i.e. soft as opposed to hard, gentle as compared with violent. How can one feel peace if one has not been in warlike situations? In some circumstances it is surely healthy to feel 'righteous anger' or 'indignant rebellion'.

The foregoing comments all indicate that education for peace must avoid any action that might soften, devitalize or tame the personality of young children, who should all be able to explore the dynamics of human relationships in a lively and inquiring moment. But while aggressiveness should not actively be repressed, it should not be encouraged either. It should be possible to encourage children to find patterns of social conduct that are more sophisticated, elaborate and creative than the simple discharging of aggression. - .

The way to convince oneself that there exist non-taming methods of educating children for peace is to ask what characterises a 'child at peace'. This does not necessarily mean a well-behaved child, and certainly not a frustrated one with repressed impulses.

The authors of the present work were obliged to try to work out a definition, in the course of an international meeting, and the concepts they produced included gentleness, empathy, union regained, intimate contact with the mother, and happiness for a child's peace is built in a context of happiness, whereas fear destroys it. The description of the child at peace also indicated, however, a child who is generous with his energy and who knows how to control his willpower in order to make use of his personal resources and to draw on them for the assurance and security that are conducive to peace. Lastly, emphasis WAS laid on the child's ability to maintain a balance between impulses and his ways of satisfying them, to live in harmony with himself whatever the contradictions cast up by life, and to live at peace in a warring world.

So it would seem that the approach to pre-school education should run along the following lines:

1. respect for and preservation of the aptitudes for peace inherent in each and every child, which education often tends to destroy through the type of pressure that it exerts;
2. inclusion of education for peace in the pattern of vital and constructive dialectic used by children in their exploration of their own potential and that of the world around them, in their construction of a network of relationships and in their enthusiastic experimentation with all that life has to offer.

3. encouragement of the specific form of creativity that consists of finding feasible ways out of conflict, and hence development of the ability to:

maintain the delicate balance between desires and the possibility of fulfilling them;

control the conflicting forces present both inside and outside oneself in order to ensure the victory of order and harmony over the unbridled squandering of energy;

maintain the integral unity of the individual or group against life's ups and downs;

find ways of graduating towards levels of behaviour that are more highly evolved, elaborate, complex and socialized, and ultimately more liberating.

Although this type of education for peace seeks to guide the process whereby the young child's personality is formed, it cannot be charged with being overly psychological, since it is based on relationships and the social context.

It leads us to revise our concept of the socialisation of the young child. This concept is still often seen in terms of the child's gradual adaptation to the rules dictated by life in society (usually meaning the social behaviour present in societies where the values of peace are by no means predominant) and the learning of 'good habits' which are often no more than the rigid code of conduct imposed in one particular social group, as opposed to the rules obeyed in other groups.

Education for peace requires a form of social training that maintains the young child's natural open-mindedness, instead of trying to convert the child as quickly as possible into an individual who is narrow-minded and intolerant of anything that does not conform to the rules of the society in which he or she lives, overlooking the fact that, at the outset, young children are sufficiently receptive to acquire any and every language and culture, depending on the environment in which they are born.

Another requirement of education for peace is the development of the child's independence throughout the social fabric of mutually interdependent relationships, for a socially independent individual possesses a more community-oriented outlook and a greater immunity to prejudice, indoctrination and all the forms of outside manipulation that coerce people into fanatical behaviour for which they will not accept full, clearly thought out responsibility.

This is why, from earliest childhood, young people's creativity must be encouraged in a context of social activity. Children thereby find ways of solving conflicts by means other than submission or rebellion, and can remain at peace in the midst of the changing emotions and events of daily life.

For children to enjoy a social education of this kind, they must be able to find suitable friends. Generally they find them among their peers, but unfortunately they do not always find them in the world of big, strong adults, whose own education, whose past, and whose present lives do not

always provide adequate preparation for the role; and indeed, which sometimes seriously imperil adults' own inner peace.

A work of the present kind seemed worthwhile for this reason, and the authors hope that it will help to break the vicious circle of violence.

The authors feel that there is a particular need for the work on account of the fact that, at present, young children's peace is increasingly threatened. In some places the threat emanates from the stress and strain of modern living, in others from the destruction of the security afforded by traditional ways of life, elsewhere from armed conflicts, and, nearly everywhere, from one form or another of abandonment, of which very young children are the main victims.

If the peace of children is threatened, what hope is there for the future peace of the world? How can we expect to educate children eventually to shoulder responsibility for world peace, if we do not first help them to maintain it within themselves so that it stands some chance of blossoming outside them?

CHAPTER I

The role of the family in education for peace

In most cases, a child is born into a family, and it is the family that constitutes his first educational environment. It stands to reason, therefore, that education for peace should begin in the home.

A. The parents' role is crucial

The vain attempts to provide truly effective relief for the educational deficiencies of children from so-called 'high-risk' families, and the studies that have been carried out highlighting the special importance of the early years in a child's development, all emphasize the determining role of parental influence and the need to work with parents towards an improvement in early childhood education.

Indeed, a child's attitude towards going to nursery school or primary school is a reflection of the atmosphere reigning at home. While some children are fearful or aggressive, others are calmer and ready to cope with change.

Regarded now as scientifically established truths, these ideas serve only to endorse insights that are extremely venerable. For example, there is the story of the wise man in Ancient Greece who one day received a visit from a young mother. She had come to ask him when he thought she ought to begin the education of her one-year-old infant. His reply was, 'You're a year late already'.

Since it takes many months to prepare for the arrival of a child, the educational process ought to begin even before the child is born. Whether or not he is awaited and received in peace is bound to have consequences.



*... the educational process ought to begin
even before the child is born*

At present, the institution of the family is undergoing a number of upheavals: migrations, mothers going out to work, the 'nuclear' family with its constriction of family relationships, the increased incidence of un-married couples living together and of single-parent families. By upsetting the time-honoured balance of basic social structures, these changes often make it more difficult to create the minimum of emotional security that will enable the child to be educated in an atmosphere of peace.

The following conversation took place in a French nursery school between children in the 5-6 age-group. It concerns a fairy tale and provides an excellent example of the problems currently facing young children:

(The Prince said to the Fairy, 'I love you. Let's get married'.)

'He's saying that, but perhaps he's got another wife somewhere else'.

'My daddy's gone away'.

'My mummy's divorced. If your daddy doesn't give your mummy money, it's better for them to split up'.

'Yes, or if your daddy knocks your mummy about'.

'My grandma looks after me'.

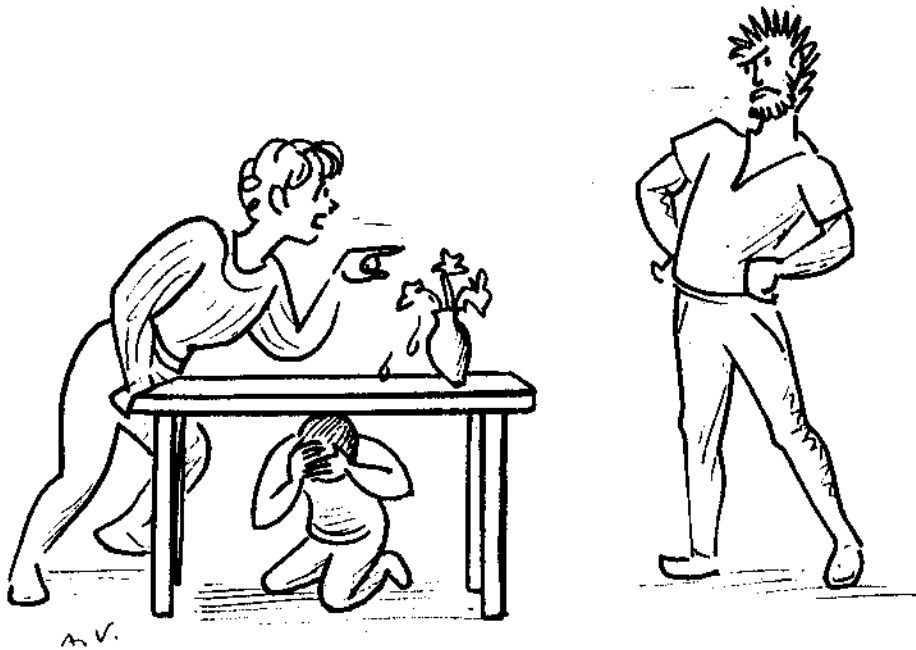
B. Peace begins at home

Within the family, similarities, common interests and lack of privacy are all more intense than elsewhere. This means that the need for self-assertiveness often makes family conflicts particularly acute. The way in which they are handled and resolved gives young children their first lesson in education for peace. It will determine the way the young child approaches any new situation thereafter.

An example is provided by two children from different marriages, now living with parents who had remarried after the death of their first spouse. The first child had been brought up in an atmosphere of parental strife, while the other had been raised in a calm and happy environment. The first approached the new situation with mistrust and violence, whereas the other child accepted his stepmother and her child, in spite of the grief caused by the death of his own mother. Without being passive, the second child knew how to defend his rights without resorting to violence.

1. Relations between parents

It is extremely difficult for children to be educated for peace when they live with parents (or surrogate parents) who daily offer a spectacle of unpleasant scenes, when the home is a setting for violence, a cold-war atmosphere or the feeling of a war of attrition, or when the winner gains his or her ends through terror, blackmail or deceit, and the loser projects an image of fear, weakness and cowardice.



... a daily spectacle of unpleasant scenes ...

A more favourable atmosphere for peace education is created by parents who know how to talk matters over, are willing to listen to their spouse's point of view, seek a fair compromise, make concessions, show generosity without weakness, are capable of giving, and better still, of making the love between them radiate outwards to include all around them.

In order to settle a serious conflict of views, parents must first try to talk matters over honestly, and acquire the habit of discussing : thoroughly the various causes of the dispute. In certain cases, marriage guidance counsellors can help to effect a reconciliation and prevent a divorce, an eventuality-feared daily by many children.

Should the differences of opinion prove so wide that it is impossible to maintain a congenial atmosphere, and there is no other solution but a separation, the least the parents can do is to make sure that they do not force the children to take sides. The two parental 'superpowers' must not

use their children as pawns in their war games, or even make them the ultimate 'weapon', as sometimes happens.

Children's reactions in face of the tragic breakup of their home depends on the parents' attitude. Separation is always a painful matter, but if the parents show the child that there are ways for him or her to maintain a relationship with them, he or she will understand and accept the new situation better, despite the suffering caused. Should the child be forced to turn its back on one of the parents, usually the father, and should the absent and guilty father then be held in accusation, the child is being impelled towards self-destruction. This stems from the fact that there is a mechanism present in children which causes them to feel that they are to blame for their parents' shortcomings. Over and above this, children are often stifled by the smothering affection of one parent in compensation for the absence of the other, and as a result become overly shy and emotional.

Single-parent families

- . In the English-speaking Caribbean, one third of families are headed by women.
- . In Venezuela, 25 per cent of families survive on the wife's wages.
- . In the United States, 15 per cent of families are headed by women.
- . In the United Kingdom, 600,000 families are headed by an unmarried mother.
- . In Sweden, 40 per cent of the children have an unmarried mother; 37.7 per cent in Denmark.

(Human Rights: Jordanhill Project in International Understanding, Jordanhill College of Education, Glasgow, Scotland, 1982, p. 62)

Some societies, which are based on patrilineal or matrilineal filiation and which have preserved traditional family structures, seem better able, in cases of divorce, to maintain the continuity of the child's education and emotional security.

In Senegal, when there is a separation, if the father has custody of the children, it is usually the paternal aunt, grandmother, or even great-aunt who moves into the home to help the father maintain the continuity and security of the household. With this end in view, the parent who has custody of the children is often obliged by the family to remarry.

In cases where the custody of the children is entrusted to the wife, it is her father, brothers or nearest cousins who come to her aid.

2. Relations between parents and children

It can happen that parents convey the impression of being a happy couple, but that their shared adult selfishness and lack of understanding of

their own children drive a wedge between them and their offspring. Regardless of whether or not this rift takes the form of a conflict, it is invariably damaging to the children and results in a yawning gap of mutual incomprehension.

The present century is said to be the 'Century of the Child', and we have indeed witnessed a decrease in the severity of educational methods and an effort to understand the child, due in particular to the development of the main areas of scientific study of children, i.e. paediatrics, psychology and education.

The fact remains, however, that physical violence against children is as rampant as ever, as indicated by damning statistics. The situation is so bad that some countries in northern Europe have introduced legislation outlawing all forms of corporal punishment within the family. This follows the prohibition of corporal punishment in state schools in a large number of countries. The hypothesis underlying these measures is that even a light slap can start a spiral of violence and undermine the dignity of the individual.

In Belgium, as in a number of other countries, any primary-school teacher who inflicts corporal punishment on a child in his or her care is liable to immediate dismissal.

Even in cases where physical cruelty does not actually cause the death of the child, it can lead not only to permanent disablement, but also to behavioural and psychological damage, and the younger the child, the more difficult it is to repair that damage.

... Kempe, some years ago, estimated that abuse in pre-school children in the United States occurred at the rate of about 6 per 1,000 live births and in schoolchildren at about 40 per 100,000 school-age children. Oliver, working in one county in the United Kingdom, found that maltreated cases topped 8 per 1,000 children under 12 years in 1973, a figure comparable with that of Light from Harvard, United States, in the same year, who estimated 1 per cent of children under 18 years are victims each year. Chesser, in the United Kingdom as long ago as 1951, estimated 1 per cent of children under 15 years are abused each year. Projections by Oliver reached a figure of not less than 4 per cent of children under 12 years will be ill-treated at some time in their childhood and Chesser's comparable figure was 6 or 7 per cent. When abuse is recognized it can often be shown that the child has been abused over months or years.

...

In reported groups of abused children the death rate has varied from 6-28 per cent. Naturally it depends upon the criteria : for diagnosis, the earlier this occurs and the more effective the management, the lower the death rate will be. It is clear that many children who are killed by inflicted injury do not appear on the statistics for homicide or even for accident. Some die of unknown or 'mysterious' causes, some from poisoning where it is notoriously difficult to obtain a clear history, or from 'cot death', and in others infection may play a part in the terminal stages and this then appears on the death certificate.

The rate of permanent sequelae is high in all studies published. Commonest are neurological defects resulting in varying degrees of cerebral palsy, mental subnormality, impaired vision, hyperactivity or clumsiness. Deformed joints and various severe scars also occur. Learning difficulties, speech disorders and behaviour problems are common later on although whether they result from the injury, or from the persisting adverse environment, may be hard to determine. From these figures it will be seen that child abuse is a common disorder, and that it is highly dangerous and damaging to children, physically, mentally and emotionally. Due to the nature of the problem, statistics are unreliable just as they are in other socially unacceptable forms of behaviour such as drug abuse, alcoholism, homosexuality and delinquency.

...

in 'The Causes and Prevention of
Child Abuse'

Council of Europe
Strasbourg 1979

It is difficult to imagine all the groundless fears that are liable to inhabit the mind of children, nor can we guess how they gradually sap their energy and destroy them, for fear is a particularly paralysing and alienating emotion.

In a survey conducted in Belgium and the Central African Republic, children in the 6-12 age-group were asked to imagine what the characters depicted in Picasso's 'Ring of Peace' were actually saying.

The frequency with which the word 'afraid' occurred was striking:

'Let's dance together, for today, my friends, we are no longer afraid'

When children express what the word 'peace' means for them, it often means freedom from fear.

'It means shutting the door quickly to be alone with Mummy and not to be afraid of hearing Daddy when he starts shouting'.

'It means going back to Greece on holiday whenever we want and without being afraid'.

For example, in Western society, parents are quite aware of the condemnation of corporal punishment by the media, teachers and child guidance experts. Since parents are anxious to avoid being accused or even suspected of inflicting cruelty on their children, there is now a resurgence of highly traumatic punishments which leave no visible traces: the child is locked in a cupboard for long periods, left alone in an empty house, given a nickname that is humiliating, and so on. Many, many children are constantly addressed with a degrading adjective such as 'stupid', 'useless', 'revolting', and even worse.

There are indeed many kinds of mental cruelty. Sometimes it appears in a subtle, and even unconscious form, e.g. a marked preference is shown for

one child who is constantly the centre of attention, to the detriment of the other children, or, on the contrary, one child is singled out as the butt of constant humiliation. This may lead to the development of feelings of insecurity resulting in withdrawn behaviour, aggressiveness or a desire to attract attention at all costs, coupled with a lack of self-confidence which hinders the ability to communicate.

Professor Origlia, a psychologist at the University of Milan, describes the case of two small brothers. The parents were delighted when the elder was born, for they had been looking forward to the birth of a boy. Since, in addition, the boy was extremely bright, he was admired and praised beyond measure. As for the second brother, he was a disappointment from the moment he was born. Not only had the parents been hoping this time for a girl, but the boy was apparently less brilliant than his elder brother. He was subject to unfavourable comparisons, spent an almost solitary childhood under a cloud, and was ; finally able to assert himself only during adolescence.

Parents' egocentricity, excessive demands and determination to make their child resemble them or fulfil their own dreams cause them to violate their children's personality and deny their separate identity. Even very small children like to be consulted about matters concerning them personally, e.g. the colour of their clothes, hairstyle, the food they eat or their choice of toys.

In countries where dress is no longer dictated by tradition but follows the more or less stringent demands of fashion, a child who is clothed according to the outmoded tastes of his mother may become the laughing-stock of a group or suffer a cruel rejection by it, suffering considerable anxiety, humiliation and bitterness as a result. Indeed, no matter what the group's or society's level of tolerance, children often establish distinguishing standards to which they feel compelled to conform, however bizarre they may appear.

Another form of violence against children is the pressure brought to bear on them. Although, in many countries, economic development has enabled society to alleviate or prohibit the use of children for heavy labour, other burdens are sometimes imposed on them. In some countries, a child works longer hours at school than an adult in the work force, and competition for qualifications has introduced so many physical and moral pressures that the suicide rate of schoolchildren has risen. In many cases, children are obliged to shoulder the burden of their parents' social ambitions from nursery school onwards.

Finally, it should be remembered that poverty is still so severe in certain countries that children are excluded from both school and leisure activities and are forced on to the labour market at a very early age. Some parents even go so far as to 'sell' their children into kinds of work that may well cause serious damage to their physical and mental health. M

Parental abandonment takes many forms, ranging from the most cruel and absolute, to the most frivolous and thoughtless. This is demonstrated by the fact that the number of children's summer camps and day-care centres has increased, and that, even when they have plenty of free time, parents prefer to send their children to such centres.

Besides parental abandonment, we find that excessive permissiveness has sometimes given way to absolute authoritarianism. This in turn triggers a violent attitude towards the parents on the part of the children which does not always remain purely verbal, even in young children. If children are to be given increased freedom, they will need more educational guidance than ever, in view of the fact that freedom entails risks and imposes greater responsibility, as well as rules to be discovered, understood and respected.

For home to be a true haven of peace, children need to feel that they fit harmoniously into it. They need to sense that they are sharing fully in home life and that there is always someone there to support them in their personal endeavours.

It is often difficult to create an atmosphere of harmony within the family on account of unfavourable social and economic conditions; lack of space and time; in some cases, the hectic pace of modern life; in others, material, physical or mental impoverishment. On the other hand, peace is not born of wealth: some countries, although they may not have accumulated great material wealth, are nevertheless well known to be cultures which characteristically treat their children with considerable gentleness and understanding.

As an excuse for abandoning their children too often, parents now tend to say that the quality of the time they spend with their children is more important than the quantity. While it is true that the quality is of paramount importance, and that time ill-spent can by no means be beneficial, one must concede that it is difficult to establish a high-quality relationship if the parents are seldom with their children. Conversely, the better the relationship, the more appeal it holds for both parents and children alike. Accordingly, the desire to be together will be keener, and the amount of time spent together will tend to increase because both sides want it.

If the relationship is a good one, the children will find more scope for self-expression and fulfilment in the presence of their parents. In their turn, the parents will develop more enthusiasm for their role as educators and will try to become more spontaneous, genuine, interesting and resourceful for the benefit of the children they are learning to admire. Peace is therefore built on the mutual exchange that takes place between parents and children, and each individual discovers his or her own identity through a dialogue of hearts and minds.

The atmosphere described above exists all too rarely, and the reason for this is that parents do not know how to listen to what their children are telling them from their earliest infancy onwards. They cannot adequately grasp the child's first messages, nor do they take an interest in his or her personal life, which they see only in the light of their own problems or which they reduce to trivia or material needs. When tradition or narrow-mindedness prompts a parent to tell his child to 'shut up and eat', all possibility for dialogue is eliminated at precisely the moment when a favourable opportunity for family togetherness is present, and the child is belittled by the attitude that his need for physical sustenance is all that matters. To take another example, if the television remains switched on all the time, even when the whole family is together, it constitutes an impersonal intrusion which thoroughly disrupts relations, since these cannot possibly continue in an atmosphere of personal intimacy.

However excellent it may be, the relationship between parents and children is by no means idyllic all the time, but provided that it is good, intense reactions on either side will not disturb the general peace. Parents who know how to control their behaviour while preserving the sincerity and spontaneity of their feelings create favourable conditions within the family for their children to learn peaceable patterns of behaviour.

3. Relations among children

Being extremely lively, free, intimate and regular, relations among siblings tend to unleash extreme attitudes, intense oppositions or complicities. A child's first experience of co-operation or rivalry, jealousy or sharing, takes place in the home.

Age differences lead to the unequal distribution of responsibilities and can give rise to tension.

In Senegal, the eldest son is often invested with overwhelmingly heavy responsibilities. The parents, however, can help by encouraging him to delegate some of his prerogatives to his juniors, in accordance with the Wolof adage, 'When given much, take only a little'. Here we have an example of a way of making the youngest feel important while restraining any urge the eldest may have to dominate the younger ones.

All these different experiences are essential in order to find peace within oneself and in one's personal relationships. If the end result of these discoveries is to prove positive for all concerned, however, the attitude of the parents is quite clearly of prime importance.

If the parents show favouritism, the inevitable consequence will be jealousy and rivalry. Harmony will reign among siblings only if each one feels equally loved and respected. In cases where a child is less gifted in one area, it is the parents' task to ensure that he shines in other fields.

In relations between children, as indeed between any individuals, there may be moments of tension that are inherent in all living, dynamic situations. There are children who adore one another, but who never stop squabbling. When, however, there is an atmosphere of constant tension, it cannot in the long term be conducive to peace, because it will create the habit and the need for a lifetime of conflict. In educating their children, parents should not only help them to find other forms of interaction and other kinds of relationship, but also instil in them a taste for a generally more peaceful atmosphere in which to live.

The arrival of a baby brother or sister can seriously upset the balance of relationships unless the parents are careful to ensure that the older children also look forward to the arrival of the youngest. Parents should foster positive feelings towards the intruder by actively enlisting the 'big children' to help with the 'little ones'. Even before the baby is born, the older children can be asked their opinion as to the colour of the baby's clothes, the arrangement of his or her room, etc. The prime objective is to help the older children to realize what an original and enviable status they have now acquired in the new family constellation.

It is a pity that, for reasons of hygiene, young children are far too often banned from maternity wards. In some cases, the child takes the separation from the mother very badly, and his relationship with the newborn child is tinged with resentment.

By identifying with generous actions cheerfully performed, children can also learn how to share and give what belongs to them. Since conflicts of interest are among the commonest in this world of ours, it is easy to see how parents can make a significant contribution to education for peace.

For example, if a child refuses to eat, it is very ill-advised to threaten that his or her food will be given to another child. If one makes a child obey by an appeal to selfish instincts in this way, one should not be surprised if thereafter this boy or girl shows little inclination to share.

4. Relations in the extended family

Ties of kinship, in the broadest sense, provide children with a wide variety of social relationships. These, by definition, contain an element of intimacy and stability while at the same time affording considerable opportunities for enlarging children's horizons, especially if they live in a narrow, closed family that restricts the scope of the developing personality.

Relations of this kind are sometimes fraught with tension between parental 'clans', or are cemented by unshakeable family solidarity. In view of this, the background of social interrelationships forms a decisive testing ground for the subject that concerns us. The child can inherit distant and ingrained hatreds, or merely feelings of resentment that the parents experienced when they were children and have never been able to overcome. On the other hand, children also experience an immense human fraternity, in which their most distant cousins whom they hardly ever see are surrounded by an aura of supreme attractiveness.

As in other regions of the world, in some Indian areas of Colombia, such as the Guajira, a 'clan' atmosphere reigns in the extended family. From this, the child learns a defensive attitude, as well as all the prejudices of the group to which he belongs.

However, in the region bordering the Atlantic coast, where the extended family includes grandparents, uncles, aunts and cousins, it is quite usual to see children of different fathers and mothers living in the same household. An extremely, if not to say excessively, tolerant attitude reigns as far as children are concerned. As a result, adults from this region are not violent, and the incidence of cruelty, particularly to young children, is much lower than in other parts of Colombia.

Parents have an important role to play as mediators between children and their relatives. They must ensure that these relationships broaden children's social horizon and enlarge their outlook in a positive way, helping them to live life to the full in a wider context.

The gradual disappearance of the extended family means that the scope and variety of the child's relationships is reduced. This has harmful consequences for the child, especially if one or both parents is absent,

separated or deceased. The adoption of the child by a family other than his or her own is often an inadequate replacement for the protective role once played by the extended family. Suddenly cutting a child off from its true biological environment and placing him or her in a new setting sometimes creates conditions that are difficult, especially when the adoption occurs fairly late.

In the extended family, the grandparents usually occupy a privileged position. More often than not, they are the rallying point of the family and they traditionally continue to live in close proximity to their children, even in industrialized countries, as indicated by the figures for Europe. A special bond often grows up between the child and a grandparent, e.g. they may bear the same first name.



Opportunities for contact between grandparents and grandchildren naturally depend on whether there is a possibility of meetings between couples who are bringing up young children and the elderly parents of the former. Contrary to expectation, urban industrial society has not totally succeeded in splitting into isolated nuclear groups the households that make up kinship networks.

In France, the homes of parents and those of their married children are found surprisingly close together. In 'Sociologie de la Famille' (Martine Segala, Colin 1981), we read that 63 per cent of persons questioned live less than 20 km away from their parents, 56 per cent less than 20 km from their in-laws and 51 per cent less than 20 km from their married children.

At a meeting of the International Union of Family Organizations, Dr Walter Wydler gave the following figures: in Germany, three-generation households occur in only 10-12 per cent of cases, but, in most cases, contact with grandparents is very close. According to Ursula Lehr:

62 per cent of all parents in Denmark
69 per cent of all parents in the United Kingdom
65 per cent of all parents in the United States of America
67 per cent of all parents in the Federal Republic of Germany
73 per cent of all parents in Budapest

are in contact with their children almost daily

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Compared to the parents, the grandparents usually have more time and energy to devote to children and can therefore bring some educational continuity into their lives. In some cultures, particularly in Africa, the education of young children is acknowledged to be their special task.

In Africa, grandparents teach young children good habits, familiarity with their close relatives, respect for social values and knowledge of their environment, by means of anecdotes and stories taken from their cultural heritage. They instruct them in religious practices and look after their health. If there are problems with the parents, the child can have recourse to the grandparents who will provide a place of refuge if there is serious conflict.

Through teasing, gentle reprimands, and feigned arguments, the grandparents teach young children how to answer back, defend themselves against unjust accusations and own up to being in the wrong. They thereby smooth the edges of the child's character and make him or her less sensitive or quick to take offence.

The verbal banter traditionally practised between grandparents and grandchildren in Senegal provides a safety valve through which certain aggressive tendencies and sexual taboos can be released. It may be

regarded as a means of toning down any conflicts that exist between persons of the same or the opposite sex, or between the generations.

By virtue of the detachment that comes with age, grandparents are often able to approach problems more dispassionately and indulgently, and are able to show more patience and sympathy. They represent a temporal landmark and help children to find their bearings within the evolution of history and the family. Being more detached from events than they were in their youth, the grandparents are better able to describe them from the point of view of peace and justice. In certain cultures, great importance is attached to the role of older people, for they are deemed to possess experience and wisdom.

In Africa, where oral tradition is still very much alive, the saying goes that when an old person dies, a whole library goes up in smoke.

It is sad to note that in an age when increased life-expectancy allows more children to get to know their grandparents, the latter are sometimes less readily accessible, owing to various social factors, such as geographical distance, a busy working life, or an old-age pension that enables them to spend their free time travelling or engaging in numerous hobbies.

On the other hand, the recent opening of 'senior citizens' universities will, at certain levels of society, bolster the positive image that children have of their grandparents through their evident ability to cast themselves in a new and different role and to take an interest in current issues.

All the same, in some countries there is, unfortunately, an increasing tendency towards segregation of the generations, as more and more old people's homes are opened.

In the United States, there are rules in the villages and areas set aside for senior citizens which exclude children and dogs.

Each generation is nevertheless indispensable to the progress of the others, and education for peace requires that each individual learn to establish good relations with people of all ages. For many reasons there is a definite attraction between young children and older people, and that is why grandparents can play an important part in educating their grandchildren for peace.

The same is generally true of the oldest and youngest members of an extended family.

5 The status and role of parents

In traditional families, the duties and roles of each individual are clearly defined according to age and sex. From earliest childhood, each person learns to accept the duties and responsibilities that go with his or her status in the family. When undisputed, this arrangement imposes order and peace.

In India, domestic peace is based on the fact that the mother and father represent complementary forms of power. The father stands for a potential force which does not operate uniquely in the context of the family, while the mother represents a manifestation of energy within it.

Family roles are no longer so clearly defined, however, owing to various factors: women now go out to work and are increasingly gaining admission to professions traditionally reserved for men; the demand for equal rights and status between the sexes and the ensuing changes in civil law made in many countries; and the various upheavals currently shaking the institution of the family. More and more, family roles are becoming open to individual interpretation and there is a tendency to abolish the differences.

As a result, instability and conflict are on the increase. Domestic peace is no longer guaranteed by stable rules. To an ever greater extent, it is becoming an edifice that people must build together, a balance to be maintained by continual negotiation, agreement and compromise whenever reciprocal concessions and mutual generosity no longer suffice.

On the whole, a passive attitude is not conducive to peace. Not only does it facilitate aggression, but it actively provokes, stimulates and asks for it.

In Senegal, there is a proverb which says 'If you don't want to be walked over, then don't lie down'.

Thus family life today can become more rewarding, as far as education for peace is concerned, if a constructive effort is expected of each family member and if family duties are shared by all.



The interchangeability of family duties makes it more difficult for young children to differentiate between parental roles; however, the sharing of duties and the participation in decisions and negotiations among family members can confirm children's sense of belonging and also give them greater personal autonomy, which in turn should foster domestic peace.

The move to attach greater importance to domestic chores has led to the idea that society ought to provide payment for them. Some parents find it normal to pay their children for carrying out tasks they would otherwise be unwilling to perform. There are, however, legitimate grounds for questioning the value of domestic peace when it is purchased in this way. It is more difficult but more educational to enlist the child's unpaid, generous participation in a task whose purpose is to make everyone more comfortable.

Even if certain tasks continue to be specially reserved for one particular family member - by tradition, or because of ability or personal taste - the essential point, where education for peace is concerned, is that equal dignity should be attached to the duties, roles and status of each individual.

C. Parental models

Biological factors alone cannot account for the fact that children tend to resemble their parents, for it is well known that some adopted children come to bear an astonishing resemblance to their adoptive parents. The reason is that children model themselves on those near them and particularly on those whom they love and admire. They borrow their gestures, bodily postures, facial expressions, tone of voice, etc. Through this identification with those around them, children build their own personality, creating an original amalgam that is infused with life by their personal dynamism.

If the parents' behaviour and outlook are aggressive, the child is also likely to display these traits. If the parents are not very communicative, the child may perhaps fall victim to autism and be very withdrawn.

In the Andes, the country dwellers seldom talk to their children. They are extremely silent people who pass on to their offspring an habitual feeling of mistrust. The personality thus produced is highly introverted, taciturn and apparently docile, but masks a resentment that may suddenly manifest itself through acts of violence.

A child will learn to speak more easily if the parents talk to him or her often and in kindly tones. The more easily the child speaks, the more self-assured he or she will be in communicating, and the more developed his or her powers of forming relationships will be. Many studies have shown the link that often exists between the quality of the educational attitude held by the parents in this respect, and the family's economic and cultural status in society. An effort must be made or sustained to educate parents from social backgrounds where communication with young children is inadequate. There is room for improvement in all quarters. The 'Hourglass Campaign' in Finland is designed to remind parents to spend at least a few minutes every day conversing with their children. It indicates the extent to which the increase in readily available entertainment and the pace of modern life are alarmingly jeopardizing communication between parents and children.

It is through such direct communication, and through all that they hear around them that children absorb the opinions, convictions and prejudices of their family, especially when opinions are expressed vehemently and without discussion. These are precisely the kind of opinions that may run counter to education for peace.

Parents are not always aware of this, for their educational precepts are usually based on lofty moral values, and often parents are extremely strict with their children when it comes to ethical matters. Their educational aims are undermined, however, when the actual example set by the parents contradicts their principles and seems more like an illustration of the adage, 'Don't do as I do, do as I say'.

'Look'! The grocer gave me too much change. I'll take it back to him at once', said the child, whose mother would probably have sharply scolded or punished him if he had been caught stealing. Instead, however, she answered, 'No, don't take it back. He's already robbed us enough as it is' .

The excuses made for bending the rules of justice, honesty or mutual respect can serve only to make these principles seem even more relative in the eyes of youngsters. By using excuses of this kind in order to keep their image intact and avert any suspicion of bad conduct, parents instil in their children the belief that while one should be good, just and honest, there are nevertheless some people who do not deserve such treatment from them. One can see just where this attitude may lead, as far as education for peace is concerned.

D. The family in society

By belonging to a family, the child is also a member of a much wider social milieu: a clan, tribe, caste, social class, religious or political group, etc. All these forms of social division are liable, in varying degrees, to be narrow-minded, intolerant, fanatical or committed to struggles that are more or less violent. This means that, from earliest infancy, the child is more likely to be educated for war than for peace, and one cannot deny that this has always been a common occurrence. Each group naturally finds reasons for its antagonisms, and children are therefore expected to identify themselves with those who set themselves up as the personification par excellence of the good, the just and the true.

Once the need to educate children for a world of peace has been acknowledged, this state of affairs must be changed. The task is one in which each and every family can take part. The existence of ecumenical movements in religion and the quest for a social and political consensus, indicate that there are people all over the world who are anxious to adopt a more open-minded attitude to social issues.

Without a doubt, it is the positive assertion of differences that has brought about the blossoming of the great social and cultural diversity that makes our human heritage so rich. Like individuals, social groups forge their own identity by distinguishing themselves from others. Each village and region enjoys contrasting its specific characteristics with those of its neighbours, but this does not necessarily mean that they express feelings of

superiority (even though they may jokingly pretend to do so) nor, above all, does it suggest feelings of hostility or rejection that can go as far as a desire to kill or exterminate.

What generates intolerance is the assertion of absolute rules or standards. Children are raised in an atmosphere of tolerance if each child can assert his or her tastes and preferences without fear of infringing the un-written rules of the family. By asserting their own personality, they learn at the same time to respect the individuality of the other members of the family. Similarly, education for peace requires that the integration of a child into a social group which possesses its own cultural identity be accompanied by respect for the identity of other groups and acknowledgement of their own intrinsic value.

In an argument with Maxari, Pathè called him a 'dirty Griot'.¹ 'Without the Griot', said Pathè's mother to her son, 'there would be no songs or tom-toms, and you wouldn't know anything about the history of your country' .

Education for peace is more easily achieved when the family is socially receptive to other groups and is able to establish cordial relations with them.

In Senegal, if one moves into a new neighbourhood, one must go around introducing oneself to the neighbours, and when one leaves, one must go around saying goodbye. This gives rise to the saying, 'Whenever you change your address, the number of your friends must go up'.

This openness must extend to the ideas, beliefs and customs of other groups. There are many people who are at ease only when surrounded by those who look and think as they do. They are neither curious about nor drawn to those who are different from themselves, and may even be openly or unconsciously hostile towards them. It would never occur to such people to invite home guests who were not of the same type as themselves. Thus their children have little opportunity to get to know people unlike their parents, or to establish friendly relations with them. On the contrary, many children are forbidden to invite home the caretaker's little girl, for example, or the children of a miner, or friends from school if they happen to be Arabs.

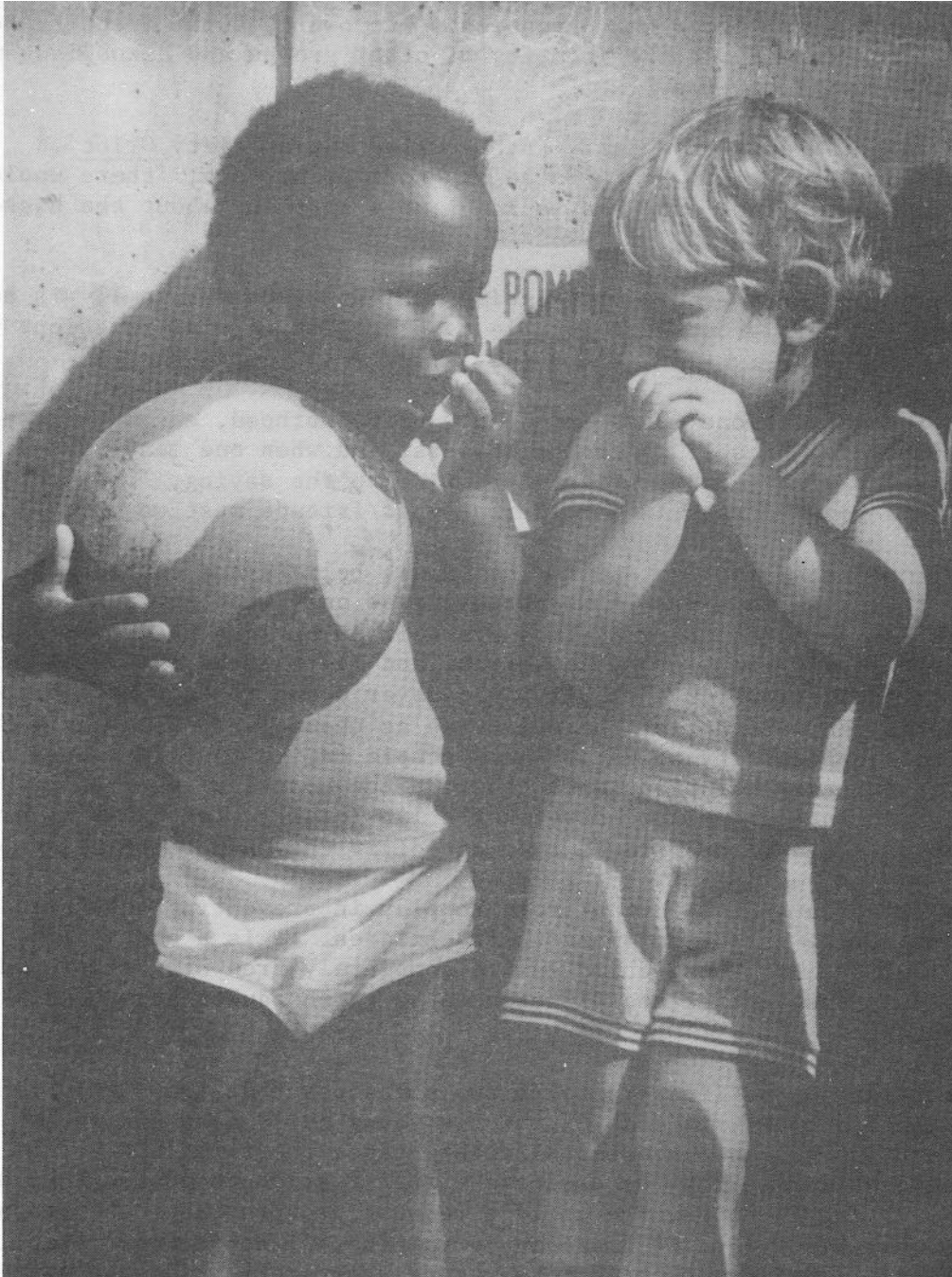
Families have an important role to play in preventing the spread of social or racial prejudice among their children. It is a heavy responsibility, for young children are completely free of such prejudice and often do not even notice the differences to which adults attach such great importance.

Professor Otto Klineberg tells two anecdotes that are highly relevant to this subject, in each of which a young child asks his mother if he can bring home a playmate. Klineberg takes the first story from an incident related by the American writer Pearl Buck at the time when she was living in China. The child's request prompts the mother to ask him whether his friend is American or Chinese. 'I don't know', replies the child, 'I didn't ask him'. The second story takes place in America and begins with the same request. This time the mother wants to know if

1. Griot: a kind of wandering poet/musician in western Africa.

the playmate is black or white. The child answers 'I don't know, I didn't notice'. But this time he adds, 'I'll have a look and tell you'. Whereupon Klineberg comments that this is how racism begins, i.e. we thoughtlessly raise questions that are irrelevant.

Differences exist, and in due course the child may become aware of them. What is the point, however, of drawing his or her attention to differences that have nothing to do with the situation in hand, e.g. playing



with another child? In another context, the texture of a person's hair or the colour of his or her skin may indeed be important, e.g. when it comes to

choosing a hairstyle or buying a dress. Here again, however, we find parents introducing ill-considered discrimination that can have a bearing on other kinds of difference:

Diara has plaited her friend Ngore's hair, in accordance with the custom at the boarding school before important home visits. When Ngore arrives home with a migraine, her mother worriedly asks who has plaited Ngore's hair. On hearing that it was Diara, she screams, 'I've told you time and again: in our family we don't have our hair plaited by someone who works in the jewellery trade'!

Regardless of whether social differences are economic, ethnic, religious or cultural in origin, it is important for the child to approach them in an open-minded, positive spirit, through contact that is as direct as possible. By their choice of school or playgroup, however, or by forbidding their child or playgroup, however, or by forbidding their children from seeing certain friends, parents sometimes try to isolate them from children of lower social rank.

Segregation of this kind can also take place even if families do not actively seek it. Every big city has its rich and its poor neighbourhoods, its council estates and sometimes its shanty towns. This system encourages people living on the same economic level to flock together, and triggers withdrawal and defence mechanisms that make it extremely difficult for truly altruistic social attitudes to flourish.

Age differences should also be perceived in a favourable light. Interaction between the generations is vital to the understanding of the human conditions, in which we all share and to which each generation makes its contribution, affecting not only the next generation but also the one preceding it.

The family also has an important part to play in making sure that any sexual prejudices present in the social setting are not passed on.

Segregation in whatever form leads to incomprehension and antagonism. As a community of people of different ages and sexes, the family can exert a particularly positive social influence in these two fields. Children from happy homes generally take a favourable view of both sexes and do not reject older people.

Clearly, therefore, acknowledging and affirming differences is not simply a matter of passively accepting them. It is only a milestone on the road to greater justice and humanity. By looking beyond the purely outward aspect of a form of equality and justice that is no more than distributive, it generates a greater degree of inner awareness of difference and hence the feeling that each individual has the right to seek and to find himself, and to achieve fulfilment on his own, different terms.

E. Parental availability

We have tried to show how far the parents' role is vital to education for peace, and how the latter depends on the quality of an educational effort that must continue at all times.

The problem of parental availability arises at a time when parents are weighed down with many different tasks and occupations, and when they are very much concerned with their own personal fulfillment and happiness. In big cities in particular, the hours spent at work or in transit leave very little time for parents to devote to their children.

If one adds to the eight-hour working day one hour for transport and one-and-a-half hours for lunch and shopping, working parents are often absent for an average of 10 1/2 hours a day. Roughly one-and-a-half hours remain for them to bath and feed their children and put them to bed, or to talk and play with them. If the parents' working schedule is awkward, the only time they see their children is when the latter are asleep.

Time at parents' disposal is eroded even further by housework, and tiredness at the end of the day prevents them from making the best use of the very little time left over.

Parents who are used to an active social life sometimes find it difficult to give up taking part in clubs and sports associations, or going to parties given by friends. For those who prefer to stay at home, television offers tempting entertainment that comes between parents and children.

Modern life is tending to take parents further and further away from their children. Women are becoming more and more inaccessible to their off-spring, since greater numbers of women go out to work, occupy positions of responsibility and attend political or trade union meetings more regularly. Meanwhile, the children trundle from one type of child-minder to another during the day, before perhaps settling down to an evening under the eye of a local baby-sitter.

One would think that, this being so, the parents' holidays and days off would be particularly precious, in order to compensate for all these absences; but, in fact, the less the parents see of their children, the less they seem to tolerate them. Some parents feel that a holiday with the children is not a real holiday, and so once again they arrange to have the children looked after.

For example, the Club Méditerranée¹ organizes holidays where parents can leave children aged four months and upwards in the care of 'baby clubs' which will look after them from 8 a.m. to 6 p.m.

In countries where a large percentage of the population lives below the poverty line, or in families that inhabit the twilight zones of big cities all over the world, a great many young children are deprived of communication with their parents for other reasons. More often than not, their parents have neither the time nor the energy to devote to the education of their children. In many cases, brothers and sisters who are scarcely older than the children themselves are expected to look after them, and when the older children start going to school, the younger ones find themselves even more abandoned.

Provided that the mother's work permits it, the traditional custom of carrying her youngest baby on her back means that, instead of suffering

1. A holiday operators

from abandonment, the child is thus guaranteed the security of intimate contact with its mother.

Poverty is sometimes so extreme that the parents are forced to exploit even the youngest of their children by making them work or, frequently, by sending them out begging.

In these highly disparate social contexts, young children suffer universally - often to an extreme degree - from the lack of the parents' educative presence. Since the problem involves the way in which work and society are organized, it can be solved only with the help of the public authorities. Labour legislation, welfare facilities and laws favouring a more equitable distribution of wealth among a country's inhabitants should constitute a legal framework within which more attention can be paid to educational needs of young children.

In some countries, there are laws which enable women, and sometimes both parents, to take paid leave or to work part time in order to educate their offspring. In some cases, however, parents do not take advantage of them because they are distracted by material needs or professional ambitions that are excessive or because they occupy positions of considerable responsibility.

Adult working hours should be organized to make greater allowance for the educational responsibilities of parents. Some government departments and private companies have experimented with 'flexitime', a system which allows each individual to fit his working hours around his various obligations. The experiment has proved satisfactory for all concerned and deserves to be more widely adopted. The need to reconcile family obligations and professional activities has brought the renewed popularity of part-time work and working at home, even though the latter deprives adults of the pleasure of daily professional contact with other people. The expansion of computer technology should make it possible to find new forms of participation in the work force which do not take parents away from their children.

However, economic, legislative and administrative advances, in whatever shape or form, will remain without effect unless they are backed by the parents' personal interest in their children's education. This may be seen in the case of the parents' increased leisure time, which is not always of benefit to the children and often serves only to upset the regularity of their lives.

In France, nursery-school teachers often complain of the irritable and over-excited mood in which the children arrive on Mondays, having been greatly disturbed by the work-free weekend.

If organized for the benefit and pleasure of all concerned, leisure time can greatly enhance family harmony.

For example, a family camping holiday not only suits those on a tight budget but also clears the way for human relations that are simpler, more direct and more intimate. The parents also have an opportunity to teach the child how to be more at home in a natural environment.

A holiday atmosphere can also be created in everyday life when people can laugh, sing, dance and play together as a family. Gaiety stabilizes the entire household, and a cheerful disposition usually makes for a peaceable person. There are times when one should know how to cast off everyday worries and arrange for a joyful period of relaxation. There are far too many parents who are capable only of scolding their children during the rare moments they spend with them.

The celebration of public holidays is also a factor contributing to family and social integration, provided that it is not distorted by over-commercialization and that its deeper significance is made clear to the child. Such celebrations foster the awareness of cultural identity, and develop social memory as well as the cohesiveness of the group.

It is a pity that some parents are losing the habit of telling stories to children. This is an exciting, eagerly-awaited time, when relationships can be formed at a very deep level, especially when one draws on the cultural wealth built up by tradition over the centuries. Parents tend far too often to think that children are likely to be interested only in puerile little tales, whereas they are in fact much more demanding. Spiritual nourishment of the highest calibre will establish the best relationship with them and most effectively prepare them for peace.

F. Teaching parents to educate their children for peace

Since the parents' role is vital, it is important to teach them to fulfil it properly.

Schools for parents, where they exist, have an important task to accomplish in this respect, but many social services could also help to inform and sensitize parents.

Planned parenthood does not always guarantee a warm welcome for the new-born child, for many social pressures are brought to bear either to increase or to limit the number of births. In such cases, a financial reward or penalty accompanies the arrival of the newly born.

In China today, the government is making efforts to stop the murder of baby girls, a consequence of legislation aimed at dissuading families from having more than one child; this indicates the urgent need to educate families.

Town-planning departments have created 'community precincts' in which children and adults from the same district or neighbourhood can get together to share their activities and leisure time, or to launch joint enterprises. This is intended to encourage a willingness to meet and help other members of the community, and to relieve the isolation of some families.



For example, the pre-school centres in France and Belgium are an innovative experiment whereby various departments and institutions are joining forces in an attempt to meet the whole range of needs of young children. The centres could play a central part in running the community precincts and could prevent the segregation of adults and children.

By and large, establishments for pre-school education, which can perform their task adequately only if they work in close collaboration with families, can also be extremely useful in training parents for education for peace. These establishments can act in several different ways. They can:

Sensitize parents to the question of world peace by providing them with reference material, e.g. books, magazines, films, television programmes, children's books, etc.

In France, when parents were encouraged to take an interest in a TV programme entitled 'Children of the World', children were moved to suggest that a further programme be made, entitled 'Parents of the World'.

Encourage people to rally round when the family of a child, from the pre-school establishment or elsewhere, falls victim to misfortune or accident.

Develop a multicultural approach to education, in cases where the establishment has an intake of children from different cultural backgrounds, and encourage parents to take part in the festivals and cultural events organized by the various social groups.

When the cultural environment is homogeneous, a bier multi-cultural dimension can be introduced by twinning nursery schools in different parts of the country (a scheme launched in Senegal), in countries which share a common frontier (e.g. northern France and Belgium, Alsace and Germany) or in countries farther apart (e.g. France and Lebanon).

Enhance the social status of each family, especially the occupations of the father and mother, by encouraging all the children in a particular group to take an interest in these things.

As a result of industrial development, children are now unable to observe or understand the work of adults. By inviting mothers and fathers to give talks about their work, or by organizing a visit to their workshop or office, it is possible to reforge the links between the children and the father, who is all too often absent.

In the case of migrant workers, talking about the work of a ~~far~~ father is one means of making the father seem slightly less absent. Meanwhile, parents who are unemployed can use their time to become more closely involved in the activities of the pre-school establishment.

Organize meetings to discuss the effect on children of the problems that cause dissension among adults in the community.

Organize discussions on the problems caused by children in general.

All these group discussions help parents to be more self-aware, talk more easily to their children, recognize mistakes and overcome feelings of guilt.

At present, especially in Third World countries, new experiments in pre-school education are emerging which either involve extensive family and community participation or are combined with programmes aimed at educating the parents.

By fostering interaction between parents (mainly mothers) and young children, such programmes can have a beneficial effect as far as education for peace is concerned. Too often, programmes are too exclusively focused on cognitive and psycho-motor stimulation; instead they could widen their scope by explicitly aiming at an increased awareness of education for peace on the part of the parents.

Television programmes to educate parents can be extremely effective, especially if an effort is made to keep them lively and straightforward.

In Finland, educational messages intended to improve communication between parents and children are televised in the form of brief flashes which have all the appeal of a highly popular advertisement and are couched in punch language that everyone can understand.

Recent studies on unweaned infants reveal the importance of the communication that is immediately established with the mother (or surrogate mother), and thereafter with those in the baby's immediate vicinity, through the extensive use of body language and eye contact, and the charm of voices. It is through this kind of communication that the new-born child's consciousness is awakened and he or she becomes part of the family.

Helping to create a peaceful home means preparing parents to give as good a reception as they can to the as-yet unborn child, so that its integration into the family is as successful as possible. The happier the awakening of the child's consciousness, the more lovable the child will be and the more enthusiasm the parents will show for his or her education. Provided that one knows how to 'listen' to children, even if they cannot yet talk, and speak to them in kindly tones (which does not rule out firmness), one can from the very beginning establish a deep level of communication, without which it is impossible to maintain peace for very long between people living in close contact.

Since every child has a drive towards growth and a capacity for receptiveness, home life will be completely fulfilling for the child only if it serves as a springboard for access to the outside world, which alone can reveal to children the full scope of their human identity.

While there are ways and means of training parents in education for peace, it is certain that no method is infallible. No adviser should inter-vene between parents and children, for communication is much more effective when those concerned are able to rely on their natural reactions, spontaneity and intuition. Even mistakes can be set right when parents are able to acknowledge them, thus indicating that it is not always the same person who has to be right every time. So children come to realize that disagreements are not the end of the world and that love can always return.

CHAPTER II

The role of educational establishments in promoting peace

A. Community life, an area of possible conflict

Changing concept of pre-school education

The concept of pre-school education as reflected by both research findings and national social policies has been fast changing. Until recently it was mainly seen as a downward extension of formal primary education. There is increasing realization that this view of pre-school education is too narrow and incomplete. The basic principles of pre-school education have in the past derived their main inspiration from developmental psychology; now increasingly the emphasis is shifting to a broader sociological approach, to include the child in the family and society. The stress is on flexibility of structures, on community participation and, above all, on the critical role of the family, particularly the mother, as the single most important mediator of the child's environment at this stage. As such pre-school education is no longer seen as schooling for the 4-6 (or any other similar) age-group but re-defined to cover the entire range of activities which contribute to the all-round development of the young child from conception to the commencement of formal schooling. A more appropriate terminology for such activities would be 'Early Childhood Care and Education'.

Excerpt from the Final Report of
the International Consultation on
Pre-school Education, Unesco,
Paris, 23-27 November 1981

1. Starting to attend a pre-school establishment

In the family life of any young child, there is no lack of opportunities for conflict, and the child himself will not shy away from provoking them.

His entry into a pre-school establishment will engender still more conflicts, for the following reasons: there is a higher density of children than in the family:

there is a lower percentage of adults or older children, who are usually prepared to make concessions;

it is a more 'foreign' environment indeed, totally foreign for children of immigrants -which triggers varying degrees of fear;

lack of experience of community life causes anti-social behaviour in young children.

Growth of pre-school enrolment
from 1975 to 1980

Enrolments expressed as a percentage of the population aged 3-5 years (excluding China and the Democratic People's Republic of Korea)

15.1-17.1%	worldwide
63.6-73%	Europe and USSR
46.9-49.4%	North America
9.6-13.9%	Latin America
5.8- 7%	Arab States
4.1- 6.1%	Asia
1.7- 2.1%	Africa

(ST/STE/PRESCH, October 1981, Unesco)

This explains why the massive influx of children into certain pre-school establishments at the beginning of the school year leads to violent displays of aggression and to panic-stricken or desperate behaviour whenever the family and the pre-school establishment have not worked closely together to prepare the children for their earliest days at school.

Many parents thoughtlessly threaten their children by saying:

'If you don't behave yourself, I'll send you to nursery school'.

'At school, they'll teach you to do as you're told'.

'I'll send you away to boarding school'.

'If you go on hitting your little brother, I'll take you to school and leave you there'.

After which it is hardly surprising that the child is a prey to all sorts of fears when he first goes to school.

This excessively aggressive atmosphere can sometimes have highly dangerous consequences. The ability to enter a new environment with an open, lively and optimistic attitude devoid of undue fear is an important thing to be learned by those who are to be future peace-makers. The preparation of young children for their first days at the day nursery or at nursery school therefore provides an excellent opportunity of educating them for peace.

Parents should present the child's entry into nursery school or a play-group as a real step up in the world:

'When you're big, you'll go to school'.

'Now that you're big, you'll be able to go to school'.

The preparations for the first day at school, which may include buying clothes, a satchel, coloured crayons, etc., helps to present the child's entry into community life in a positive light.

For an only child who has never left his or her mother and is unused to the company of other children, the first day at school should be regarded as particularly beneficial; but it also runs the risk of being extremely frightening. The eldest child is also faced with a difficult task, for in his or her case, everything is new, whereas younger brothers and sisters will have plenty of time to become familiar with the school buildings, smells and colours, and also the staff by going with their mother to take the older children to school and collect them at the end of the day.

In the case of older children, it is advisable to explore with them the route that they will take to and from school, in order to prevent any anxiety that may arise from being isolated in a place without connections with the familiar world.

Another good idea is to let children watch the joyful reunions that take place with parents at the end of the school day, so that they know that school is a place that one not only enters but also leaves in order to go quietly home.



*Another good idea is to watch the joyful reunion
... at the end of the school day ...*

The child will thus be able to picture the happy ending to his first day at school, and many feelings of panic and abandonment will be avoided.

The first few days at school will be completely peaceful and happy only if the pre-school establishments have also played their part in preparing the children. It is particularly necessary to prepare the ground in the case of establishments which operate like schools, i.e. with a massive influx of new children on the first day.

We find this in the case of pre-school classes that belong to an education system or prepare for entry to primary school.

A system of 'staggering' the return to school makes it possible to welcome the children in small groups, and, if the school day is long, perhaps to reduce it somewhat.

Taken in isolation, such measures to improve flexibility are insufficient: preliminary contact with life at the establishment in question, accompanied by the mother and if possible by both parents, is the best way of establishing a link between the family and future life at the school and allaying doubts and fears, or, at least, attenuating them considerably.

In countries where the school year begins in autumn, such a visit will usually take place before the summer holidays, a time when the children already at the nursery school are most at ease and most likely to extend a warm welcome to visitors. Should the visit prove highly positive and attractive, the child will have plenty of time for the desire to go to nursery school to grow stronger.

By spending an entire day at the future school with his or her mother, the child will have a chance to try out all the different places there, to experience the most awkward moments, and to test the toilets and the beds, as well as the toys and all the rest of the equipment. Later, the parents will be able to remember the day's visit and picture their children's activities, a point that is as reassuring for the parents as it is for the children. Indeed, it is very difficult for any child to be at ease who senses that the parents themselves are not totally happy with the situation.

A preliminary visit to the nursery school while it is in session is particularly important for immigrant parents (who perhaps never went to school themselves, who may never have seen a pre-school establishment in their own country, or who have experience of a completely different kind of school). It will be easier for the child of a migrant worker to become assimilated into the school if a link with the family is established from the moment the child is enrolled. This will prevent a good deal of suffering that finds expression through refusal to co-operate and aggressive behaviour.

Even though a pre-school establishment is itself a potential place of conflict, it can, by being more neutral, dispassionate and distant than the family environment, bring relief to children who are suffering from serious family strife.

Juan Pablo's parents are divorced. He never sees his father and only ever hears bad things about him. Since his mother goes out to work, he is looked after by his grandmother (who does not like him). On entering nursery school, Juan Pablo acts aggressively, distrusts everyone, hits and bites the other children, and displays rude, threatening behaviour towards the teacher. Thanks to the teacher's understanding attitude and the atmosphere at the school, Juan Pablo gradually forgets his fear and distrust, and adjusts to the group. He becomes a cheerful, happy child at least during the hours he spends at the nursery school.

Another typical example is that of a little girl living in Dakar who used to cry on Monday mornings when her mother left her at the nursery school, but who thereafter was most unwilling to leave except when her mother came to collect her at the end of the week. During the week, the girl lived with her paternal aunt who was not at all kind to her, so that the nursery school became for her a source of relief from her everyday problems.

The pre-school establishment is not only a more neutral environment than the family, but often provides a wider social context for the child. It is easier for the child to cope with, because the motivations of other children seem more comprehensible than those of adults. Hence, if suitably organized, it can become an extremely fertile testing ground for social experiments in education for peace.

One of the main goals of education for peace is to help each individual to acquire the ability to resolve conflicts in a peaceful way; accordingly conflicts with well-matched peers, are an excellent means of learning how to do this.

For example, in a conflict with an elder brother, the young child will fear his brother's strength or will fear being reported by him to the parents. For safety's sake, he is obliged to give in, but may subsequently harbour feelings of resentment.

Conflict with a peer means that the dialogue, however heated, takes place on an equal footing. Once the abuse and the fighting are over, each party feels a sense of release, and reconciliation comes all the more easily.

Whether or not they are present, however, adults exert such a powerful influence that in some cases quarrels between children are so strongly affected by it that the children are incapable of finding a positive solution to their differences.

2. The origins of conflicts

If we examine the origins of the conflicts that occur in a community of young children, it becomes clear that conflict is in some instances caused by the attitude of adults:

- (i) Overt or latent racism as expressed by parents or teachers: even when it is not overt, young children are keenly aware of the attitude of rejection.

Remarks made by the staff reveal their prejudice, e.g. the following comment by a teacher's helper, 'He's got little paws, you can see he doesn't eat like us'.

In a class of children aged 4 and 5, the wedding of the little Prince to the golden-haired Princess is being acted out. As the children are fetching the props they will need for the roles they have chosen, the teacher says to one little girl, 'you can't be the Princess, not with your black hair. Choose something else'.

(ii) Enmity or rivalry pervading the general atmosphere or in the pre-school establishment.

Rivalry can be artificially induced when teachers stimulate activity using techniques which create a climate of competition between children. Generally speaking, however, care is taken in nursery schools to ensure that fairness prevails, and enmity is more likely to originate in the general atmosphere.

One day, a black child arrived at an institution where abandoned children living on the streets were deposited by the police. The population of Bogota is almost exclusively composed of whites and of people of mixed white and Indian origin. Although they were themselves the target of hostility from the rest of society, the 'nippers' (the nickname given to the street urchins of Bogota) in the institution did not take at all kindly to the black child, and were as suspicious of him as the adults were.

(iii) Overt or ill-concealed favouritism towards certain children.

Although less intense than in families, feelings of jealousy can also arise at school, directed towards children who are too often chosen by the teacher to play roles in which they can shine. For the sake of convenience, adults often tend to rely on the brighter child, although by delegating responsibility to a slower, shyer child they could help the latter to become more self-assured.

Some very affectionate children will spontaneously embrace the teacher. If she accepts this, but does not take pains to encourage the more reserved children, these may feel less well liked.

Although teachers usually think that they treat children all alike, the fact that they often look towards and expect much from those who bring the class to life is perceived by the others as a marked preference.

(iv) Categorical judgements expressed by adults.

An adult who accuses a child of being 'naughty' or 'lazy' fixes upon him the latent hostility of the group through identification with the adult. This merely serves to exacerbate the child's problem as manifested by his aggressiveness, indolence, or withdrawn attitude. It is preferable to seek the causes of his behaviour, and to try to remedy these.

(v) Personal projections which tend to under-or over-value certain kinds of child.

Teachers may be influenced by memories of their own childhood or by the image of their own children.

A young teacher had a dislike of placid children because, as a child, she had never been placid herself.

Memories of elder brothers and sisters who attended the same nursery school previously tend to be projected on to their younger siblings.

'Your brother would never have done that'!

'And to think how nice your sister was'!

Parents also project personal feelings which may have an under-~~er~~ over-valuing effect.

'What a lovely house! Is that where your friend lives?

He must be very nice'! said the admiring mother.

(vi) Recommendations to children.

Since they feel that they have made the best choice for their children, parents are not particularly pleased when they wish to try out other children's belongings. As a result, the advice given by parents does not foster the spirit of sharing.

'Don't lend your eraser'.

'Don't swop your tea-time snack'.

Anxious to see that their child has only 'nice' friends, parents introduce forms of discrimination that are a source of rivalry.

'Don't play with so-and-so'.

'Don't hold hands with Arab children'.

Resentment can arise as a result of certain educational methods which have not yet completely disappeared, and which encourage children to tell tales on one another.

'Keep your eyes open, and tell me who has been naughty'.

(vii) Parental ostentatiousness: children are overwhelmed with toys and sweetmeats.

By showering toys and candies on their children, some parents are often merely trying to compensate for the time, and even the affection, that they do not give them. Others do so because they enjoy being ostentatious.

There is no doubt that items brought from home can help to increase a child's prestige and, especially during the first few days at school, make him or her feel more secure. They also help to establish a continuous link with the family environment and focus interest on the children's contributions.

If teachers are not careful, however, this can in some cases engender feelings of envy, highlight social differences, and lead to a form of competition between families.

Some mothers on a low income tend to buy expensive, bulky ~~time~~ snacks in order to demonstrate that they do not skimp on their children's food, or because their children want to have the same as their envied schoolmates, whereas in fact a smaller homemade snack might be much better for them.

(viii) Opinions concerning social status.

These can have serious consequences if they are disparaging.

A child whose mother was the caretaker and cleaning lady at a nursery school in Belgium came to feel great resentment against the teacher and the other children because he sensed that his mother was looked down upon. In the end, he simply refused to go to school. The following year, enrolled in a different school, he overcame this first, unfortunate experience, and found happiness and fulfilment.

Opinions expressing approval can also create undesirable differences.

Alexander, aged 3, arrives at school in new and very attractive new clothes. 'Oh', says the teacher, 'how smart Alexander looks today'! One of the other children draws near and the contrast between the two children's clothes becomes striking. Quickly, the teacher adds, 'Frank looks nice today, too. You're two smart children'. Their faces light up with the same smile full of complicity.

(ix) passivity of teachers

A climate of anarchy is created if parents or teachers do not fulfil their role as regulator or arbitrator, if they tend not to interfere or if they are unable to preserve a reassuring atmosphere through their vigilant and kindly presence; and when anarchy reigns, the children with the most domineering personalities tend to impose their will by force.

With the exception of conflicts sparked by destructive adult attitudes, the minor skirmishes between children are natural and even beneficial, in the sense that conflicts must take place if children are to gain practice in resolving them. Indeed, it would seem that some children deliberately engineer quarrels for their sheer experimental value.

Teachers must therefore be able to view these minor conflicts in a positive light, and see in them an opportunity for developing education for peace.

In a country such as Colombia, where children who attend nursery school are in the minority, one of the most striking differences between these children and those who go straight to primary school is their ability to join a group and establish good relations with other children. Preschool education helps the child to overcome fears and master aggressiveness, both of which often stem from the situation prevailing at home. The child learns techniques of adapting which enable him or her to develop a more peaceable attitude.

3. Resolving conflicts

Some adults cannot tolerate quarrels between children. A repressive, reproachful, anxious or melodramatic attitude does not help the children and is likely to stir up more angry feelings, whereas, left to themselves, squabbles between children are usually resolved very quickly.

If children are punished indiscriminately every time they argue or fight, they will tend to settle their differences behind their parents' backs, in which case the strongest wins. It does not help to react to tension between children by displaying equal tension oneself. The desire to dispense justice at any price, even when the origins of the conflict are unknown, leads to injustices which make the situation worse. Forcing children to 'kiss and make up' when they have no wish to do so is false and artificial, and does not resolve anything.

In the world of the child, an aggressive attitude may in fact be a manifestation of the desire for contact. Quarrels are a form of relationship, and it is common to see children who are inseparable fighting all the time. At the pre-school age, body language is very strong, so that, in many cases, fights also offer the advantage of providing a somewhat violent form of communication. One must be careful, therefore, to distinguish between real and simulated fights.

Children are often heard to say:

'Let's play at fighting'.

'Let's pretend to have a battle'.

All games involving struggle come under this heading.

They serve primarily as a test of strength.

Roughhouses are usually started as a game, and some simulated conflicts are uniquely aimed at attracting the attention of adults or even of annoying them.

Many children considered to be 'aggressive' have not in fact found an alternative way of expressing their need for contact and affection. A patient, understanding and affectionate attitude towards them can help them find other ways of relating to people.

How can teachers who know how to deal with children's conflicts in a positive way use this ability in the cause of education for peace? Should they intervene? Should they leave the children alone? Is leaving them alone in itself a form of intervention or tacit approval?

There are no hard and fast rules on this point. It is entirely a matter of assessing the situation and knowing the children. In some cases, it is better to turn a blind eye to the conflict, while remaining on one's guard and thinking about what can be done subsequently to improve relations. Should a serious fight break out, one must intervene, but here again, it is only through one's assessment of the situation that one can do so with the necessary adroitness.

If an atmosphere of general aggressiveness tends to prevail, it may be because the children's energy is not being sufficiently channelled towards positive ends, and the best way of intervening is to step up their activities, by making them more interesting and exciting. It may also be because the presence of the adult is too distant, thus creating a general feeling of insecurity. In such cases, the teacher should become more closely involved in the life-situations experienced by the children.

Entering the conflict by taking sides or by passing emotional judgement on one of the protagonists gives a blatant bias to the pattern of forces present.

Peace may best be achieved if the feeling prevails that the conflict has been resolved in the fairest possible way. An unfair solution will leave the person who considers himself or herself to be the injured party feeling resentful. Children, may, however, disagree with adults as to what constitutes a fair solution. The best idea is to launch a discussion of the conflict or argument, trying to bring the facts into perspective and encouraging the antagonists themselves to seek possibilities for agreement.

Asking for the ideas and opinions of the group may prove to be a good means of approaching the problems more objectively, and of making the group more aware and more responsible in the field of relationships. This is desirable, however, only in a non-passionate atmosphere and in cases which could apply to all, otherwise certain children will feel that the teacher is making an example of them. Respect for each individual demands that personal conflicts remain private and that an isolated individual not be exposed to general censure, however guilty he may appear to be.

Social prejudice often plays a part in the way adults intervene. For example, in Senegal, when a girl and boy argue or fight, some people will say to the boy,

'You ought to be ashamed of yourself for fighting with a girl',

while others will reprimand the girl's rashness:

'It isn't done for a girl to fight with a boy'.

Adults will not help their children in this respect if they attempt to resolve the children's conflicts for them, and by taking sides with their children, adults may even end up quarrelling among themselves'

Sami is an extremely bellicose child. When Jihad comes home with an injury, his parents forbid him to play with Sami and quarrel with his family. The next day, the two children have forgotten the past and go back to their usual games.

Careful observation indicates that young children know how to share and take turns with toys, and that, in almost every instance, they tend to do so fairly. If a child refuses to accept the rules of the game, the most important role of the adult is to show the child how the rules work and what their advantages are.

There may be cases, however, in which adult intervention is necessary, e.g. if a child is violently and dangerously attacked by another child or by a group.

For example, a physically weak child who runs away from violent children can become an easy victim by providing a focal point for their aggressiveness.

In a case such as this, there is a need for urgent intervention to protect the child, and, moreover, there is probably an even greater need for continuous, long-term action.

One must therefore inquire into the meaning of such actions when a child is rejected, despised, victimized, envied, handicapped, overly aggressive, etc. The teacher must take a fresh look at his own relations, and those of other adults, with the children in question, as well as relations among the children themselves, and must undertake long-term action to ensure that the unpopular child is more highly valued, the inhibited child gains self-confidence, the aggressive child expresses himself in more positive ways, etc.

Adult intervention can thus be indirect by aiming at the deeper sources of conflict and, ultimately, fostering less aggressive behaviour.

It is often children who are 'different', i.e. of a different race, handicapped, or in different circumstances (orphaned, adopted or fostered) who are rejected by the group, while it is important to avoid drawing attention to an unseen difference, if being different leads to rejection or even merely to surprise and curiosity, the whole class should discuss the matter either in the presence or in the absence of the child concerned.

At a nursery school, a child from a fairground was rejected. The teacher encouraged the children to take an interest in the life of itinerant fairground people:

'They don't have houses, just caravans'.

'They put on fairs for us'. etc.

Jeremy, a child of the road, was thus able to express himself, be a member of the group, and enjoy the school. He explained, however, that he did not like having to change schools all the time, because he was always an outcast.

The children in his class therefore decided to send messages to all the schools that he attended in turn, asking everyone to accept and like their friend, Jeremy, who was very nice.

In exchanges with children, by focusing attention on the causes of the conflict rather than on the opponents, it may be easier to clarify the situation and arrive at solutions.

Sometimes, the cause is quite simply a matter of bad organization: instructions that are ambiguous; equipment that is badly arranged, not easily accessible or in short supply, etc.

The interest that the teacher takes in finding such solutions, irrespective of the individual disputants, will foster creativity in this area. Even very young children show themselves to be capable of negotiating and arriving at solutions which involve, exchanging, sharing, taking turns, compromising, co-operating, etc.

Mor wants to play with the jigsaw puzzle which Madiop has been holding for some time, but she refuses to let him have it. 'Listen', suggests Mor, 'here's my car. You can play with that, and I'll play with the jigsaw'.

A little girl who does not have many belongings of her own has taken a pretty pair of gloves which she would very much like to keep, but which do not belong to her and which she will have to give back. Of her own accord, the girl from whom they were taken goes to the lost-and-found box, takes out another pair of pretty gloves which were left there a long time ago, and gives them to her without more ado.

Conciliatory behaviour like this is indicative of a special kind of creativity in the social sphere, a kind that has been underestimated in young children.

In some cases, choosing not to behave aggressively requires the invention of a more complex interpersonal structure and raises the child to a more highly developed level of conduct.

Two children who had been very aggressive on entering nursery school are happily playing at hospitals. The little boy does not complain as the girl subjects him to all sorts of medical 'treatment', accompanied by many expressions of tenderness and sudden severity. A third child wants to join the game, but the girl vigorously pushes him away. He insists, however, and, given the temperament of those involved, a fight begins to loom. Seeing how determined he is, the girl picks up a small shopping basket. 'Go and get some medicines for me', she orders him. 'Where'? he asks. 'Over there', she replies, pointing to the other end of the classroom. The third child goes round the classroom and comes back with the imaginary medicines. Now go and get me some cotton wool', the girl says. Once again, the intruder sets off around the classroom, an activity which he is beginning to enjoy, and the game continues in this way, to the great satisfaction of all concerned.

A harmonious atmosphere that is conducive to actions which are likely to encourage cheerfulness makes this learning process easier. There are nursery schools where conflicts are resolved autonomously, easily and relatively painlessly.

Coumba and Maty are fighting over a doll. The hapless teacher is unable to separate them, and it looks as if he will have to enact the judgement of Solomon. Khady comes to the rescue, however, by giving her doll to Coumba of her own accord. A moment later, Maty follows suit and in turn gives Coumba the doll they were both fighting over.

The quality of the teaching dispensed at each and every moment is what determines whether or not children learn the habit of co-operating, helping one another and sharing. It is also decisive as far as teaching them

thoughtfulness is concerned, and in fostering the kind of generous behaviour that engenders a great feeling of inner richness.

Teaching methods that involve sharing responsibilities in the running of the class and carrying out joint projects and activities develop the spirit of mutual co-operation and help. Children are helped to understand the lives of others by being encouraged to take an interest in a schoolmate who is sick, one who has just had a little brother, one whose grandmother has just died, one whose father is away working in a far-off country, etc.

In fact, small, outward conflicts are easier to resolve than the inner conflicts from which some children may suffer and which may be at the root of anti-social attitudes. The group can nevertheless help the child in certain cases.



Children can find an outlet for their inner conflicts through group games, and enhancement of their personal worth can help them overcome those conflicts.

In the following sections of the present chapter, we shall try to see whether, through its relations with the community and the various aspects of its educational work among young children, pre-school education can widen the scope of its role to include education for peace.

B. Relations with the general surroundings

In order to guarantee emotional security and smooth development for children at a pre-school establishment, it is important that the education they receive there should be a continuation of the instruction they have received in the family environment; otherwise, they may feel torn between excessively different - and even opposing - ways of life.

A pre-school establishment can scarcely set out to teach its young children education for peace if it is at odds with their families, or unwilling to collaborate with them or with other professionals concerned with early childhood.

It is not always easy to establish such continuity, however, either because the social and cultural environment is highly complex, or because pre-school education is extremely institutionalized, and thus is hedged about with many constraints and much red tape.

Let us therefore examine possible ways of improving relations with children's general surroundings in each of the various cases.

First, let us consider relatively homogeneous social milieux.

The decision to found an establishment may have been made by a body outside the community, e.g. in application of a general policy. In this case, the establishment may be welcomed, especially if the staff are drawn from the community, and continuity will be easy to establish.

The decision may, however, have been taken in order to ease a situation deemed dangerous for young children and to encourage more progressive educational practices on the part of the parents. In such cases, the decision may meet with a mixed reception, parents may be reluctant to send their children to the school, and continuity will be more difficult to establish. This applies particularly to cases where part or all of the staff come from outside the community aim at goals which conflict with the families' beliefs and customs, and, at worse are prejudiced against the community.

Let us, for example, compare two nursery schools in Colombia:

The first is in the village of Pelaya (Gesar), far from any big city. It is run by teachers from the region, who at the outset had received only primary schooling. On being appointed, they took secondary education courses broadcast on the radio, and pre-school teacher training courses in Bogota during the school vacations. The nursery school has proved highly successful, as is borne out by the children's progress and the influence the establishment has exerted in fostering a community spirit

among the inhabitants of the region. Particularly well known is its achievement in promoting peace and understanding between adults and children.

The second is in the 'Camilo Terres' district in Medellin, and here the story is totally different. Camilo Terres is a poor, but highly politicized, neighbourhood. The Colombian Institute for Family Welfare refuses to employ local staff because they have no formal training, and the community rejects the qualified nursery school teachers appointed by the Institute. The children have finally lost the benefits of pre-school education and the local population has become more embittered against society and its institutions.

For the establishment to be fully successful, the families' aspirations must often be taken into account.

In Dakar, a nursery school in a strongly Muslim neighbourhood found it difficult to recruit enough children. A survey revealed the reason: the curriculum did not include religious instruction. When the latter was included, enrolments trebled in less than a year.

If the regular staff members drawn from the community are treated as servants by head teachers recruited from outside, it is difficult for children to identify in a positive way with the people from their own social environment, and this hampers the assertion of their social identity.

In cases where the pre-school establishment is founded at the request and on the initiative of the community, drawbacks of this kind should not arise. On the other hand, there are cases where, owing to lack of ability or availability, the community needs outside help, and this is where problems such as those described may arise.

In a mixed social environment, the difficulties are even greater. This is true of bicultural communities in which there are two opposing languages, religious or ethnic groups, and in multicultural societies, which are even more complex. We find this in many countries and modern cities to which people have migrated, and in which hatred between clans, castes, tribes and social classes may be rampant.

Provided that the establishment is not confined to children from one particular environment, mixing children at random can be highly conducive to education for peace. Since, however, the teachers do not represent all the various communities concerned, many difficulties and prejudices may arise among the adults involved.

In Senegal, the school attached to a research centre had an intake of French, Wolof and Serer children. The French parents did not like the fact that the teacher spoke to the children in Wolof. To begin with, this impaired relations between the teacher and the group of French parents.

In cases where pre-school education is heavily institutionalized, staff may be appointed according to administrative criteria or as a result of corporate privileges that have nothing to do with the interests of the community. Establishments may thus tend to be rather unreceptive and to remain aloof from the life of their surroundings.

For example, a mother who works only part time may be taken aback to find that, if her child is to obtain a place in an establishment, she must leave him there all day long.

Circumstances vary so much that seamless integration with the environment is not always possible. For example, it may be advisable for teachers to live in the same neighbourhood as the establishment in which they work, but in big cities this is not always possible, and an establishment does not always serve a clearly defined geographical area: this is true of day-care centres of large companies, for example.

Nor do the working hours of the parents make contacts with the families easier, especially in big cities and in cases where the teachers' own working hours are strictly fixed and limited.

But whatever the difficulties inherent in each situation, teachers can always find a way of improving the quality of relations with the families and strengthening the links with the community.

It would of course be unreasonable to expect the families to take the initiative, and while such initiatives as they do take should be welcomed, the teachers should make the first move and actively encourage them.

From the outset, a link should be forged between teacher and family. If the staff is drawn from the community, many ties may already exist, but staff members may have close ties with some families and distant ones with others. If this is the case, an attempt must be made to achieve a better balance.

In some instances, teachers visit families before the establishment opens, either to persuade them to send their children, or to prepare the children for their time there. Great tact and social diplomacy must be exercised on the part of the teacher, especially when the families in question are of a much lower social status or of foreign extraction.

Contact with teaching staff may be made at a community meeting. This can happen, for example, when a community is to be persuaded to open a nursery school, or when the community itself wishes to open one. Since this meeting will be decisive, it is important that confidence be established immediately. The professionals must be able to listen, understand needs and fears, and even accept criticism. This is the price they must pay if they wish in their turn to put forward their point of view and hope to be understood. A patronizing attitude will dash any hopes of true co-operation.

If pre-school education is to contribute to the advancement of local communities, it is particularly important that officials in the social services should adopt an open attitude towards dialogue.

In order to comply with the request of a small community of 620 people living in a fairly remote and inaccessible village, a team of officials from the Colombian Institute for Family Welfare made a long and difficult journey in order to hold practical discussions with the villagers, the aim being to help the latter to state their own most urgent needs and to collaborate in determining the kind of aid that would be of use to them.

The villagers turned out to be a jaded group; they no longer believed what people from the outside world told them, having been misled once

too often by electoral promises that were never kept. A positive contact was nevertheless established, and an agreement was reached whereby the project would be a joint effort: the Institute would provide support if the community showed its willingness to make the project a success.

And so a small 'Social Action Centre' was founded in the north of the country, where pre-school activities were to be developed in keeping with the life of the village and with maximum participation by the villages.

In cases where families have to go in person to the establishment in order to enrol their children, the enrolment should not be a mere administrative formality, but an opportunity for creating, there and then, a strong and positive link with the child and its family, and for involving the latter in the life of the establishment.

So the teacher should not be in a hurry when families arrive for an enrolment, and should suggest a time and a day that best suits them for this first meeting. By showing amenability, he or she indicates a desire to understand the parents' needs. Especially in neighbourhoods of mixed ethnic origin, to suggest a meeting on a day of strict religious observance, or to propose a time that is incompatible with the rites and customs of the families or with the parents' working hours, would be to show very little consideration for the everyday life of the families and would not be the best means of ensuring a good first impression or true co-operation later on.

In countries where the number of candidates far exceeds the number of places available in schools, enrolment day is a very difficult time both for parents who are trying to place their child and for teachers of day-care centres and nursery schools. This is very often the case in developing countries and is a contributing factor to increasing social tension .

Often, when faced with a communication problem due to language difficulties, the teaching staff resign themselves to it by saying that it is impossible to establish relations. And yet it is in precisely such cases that relations are most necessary, for the parents need to be reassured that their child will be properly educated, and need to have their wishes and recommendations understood. Once their confidence has been gained, suspicious, aggressive parents can become extremely grateful and co-operative .

Even if only a few words of greeting are learned from the various languages spoken in the local communities, contact will be warmer and more relaxed, and the children will feel more sure of themselves.

A Senegalese teacher was appointed to a post in Kedougou, a region where Soninke, Pulaar and Basari are spoken. Although a stranger to this rural environment, he immediately began learning two of these languages by taking lessons and practising conversation during his visits to the families. This receptiveness towards others earned him the respect and support of the population, and helped him in the task of teaching the children a language other than their mother tongue.

In some instances, it is useful to have helpers who are active and evenhanded, and fully assimilated members of the community; these are able to act as intermediaries between the families and the pre-school establishment.

Such helpers may be parents already familiar with the school, older children, the staff of a foreigners' reception centre or of a consulate, language teachers, etc. Needless to say, this type of solution is necessary only when the family is unable to bring its own interpreter - the latter always being preferable even if he or she is less fluent in the languages.

In Casamance, the first nursery schools relied on existing day-care centres and the skill of their staff. The Inspector for Human Development, who belonged to another ministerial department, had no difficulty in interesting people in the nursery school, for he was himself an active, committed helper who was already fully integrated into the community.

If good relations are to be established with the families, it is vital to explain to them the educational aims and the methods employed.

This may be done at the time of enrolment, during an 'open day' or when parents come to see the nursery school in action. It can also be achieved by means of slide-shows, during which the various activities available to the children are explained. This gives the parents an opportunity to ask questions about the purpose of the activities, their duration and the variety of equipment used, and thus gain a better understanding of the ends and means of pre-school education.

In a multicultural environment, it is essential that such sessions are conducted in the various languages used by the families. Sometimes, merely the belief that an interpreter must be present is enough to make one come forward, and whether or not he is educated or illiterate is of little importance. The fact that an effort to communicate has been made will be noted by the families, who will respond to it warmly.

It is also important for families to describe their own educational methods, so that real continuity can be maintained, each party learning from the other in a two-way dialogue. Likewise parents can help to plan educational projects, especially when they take an active part in the running of the establishment.

The parents' contribution can be particularly valuable when it comes to traditions, local history and crafts. Parents can also play a part in organizing excursions, a library, a games room, etc.

At a nursery school in a crowded suburb of Paris, parents organized and ran a library. Initially, all went well, but it soon became obvious that the atmosphere was being disturbed by North African Arab children, who were unruly and noisy. It occurred to the headmistress to ask an Arab mother to come and read aloud stories taken from books written in their own language. This acknowledgement of the Arab children's own specific identity and culture produced a spectacular effect on all the children.

When parents take a hand in the administration or running of the establishment, contacts are close and frequent.

If this is not the case, contacts must be encouraged. Many teachers complain that parents do not respond to their invitations, but one must ask why :

Has the time of the meeting been chosen to suit the teachers only?

Has due consideration been given to the parents' motivation?

Have they been asked to express their wishes?

Are parents allowed to decide for themselves when meetings should be held?

Are parents confined to a role that is too passive?

Is the atmosphere too formal?

Are some families embarrassed by the presence of others?

Has care been taken to ensure that willing volunteers have been recruited to act as interpreters?

Has provision been made for a written summary of the collective decisions that may be adopted, so that those absent from the meeting can be informed of them?

Trying to force parents to attend the meetings is unlikely to be the best way of winning their collaboration.

At state nursery schools in Bogota, penalties were imposed on parents who did not come to the meetings. The sanctions even extended to the expulsion of their child. While this method worked in some cases, in others it was regarded as an abuse of power and caused much hostility towards the school.

In establishments run by the community, parents faithfully attend the meetings because they are personally involved in the administration of the nursery school.

In a highly diversified social environment, to build up a community of families around the establishment can be a major contribution to education for peace.

By focusing activities on the different cultures represented, it is possible to arrive at greater understanding and mutual respect. Customs can be contrasted and exhibitions and festivals organized which highlight each community in turn. At parents' meetings, educational principles can be compared and discussed.

In Belgium, many schools cater for a large percentage of immigrants. Accordingly, in the Unesco Associated Schools, the school year often begins with a study of daily life in Belgium, designed to help foreign families to adapt as quickly as possible.

Community problems are often linked to wider issues. Tackling these problems together can forge bonds of solidarity between individuals that may prove stronger than the obvious differences dividing them.

In some of the Unesco Associated Nursery Schools in northern France, such subjects as famine or child labour have been discussed with the aid of photographs or documents. Children have worked together on various large-scale projects:

organizing a fete to raise money for a refrigerator to keep vaccines for children in the Third World;

helping a child refugee from Tibet, living in a camp in India, by sending him letters and gifts; sponsoring a child who has been taken in by an ashram in India; sending food and clothes to child victims of earthquakes, etc.

When the Unesco Associated Schools organize events to celebrate the idea of peace and international understanding, parents from abroad are usually present.

ASSOCIATED SCHOOLS

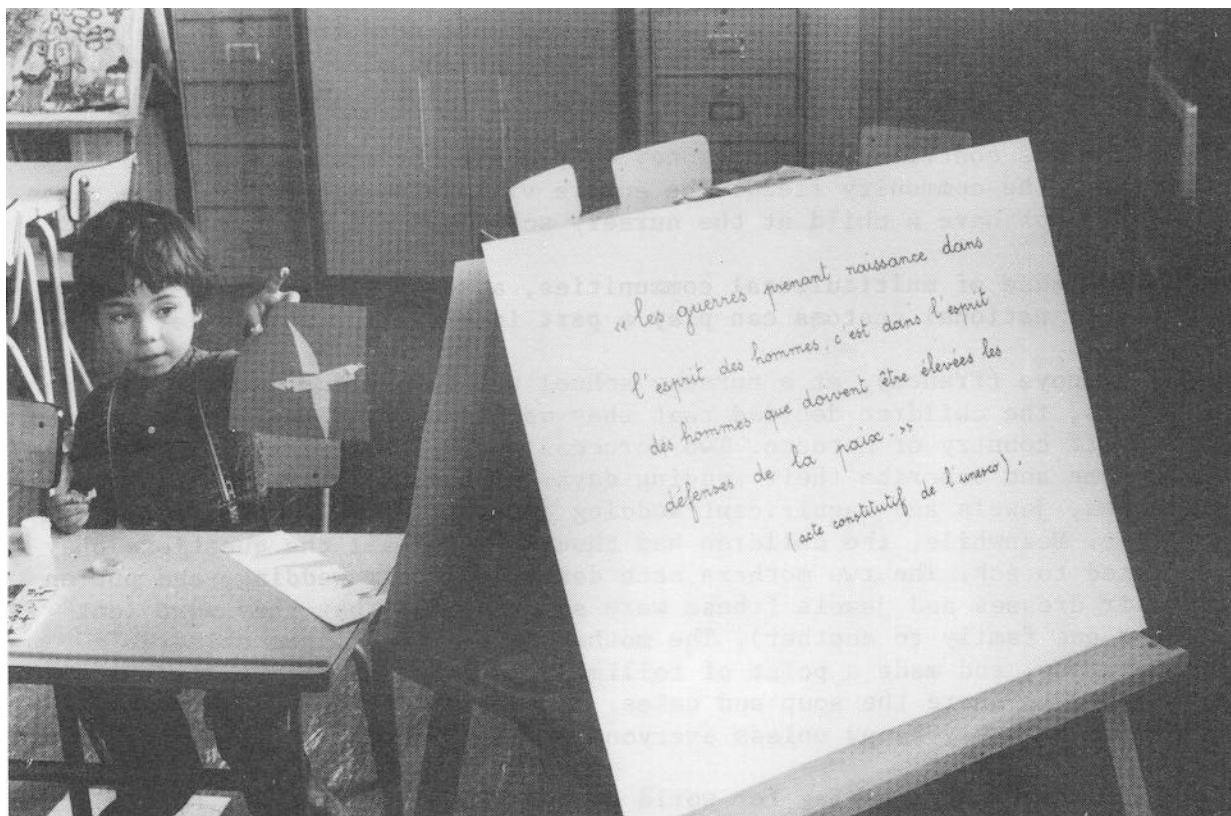
The Unesco Associated Schools project was launched in 1953.

It rapidly expanded in a large number of Member States as a result of the educational efforts of the National Commissions and teachers who espoused the themes put forward by Unesco, i.e. peace and international understanding.

Associated Schools now exist at all ages of education, ranging from nursery schools to universities.

With the help of existing programmes, an attempt is being made by teachers to implement an educational approach that involves research, interrelations and participation, based on new techniques of communication and learning.

In 1984, there were over 1,800 Associated Schools throughout the 90 Member States. Since 1974, they have had at their disposal a moral and educational instrument of paramount importance: the Recommendation concerning education for international understanding, co-operation and peace and education relating to human rights and fundamental freedoms, adopted in 1974 by the Unesco General Conference at its eighteenth session (cf. paragraphs 23, 41 and 44).



In some cases, the establishment thus has the support of a small community cultural centre in which parents, teachers and other professional workers who deal with children (e.g. doctors, dentists, social workers, psychologists, etc.) organize evenings or excursions for the community, or work on community projects.

In Colombia, there is a noted difference between the success of nursery schools which work exclusively with children, and those which form part of a community centre.

In the latter case, parents feel that the nursery school forms part of an institution which belongs to them and in which their opinions carry weight. Over and above this, they receive all kinds of aid in the form of courses at different levels, a labour exchange, medical and dental treatment, etc. They also take part in family recreation sessions. This type of nursery schools attached to a community centre, is better geared to the needs of communities in Third World countries.

Since many families require advice on the choice of television programmes, toys or books for their children, and guidance on health problems and education, community centres of this kind can provide an excellent setting in which to share and discuss experiences, and also to receive advice in an atmosphere of give-and-take.

An educational community such as this can be formed only by degrees, and as a result of an open-minded, friendly approach that makes each member of the community feel that he or she is important, regardless of age, ability or social status.

At Tendième in Casamance (Senegal), the nursery school is run by the community. The men of the village take care of the building work, fences and repairs of all kinds, while the women make sure that both the school and the children are clean and tidy. Some of the older women are chosen to help the teachers in their work.

Both sexes contribute either money or produce for the canteen, and help to farm the community field. The entire village participates, even those who do not have a child at the nursery school.

In the case of multicultural communities, a receptive attitude towards religious or national customs can play a part in education for peace.

In Aulnoye (France), at a nursery school with a large number of Moroccan pupils, the children decided that they wanted to find out more about the far-off country of Morocco. Two Moroccan mothers were therefore invited to come and describe their wedding days. With them, they brought photographs, jewels and magnificent wedding dresses, as well as Moroccan music. Meanwhile, the children had thought about all the questions they wanted to ask. The two mothers each described their wedding, and put on their dresses and jewels (these were so beautiful that they were lent from one family to another). The mothers answered all the children's questions, and made a point of telling them that the entire village was invited to share the soup and cakes. 'After all', they said, 'how can anyone be truly happy unless everyone else is, too'?

Another way of preparing for world co-operation and peace is to encourage solidarity with a family or a community that hardship or misfortune has befallen. Here, children and parents can work together, each at their own level.

Adults have a tendency to want to do things in their children's stead, because they regard the latter's contribution as too insignificant (pennies in the piggybank) or useless (a pretty picture). It is, however, the thought that counts, and a child's gift is priceless.

In Belgium, parents and friends of schools sometimes make an effort to provide a temporary home for certain children from abroad, especially those who need a place to stay while their parents are on a trip to their country of origin. For example, a six-year-old African girl in this situation is regularly the guest of several families and has been taken under the wing of the women students at a training school.

One of the rights of the child is to be taught in his or her mother tongue. For various reasons, this is sometimes not possible, nor do the parents always wish it.

In most European countries with a large immigrant population, there are laws requiring migrant workers' children to be taught the language of their country of origin. This rule is intended to ensure the preservation of their cultural identity, and a smooth re-entry if and when they return to their own country.

These laws seldom apply to the pre-school level, however. It is nevertheless advisable for nursery-school teachers to learn at least a few words of the languages of the children they teach, and to make the nursery school more accessible to children from the countries in question.

Difficulties arise for child, family and teachers alike if not a single adult at the pre-school establishment speaks the child's language. This situation can nevertheless be turned to the advantage of education for peace, provided that all those concerned, including the other children, show themselves particularly welcoming to the child (or children) in question, approaching the difference from a positive angle.

At a school in Maubeuge (France), two little girls arrived straight from Morocco. They felt very lonely and upset by such a dramatic change in their lives. The entire school set to work to make them smile, play and get used to the daily routine. The experience was very beneficial to the school as a whole, and the two girls adjusted in no time at all. The Unesco Associated Schools consider that one of their prime duties is to be welcoming.

When very strong ties have been established between the children, and a lively children's community has sprung up, complete with community projects, it is possible to use the bonds between the children to improve relations between families. The nursery school can then be the scene of reconciliations between families which do not get along or which have chosen to ignore each other.

In a village in the French Pyrenees, the population was strictly divided into political 'clans', and some families had not spoken to one another for several generations. The head teacher of the nursery school was appointed from the outside and established good relations with the entire population. Shortly afterwards, the children organized a raffle, in which everyone was invited to take part. The event was regarded as a very bold move, but, in the end, everyone agreed to participate. The result was that one participant won a prize donated by his worst enemy, but decided to accept it, while another spoke to his neighbour for the first time in his life.

C. Educational action aimed at children's communities

A day-nursery or nursery school is a micro-community whose members are children. At the beginning of this chapter, we took a look at the reasons behind aggressive behaviour in a community of this kind. Since education for peace consists in teaching people to live in peace and to enjoy it, educational action must strive as quickly as possible to create a peaceful everyday atmosphere.

Certain material conditions can play a part in this. Crowding of children into an enclosed space can generate considerable tension. Even though, to a lesser or greater extent, the space available is undoubtedly limited, each individual can try to make the best possible use of all the space at his or her disposal, in order to avoid overcrowding.

In this respect, the practice of setting up 'corners' for various games makes it possible to organize activities on the basis of small groups scattered throughout the space available. This presupposes, of course, that the play 'corners' are not simply used for brief periods of time by all the children at once.

If space is to be used to best advantage, teachers must be capable of running several small groups at once, while at the same time fostering the children's independence. This does not mean that independence should be used

as a pretext for leaving the groups to their own devices. The activities of each group will be all the more meaningful if, beforehand, action has been taken to determine aims and discuss possibilities, and if the group's efforts are underwritten by a vigilant presence. The times when all the children are



gathered together should be neither too long, nor too exclusive, but such moments are nevertheless vital to overall cohesion, the organization of community life, and the nurturing of a community spirit.

The problem of space is less crucial in countries which enjoy fine weather throughout the year. As the Africans say, 'When Europeans talk about «school» they mean a building. But when we say «school» we mean a teacher. Europeans talk of «open-plan» schools, while we speak of «schools without walls»'.

An ample supply of equipment also eases the functioning of the school. When stocks run low, children tend to fight over apparatus, but the accumulation of supplies will not alone make for a peaceful atmosphere. On the contrary, too many forms of material stimulation can provoke aggressiveness and unleash extremely destructive forces. The games, objects and materials to be found in a given environment form part of a specific cultural context. Contact with them exerts a 'civilizing' influence on the child to the extent that they are introduced through an educational activity.

From the point of view of education for peace, what counts is the quality of the child's relationship to the object and the importance that he attaches to it. If the object is in short supply, it will gain in value and will oblige the child to adopt behavioural patterns which involve lending and sharing. It will also give rise to activities involving searching, gathering and requesting, and the children will go hunting for pretty pebbles, seeds, leaves, seashells (if near the sea), etc. Requests will be made of parents, officials, shopkeepers, craftworkers, and so on. These activities will help to establish relationships and teach children how to look for alternatives, a vital factor in difficult situations, and one preferable to acts of pilfering and theft.

Using cast-off materials, it should be possible to construct toys and invent games. Another possibility is to make objects for the community in exchange for more materials to improve the school's equipment.

On the coast of Belgium, children collect seashells which they then pretend are the 'coins' that they use in their 'shops'. For example, they make various kinds of flowers which they 'sell' in exchange for shells, inventing a whole system of currency based on the size of the shells.

The presence of living things (e.g. animals, plants, grassy open spaces and gardens) can play a considerable part in creating a peaceful, happy atmosphere. Children are very impressed and fascinated by the birth of animals. It gives them an opportunity to understand not only the fragility of life, but also its strength, and allows them to accept responsibility for their contribution to the well-being of newly born creatures.

If children are to feel secure and at peace, there must be an adequate number of adult supervisors. This is not the only condition, however, for a large number of poorly trained adults, who are more interested in communicating among themselves than in taking care of the children, can create an atmosphere less conducive to peace than a smaller, more competent and more dedicated group of staff.

Even in countries with high standards of training for teachers of young children, the ancillary staff are sometimes less well-trained.

For example, in some French nursery schools, a day-care system operates outside school hours which relies on staff who have had little, if any, training.

The following is a selection of comments made by nursery school teachers on the way day-care systems are run:

'It's the person in charge of the canteen who also does the day-care work. As far as she's concerned, all that matters is whether or not they get a good meal'.

'Whenever I go to the day-care centre, the children are invariably sitting down'.

'The children are looked after by a cheerless boring sort of girl who spends the whole time miles away, slouched against a piece of furniture'.

'At the open-air centre, the children are looked after by teenagers who sit around smoking and waiting for the end of the day'.

'The children fight or get bored, but the school buildings are very nice'.

Needless to say, the situation is not always as bad as this - thank goodness' .

The temporary staff of playgrounds and summer camps is often composed of teenagers who are more interested in scraping together some holiday money than in taking care of children. Mothers may well complain that their children return agitated and aggressive from such centres, but their ever-increasing demand for child-minding facilities is precisely what creates these problems.

In fact, it is the quality of the relations established with the children that plays a decisive role in fostering a feeling of peace and security. They must be stable, lively and intimate. A large staff, constantly coming and going, with children being passed from one instructor to another, is scarcely conducive to stability or intimacy.

This is particularly striking in the case of babies. In days gone by, the theory was that only their material needs should be met, and that it was better to leave them alone otherwise. It has been discovered, however, that even a baby's general health can depend on the quality of the relationship with the person taking care of it.

An extremely 'professional' relationship cannot be lively, and is incapable of generating an atmosphere of profound and spontaneous communication; nor can it foster the young child's full confidence in the adult.

Abandoning a child whose parents have not yet come to collect him or her because they are late is an extreme example which can cause a great deal of anxiety in the young child. Fortunately, however, it is usually forbidden by current legislation.

Talking to children in a neutral, impersonal way about nothing but matters of daily routine is unlikely to help develop a child's sensibilities.

A manner that is natural, spontaneous (without being impulsive), optimistic and confident (without ignoring problems) is particularly well-suited to engendering feelings of peace in young children.

Admittedly each teacher has his or her own personality, but the very fact of having chosen a career in education surely indicates an optimistic approach

towards our human potential. Being natural and spontaneous is undeniably a state that everyone should aspire to reach, and is a mark of freedom and sincerity. A suitable working atmosphere will undoubtedly foster these qualities in teachers.

An equally important point is the atmosphere reigning among the teaching staff. The way in which adults collaborate, overcome possible differences of opinion, establish their relationships, and adopt a welcoming attitude to visitors (especially parents) will set the tone for human contacts within the establishment and will produce an immediate effect on the children's behaviour.

In Senegal, the education authority was obliged to appoint two teachers to a village whose language they did not speak. As soon as the teachers arrived, their colleagues from the village spent two hours a day teaching them the local language. When the children saw what was going on, they were delighted to lend a hand by themselves helping the teacher to learn new things.

It goes without saying that time must be set aside for meetings and concerted action and discussion, if there is to be collaboration among the teaching staff. The only way to solve difficulties and differences of opinion must be sought through a constant and friendly exchange of ideas.

Children are present in greater numbers at a day nursery or nursery school than they are in a family. They therefore require supervision that is sufficiently firm and strict. There must be rules and regulations: these, however, should be extremely flexible. Too much rigidity, or too many orders, will stifle initiative or provoke rebellion.

The children must enjoy a certain amount of freedom, but that freedom should be shaped by rules of correct living and by occasional discussions on the obligations imposed by community life.

On the other hand, too much permissiveness leads to considerable anxiety. The weaker children are sacrificed, and the aggressiveness of the stronger is unleashed because it is not being channelled into social and constructive ends. This is often what happens when free playing-time lasts too long.

Education for peace should not be a separate ethics course but should form part of an overall educational project. While this is true at all levels of the educational system, it is particularly relevant at the pre-primary level. It is quite possible that the concept of peace or war contains no meaning whatsoever for young children. They can nevertheless experience the reality of these concepts in the world around them, and experience them at a deep level of personal feeling.

This is the case for all those who are, unfortunately, suffering as a result of the numerous wars that are taking place all over the globe, with all their physical and mental repercussions.

Quite independently of this, children are sensitive to the atmosphere in which they live, as is apparent from the degree to which they are perturbed when a climate of peace does not reign in their home. At school, teachers who shout, scold and fly into tempers are disliked by the children.

For pre-school education to be successful, it is imperative to create a calm, joyful and poetic atmosphere. If used in moderation, music can play a considerable part in this, through the harmony that it brings to collective activities, e.g. songs, singing games, rhythm games, dancing, etc.

The quarrels and fights that take place during free playing-time provide a direct personal experience of war and peace. Collective discussions can help children to seek more peaceful solutions to their conflicts and improve the way they organize their games.

Education for peace does not happen at any one precise moment, nor should it be taught in an ad hoc manner, e.g. when a fight or misdeed takes place.

In fact, education for peace can occur at each and every moment, provided that the teacher is fully aware of the problem and that moulding the individual's social personality is one of the teacher's constant preoccupations.

When seen from this point of view, any subject can afford an opportunity for education for peace on condition that the teacher is constantly attentive to this aspect of education.

For example, all young children take a lively interest in animals, and these are much in evidence in nursery schools, appeasing either physically or symbolically, or represented in picture or storybooks. The way animals are treated and the opinions spontaneously expressed about them can afford an opportunity for very worthwhile discussions, and for important realizations concerning the right to existence.

In Senegal, the sight of a dog usually inspires contempt, and children tend to throw stones at them. A discussion about canines their good qualities and the many services they render can help children to overcome their prejudice.

The presence of animals at the nursery school encourages respect for life through the sense of responsibility that it entails. Meals must be prepared on time, the cages have to be cleaned, cats and dogs need to be groomed, and also stroked, because they need affection. During the school holidays they have to be given a home and cared for in the same way, and then brought back to school in perfect health. All these actions call for a great deal of attention and love.

Plants also require considerable care and respect, and this can help children to become aware of life's fragile beauty, its unassuming tenacity, and the generous way in which the gift of life is passed on. For example, when taken on a walk, children should not be allowed to pick flowers and then throw them away or let the flowers wilt through negligence.

Young children should learn how to live at peace with nature. Nursery schools with a garden in which children can plant and grow things or which are lucky enough to possess animals tend to have children who are calmer and more co-operative.



... a garden in which children can plant and grow things ...

Objects and natural phenomena which can be linked to far away places and times can also help to broaden children's knowledge of life, making them aware of the vastness of the universe and channelling their receptiveness in favourable ways.

In nursery schools, it is common practice to collect items from nature (e.g. seeds, shells, etc.) mainly in order to handle, count and sort them, or to use them for handicrafts. The fact that they are natural objects is interesting in itself, however, for children can find out where they come from and what their biological significance is. In this way, children come into closer contact with the natural living universe.

Artefacts can bear witness to human beings' endeavour and their creative imagination. They can have a positive, civilising influence which helps children to project their thoughts towards the creative effort and joy of humankind, and to feel gratitude and a wish to participate.

Children invariably have a predilection for the kitchen, because the latter is often the only room in the house where children can observe the practical results of a task whose purpose is immediately obvious, for which interesting utensils are required, and in which children can take part.

In modern society, adults usually work in places to which children do not have access. Children should therefore be shown around various places of work, especially those of their parents, and given some raw or finished materials to take home with them. A visit to craft workshops, where simpler methods of production are employed, is a particularly fascinating experience for young children.

Exhibitions, trade fairs and sections of museums containing ancient and modern tools or human artifacts can also help to forge a link between children and the working world, and encourage them to produce creative work of their own.

In a small village in Portugal, by collecting old agricultural tools, the children enhanced the adults' awareness of their history and cultural identities, and provided them with the necessary impetus to set up a small museum of local agriculture.

Unexpected events which take place at the nursery school can skilfully be exploited in the cause of education for peace.

In the north of France, a young Arab employed by the local council was painting a nursery school. He knew the children well and was very fond of them. One day, however, one of the children called him a 'filthy Arab', repeating something that he had picked up from other people, and the young painter burst into tears. A discussion ensued, and the incident was used as the starting-point for an edifying inquiry into the question of 'the right to be different'.

Events which take place locally can also be used for the same purpose, especially if the children's emotional reaction to them is the same as that of the adult. Likewise, events can be instigated by the school itself as a means of education for peace.

The gardener at a Unesco Associated Nursery School in Belgium brought a cherry tree to the school. The tree was ceremoniously planted and became the 'Cherry Tree of Peace'. It became a focus for songs and dances in honour of peace, and a small but moving ceremony.

The important events reported in the world news provide opportunities for widening the scope of young children's social conscience to include places that are further and further away from them. Such events need not necessarily be conflicts, but may include unexpected catastrophes, accidents which could have been avoided, etc., or adventures, successes beneficial to humankind, exemplary deeds, and so on.

At a nursery school in Belgium the visit of the Belgian King and Queen to Zaire was the occasion for a major study of the way people live in Zaire. Using reference material brought to school each day, the children traced the route taken by the royal couple, thereby 'discovering' the country, i.e. its people, landscapes and animals. Through skilful guidance on the part of the nursery school teacher, the young Belgian children took a keen interest in the adventure and identified, in their imagination, with the children in Zaire.

Television programmes, whether beneficial or harmful (and especially if considered harmful), can create an opening for educational action to promote peace.

In France, an excellent programme entitled 'Hungry Countries Provide Our Food'¹ by Frere des Hommes was the starting-point for projects on nutrition and famine in the world.

Television newsreels on the war in Lebanon prompted discussion of the evils of war. Having become conscious of the horror of war, a nursery school in Maubeuge (France) decided to produce posters urging people everywhere not to make war.

A nursery-school teacher in Alsace (France) was not happy about the number of Red Indians 'killed' every day at his school. Obviously, the children were influenced by the stereotypes seen in Westerns. He therefore decided to arouse the children's interest in the customs of the Indians, and was so successful that the children ended up identifying with them. Now that the children were no longer sure who were the 'goodies' and who were the 'badges', they invented stories in which the cowboys and the Indians made peace and became good friends.

A Belgian nursery-school teacher made good use of a television programme showing a football match which had ended in acts of violence causing the deaths of two people. Having understood the concept of fair play and justice as dispensed by the referee, the children were particularly stern in their judgement of those responsible for the violence.

All these topics should, of course, contribute to a far-reaching educational drive aimed at helping children to develop certain personality traits considered desirable as far as education for peace is concerned.

As seen in the examples cited, the objective is to produce individuals who have minds of their own and who accept responsibility for their own opinions. The teacher does not in fact impose his own value judgements on the children regarding facts and events, but simply gets them to think so that they arrive at and develop their own ideas through contact with reality and through the collision of various different opinions which may result.

Following incidents of theft in a village in Alsace, it was decided that it would be better to lock away all the 'jewels' the children had made. This prompted discussion of why the thief had committed the crime:

'If it's because he's hungry, he can come to my house and eat as much as he likes'.

'When you have a lot yourself, you should give to other people'.

'If you don't have any money, you should go and get some from the bank'.

'If you have a job, you have money'.

'Maybe thieves haven't got jobs'.

Learning to understand those who commit acts regarded as antisocial means adopting the positive, active attitude of the pacifist who is willing to work towards improving society in order to make it better able to assimilate all of its members.

1. Original French: 'Les pays de la faim nous nourrissent' (Translator).

In this way, children learn how to build up their own standards of judgement, express their personal values, question and reject those values, adopt less self-centred ones, etc.

In a class at a French nursery school, a little boy says:

'What I like is playing wars, it's more fun'.

- The class therefore plays wars. This means playing at being wounded, i.e. lying still in bed for a very long time, or pretending to be dead.

The idea dawns on the children that war does not just mean the leader who kills people.

It also means:

children dying, even though they have done nothing wrong; mothers crying; fathers who never come back; wounded people who will never walk again.

Independence of thought and feeling leads to independence in the field of action and initiative.

'War is the solders' fault, they're the bad ones'.

'My grandpa was in the war and he isn't bad'.

'It's the leaders who force them to go to war'.

'We'd better write to the leaders about it'.

A UNICEF poster shows a long queue of people waiting to collect water. The children look at the poster, and, by discussing it, come to realize that water is a precious thing. This makes them think of ways in which they themselves can avoid wasting it.

Independence in turn triggers creativity. Fostering creativity tends to channel individual's energy towards positive goals and can do much to free them from their aggressiveness. Moreover, education for peace can make an added contribution to the development of creativity in the social sphere, for even the very young show that they are quite capable of creative thinking.

As problems arise in everyday life in the nursery-school community, if the teacher knows how to promote collective discussion, the children will be able to suggest rules of behaviour, thereby establishing a kind of 'code' for their pre-school society.

Once specific responsibilities have been defined (watering flowers, sharpening pencils, etc.), the children in their turn become capable of devising and running various services, e.g. a lending library or games shelf.

It goes without saying that teaching thoughtfulness, or empathy, forms an integral part of education for peace. There are many opportunities for this, because contacts between children are direct and uninterrupted. Whereas adults are capable of ignoring one another or restricting their relations to superficial, conventional exchanges, the same cannot be said of young children. Indeed, one of the hallmarks of a child's character is the facility with which

the child engages in projecting or introjecting. This can be turned to positive account in developing the child's sensitivity to other living beings.

During the International Year of Disabled Persons, a group of young Belgian children decided to make sure that their own activities would be of benefit to the handicapped. Under the guidance of the gardener, the children were highly successful in growing vegetables. They then took up cooking, and presented the results of these efforts to their disabled friends. On several occasions, the children even chose to go without the food they had prepared for themselves, in order to give it to the handicapped.

When the prevailing atmosphere is conducive to peace, spontaneous gestures of solidarity and generosity are often seen.

A little girl aged three arrives at a nursery school in Colombia. Her mother died when she was born, and the little girl tells the other children that her mummy is dead. Because she looks so abandoned, each child immediately gives her a personal treasure (marbles, sweets, ribbons, etc.).

In fairy tales, certain characters are unjustly treated (e.g. Cinderella, Snow White, etc.), and most children are profoundly affected by this. Discussion of the ways in which justice can be restored (i.e. before the children know how it is re-established in the story) produces a gamut of solutions ranging from the extremely vengeful to the extremely merciful.

Teaching young children independence and empathy is not the same as teaching them submission (voluntary if possible) to a social order imposed from the outside.

An overall framework for existence will, through its stability, provide a sense of order that helps people to maintain the feeling of security and inner peace that they need in order to experience to the full all the ups and downs of human relationships. Children should, however, be given scope for social freedom, so that they can discover types of relationship which are not based on domination or submission.

Giving, sharing, co-operating, helping one another, looking after the youngest, and showing solidarity can all be discovered and tested as forms of behaviour which are rewarding and liberating, provided that they are not imposed from outside and at someone else's discretion.

Children of different ages who live together learn how to help one another and this constitutes a further reason for multiplying the links between nursery and primary schools.

In some Belgian schools, children aged 5 and 6 go to the 'big school' to tell to the pupils aged 6 and 7 the stories they have made up. In their turn, the older children go to the nursery school to read tales to the smaller ones.

At a nursery school in Saint Germain-en-Laye (France), children aged 5 and 6 worked on a joint project with children aged 8 and 9 at a primary school. The project was to build a house for their puppet. The older children were glad to return to the nursery school where they could enjoy its freedom, play areas and workshops. The younger children on the other

hand, were proud to go to the 'big school', just like the older children. The experiment was particularly rewarding because it helped to form bonds among the children. The older ones felt responsible for the younger, and the latter identified with their elders by admiring and imitating them. The younger ones proved more open to the advice and guidance of the older children than they usually were to that of adults. For example, they would not accept the teacher's refusal to let them use wood to make the roof, but allowed themselves to be convinced by the arguments put forward by the older children.

In view of the fact that adults generally use competition and coercion to make children conform to the standards of behaviour they wish to impose, social discoveries such as these are unfortunately suppressed in favour of discoveries that are less likely to foster peace among human beings. Thus the stage is set for those who wish to be top of the class, teacher's favourite, or boss over the others.

It is a welcome development that the detrimental practice of awarding points or stars for good work has been discontinued in many nursery schools. This system encouraged submission to the model imposed and obedience to the rules set. It led to regrettable discrimination between children, stifled feelings of unity and solidarity, and undermined the children's independence by ensuring that they were invariably subject to the adult's exclusive and final assessment of their activities and behaviour.

Naturally, all these possibilities for useful discoveries can arise only in the context of communal life, for they are of a social nature. The more rich and varied that communal life, the more numerous and positive will be the discoveries and original initiatives. Conversely, individual initiatives involving other people will add to the life of the community.

An education that concentrates too narrowly on individual acquisition of knowledge tends to neglect the social aspects of community life and forgo the potential enrichment that it offers.

It is one thing to make a drawing because the timetable indicates that it is time for the drawing lesson; it is quite another to make a drawing because the class had decided to send a get-well card to a schoolfriend in hospital.

Likewise, it is one thing to learn how to tie knots because the teacher thinks that it is a useful thing to learn, and quite another to learn how to tie knots because the class has to send parcels to the children in Poland.

Those concerned with the question of education for peace will strive to build up the social life of the group and to see the individual as a social being acting as part of a group even if that action consists of temporarily isolating oneself from that group. From being a collection of individuals who at first did not know one another and who acted in a disparate and unharmonious fashion, the group must gradually form itself into a 'community' of people who mutually acknowledge their respective rights and their individual distinctiveness, and are able to work together for common goals.

The position adopted by the group's natural leader (i.e. the teacher) in relation to the group is crucial. By constantly compelling the group to align

itself with his or her opinions and wishes, the teacher will not enable the group to become self-aware, and will guide it from the outside. By adopting the opposite approach, i.e. by identifying with the ideas and initiatives of the group, the teacher will have to become aware of its identity as a group, discovering and expanding its potential, and will guide it from within.

On this point, the questions that the adult asks must reflect awareness of the group's unity, e.g. 'Why isn't Veronica here today? She's never absent'. Such questions should also point the way to communal projects, e.g. 'What can we do to make our pet mouse feel at home in our class'?

The more a formless group of children develops into a structured community, the more creative it becomes, the more forward-looking and the better able to take responsibility for projects that are adopted and planned together. It is by learning how to do something that one becomes capable of doing it. By identifying with the common wish, however vacillating and uncertain that wish may be initially, the teacher can help the children to expand their capacities in this area. As projects develop, the group accepts greater and greater responsibility for the work involved in organizing activities and assessing the progress made in implementing the various schemes.

Shared experiences and joint ventures help to unify the group, and the more structured the group, the more it expresses and projects itself through its communal achievements. The group becomes capable of forming a relationship in an original way with other groups. This may, of course, be a relationship of opposition or co-operation, rejection or exchange. Here again, we find plenty of scope for education for peace, because it is a well-known fact that unity is strengthened through struggle against another group.

Learning to establish positive and meaningful contacts with another group, while at the same time maintaining the intimacy and specific features of one's own group, is an ability that is essential to the preservation of peace. That ability can be developed from the nursery school onwards.

'Correspondence' between schools can afford a good example of this, on condition that it does not remain narrowly conventional and permits contacts between two groups with marked personalities which have asserted themselves through their own projects. It becomes particularly meaningful when established between children from communities that are especially antagonistic to one another, e.g. French-speaking and Flemish-speaking children in Belgium.

The bonds of friendship linking nursery school classes and institutes for handicapped children have proved extremely useful, and have given rise to plans for exchange visits, excursions and group games. In Maubeuge (France), children with serious motor handicaps were able, for example, to play on the swings, slides and other playthings of their dreams, and to roll about in the grass during a picnic, just like the children from the nursery school. In Saverne (France), the status of a group of mentally handicapped children rose to such an extent through their contact with the nursery school that, in the Carnival procession, they were applauded just as loudly as the other children.

Links between children's communities and old people's homes can be a source of visits, exchanges of stories, messages, invitations to tea and small gifts. This breaks the isolation of the old people, who are delighted to knit things for the children and receive their gestures of

kindness, and so the links between the generations, regrettably severed by modern life, are forged anew.



Communities of whatever kind are invariably surrounded by wider communities with which they maintain more or less vital links, such as national or linguistic communities. It is natural, therefore, for small children's communities to maintain numerous connections with the local community to which the children originally belong.

It would be an extremely positive step forward for peace if children's communities learned to direct some of their activities and projects towards the larger community, and if the latter in turn made more room for children's projects in schemes organized by adults.

Museums can mount exhibitions of children's work, and gestures of solidarity can include children's offerings.

In a town in northern France, an exhibition on Peace showed drawings, written work and objects produced by children, side by side with the adults' own contributions.

Parents' participation in nursery-school activities in particular should be approached with the aim of increasing the larger community's receptiveness to children's projects. The parents can answer the children's questions, provide them with reference material and describe their own experiences, all of which will prompt the children to ask further questions.

By telling stories from their home country, performing its dances and songs, and showing objects typical of it, parents from abroad can make children aware of the community to which they belong. But to avoid any banal and artificial form of 'folklore-peddling', it is better if the parents make a point of answering questions that arise spontaneously (e.g. Do people also decorate Easter eggs in Ali's country?), or collaborating on original projects.

Modern means of transport, mass communications, and children's literature bring youngsters at a very early age into contact with wider communities than their own immediate social surrounds. Some of their activities can therefore be directed towards the very large communities to which they know they belong (e.g. the community of all the children in the world). Here again, the opportunity arises at nursery school level for action to promote international understanding, and to build that great human community which alone can ensure peace in this world of ours.

Here is a description of two very different approaches adopted in Tournai (Belgium):

1. A survey was made of the way in which 5 and 6-year olds in the different parts of the world spent their day. Various documents were used, and mothers from abroad were invited to take part. The children learned that the day was not spent in the same way all over the world; that there were good reasons for this; but that, whatever the country, the day was always interesting.

2. It was 'Kindness-to-Animals Week' and, wishing to make good use of a subject close to the children's heart, the teacher took them on a visit to the animals' home. Observation of the various breeds of cat and dog led to discussion of how they live and how human beings should look after them. Having extended the subject to include other animals familiar to the children, the teacher drew their attention to animals native to other parts of the world: Saint Bernard dogs, the horses of the Camargue, mountain dairy cattle, the kangaroos of Australia, etc.

Highly varied methods were used to introduce these animals to the children, leading to discussion of the people, and, more particularly, of the children who live in Switzerland, the Camargue (France), Australia, etc.

Taking the children's interest in animals as a starting-point, the teacher was able to make the class aware of the existence of other societies and other ways of life.

At a nursery school in Alsace (France), children were taught about cultural differences by means of the adventure-packed travels of an imaginary pineapple.

Contacts between nursery schools in different countries can prove very useful as far as education for peace is concerned, both for children and for adults (parents, teachers, educational communities, etc.). Obviously, however, a number of problems arise:

1. it is not possible for children to be 'school penfriends' in the usual sense of the term, because as a rule, at this age, the children have not yet learned to write;

2. sending other forms of communication (drawings, cassettes, photographs, etc.) is fairly expensive, especially if these are sent by air-mail;
3. if the countries are separated by great distances, it may take a long time for communications to arrive;
4. should the two countries be in different hemispheres, term time in one country may be holiday-time in the other, and vice versa;
5. the younger the children, the greater the need for contact to be close and immediate.

Modern communications, the increase in family travel and the skill of teachers can nevertheless turn such contacts into lively and fruitful experiences for young children. In this respect, unusually good opportunities are offered by areas near national frontiers.

For example, a small nursery school in Alsace was able to receive a two-day visit from a bilingual nursery school in Germany. The teachers in both countries took much time and care over the preparations for the visit. Through an exchange of photographs, cassettes of songs in French and German, and information on the respective activities of the two schools, the children were ready to meet one another and able to take part in singing, dancing and joint activities.

The German children were invited home to visit families in small groups; they visited farms, and went round the old mill. A circus performance put on by the children, and a folk evening, attracted the entire village to the nursery school. The parents lent a hand in preparing the refreshments, which were paid for by the local council.

To begin with, the grandparents were not very kindly disposed towards the project, no doubt on account of war-time memories, but their reluctance quickly disappeared, and the grandmothers were soon remarking 'how nice these particular Germans' were. Encouraged by this, the German children announced that they would return with their parents.

Once the village felt ready to pay a return visit, the original contacts were expanded into the twinning of the two school communities. Mutual prejudices were thereby tested against hard facts, and each individual was able to make his or her own humble contribution to peace.

Although immediate contacts between widely-separated countries are not feasible, establishing links between them - however distant - can help young children to realize that all over the world there are children who may lead different sorts of lives but who nevertheless share the same basic needs and hopes.

Some Belgian nursery schools belonging to the Unesco Associated Schools system have arrangements with nursery schools in far-off countries for the exchange of photograph albums and information on such subjects as 'Our House', 'Our Garden', 'Our Pets', etc.

These exchanges are particularly worth while in monocultural environments where the absence of a school life shared with children from abroad or from

other cultural groups within the nation means that there is no feeling of belonging to wider groups, i.e. groups different from the small group to which one is directly attached, nor is there any awareness of just how varied the world is.

When primary schools are associated with international exchanges between nursery schools, those exchanges are all the more influential and wider in scope. They also reinforce the children's sense of belonging to a local and national community, as well as giving them access to the international community.

For example, a primary and a nursery school in Australia put together a little study on their country to send to two schools in Nigeria. It dealt with ten main topics, two of which were covered by the nursery school children:

1. Houses in Australia;
2. Nature in Australia -animals and vegetation.

In return they received drawings and small objects from the children in Nigeria.

The experiment was efficiently organized and proved highly popular in both countries.

D. Training of Personnel

Since education for peace is becoming one of the major aims of preschool education, it must be catered for in staff training methods and syllabuses, especially in training schools.

Education for peace is not a subject that can be taught, but rather a certain form of awareness to be acquired, an ability to create a specific atmosphere, and certain social characteristics that must be cultivated. This, being the case, it would perhaps be useful for training schools to make a point of treating their future teachers as the teachers themselves should treat the young children in their charge.

For example, does the reception that pupil-teachers receive at their training schools and colleges prepare them to apply the principles of education for peace when it is their turn to receive children at their nursery schools? Are administrative formalities, instructions on practical matters and ceremonial speeches enough in themselves to create the required atmosphere and attitude immediately?

When planning the specialized course for teachers of young children, the Teachers' Training College in Lisbon organized the first few days of the new school year in such a way that they were an excellent example of the notion of 'welcome', which is of great importance to nursery schools.

A room had been specially arranged to provide a most welcoming setting for the first time of meeting, which took place in a very human, informal atmosphere. The College staff introduced themselves in both their professional and their personal capacity, a tour of the school was made by all present, and preliminary information was given on the programme of future activities. The first-rate quality of the welcome created such an

impact and was regarded by the student-teachers as so very important, that at the end of the school year, when plans were being made for the following year's activities, they insisted on cutting short their holidays in order to help their teachers prepare the welcome for the new students. The preparations took place in an unusually convivial atmosphere, with everyone putting forward their own ideas. The outcome was a series of performances, rambles, picnics and discussion groups.

Provided that the welcome is not merely an enjoyable moment that remains artificial and is not followed up, it will naturally lead straight into an excellent community life. Over the years of training, that community life will bring experience which will be an effective preparation (i.e. practical and not merely theoretical) for the type of educational action that will foster the organization of a genuine children's community with its own personality and goals.

The teachers and other staff members should begin by themselves putting into practice the skills that they expect their students to learn to use with their young pupils. Together with the students, the teachers should form an educational community that collaborates on shared projects, even if teachers and students are pursuing different ends and derive different benefits from the ventures.

In countries where pre-school education is not yet very developed, it is particularly helpful to steer future teachers towards projects which are aimed at children who do not have the advantages afforded by attendance at a nursery school. For example, the teachers at a private training school in Lisbon encouraged their students to put on children's shows in public parks, church halls and primary schools.

As these projects proceed, it is important for students to gain experience in making independent decisions regarding the way they organize their time and the directions that they choose. They must also become accustomed to teamwork in a context that is likely to stimulate their creativity and their sense of responsibility.

Individual effort must be harmoniously blended and balanced with teamwork, for the two are complementary. Individual initiative and research stimulate the group, while the interactions taking place within the group give impetus to individual research. Hence it is also possible to avoid both excessive individualism and excessive collectivism, neither of which tends to be conducive to peace.

An example of teamwork based on individual research carried out by students and teachers is the founding of the poetry society at the Teacher-Training College in Tournai (Belgium). The aim of the society was to learn about children through literature, and at the same time to study the social and cultural features of education as these emerged from the texts studied.

Through teamwork, as opposed to theory classes, group dynamics can be put into practice in a stimulating and instructive context. Thus teachers gain practice in listening to conflicting points of view, maintaining a dialogue, arguing against others, making concessions, refining their points of view, resolving conflicts, adhering to resolutions vigorously challenged by others, etc.

On points of professional practice, the use of video, where available, can help future teachers to see their performance in a more objective light. This facilitates teamwork within establishments and leads to useful discussions.

Through the exchanges of views prompted by the video tapes, teachers become accustomed to assessing their own performance and learn to set themselves personal standards in their work.

Observations from peers help each individual to take other people's points of view into account, and to observe children more carefully and help them to improve their way of observing others. Through comparison with other teachers' ideas, the individual's own approach is seen to be relative and it becomes more supple, objective, free from prejudice and capable of self-criticism.

The use of newspapers and magazines representing a range of opinions is recommended in many training programmes. It can stimulate comment and discussions which develop the critical faculties, and helps to qualify unduly sweeping judgements.

The training school or college must prepare the student-teacher so that eventually he or she will be capable of establishing meaningful links between his or her future pre-school establishment and the larger community. It is questionable whether a sociological study of the neighbourhood, consisting of observation of living conditions, life-styles, working conditions, a few interviews, etc. really constitutes a sufficiently appropriate preparation, for a sense of personal commitment or a feeling of belonging to a community are surely lacking.

Future teachers enter the training school with a personality that has been shaped by their home background. For example, an interesting experiment took place in Portugal, involving student teachers from the Teacher-Training College at Evora. It was interesting in that the students represented a particular community, i.e. the one from which they came. Many were from a simple village which they felt incapable of describing accurately to their classmates or teachers, and which many doubted was worthy of so much interest.

The students in question returned to their village with the task of finding answers to all the questions that had been put to them. This helped them to see their village with fresh eyes, and to notice its good points and its individual character. Thereafter, the students felt themselves to be bearers of a cultural heritage and to have acquired a certain status by virtue of that culture.

By making the students aware of the cultural values that they represented and pointing out to them the cultural differences represented by their fellow students, this experiment may justly claim to have prepared them likewise to perceive the distinctiveness of the environment in which some day they will be teaching. It may likewise have made them better able to appreciate that environment, to make the best use of it, and to become more smoothly integrated by maintaining an open, positive frame of mind.

Social mobility and patterns of immigration trends have meant that teachers are increasingly obliged to work in multicultural environments, a situation for which they have seldom been prepared.

This situation can nevertheless be turned to extremely great advantage, as far as international understanding is concerned, if teachers know how to approach it from the right angle.

To achieve this, the training of teachers must rest on less narrowly defined bases. While one may love one's own culture, one should not mistake it for the nec plus ultra of civilization. A knowledge of cultural anthropology is required to preserve a more balanced, relative view of the world.

The instruction manual for the new training of primary-school teachers in France contains a list of working objectives to be attained with children who are experiencing problems due to social and cultural differences. Among the goals cited is the following:

'Assemble material for teaching that is based on intercultural principles and strategies. Such teaching should explore similarities as well as differences, and should increase the curiosity and open-mindedness of each and every child'.

In the case of teachers already trained and working in multicultural environments, special courses should be run to help them acquire information that is vital if they are to avoid serious errors. A number of countries run such courses.

For example, in France there are 14 'Information and Training Centres for the Education of Immigrant Children'¹, the first of which was opened in Lyons in 1975. They are located in regions with a large immigrant population, and their role is to organize courses for nursery- and primary school teachers who work in schools attended by immigrant children. The purpose of the courses is to provide better background information on cultural features and human resources.

The fact that the staff's level of culture within their own society may not be very high and may therefore call for extra training should not detract attention from this problem. The main aim should be to encourage more open attitudes, judgements that are less categorical, the desire to understand customs and beliefs different from one's own, and respect for what is unfamiliar.

Encounters with teachers from abroad, foreign study visits and courses at foreign institutions can broaden teachers' outlook and prepare them to adapt their work to the cause of international understanding.

Mutual understanding was the motive behind the organization of exchanges between teachers at German and French nursery schools, who also teach their mother tongue to the children during their year of study in the neighboring country.

International understanding can also be fostered through end-of-year class travel, which increasingly takes children abroad, provided that such travel is carefully planned for this purpose and designed to establish ties with teachers in the countries visited. For example,

1. Centres de Formation et d'Information pour la Scolarisation des Enfants Migrant (CEFISEM) (Translator).

student-teachers from a Belgian teacher-training college spent six days in Athens with their Greek counterparts, before returning home accompanied by the Greek students, who in turn spent six days in Belgium.

Participation in international organizations facilitates meetings and exchanges with colleagues from other countries, and is conducive to collaboration on international projects.

For example, the World Organization for Early Childhood Education organizes meetings all over the world, and holds a General Assembly every three years, at which participants can meet not only teachers from other countries, but also professionals in other disciplines (e.g. doctors, social workers, educationists, psychologists, sociologists, lawyers, architects, organizers of leisure activities, authors, composers, etc.) involved in working with children. The Organization also publishes (with financial support from Unesco) an organ entitled the 'International Journal of Early Childhood', which provides teachers and child specialists with information from all over the world (in French, English and Spanish).

Surveys in early childhood education are carried out with the participation of the various national committees belonging to the Organization.

Pre-school education programmes, aimed primarily at the developing countries, are supported by international organizations, such as UNICEF and Unesco.

Study of foreign languages facilitates such contacts and can raise the cultural level, especially when it leads to direct practical use of a foreign tongue.

In countries with only one national language and language programmes that do not begin until fairly late, i.e. at secondary-school level, training colleges for nursery and primary-school teachers do not usually include languages in their syllabuses.

In France, recent legislation concerning the preservation of regional cultures and entailing -where applicable- reception classes in the child's native language, makes provision for the teaching of certain languages in teacher-training colleges.

Some European countries operate programmes from nursery-school level onwards, aimed at teaching immigrant workers' children their native tongue. Since the lessons are usually conducted by people from the country in question, however, foreign languages are not necessarily taught in training colleges. But, increasingly, teachers of young children are feeling the need to speak foreign languages in order to establish initial contacts with children from a different culture and to communicate with their parents.

Teachers cannot accomplish useful work in the cause of peace unless they have a comprehensive view of today's major world problems. These include economic and political issues, ecological problems, the question of world water shortages and famine, human rights and children's rights, the status of women, the birth rate, illiteracy, etc.

In several countries, the latest training programmes contain an introduction to major world problems.

In Belgium, these problems provide subject-matter for free-ranging discussion groups. Future teachers are not only introduced to the realities of life in today's world, but are trained in the art of discussion, listening to others, forming personal opinions, gaining confidence in asserting oneself against an often considerable body of opposition, selecting valid arguments, exercising self-control, resolving conflicts of opinion, and generally acquiring practice in debating.

In addition to this, the adoption of comparative legislation as a syllabus subject provides future teachers with a special introduction to educational problems throughout the world:

compulsory education in Belgium and other countries;

child labour throughout the world and legislation concerning it;

the changing role of the family and women's rights; etc.

Teachers should be aware of Unesco's action to combat these problems, and especially its work for peace and international understanding. For example, Unesco Clubs could be organized at teacher-training colleges.

UNESCO CLUBS

In tandem with the expansion of the Associated Schools Project, many Member States have set up Unesco Clubs.

Some of these are attached to Associated Schools, while others have been established outside the educational setting.

They consist of groups with members of all ages, and their intellectual, social and practical activities are in keeping with the fundamental principles enshrined in the Unesco Constitution and the ideals upheld by the Organization.

As in the Associated Schools Project, the aim of the Unesco Clubs is to spur their members into contributing by whatever means possible to the development of international understanding, mutual respect, the defence of human rights and fundamental freedoms and in short, to anything that will help to construct peace.

Even in countries where the training period has been lengthened from two to three years, syllabuses and timetables tend to be overloaded. This is particularly true in cases where, as in France, training for work at nursery and primary-school level is combined. This makes it difficult to organize Unesco Clubs. But since individual and teamwork are increasingly becoming a training requirement, they could perhaps be incorporated into the activities of a Unesco Club. This presupposes, however, that such activities do not acquire an academic slant or become a means of obtaining a qualification, for actions to promote peace must remain a voluntary commitment which is completely benevolent and as creative as possible.

Student-teachers could be required to work on a private, optional project connected with education for peace. This might consist of writing poetry, making up fairy tales, drawing strip cartoons, putting on puppet shows, etc., all aimed at furthering the cause of education for peace. The student-teachers might also produce an essay, a report, an audio-visual lecture, etc.

The following is a representative selection of activities carried out in Belgium:

in 1979, participation by nursery and primary-school children in a drawing and poetry competition for the 'Peace Forum', organized in Hiroshima and at Unesco;

exhibition of the above-mentioned drawings in Brussels on United Nations Day, 24 October (1980);

puppet shows depicting characters from foreign countries and other ways of life;

audio-visual lectures prepared by student-teachers, for the benefit of their fellow students, dealing with the new economic and social order;

audio-visual displays on projects carried out by and for children, e.g. demanding peace for their animal friends and for flowers;

essays on a subject connected with peace and international understanding.

Needless to say, all these activities remain optional, even when carried out as part of a training course, but provide opportunities for those who feel the basic need as individuals to do something concrete for the present or the future. Any compulsion or ulterior motive would inevitably distort such projects to their detriment. This kind of work must stem from a profound conviction and be carried forward by the genuine impetus of absolute sincerity.

These achievements will be worthless unless student-teachers live them as a committed, personal experience in their relationship with their instructors and with the other students, for peace must be an experience that is lived through at a profound level.

The quality of teacher-training obviously depends on those responsible for the training. Instructors must themselves take an interest in international issues and in ways of expanding international understanding.

It would therefore be advisable to organize training courses for this purpose, as well as international meetings. Cultivating a friendly, companionable outlook and establishing personal relations on an international scale is the best way of communicating one's own receptiveness to other cultures.

Initiatives taken with this purpose in mind include the meetings organized by the Council of Europe. These are intended to bring together those in charge of training teachers in countries of emigration and in countries of immigration, in order to discuss the intercultural problems caused by immigration to Europe.

These meetings follow in the wake of the studies carried out by the Council on the integration of migrant workers' children into the school systems of the various European countries.

Over and above the specific measures that may be taken to improve teachers' appreciation of the need to foster peace and international understanding, it is apparent that a high calibre of teaching and of education in general constitutes in itself an excellent education for peace by developing the full range of civic, moral and spiritual aptitudes.

CHAPTER III

The role of leisure activities in safeguarding peace

As mass industrialization developed in the West, there was a corresponding erosion of the leisure time afforded in earlier centuries by a religious calendar containing many festivals and holidays. In the course of the twentieth century, leisure time has gradually been reclaimed, and paid holidays are now the order of the day. A wide range of possible leisure activities has appeared, and the choice has become so vast that the phrase 'The Age of Leisure' has been coined.

Leisure time is contrasted with working time, meaning the time spent on various family, social and professional duties. As far as small children are concerned, it may seem something of a misnomer to speak of their 'leisure', since they are not under any obligation to work, and their characteristic activity is basically that of playing.

A. Play

The restrictions nevertheless placed on this natural activity of children, even when they are very young, has given rise to the affirmation of the right to play which appears in Article 7 of the Declaration of the Rights of the Child, adopted by the United Nations General Assembly in 1959: 'The child shall have full opportunity for play and recreation'.

1. The need to play

Play is vital to children's development, because it is through playing that they freely and creatively explore their capacities, assert their



*children ... assert, their personnalitises,
and try out various social roles.*

personalities, and try out various social roles. Spontaneous playing produces an energy giving and satisfying effect which can easily be observed in the great joy and enthusiasm it releases, as well as the considerable imagination and creativity it reveals. Depriving a child of play causes frustration and inward destructiveness, and these clearly cannot be said to foster inner peace or peace in the world.

While it is particularly strong in early childhood, and remains very active throughout youth, the need to play never disappears. Everybody feels the need for recreation, i.e. the need to be 're-created', to regain one's zest for living and one's recuperative powers through play.

2. Infringements of the right to play

Since playing expresses the individual's vital and expansive energy, the individual must first have the desire and the strength to play. An observant mother can tell when her child is unwell or has an illness coming on when he or she no longer plays with the same enthusiasm as before.

Particularly tragic examples of this are the millions of children throughout the world who rarely play because of the varying degrees of malnutrition from which they continually suffer, sapping their physical and mental energy and rendering them extremely vulnerable to illness and so apathetic that they do not even have the strength to play.

Social poverty often means that children are used in the work force. This wrongful exploitation mainly affects other children, aged 10-12 and upwards, but often at a much earlier age the child is already obliged to begin sharing in adult work, accompanying parents to the fields or doing a share of the housework. In other cases, the child is hired out or sold into domestic service, or even into prostitution. Children aged 4-7 are often made responsible for the care of their younger siblings, and are severely punished if they do not look after them properly.

The plight of children who do not play is illustrated by the pathetic answer given to a television reporter by an eight-year-old country girl in the Narino district of Colombia. The girl worked 12 hours a day, from 7 a.m. to 7 p.m., and when asked in the television survey of the region whether she possessed a doll, she replied, 'No, I never play. I'm a good little girl and I don't like dolls'.

In the big cities of many countries, large numbers of young children ply in minor street-trades.

For example, in some parts of the Middle East, there are children whose sole form of amusement is clinging to cars or running between them at the traffic lights. Or they loiter around the entrance tonight-clubs, cinemas and restaurants selling sweets or other small items at all hours of the day and night.

In the developing countries, child labour takes place in conditions that are disastrous for the child's health, and the child is almost always underpaid.

NUMBER OF CHILDREN UNDER 15

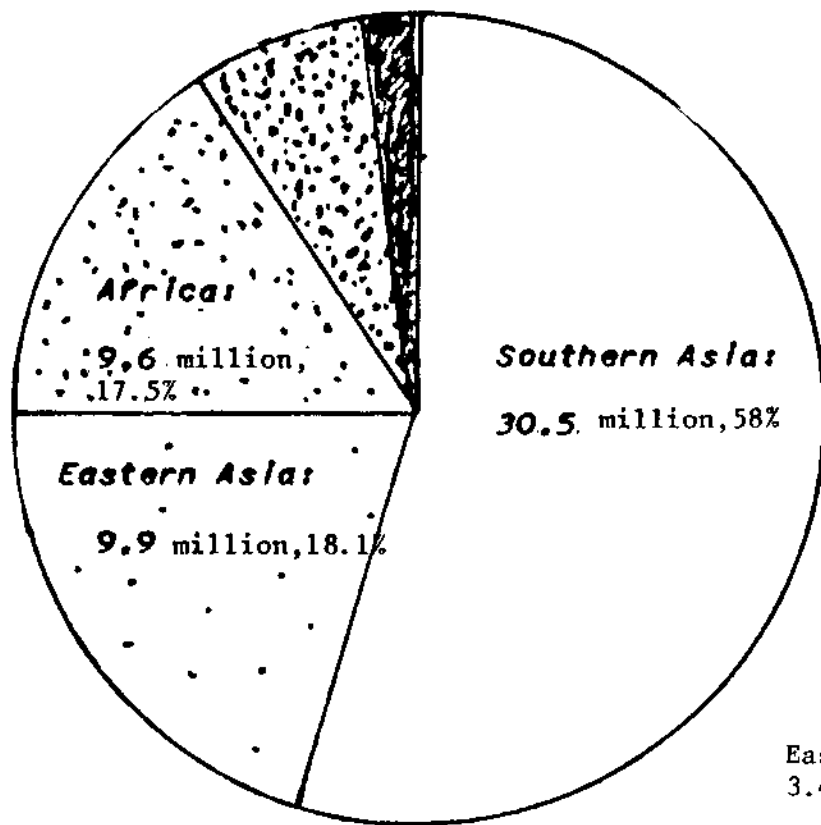
IN THE WORK FORCE, 1975-2000
(in millions)

Latin America:
3.3 million, 6%

North America, Europe,
Oceania, USSR: 1.3 million,
2.4%

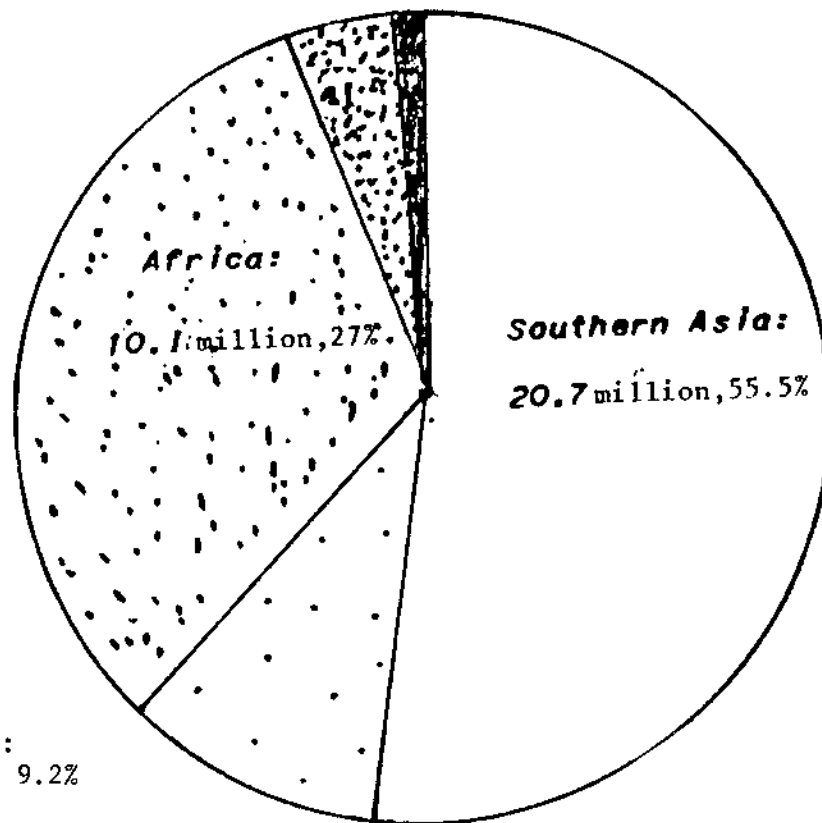
Latin America:
2.3 million, 6.3%

North America, Europe,
Oceania, USSR: 0.71 million
1.9%



1975

workers under 15



2000

workers under 15

(Source: 'Population', International Labour Office, 1980).

Among poor people, playing is often regarded as an unhealthy luxury which may give children bad habits and make them disinclined to work. But children who have been forced to work at too early an age never really come to enjoy it.

In an African country, a primary-school teacher used enjoyable activities in her teaching methods, with the result that one of the mothers decided to take her child away from the school. 'We're much too poor for that kind of thing', said the mother. 'If all the child does at school is play, he may as well stay home and help around the house'.

This urge to make children work as early as possible is not confined to the poor. In social groups that are sufficiently well off not to have immediate need of child labour, exaggerated social ambition can sometimes demand an intense intellectual effort of children at an increasingly early age. In such cases, the child's existence is 'mortgaged', as it were, to some highly prestigious professional position in the future. Needless to say, parents who make such demands on their child claim to do so for his or her own good and happiness (again in the future).

Since psychological studies have demonstrated the vital importance of early childhood in individual development, the trend towards early intellectual training has not stopped growing. There is strong parental pressure on pre-school educational establishments to pave the way for academic studies. 'Playing' has become something of a dirty word and tends to be replaced by the term 'activities', these being classified as either 'free' or 'compulsory'.

Young children can undoubtedly learn far more and much more easily than has generally been believed, and all societies influence games and provide inspiration for them. Luckily there are teachers skilful enough at organizing activities that are so pleasant and dynamic that it is not always easy to tell the difference between 'play' and 'work', since the latter is so enjoyable. Indeed, young children often like to say that they are 'working'. It is important, however, to the development of young people's independence that they maintain freedom and initiative in the use of their time and the invention of their own activities. This means that their freedom cannot be reduced to a straight choice from among several activities that are suggested and more or less directed for them. Time for genuinely free play should be unrestricted.

Safeguarding the right to play is the motive behind the Scandinavian countries' decision to delay children's admission to school as long as possible. The same motive is to be found throughout the world in pre-school education programmes that recommend giving considerable prominence to playing.

Children's playing time is limited not only by social and intellectual work. The growth of competitive sports has led to more and more intensive physical training of younger and younger children, with a view to selection for sport.

Thus the lives of even very young children are filled with specific times for music, dancing, tennis, drawing and all kinds of activities which, however enjoyable they may appear to the children, place dangerous limits on the time left over for spontaneous, liberating periods of play.

More leisure time for adults does not always engender more playing time for children. Often, parents please themselves first and trail their children with them to places that are of no interest to youngsters. In other cases, the parents park their children in day nurseries so that they can enjoy their favourite sports and pastimes, or pack the children off to clubs and centres so that, under proper guidance, they can learn their future leisure activities.

These leisure centres, and even sometimes the schools or pre-school establishments (in some cases chosen by parents for reasons of social prestige) are not all located near the child's home. Some children spend several hours a day travelling to places which take over the organization of their time.

Even when there are no compulsory domestic chores, time at home is not always spent playing. Homework still has to be done, or else television programmes further erode what little time children have left.

Another point is that the dwindling numbers of children in families today, even in the developing countries, tend to make the child in a 'nuclear' family more isolated, thereby depriving play of part of its socializing role.

Such curtailments of children's right to play can be avoided only if adults are aware of the value of play, and learn not only to respect it but also to take an interest and become personally involved in it. Children's play should not be a world apart, from which they emerge in order to receive training or guidance. If parents themselves enjoy playing with their children, they will provide the best stimulus for their children's vital energy, make it easy for the child to fit harmoniously into the family, and ensure that the home leaves scope for play. Likewise, a teacher who knows how to enter into children's play, rather than imposing a game that has been artificially invented outside the group, will be best equipped to put stimulating educational methods into practice while ensuring that play remains the most important activity in the pre-school establishment.

3. Play areas

Play requires not only time but also space. As we have seen, the time allotted to play is tending to decrease, but what about the question of space?

The trend away from large family houses towards small apartments has meant that children are confined to a small area. Many of them do not even have a corner to themselves, much less a garden to play in.

In the country, even poor children enjoy a certain amount of natural space, although this is tempered by the fact that their living conditions may restrict the benefit they derive from it.

In India, there are usually only one or two rooms in private houses, and these are generally crowded with people. Children therefore play outside, in natural surroundings, and reap the benefits of sun, fresh air and space. Parents complain, however, that they have a difficult job keeping their children clean. There is usually no lack of water, but the water is never purified or filtered. Toilets are non-existent, and people relieve themselves outside. Stagnant water attracts mosquitoes. As a result, malaria and water-borne diseases are frequently the cause of infant mortality.

Space is more limited in cities, and the street, traditionally the source of fascinating experiences, has become less interesting, owing to the gradual disappearance of local stores and craft workshops. Above all, the street has become increasingly dangerous.

Pre-school establishments have appeared precisely in order to protect children from the dangers of street life. They offer the child indoor and outdoor play areas, and an effort is made continually to improve the way these areas are organized. Some children stay there for ten or more hours a day, however, and spend the school and summer holidays at the p~~re~~school establishment. They thus become the prisoners of the same confined space.

Space is limited not only physically, but also by the rules and regulations governing its use. To avoid disturbing the neighbours, to prevent accidents and to respect the park regulations, children are forbidden to shout, run, jump, walk on the grass, etc.

Large housing estates on the outskirts of big cities do not always provide the necessary play areas, so that children are reduced to playing on staircases, in basements and in underground car parks.



A study carried out in Berlin in 1979 indicated that the city devoted less space to children's play areas than to parking facilities. Since Berlin is certainly not the only city of its kind, this example may be taken as an implicit indication of our modern world's system of values, a world in which machines are more important than people.

Juvenile delinquency, particularly reflected in acts of vandalism against material objects, points to the need to reverse this order of values. There is a dawning realization that priority must be given to parks and open spaces, playgrounds, and sports and leisure centres, especially in the poorest neighbourhoods. The purpose behind these measures is to channel young people's energy towards positive goals, so that it is not misdirected into acts of aggression and destruction.

In some countries, public opinion is sufficiently aware of the importance of these measures for politicians to use them as part of their election platform. For example, the following is an excerpt from a Belgian politician's manifesto for the local elections of October 1982:

'Upkeep of parks and open spaces, and conversion of these into areas for play, sports and leisure activities. Town planning on a more human scale: more grass and less concrete'.

What is needed most of all, however, is to change people's attitude towards children. Adults must be encouraged to allow children more space and to be more tolerant towards them.

In Colombia, for example, unduly extensive birth-control programmes have caused even greater rejection of the children already born, especially among the poor. In rural areas, it is not unusual for workers to be refused a job if they have too many children. A case in point is the peasant couple who were forced to give away some of their children in order to obtain work on a farm.

The developing countries are precisely those where the percentage of young children is highest, and for such countries, the effort required to provide the play areas that children need may perhaps seem too great. The damage caused by development which ignores fundamental human needs has, however, prompted international organizations such as Unesco to declare that 'man', i.e. human beings, should be placed at the centre of development. Since children are the future of humankind, it would be even better to declare that the child should be placed at the centre of development.

4. Toys to play with

For many reasons, the amount of time left over for play seems to be decreasing, but paradoxically the market for toys continues to grow and grow. Children are becoming ever-greater 'consumers' of toys, at least in some parts of the world.

One of the most significant differences between India, for example, and the West is that in India toys are virtually non-existent, especially plastic and mechanical ones. The only toys to be found there are items fashioned by the parents out of clay or wood. Indian children have great fun with painted cooking utensils, which depict scenes from everyday life. In most cases, however, the games they play do not require any special equipment, and the children get by on their imagination alone.

In the industrialized countries, business is booming for the toy industry. Like other sectors of production, however, the toy industry is aggressively dynamic. Parents and children alike are under pressure from the industry to acquire more and more sophisticated toys in ever larger quantities. Children are conditioned to want toys from the cradle onwards, for they are given toys before they even want them or are sufficiently developed mentally to take an interest in them.

Celebrations and social occasions are exploited by the toy industry, and parents with low incomes spend a small fortune on toys which their children do not always particularly appreciate.

The industry encourages the demand for what is new by taking advantage of passing fashions, flooding the market with certain kinds of toys at a given moment. Spurred on by competition, the industry is committed to the race for technological advances and record-breaking sales figures. This results in the production of a range of toys that varies considerably both in variety and in quality, and the continual appearance of new toys that every child wants to possess.

On the one hand, ever-more expensive and sophisticated toys are being produced which are more and more out of keeping with the child's physical size and abilities.

This type of toy is often the parent's present to himself/herself through the child. Overly sophisticated toys with mechanisms the child cannot understand reduce opportunities for projection during play, and curb creativity. This explains why children often prefer simpler toys, or ones that they have made themselves, to more sophisticated play-things.



This type of toy is often the parent's present to himself/herself through the child

On the other hand, sales of cheap trashy toys have rocketed, and people have become accustomed to buying them because they cost virtually nothing. This situation is dangerous because it turns toys into banal, commonplace objects which are less desirable and worthy of respect, and makes the child feel surfeited with them.

An illustration of this is provided by an incident which took place in a big metropolis. Passers-by were obliged to make a detour to avoid being hit on the head by projectiles thrown from one of the windows of a very tall building. The projectiles were in fact children's toys, some of them still in their plastic packaging!

The single, solitary child is typically showered with toys by parents who are too busy to spend time with him or her, and who hope to make up for their absence by extravagant presents. In fact, what a child needs in order to play is the presence or participation of others. Toys on their own are meaningless, and it is only when they become part of a world of meaning and human relationships that they acquire significance and value. Simply buying toys is not enough: one must also know how to present them to the child, conferring prestige on the toys by participating in the child's play and taking an evident interest in what he or she does with them.

Children's happiness is not measurable by the number of toys they possess, especially since, given enough time, they will invent their own.

At an exhibition of toys from all over the world, organized by Unesco in 1978, the public's admiration was aroused by the ingenuity of the toys invented by children themselves, e.g. a car made out of a coat-hanger with four empty tin cans as wheels.

Psychological theories stress the contribution of various types of stimulus to the child's mental development, and certain educational materials have proved so successful that parents have run away with the idea that the more games and toys they buy their children, the greater will be their development. If it is to be effective, however, stimulation (even sensory) must take place within a relational framework. The quantity of toys is in fact less important than their quality and the way in which the playthings are used.

The accumulation of static, lifeless toys which are no more than highly realistic miniatures of objects from the adult world is unlikely to foster the child's powers of inventiveness, or his faculty for manipulation and interacting; indeed, it is likely to encourage a taste for hoarding. Good design and robustness are not the only criteria to be applied in choosing playthings. A simple, sturdy toy that provides children with opportunities to adapt and put it to different uses, thereby enabling them to create and construct, is more likely to stimulate their imagination, release creative energy and encourage co-operation.

An interest in education for peace inevitably raises the question of martial toys. These form a constantly expanding arsenal of ever larger, ever-more terrifyingly realistic play weapons. This category also includes many new toys and games based on science fiction, representing powerful superheroes armed with remarkable weapons that are invincible. Toys of this kind may well encourage violent impulses and behaviour, and sustain a warlike attitude among children. It is surely disgraceful to encourage children to imitate murderous acts and to give them deadly weapons that are the shame of

mankind. Indeed, a number of countries have felt the need to take action to protect children against this form of incitement to violence.

For example, during the International Year of the Child, the Swedish Government banned the sale of war toys as from 8 January 1979. On 13 September 1982, the European Parliament decided by 82 votes to 45 (with 12 abstentions) to outlaw play weapons in the countries of the European Community. The text emphasized the dangers of giving children a taste for weapons, and recommended that 'the production and sale (of warlike toys) be gradually reduced and replaced with constructive toys'. An amendment was adopted which in particular called for the prohibition of imitation rifles, pistols, etc.

Needless to say, there are those who feel that such laws are highly unrealistic, given the fact that in real life arms continue to proliferate, and children can see them in use. Some people even consider that play weapons can actually provide children with an outlet for their aggressiveness, and that the deep-rooted causes of violence are more likely to be found in the many different forms of aggression that adults inflict on their children.

A survey of (boys') playthings is enough to give one the shivers:

Pride of place goes to the tank, ranging from the Japanese 'Chi-tank' to the 'Sheridan', the 'Chieftan', the 'K 102 M 48', the 'scorpion', and finally the 'Leopard A 4', the 'hot competitor of our AMX 30'. All the tanks come equipped with 'authentic' caterpillar treads, swivel gun turrets, various hatchways, and directional guns, 76 mm in diameter.

Next there are the toy guns, comprising some 30 different revolvers and rifles with names like the 'Viper', the 'Bulldog', 'Susan 90', 'up to date', 'aggiornato', the 'Fantastic Flash Pistol', etc., all of which are to be found in the catalogue of a major Italian producer. Games such as 'Tankattack', produced by Nathan, enable the younger generation to engage in warfare using 'writeyour-own-programme' computers. Each participant is chief of the armed forces of a country and commands eight tanks and four armoured cars.

Finally, there is the Big E, the first nuclear-powered warship. It carries 90 aircraft, has a crew of 5,500, weighs 89,000 tons, and needs refuelling only once in 15 years. The model Big E is 85 cm long, and constitutes the ideal toy for a futuristic megalomaniac.

Children's games always draw their inspiration from the culture in which they are invented, and are influenced by their surroundings.

For example, in societies which set great store by motherhood, little girls generally show a marked preference for dolls. On the other hand, in families where the mother has her own career or goes in for a great deal of sport, little girls tend to prefer other kinds of game, although they do not entirely abandon playing with dolls.

The popularity of war-games may depend on the prestige attached to weapons, or on a particular culture's admiration for power; in this case, the

1. Pourquoi apprendre aux enfants a jouer a la guerre

(Why Teach Children War-games?) by Jean-Marie Baudlet, MIR-IRG: Education a la Paix, rue Van Elewyck, 35-1050 Bruxelles.

child does not need to be given a toy gun, since he can pretend he has one simply by using two outstretched figures. Even if play weapons should prove to be less harmful than some people suggest, they would still appear to be somewhat unnecessary, and one can level the same criticisms at them as at any other overly sophisticated, exaggeratedly lifelike plaything.

What counts is not the toy but the game. By experiencing simulated violence through play, children can learn how to control their own violence, and they know that what they are doing is 'just for fun'.

'Bang' You're dead', says the child.

There is a risk that the distance created by the use of a play weapon, the focusing of interest on it, and the projections that it may engender, will undermine the child's instinctive understanding of a directly antagonistic relationship and an external object may be blamed for something that is rooted in human nature. Many adults themselves tend to believe that to guarantee peace one need only prohibit weapons, thereby overlooking the fact that wars begin in the minds of men.

While the social and cultural context plays a part in the choice of toys, the age of the child is also a factor. In large families, toys may be handed down from one child to another, but in the case of the only child who has too many toys, there is the question of what to do with the playthings he or she has grown out of. Even very young children can be made aware of inequalities between people, and can be taught to give away some of their cast-off toys, and even those that they still play with.

At Christmas, the children in some schools in France and Belgium donate toys to a collection made specially for children in orphanages or victims of wars and natural disasters. Sometimes the children gift-wrap their donations themselves and are very proud to carry them out to the collecting van.

Naturally, certain precautions must be taken to ensure that the donations are hygienic, for toys may have been left lying anywhere, or children may have put them in their mouths, so that some freshening-up is necessary.

Another way of ensuring that each child's store of toys is circulated to the whole community is to donate playthings to a toy and game library, from which toys can be taken out on loan, just as one borrows books from a lending library.

The library may be set up by the children of the nursery school themselves, each member either giving or lending some toys. This helps to circulate the toys among the children and gives each child an opportunity to possess different playthings for a time. Youngsters are thus able to discover the advantages of pooling their treasures and the need to respect common property.

Toy and game libraries set up for a neighbourhood community provide a new form of cultural activity that can be highly conducive to education for peace. Since children of all ages and their parents are free to use the libraries, there are games for all age-groups, and parents are willing to play with their children and their friends. The pleasure of playing brings together people from all walks of life, whatever their age, sex, social background, origins, language or religion. The libraries provide a place where people can meet in



an atmosphere free from segregation and competition. They are designed for sharing the pleasures of playing together, and as such they are a new kind of social environment which can contribute to the mental health of the community.

Toy and game libraries

Some people claim that the first library of this kind was set up in India; others that the first one appeared in 1934 in the U.S.A. In Europe, the trend for toy and game libraries is said to have been set in Denmark (in 1959 or thereabouts) and in Sweden (1963).

At present, in France, there are more than 300 such libraries, and the one in Mâcon alone (which is supplemented by a 'Toy and Games Bus') serves more than 250 schools.

In the United Kingdom, for disabled children alone, there are over 400 libraries of this kind.

Toy and game libraries are set up by educators, cultural associations, religious and secular clubs, family welfare bureaux, hospitals, social centres, works associations, community centres, neighbourhood organizations, tenants' associations, libraries, etc.

This kind of library can also encourage international understanding by introducing toys and games from other cultures, especially those of the various cultural communities represented locally. They can preserve the cultural heritage and enhance creativity by building up a stock of traditional toys, as well as playthings made by local craftworkers and by children themselves.

Toy and game libraries could prove particularly useful in the countries of the Third World. First, because children in these countries do not have enough toys to play with, and playing needs to be better understood and appreciated; and second, because playing eases the tension and aggressiveness experienced by children in families from deprived areas. This kind of library often helps to improve relations within families, for at the library, family members can meet in a different context where they can forget their troubles and enjoy themselves.

Clearly, however, toy and game libraries must respect the cultural characteristics of the locality, and can be set up only after a preliminary study of the latter.

5. Play as a means to peace through happiness

Through the joy it brings, play helps to form cheerful, optimistic personalities, and can thus contribute to peace, since happy people tend to be better balanced and less aggressive.

Since parents and teachers usually want children to be happy, they should endeavour to create an atmosphere conducive to play, and reduce the amount of tension they introduce into children's lives, without, however, completely ceasing to make demands on the children, for even though they are playing, children are capable of earnestness and concentration. They are able to set themselves challenges which are often much more difficult than the easy, boring tasks that adults impose on them.



Everyone tries to make a baby laugh, but once the child has grown up with an inclination to laugh at things, people start chiding him or her for laughing'

Laughter and games relieve tension, and have a liberating therapeutic effect. By seeing the funny side of a situation, one defuses it and renders it easier to cope with. For example, oppressed peoples protect themselves by making up a great many jokes, which are a kind of play activity for the mind.

Play also has a psychotherapeutic effect on children, for only through play can a child with repressed emotions and feelings of guilt express those inner conflicts without feeling even more guilty.

Children have a natural tendency to play at frightening one another in order to exorcise their fears. Games such as Big Bad Wolf are a way of learning to control one's fear or to laugh it off. At the nursery school, games and activities concerned with self-expression, and especially psycho-dramas, likewise have a positive effect by providing an outlet for painful emotions and an opportunity for resolving conflicts and gaining control of difficult situations.

While a child may be isolated by the fact of possessing his or her own toys (especially if he or she refuses to lend them), the true act of playing implies a relationship, i.e. contact and communication. This explains why

traditional games do not usually rely on the use of a toy. The child's own body, and the bodies of his playmates, are both the passive and the active participants in the game (miming, dancing in a ring, playing at hide-and-seek, leapfrog, etc.) and in cases where an object is used in the game, it is often chosen quite arbitrarily (e.g. the item hidden in hunt-the-thimble).

The main point of the game is to be with one's friends and to have a good time together. Laughing with someone opens the door to a more intimate relationship, because it implies a shared emotional state. Being with friends tends to trigger laughter, because friendship establishes beneficial and invigorating emotional harmony.

Spoilt children often sit unhappily amid their toys, while children who have nothing are happily playing with their many playmates.

In countries where education is highly developed, children's lives are so restricted by a crowded schedule that they have no opportunity to establish spontaneous contacts, or to spend their time freely and happily.

Rules not only define how a game is played but also determine how difficult it is to be. Moreover, they constitute rules of social behaviour which ensure that the players can reach agreement. By learning to abide by the rules and to overcome the desire to break them, one discovers how to cope with difficulties, control one's emotions, respect other players' rights and opportunities, show honesty and integrity, agree to wait one's turn, and take an interest in the way other people play. Learning to lose without being discouraged or resentful, i.e. while still enjoying the game, is a productive way of getting used to approaching life's difficulties from a positive angle.

In group games, even the most undisciplined children can learn to abide by the rules, and there is no need for authoritarian adult intervention.

Adults should set an example in the games they play among themselves or with their children. They should try not to cheat or to give the impression that they must always be the winner, and should be able to lose with equanimity.

The idea of 'winners' and 'losers' is foreign to the mind of the very young child, but is often introduced prematurely and ill-advisedly by adults. It taints the game by adding to it an irrelevant social significance and distorts an activity that is its own reward and requires neither outside approval nor independent standards of success.

Even if the game itself does not contain any challenge justifying the use of certain phrases such as 'Who'll get there first?', 'Who's going to win the most?', etc., adults tend to use these phrases to introduce an element of competition into the game by way of encouragement.

Unduly frequent and systematic use of prompting of this kind is likely to give too much incentive to children with domineering personalities, and may instil in them a burning desire to win at any price.

While at play, a child is constantly comparing his achievements with those of other children, and using them as an incentive to go one better - a process that is all part of the game. But it is likely to be distorted and, as it were, alienated, if aims and assessments charged with the full weight of adult opinion are brought to bear on it from outside. Unless the teacher is very careful on this point, bitter rivalry can result.

The presence of an impartial outside observer is sometimes required to make sure that the rules of the game are kept. This is precisely the role of the referee, who, in his own way, takes part in the game because he fulfils a necessary function in it. Even in adult sports, however, the game can quickly degenerate into a show of aggressiveness when outside spectators intrude their own personal emotions and irrelevant social motives are allowed to interfere.

A supervisor at an international school bemoaned the unduly aggressive atmosphere reigning in the playground on the day after a major football match. The children of the same nationality as the losing team were trying to take their revenge on the pupils of the same nationality as the winning team, each side finding supporters among the remaining children.

It is not difficult to see how an exaggerated spirit of competition can mar the development of a true community spirit.

In the ritual games found in the traditions of certain pre-Colombian cultures, one of the rules specified which team was to win, just as, in a theatrical play, the fate of the characters is determined in advance. These games, then, left no room for the spirit of competition, and social unity was preserved.

It is worth noting that sports and some indoor games use martial terminology, e.g. there is the 'adversary' who has to be 'beaten' by means of a 'strategy', these are the 'victors' and the 'defeated', and so on. It is possible to regard such games, and especially sports requiring the full use of one's physical energies, as a playful, non-lethal substitute for war. Assuming that the lust for combat is an ineradicable and even a necessary human attribute, it is reasonable to suggest that competitions of this kind should be encouraged, since they provide an outlet for passions which might otherwise find expression in a more violent and deadly form. The rules and discipline that games impose, the change of opponents, and so on, mean that sports can help particularly violent individuals to gain a better grip on their aggressive impulses.

Given that rivalry is not the only kind of relationship it might perhaps be possible to go one step further and ensure that games play a more positive part in fostering peace by popularizing games based on co-operation, so that gradually they come to replace those based on competition.

Having noted the large sector of the market that is now occupied by new games (especially electronic ones) based on battle strategies, several non-governmental organizations are concentrating their efforts on inventing games based on peaceful pursuits.

The question is, can peacelike games be as exciting? Is it possible to generate the kind of dynamism inherent in competitive games while avoiding the aggressiveness caused by confrontations? For example, games that stimulate people's creativity are just as exciting, and an effort could be made to invent creative games involving an entire group.

At a Unesco Associated Nursery School, a large number of rights took place in the playground at the beginning of the year. The teachers took care to play down the importance of the conflicts and began to direct the children's attention towards the search for solutions. Soon the children were inventing games for the playground, constructing the necessary apparatus, trying it out, making up rules and improving the way these

were put into practice. The end-of-year school fete included all the games the children had devised during the year. 'We could have invented more', the children remarked. 'We've got lots more ideas'.

Young children like to test themselves by fighting, and we do not think that all forms of competition should be banished, and still less that aggressiveness should be repressed. Competition should not, however, constitute the only form of encouragement, and if it is used, it can advantageously be counterbalanced or supplemented by other kinds of motivation. This approach should ensure that competition does not cause overdeveloped aggressive and domineering tendencies, for it allows other tendencies to balance these out, thus making for a more rounded personality.

For example, in the United States, local 'Easter-egg hunts' are organized for young children. At the word 'go', the children have to fill up their baskets with all the hidden sugar eggs. Needless to say, the older children find more eggs than the younger ones. When everyone has proudly shown off how many eggs they have found, it might perhaps be an idea to play a game in which all the eggs are then shared out equally, and thus reinforce the community spirit.

Some societies are fond of competitions of all kinds, and beauty queens are very popular. This is the quest for absolute perfection. Children, however, show that they are able to arrive at more subtle, balanced judgements.

A class of young children in Hungary organized a dog show by bringing in photographs of a large number of canines. In trying to decide which dog really was the most beautiful, the children made the discovery that while one dog had very fine eyes, another had a handsome coat, a third had lovely ears, etc., and that it was impossible to make a decision because each dog had something special to recommend it. This was indeed a highly successful 'beauty contest', in which love and genuine understanding of life came into their own.

Through the joy that it releases and communicates, and through its propensity to foster community and personal relationships, play can undoubtedly help to strengthen peace. The condition for this, however, is that the element of competition and rivalry it contains, which makes play more exciting, should not become so exaggerated that it takes all the fun and joy out of play, reducing it to a merciless battle. The atmosphere in which play takes place is crucial, and it is the task of parents and teachers to be vigilant about this.

Experiments have shown that when the leisure activities of youngsters in poorer neighbourhoods are organized constructively, the delinquency rate goes down.

Because they are community events, fairs and fetes can have a beneficial influence, and they should be revived, wherever they are showing signs of disappearing.

B. Oral tradition and children's literature

1. A means of cultural assimilation

Nursery rhymes, counting rhymes, folk tales and legends are passed down from one generation to the next, link up the generations and are an integral



part of the cultural heritage. Regional variations in oral tradition usually persist until musicians and writers set down the stories and songs in writing, at which point one particular variant tends to become the definitive version. Often, folk tradition is recorded at the very moment when it is beginning to die out.

With the development of modern educational methods and the demand for more rational learning, this kind of cultural heritage has attracted a great deal of criticism and has been excluded from many homes and schools. The main criticism has been that it tends far too often to dwell on the following points:

cruel and inhuman acts (abandonment of children, corporal punishment, cannibalism, etc.);

frightening figures of fantasy that may cause anxiety (wicked witches, fierce ogres, etc);

an outdated, undemocratic social order (princes, castles, common people plying trades that no longer exist, etc.).

The work of some psychoanalysts is now rehabilitating folk tradition by showing that it in fact embodies a symbolical language that speaks to the unconscious mind and can help the latter in its inner ruminations when difficulties and conflicts arise.

This is still a controversial question, but without entering into polemics, we can make the following observations:

1. The contents of the cultural heritage are in fact much less outdated than they seem. Corporal punishment is still extremely common at all levels of society, even if it is no longer an approved educational practice. While the plight of Tom Thumb may not mirror that of the children who hear histale, there are still many children who have been abandoned in one way or another, just as there are unfortunately millions of children whose parents have no food to give them. Social inequalities are still so great that every country continues to have 'princes' and its modern castles stand next door to poor hovels.
2. Each period of history colours the tradition in its own image. For example, in the Christian countries of the West, the characters in Biblical scenes have been represented over the centuries in contexts appropriate to each successive period, and in particular have been dressed in the clothes of the day. The same is true of legends and fables, for it is the message which counts and lasts, even though it can always be brought up to date and made to reflect contemporary tastes. Older versions -like old pictures -link us to the past and help us to understand it more easily.
3. Each historical era builds its own world of fantasy, and our own is no exception. The supermen one sees at the cinema may make the fairies and giants of yesteryear seem rather harmless and insipid, however.

Seen from the angle of education for peace, the cultural heritage clearly has a part to play, provided that it is presented in a positive way and that children are not encouraged to dismiss the creations of the past as ridiculous, unjust or cruel, thereby widening the gap of incomprehension between the generations.

The person telling a story may consider it necessary to make certain changes to adapt to the age of the children and to changing social attitudes (e.g. the roles and images of men and women, the characters' status, the nature of punishments, etc.). If we assume that behind these traditional tales there lies a certain philosophy of life, we find that they provide an opportunity for extremely constructive discussions.

For example, consideration of the conditions in which certain fairy-tale heroes and heroines lived (e.g. Snow White, Cinderella, Tom Thumb, etc.) helps to highlight various 'Rights of the Child' as laid down in the 1959 Charter.

Since children are themselves capable of creative thinking, they can take part in finding a moral to a story or inventing an ending to a fairy-tale.

In countries where tradition is still very much alive, the cultural heritage constitutes a treasure-house for children's education.

India provides a consummate example of a country with a strong oral tradition. It has thousands of stories, usually told by mothers or grandmothers at fireside gatherings or at bedtime. The tales all have different origins, subjects and purposes. Some deal with everyday life, describing how the children in the story discover familiar objects, the natural world and animals. Others are designed to help the child learn his native tongue and improve his pronunciation. Still others relate imaginary tales of kings, queens, warriors, etc. Stories are also told to help children learn about the lives of holy men and heroes, as well as the gods and goddesses in the vast pantheon of Indian mythology. Many tales are taken from the great religious texts of India: the Ramayana, the Puranas, the Mahabharata, the Upanishads, etc.

A large number of languages are spoken in India, but the basic oral tradition functions as an important cultural bond.

In countries where the oral tradition is no longer as vigorous and is under strong competition from the written word, a children's literature has sprung up which is not always in very good taste or inspired by the best possible motives. The stories are often flimsy, the illustrations crude, and the text poorly written, when not downright questionable. The authors of such books seem to think that only down-to-earth subjects are likely to interest children, or that it is imperative to make children laugh in order to please them, even if the authors have no idea how to be genuinely funny. In fact, children derive most enjoyment from stories which they can 'get their teeth' into and which give them substantial food for thought.

In contrast to this trashy literature, the artists and writers of many countries have made an outstanding effort to produce exquisite children's books with fine texts and excellent illustrations. Parents must therefore take care to give only high-quality books to their children, and those books need not necessarily be too expensive.

With regard to education for peace, the following standards should be applied when choosing children's books: absence of any hint of racism or other form of discrimination;

absence of cultural, sexual or social stereotypes; absence of any glorification of violence or justification of aggression;

presence of a positive message with regard to human relations, i.e. friendliness and sensitivity to others, etc.

2. A means of inculcating cultural values

Even in societies where children's books are easily obtainable, the pleasure of owning a book cannot replace the joy of listening to someone telling a story, and youngsters generally derive even greater enjoyment from a book once the story has been vividly told to them.

Verbal narrations establish a contact between the storyteller and his or her audience, and the art of story-telling involves using one's powers of expression to invest a simple tale with a strong emotional content. Depending on the way it is told, one and the same story may be either boring or exciting, and the same detail can seem vulgar or funny according to the tone in

which it is described. The story-teller creates the atmosphere of the tale, and an episode which might otherwise have seemed frightening can be heard without anxiety, provided that the tale is told in a reassuring way which suggests a happy ending. The sharing of emotions is what is important to the child, who thus does not feel alone when living through the adventure suggested by the story as it unfolds. The child is also able to interrupt with questions and comments, an interaction that can be skilfully encouraged by the story-teller.

Clearly, then, a story-teller who inspires feelings of peace and security will be all the more capable of enlisting stories in the cause of peace.

Apart from established tales, there are improvised ones that can greatly contribute to family peace. Transposing a problem into an imaginary setting is a way of portraying it more objectively, and in so doing, stories provide an easier and more congenial way of solving certain minor conflicts.

A Syrian woman recalls how her mother used to deal with the problem of children who refused to eat what was put in front of them. She would tell the story of a mother who, in similar circumstances, set the stewpot on the table as usual, but when she removed the lid, much to all the children's disappointment, the pot was full of pebbles. The story, which was probably expertly told, was a more effective way of stimulating the children's appetite than any amount of scolding.

Stories improvised to suit the occasion can help to cool the hot tempers that are bound to negate the values that one is trying to inculcate. They make it possible to communicate the educational message through metaphors which are much more striking and comprehensible to the mind of a child. All these little stories are gifts from parents to children, and keep open the lines of communication. Far too many parents think that they should constantly reason with their children, whereas a little imagination on their part would make them less tiresome and more effective.

Children are also very fond of stories which include them personally in the guise of children who have the same name and who are perhaps easily able to do things that they themselves find difficult. They also enjoy tales in which the main character is their own father or mother when he or she was small, as well as stories from their parents' schooldays.

Whether these stories originate in the family or elsewhere, they can also contribute to education for peace, provided that the story-teller takes care to place emphasis on such values as generosity, sharing, respect for people different from oneself, the desire to help smaller children and those in difficulty, etc.

In India, stories tend to explore themes such as self-control, sincerity, patience, perseverance, courage, orderliness, etc., and are used to further the moral, religious, mental and spiritual education of children.

In some Western countries, 'moralistic' stories are regarded as out of date, the prevailing theory being that they try to condition children to keep to patterns of behaviour that are rule-bound, restrictive and even Puritan or middle-class.

Peace is a value in itself, and imposes an educational choice. Even if adults are afraid of conditioning children to accept values that are imposed

rather than chosen, they can still encourage them to think about the stories they hear, find solutions to the problems posed in fairy-tales, express their opinions regarding the actions of the characters and the situations described, make up a different ending, deduce the moral of the tale by themselves, and invent their own stories.

3. A window on culture and society

Some folk tales have become part of the universal human heritage and are told all over the world. Others explore universal themes, but the names and outward features of the characters differ according to each culture.

The spread of mass communications and rapid distribution on a worldwide scale have meant that characters such as Mickey Mouse, Donald Duck, Snoopy and Tintin are known the world over. Children everywhere adopt them, identify with them and communicate through the fondness they feel for them.

It is possible to broaden children's cultural horizons by telling them stories that describe the lives of children in other countries.

For example, the story of Heidi, the little Swiss girl, is known in many countries, and for a large number of children it represents their first introduction to the lives that people lead or, rather, led at the time of the story -in the Swiss mountains.

Such stories must, of course, be highly objective and must not spread negative stereotypes. The efforts being made in this field mark a genuine step forward compared with the literature previously available.

C. Cinema, television and radio

In many countries, the media have assumed ever-greater importance at all levels of society, and today's computer revolution suggests that they will be used to an increasing extent in the home and the community. We must therefore examine the impact of this new technology on young children, especially as it has a bearing on education for peace.

1. The power of cinema, television and radio

The enormous popularity of these media places them in competition with written and oral tradition, and poses a threat to the latter.

Such great success highlights the specific features of messages broadcast by these media. These could indeed contribute to peace, but, like everything else, they can be ill-used and abused, and thus produce the opposite effect.

Cinema, television and radio provide a presence which breaks down the barriers isolating one human group or individual from another.

For the shepherd in the remote mountains of the Andes or the Himalayas, the transistor radio is a link with the outside world. Television provides company for lonely old people, and the telephone offers emergency services for those in physical or mental distress. Even very young children learn how to dial their parents' work number, and this gives them a feeling of security. Literacy and pre-school education programmes can be broadcast over a wide range of geographical regions.

These media also have an immediacy which annihilates distance in time and space, thus making the planet closer-knit and fostering world unity.

When an important event takes place in one part of the world, it is immediately known everywhere else. If need be, it can set in motion relief campaigns on a massive scale.

Even at a very early age, children are able to react to such events at nursery school, and teachers aware of the importance of training children in international mutual aid will seize this opportunity of involving young children in the international, national or local relief programme to which an event of this kind gives rise.

The immediacy of these media also has social repercussions, in that local intermediaries (e.g. newsbearers, teachers of coded languages, and message decipherers) are losing their importance. Illiterates of all ages now have direct, immediate access to the messages broadcast by radio and television, and these new means of communication have made information instantly more democratic. They bring a wide range of experience to those whose world is limited by such factors as illness, isolation, poverty or ignorance. Regardless of their social background, children tend to live in a world that is temporarily limited by their immaturity; the arrival of television has suddenly pushed back the boundaries of that world.

These media are attractive because of their liveliness and energy; they also have a potential effectiveness that has not yet been fully exploited. Recent techniques in sound and image manipulation have produced a dramatic rise in possibilities. The field is still wide open for exploration of these new technological resources for educational purposes, and considerable creative efforts must be made to put them to constructive, unrestricted use.

Because of its realism and dynamism, the cinema has an unparalleled power of suggestion which produces a deep impression on the mind, and often makes the other media seem feeble and dull in comparison. Those with power are under a considerable temptation to put their power to violent use. In this respect, cinema and television have been greatly criticized for their excesses. They are reproached with not having achieved the degree of self-control required to use their power in a constructive, balanced and discerning way.

These media have unrivalled power, not only to portray real-life situations, but also to create imaginary ones. They have even been accused of becoming the new 'opium of the people'.

In India, children and adults alike are enthusiastic cinema-goers. India has produced a great many films of varying quality, and popular screen stars enjoy an immense following. The roles they play provide models of behaviour, and influence people's self-image. This often leads to behavioural patterns that are totally out of keeping with the children's everyday environment.

2. The use of television programmes

The amount of time spent at the cinema and in front of the television, and the type of influence that they exert, produce an educational effect that we shall now examine from the point of view of education for peace.

Various studies have indicated that many children spend more time watching television than they spend at school. Some parents habitually abandon their children in front of the television screen for hours at a stretch, with the result that they learn to speak very late. As with the phenomenon known as the 'hospital syndrome', it is not enough for the children to hear people speaking around them in order to learn the language: the child also needs to be personally involved in situations where language is used, and to have someone who not only speaks to him or her but expects an answer.

The 'company' provided by television is not valid unless the child already has access, or is about to gain access, to more direct forms of communication and is capable of establishing relations with those in the immediate vicinity.

Too much television at a very tender age may well reduce a child's ability to form relationships and sense of conviviality, qualities that are of paramount importance throughout life, and essential for establishing peaceful relations.

The all-pervading presence of sounds and images in turn triggers a continual need for external stimulus of this kind. Many people can no longer live without music permanently playing in the background, as evidenced by the proliferation of radio-cassette players (often equipped with headphones) seen on aircraft, trains, in cars and even carried by people as they walk alone. Some people even sleep with them playing under their pillows. This unfortunate custom is taking over in schools. Silence is necessary for complete rest and is a symbol of inner peace, but it has come to seem like a frightening vacuum. Indeed, audio-visual stimulation has become a kind of addictive drug, without which life is unbearable.

This glut of images does not constitute a true store of material to draw on because it is likely to stifle creativity. What is important is to be able to control one's inner images, combine them and thus produce original, personal creations through the fertile workings of the imagination.

The vividness or dullness of the image depends entirely on the sensitivity of the mind receiving it. Too much stimulation tends to blunt sensitivity and children become jaded and blasé.

At a New York nursery school, the older children were shown a screening of a fine and moving documentary film. The teachers were very disappointed, however, to hear the pupils commenting afterwards on how boring they thought the film had been.

Scenes of violence either traumatize children or eventually desensitize them, for it is in this way that sensitivity protects itself. In the long term, violence becomes a commonplace and natural occurrence. One grows accustomed to it, just as one becomes used to war, and the sight of violence strengthens the onlooker's aggressive impulses.

Another criticism levelled at television is that it leads to passivity. At an early age, children quickly learn how to turn on a radio or television, whereas it takes a great deal of time and effort to learn to read. A printed page does not have the same immediate appeal as a visual image, and its content is not as readily understandable. The consumer society gives people 'everything, immediately and all the time', but this easy way of obtaining things is a poor preparation for the attainment of difficult goals through

time and effort, and for appreciation of the time and space needed for an achievement. Goals that require little effort are not very highly valued, and this considerably diminishes respect for them.

A further difficulty with television is the fact that its images, even of fictional subjects, are so realistic that it is difficult for youngsters to distinguish between fact and fiction. Films can engender many illusions, even for adults, and can cause people to lose touch with reality. By depicting social scenes that contrast wildly with the real world, television and cinema can provoke a reaction that is little short of a culture shock, causing frustration and delusions, and upsetting the individual's cultural identity.

Precisely because radio and television are such powerful instruments, they are not without risk, and children should not be exposed to them without caution and discernment.

Adult intervention is essential to the productive use of this particular source of information and knowledge.

First and foremost, parents should place limits on the time spent tuned in to these media, especially those which are extremely easy to switch on, being household appliances, e.g. television. Already, less and less time remains for play that is active, creative and free, and it should not be invaded by too much television.

Parents must therefore ensure that their children observe a code of family discipline which they, as parents, must first impose on themselves; for it is all too easy to keep the children quiet by parking them in front of the television, or to ignore them while watching a programme for adults.

With the advent of more and more television channels, cable television and video cassettes, the wide choice of programmes constitutes an even greater temptation. Too much food for the mind is not necessarily any better than too much food for the body. In an affluent society, people have instant access to all the good food they want, so that health is maintained only by strict dieting, and the body has to learn to forgo certain things. Similarly, strict rules of moderation must be observed in order to protect the minds of children, and even of adults, from a surfeit of information. This is a field which requires a considerable effort as far as mental health is concerned. In this connection, it is also worth remembering the harmful effects that excessive television-viewing can produce on children's eyes and ears. Since the senses of sight and hearing are essential to the development of the individual, special care should be taken of them.

The spoken and written word can almost pass unnoticed, but this is much more difficult for radio and television. Neighbours may complain about the noise they make, but quite apart from that, radio and television are even more intrusive in the home. How can children living in a cramped apartment be protected from their influence when the children's parents cannot do without radio and television?

Children and adults watch their own respective programmes, and this division of viewing time not only drives a greater wedge between children and parents, but also severs the parents from a considerable part of the world of childhood. In fact, children need adequate company as they watch television or see films at the cinema. They require opportunities to talk about what they have seen, not only to their peers, but also to adults capable of providing

whatever explanations may be called for. Parents concerned with maintaining intimacy and communication at home will make sure that radio and television stimulate, rather than supplant, family conversations.

By paying attention to the things that children see and their reactions to them, parents and other educators can help them to expand their critical faculties, correct their mistaken interpretations, and adjust their scale of values. This educational presence is the only way of mitigating the dangers mentioned earlier, concerning the sense of reality, contrasts with the immediate environment, and the individual's cultural identity. Children need to be able to fit the information they receive into a wider frame of reference, one that defines the scope of the information and reveals its true meaning.

Since parents' availability is curtailed by professional obligations, teachers should continue the work started by the parents, i.e. being with children when they are exposed to the media. The teachers' interest should not confine itself to television programmes and radio broadcasts produced specially for schools, for the programmes least adapted to children's interests are those for which the teacher's intervention is most required.

The Japanese film 'Goldorak' was a tremendous success with French youngsters, and a group of nursery schools in the Alsace region decided to carry out a survey aimed at enabling children to compare their opinions, overcome their fear or aggressiveness, arrive at a clearer distinction between fact and fiction, and define more precisely the status of the robot as compared with that of a human being. At first, most of the children said that they would like to be Goldorak because he was unbeatable, but by the end, some children could see his limitations and gave the following reasons for not wanting to be Goldorak:

'He can't do anything without being programmed'; 'I wouldn't like to be controlled by buttons and do what other people want me to do'; 'When something breaks, no one wants it any more, and it gets thrown away'; etc.

The experiment was highly instructive for the teachers and enabled them to convert the images of an aggressive technology into a constructive, peace-oriented discussion.

As soon as children are able to begin handling appliances, direct personal use of these is the best way of demystifying them, and of introducing modern technology into the world of play and creative activity. The guidance of a teacher is nevertheless required to achieve this. While the many electronic games currently flooding the market may stimulate interaction, they do not develop the individual's constructive abilities, nor do they enable children to master simpler, intermediate technologies.

For the International Year of the Child, the French Committee for UNICEF organized an international symposium on 'The Child and Technology' in Strasbourg (France). During the symposium, films shot in Spain were shown in which primary-school children were seen building clockwork toys that they had invented by themselves, using a minimum of extremely simple technological equipment.

The experience indicated that by devoting their play to building and constructing, children can learn about technology, and feel at home in a man-made world which should create not destruction but joy and comfort.

If the the family collaborates in producing a home-movie on holiday, sharing the difficulties of editing shots and adding a sound track, the pleasure and pride felt by everyone as the first images flicker on to the screen will help to introduce this medium into the creative life of the family. Of course, cine cameras and film are still quite expensive, so this kind ~~initiati-~~ve is more accessible to schools and leisure centres than to families, provided, of course, that these institutions themselves enjoy the considerable resources that countries with advanced technologies can afford.

An interesting experiment was carried out by the Experimental Music Group of Bourges ¹ (France), who constructed an electro-acoustic instrument on which nursery-school children could play. The instrument included simple listening games - the auditory equivalent of traditional visual ones - designed to help children distinguish one type of sound from another through creative play.

In the intellectual field, Seymour Papert at the Massachusetts Institute of Technology (U.S.A.) some 15 years ago produced an electronic 'tortoise' suitable for programming by children. His work may be regarded not so much as training for 'whizz-kids', as a means of using games to provide children with a pleasant introduction to technology: a method that could one day be extended to children everywhere.

At a time when, in some respects, technology seems to pose a growing threat to humankind, it is important that technology should not be seen as an instrument for one group of people to use against another. In order to foster the hope that technology may some day be used to improve the comfort of humankind as a whole, instead of giving toy weapons to children, adults should teach them games which enable them to gain control over technology, starting at a simple level and working up to the more complex, and help them to feel at ease rather than threatened in a man-made world that is both powerful and fascinating. There are certain professions in which the individual can sublimate aggressive or sadistic tendencies (e.g. blacksmith, surgeon, etc.). Constructive technological games should help to channel the energy wasted in playing with toy weapons towards more positive, inventive constructions that enable children to become useful, creative and peaceful members of societies that are becoming increasingly technological.

3. The content of television programmes

The need to place limits on the time spent watching television is amplified by the fact that programmes are by no means uniformly excellent and one is forced to be selective, if only in order to eliminate programmes that may have a harmful influence.

(a) Subjects to be avoided

As far as education for peace is concerned, the comments made with regard to children's literature apply equally to the cinema, television and radio. Harmful films and programmes are those which extol violence, seek to justify discrimination based on ethnic origin or on social, physical, age or sex differences, or which portray countries, regions, social classes and societies by means of over-simplified, misleading stereotypes.

1. Groupe de Musique Experimentale de Bourges.



Children often appear on programmes produced for young people, but regardless of whether they are shown in films or animated cartoons, a vital point is that the image projected by a child character, whatever the character's traits of personality, must never be made ridiculous. Indeed, it is important that children should be able to identify with the heroes of television programmes, and certain children should not be made to suffer by being nicknamed after a child television character well-known for being ridiculous. Also, it is highly distasteful to witness children being made to say things that are out of keeping with their age by aping adult behaviour. Such children are simply being used for the misplaced and unfair entertainment of grown-ups.

Children should be shown as they really are, with all their dignity, aspirations, joy and life-force, even if this means including the mistakes and errors of judgement which they, like everyone else, are capable of committing.

(b) Subjects to be encouraged

In the hope of improving the contribution that the media can make to world peace, we wish in particular to list those subjects which, in our view, ought to be given prominence, principally in children's programmes.

(i) Knowledge of other cultures

Provided that they do so honestly and in a positive spirit, programmes showing life in the vast range of societies throughout the world help to broaden children's conception of what is human and expand their awareness of belonging to the human race. In particular, by showing the way that children live in other cultures and geographical regions they can develop a child's empathy, admiration, solidarity, and desire to meet others. This assumes, however, that the programmes always show children as having their own specific fine qualities and vitality, whatever the disabilities or deprivations that otherwise afflict them.

The more such programmes succeed in showing how vain and pointless prejudice is, the better they will be. In this respect, films in which a particular ethnic group speaks for itself are usually quite effective. Others should be produced which help children understand the relative nature of social customs. For example, some delightful children's films could be made on the following subjects: the different forms hospitality can take throughout the world; how gestures of greeting vary from one country to another;

the codes of correct conduct practised in various social and cultural environment.

Another idea might be to make a charming and useful animated cartoon telling children how to say 'Thank you' in the world's most widely spoken languages.

Of particular interest for children are programmes which show the various festivals, children's games, dances and songs of the different countries of the world.

(ii) Human relations

Programmes showing families in which good relations exist among all the family members can contribute to education for peace by the example that they can set. In particular, scenes in which minor squabbles are settled peacefully and without histrionics can, in some instances, help to release the tension from similar situations in the viewers' own lives, especially if they are humorously portrayed.

Scenes aimed at adults might show children's games that are inspired by unreasonable behaviour on the part of parents, and such scenes could have a dissuasive effect by bringing home to adults the consequences that behaviour of this kind can produce in the minds of children.

In Finland, the Central Union for Childhood Protection has produced highly successful film sequences which are broadcast between television commercials.



In one of them, a very small girl is watching television with her large rag doll. Suddenly she cries: 'Oh' What a horrible film « , covering the doll's eyes with her hand. 'You're not watching this. It's not meant for children' It's time for you to go to bed «

Dragging the doll to the stairs, the little girl starts climbing up, strenuously pulling the huge doll by its arm, as if hauling an unwilling child behind her. As she pulls and heaves, she delivers the following speech in a charmingly childish voice: 'I told you to get to bed' Go on' Right this minute! D'you hear me' If you don't go, you're getting a smack. Oh, what a naughty girl you are' You have to be given a hiding every single night. Will you do as you're told' Just look what time it is' And tonight, don't you dare get up again for something. If you don't listen to what I say, I'll shut the door and you can stay in the dark all by yourself' .

The final shot closes in on the doll, abandoned in bed. Two tears trickle down its cheeks and the doll is abruptly plunged into the dark. The viewer's amused smile suddenly freezes in serious thought as an adult voice says simply, 'Parents, think about what you say to your children'.

To encourage a more objective approach to the problems that arise in relationships between children, live sequences could be filmed showing how children argue and quarrel while at play, and indicating how these disputes come to an end (fights, exclusion, agreement, compromise, invention of new rules of play, etc.). The sequences could perhaps be supplemented by more films, this time of the discussions sparked off among groups of young viewers by the sequences. The discussions might subsequently be continued in the family, at school, in fact wherever the programme is watched. Sequences of this kind would be particularly effective if all those involved had some points in their favour, with no division into 'goodies' and 'baddies'. It is crucial to peace that each individual's behaviour should have scope to develop independently and with a full understanding of the fact that situations can be complex, and points of view relative.

This kind of education obviously discourages the systematic taking of sides, all too common in our society, in which the parties decide in advance on how they are going to argue, not because their arguments are true or just, but because they are thought to give them the best chance of winning an election or a court case, for example.

(iii) Community life and international solidarity

Also worthy of encouragement are programmes showing the work carried out by international organizations, the activities of nongovernmental organizations and of local committees engaged in work to promote international solidarity. Even at a very early age, children can take part in these activities, and the media could second them in this, for however small the children's contribution, it has value as an example and can play an important part in education.:

A class of nursery-school children in Alsace (France) took part in the solidarity movement to help victims of a recent earthquake in southern Italy. As a result, the association in charge of relief operations published in its newsletter the message accompanying the modest donation that the children had scraped together from their moneyboxes and by saving money that they would otherwise have spent on sweets.

Peace can also be strengthened by exchange programmes between twinned cities and communities, and greater emphasis could be placed on contacts and exchanges between children. In particular, the twinning of 'educational communities', if properly prepared and organized by both communities, can contribute a great deal to international understanding, and can establish lasting links between the families concerned. It would be a distinct advantage to bring the more successful projects to the attention of a larger audience.

Nowadays, small girls take the liberty of writing to Heads of State, thus indicating that children can be actively present on the international scene. Indeed, children are intimately and directly concerned with matters of war and peace, for the future belongs to them.

Radio and television yield opportunities for direct contact, even to those who have not yet learned to read and write, but so far this resource has not been sufficiently exploited. Programmes in which children are given a chance to express themselves are produced mainly for the entertainment of adults. New programmes should be devised which enable messages to pass from child to child on a worldwide scale.

At the more modest level of correspondence between educational establishments, the exchange of photographs, colour slides, cassettes, and even amateur movies, can constitute an extremely lively and concrete form of contact in cases where it is not possible for children to meet in person because of the geographical distances involved.

4. Development of the personality

Children's programmes always set out to be entertaining, but this does not mean that they should ignore good taste or the possibility of educating and instructing children as well as entertaining them. In too many cases, superficial little stories are a waste of time, and betray scant knowledge of what children are really like. In fact, children must be constantly growing, and therefore their reach always exceeds their grasp.

Another kind of advantage, and a possible source of inspiration, can be gained from stories which give prominence to the spirit of quest and adventure, the wish to discover and understand, personal courage and self-control, generosity, love of justice, the joys of friendship, etc. All major successes in children's literature and entertainment are based on one or other of these values, even if, in other respects, they warrant a certain amount of criticism.

These values exist only by contrast with the possibility of a different attitude. There can be no question of showing reality as one-dimensional, which is altogether an illusion. Furthermore, as already stated, the purpose of education for peace is not to produce docile children who accept everything without protest. A certain amount of non-violent pugnacity, calm forcefulness, resistance to pressure, and firm resolve to see justice done are vital to the establishment of an atmosphere of peace.

5. The world of work

The segregation of children in schools and adults in offices, workshops and factories means that, with the exception of a handful of publicly visible professions, children have no knowledge of the working world or, in particular, of their parents' occupation.

Fascinating films could be made for children showing them what a varied range of useful professions exists, and the specific skills that these require. The films could give due credit to the labours of men and women, especially those who practise the most humble and arduous trades, by showing how ~~hard-~~king they are and the pride they take in what they do.

Simple means could also be used to show how work has evolved, e.g. how the grandparents' working conditions were very different from the parents', and involved the use of less complicated tools. In this way, children could be made aware of the future possibilities of modern technology; not only its benefits, but also its inherent dangers, against which humankind must take precautions. It is also important for children to recognize the component of human creativity in the way that a machine functions.



In order to foster peace, an effort should be made to bring home to children the importance of working relations based on collaboration, competition and subordination -the source of possible conflict -as well as the professional bodies appointed to deal with these relations. Young children generally notice only the more spectacular not to say violent -aspects of conflict. It is important, therefore, that they should also be aware of negotiation and conciliatory efforts and should sense the absolute need for these.

6. Animals and nature

Programmes showing animals are usually highly popular with children. Because their own systems of locomotion and perception are still at the formative stage, and because these represent the great achievements of the animal kingdom, children are quick to identify themselves with animals, and often envy their wild, free life.

The excellent documentaries that have been made, showing the highly complex behaviour of tiny insects, as well as the tremendous variety and

magnificence of the different species, can help to increase children's respect for life and foster their desire to protect it.

Most children are fond of life in the open air, and there are some fine programmes aimed at encouraging their love of nature. An effort should be made from nursery school upwards to teach children the elementary principles of ecology, so that they can contribute to the protection of the biological heritage for which humankind is collectively responsible.

Apart from providing an opening for movements of international solidarity, natural disasters can also give children an idea of the titanic power of nature, something that tends to be overshadowed by human achievements. Disasters are also a reminder of the fact that the planet has a life of its own, and that human beings must take account of it.

Respect for human life is one dimension of respect for life in general and an understanding of the necessary conditions for its preservation.

7. Accidents prevention and health care

The more varied and active children's lives, the more freedom to move and to experiment they are given, the more crowded with multifarious objects and products their environment, the more likely they are to meet with accidents.

Even today, traditional practices, the parents' occupation and the wish to shelter the child from falling down or having an accident prompt parents to restrain young children's freedom of movement.

In certain societies, all possible means are used to prevent the child from moving. During the first months of life, the baby is swaddled in thick bandages, and later it is placed in a cardboard box in which there is scarcely any room to sit up. The passive behaviour encouraged by such customs teaches the child the quiet, taciturn conduct that meets with the approval of the family and of society at large.

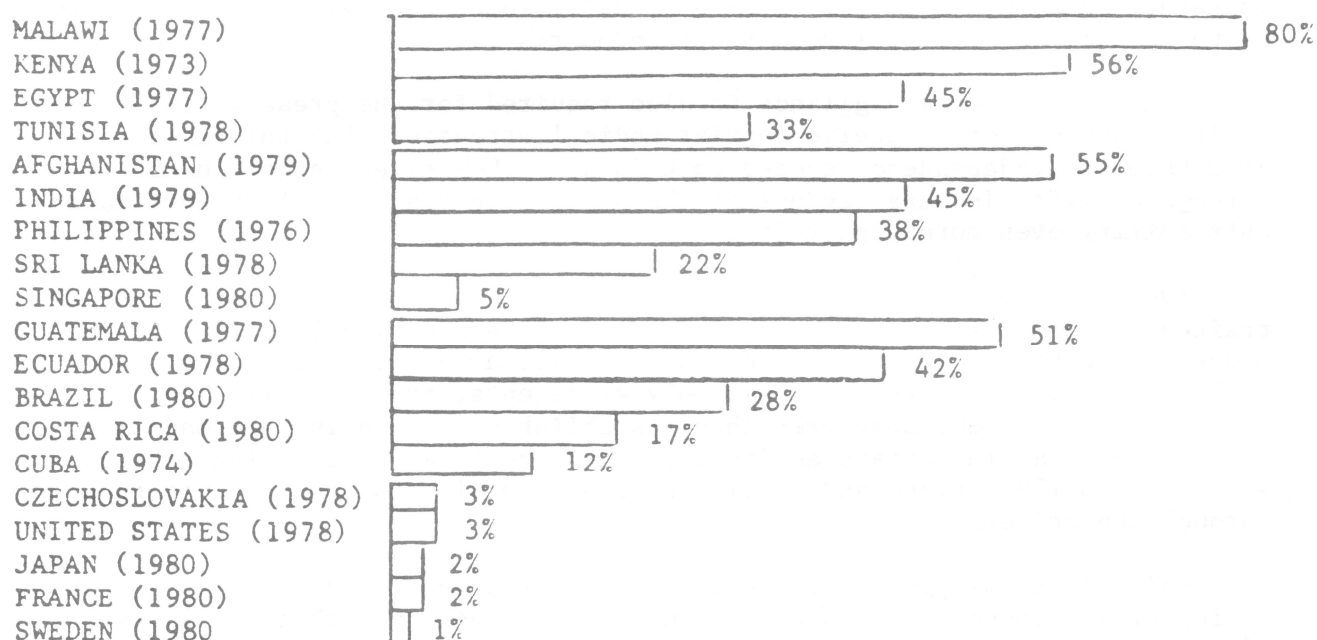
Human beings must live in a world fraught with dangers of all kinds, and the changes wrought upon the environment continually introduce new difficulties of adaptation and new sources of danger.

At a time when infant mortality rates are fortunately declining throughout the world, the number of children who die by misadventure is still too high. Furthermore, affluent societies generate their own sicknesses.

If children are to enjoy inward peace and outward social harmony, it is important to prepare them to face dangers of all kinds, but without taking excessive risks. They must not develop exaggerated fears or defence mechanisms likely to increase violence, nor should they have such a need for security that their scope for action is limited.

The current tendency is to overprotect children in big cities; parents keep their children indoors to prevent them falling victim to the many dangers of the street. Even though such protection is indeed necessary, it should not be excessive, nor should it lead to the segregation of children. Education in this area must start very early if the child is to live independently among all these sources of danger. This is not just the responsibility of teachers, for many accidents take place in the home as a result of parents' negligence.

Mortality rates of infants under the age of five, expressed as a percentage of total deaths in a sampling of countries.



Mortality rate of infants under the age of five, as a percentage of total deaths

Source: United Nations Demographic Yearbook 1981

N.B. These figures reflect differences not only between countries as far as mortality rates are concerned, but also differences in population distribution by age.

On a world scale, television could serve a very useful purpose by broadcasting regular programmes designed to warn parents and children against the many sources of danger, and indicating the habits to be cultivated if those dangers are to be avoided.

The International Children's Centre (Paris),¹ in collaboration with the French Committee on Health,² has produced an excellent film on the subject, entitled 'Just in Case'.³ While the film vigorously points out the many sources of mortal danger for children, it is careful not to encourage overprotection; instead, the film shows how parents can

1. Centre International de l'Enfance.
2. Comité Français pour la santé.
3. 'A tout risque'.

increase their children's confidence by living through experiences with them, and can help them gradually to gain control of certain types of danger.

In institutions for young children, the fear of accidents sometimes means that children's opportunities for exploration and discovery are limited. In fact, however, the less practice children acquire in facing risks, the more vulnerable they will be. What is required is proper supervision and conditions in which children can explore without undue risk.

Constant personal vigilance is also required for the preservation of good health. Some children receive regular medical attention, but this does not give them the independence needed to help keep themselves in good health throughout life. In many regions of the world, the scarcity of doctors makes this ability even more imperative.

Even at a very early age, children can be taught hygienic habits and trained to keep themselves in good health. Here again, local television could produce programmes tailored to the existing social and cultural conditions. Such programmes could be aimed not only at parents, as is usually the case, but also at children. Some pre-school establishments have in fact made the observation that in certain environments, the best way of teaching habits affecting bodily hygiene and nutrition to a community is to introduce them through the children.

While increased independence and self-confidence in overcoming fears help to foster an atmosphere of peace, it must be acknowledged that, in early childhood, self-confidence is first and foremost a matter of physical behaviour. Hence we feel that the kind of programmes we have described can also play a part in education for peace.

8. Pre-school education programmes for parents and young children

There is good reason to believe that benefit may be derived from programmes of advice to families concerning the education of young children, and from programmes for children who do not have access to pre-school education.

This type of programme has long been used in Australia for widely-scattered population groups. Now it is being adopted in a growing number of countries which face serious educational problems but which lack the immediate wherewithal to set up pre-school education systems that will meet the needs of the entire population concerned.

The programmes are aimed at both mother and child, but the mother is expected to take part with her child in the activities shown during the broadcast. Such programmes would seem particularly effective in improving communication between mother and child, and in helping the mother to understand the various mental processes that children must pass through in the course of their development.

9. Arts programmes

Radio, television and film are powerful means of educating the eye and the ear, and they can be very influential in awakening the child's sense of beauty. Children are able to appreciate painting, music, dance, in fact every art form, provided that these remain simple and invigorating.

Beautiful things transcend cultural barriers, and people separated by a different language and culture can come together as they contemplate the same work of art.

By virtue of their lively sensitivity, children can enter fully into the universal language of art. Accordingly, programmes aimed at cultivating the child's sense of beauty can contribute to education for peace by making known the creations that have stemmed from the particular genius of the various peoples of the world.

10. Entertainment programmes

Since they provide pleasure and a release of tension, entertainment programmes may be regarded as instrumental in promoting education for peace, with the reservation, however, that if laughter is provoked, it is not at the expense of other people. There are in fact several kinds of mirth: there is shared laughter and self-mockery, but there is also the kind that involves laughing at people behind their backs, ridiculing them or exposing them to cruel jokes.

Entertaining people is not an easy task, in fact, and it is a pity that children's entertainment programmes are not always of the highest calibre, and indeed are sometimes tainted with vulgarity and bad taste. A programme does not necessarily have to be hilarious to be entertaining, and a more serious, poetic approach could often make a broadcast more attractive .

Generally speaking, the kinds of programme mentioned above all require more scope for viewer participation. Since the children's passivity in watching television is deplored, it is up to television to ensure that they are more actively involved, e.g. by encouraging them to answer riddles, invent the ending to a story, perform experiments; send in replies to a question, etc.

If children could more often actively feature in broadcasts set in a very natural context, television would become more democratic, and would permit interaction between children from regions far removed from one another and from very different cultural and social backgrounds.

D. Working with professionals in charge of children's games and leisure activities

Many people are involved professionally in the organization of young children's leisure activities: publishers, producers, game and toy-makers, illustrators, composers, athletes, town-planners, architects, etc., and, last but not least, educators.

It is a pity that the part played by the latter is so limited (in the planning stages at least), and that the main benefactors (i.e. the children) should have so little say in the planning of activities.

The planning stage is the point at which professionals involved in the production and organization of children's leisure activities should seek the advice of educators, psychologists, sociologists, social workers, doctors and parents. Original and useful ideas can also be put forward by the children themselves.

Even at a very early age, children are able to describe their idea of the ideal nursery school. As a rule, it includes plenty of grassy open spaces and animals, since these are usually lacking in the nursery school that they attend every day.

Playgrounds must not simply satisfy aesthetic and architectural considerations, for their functionality is of crucial importance, and it is the responsibility of the architect to cater for the needs of those using them. All too often, however, red tape prevents the playgrounds's users from expressing their needs.

The teenager's need for space is more immediately obvious than the often underestimated need of the young child, even though the latter requires a great deal of movement. Overcrowding in limited areas creates tension which finds an outlet in shouting and aggressive behaviour.

The design and layout of the premises, the colour of the walls, the soundproofing - all of these are factors which may help to create a pleasant and peaceful atmosphere, each detail meriting careful attention. Even with limited funds, it is possible to build simple, harmonious and well-designed areas for play.

Young children also require air and greenery, but today's tendency (especially in the big cities, where land is expensive) is to keep open spaces to a minimum, even though a natural environment is essential to a young child's physical and mental health. It should, however, be possible to organize a small corner for gardening in every nursery school.

In Belgium, the use of farms as leisure centres has proved highly beneficial to young children, most of whom no longer have any opportunity to come close to large animals.

Outdoor and indoor playgrounds should provide scope for stimulating children's activities in a number of ways. Stimulation of this kind must constitute a sufficient challenge to give children a chance to assert themselves by surpassing their own performance, without, however, exposing them to real danger. Playground equipment must be carefully designed and, where necessary, checked by the authorities responsible for safety.

If the leisure centre is to function in a multicultural community, the equipment should reflect the diversity of cultures.

Legislation is therefore required, in order:

first, to insist on consultations with users during the planning and all other development stages of projects;

second, to establish certain fixed minimum standards of space and reliable equipment for the children.

Such regulations should be sufficiently flexible to avoid curbing planners' and artists' creativity or interfering with the introduction of innovatory projects.

Ultimately, the success of a leisure centre lies in its functioning.

Talented playleaders can sometimes make a boring, poorly adapted playground seem exciting, whereas ill-trained staff will inevitably hasten the deterioration of the best-planned premises.

Since the atmosphere of human relations is of vital importance, especially to young children, it is essential that playleaders should be well-trained. Playleaders must be capable of working in a spirit of effective co-operation, accepting and understanding all the children, and inspiring in them the confidence that is indispensable to their security.

Leisure centres and summer camps catering for young children of different nationalities would do well to engage staff who reflect this mixture of nationalities, at least to some extent.

The occasional participation of members of the public services (postman, fireman, policeman, etc.) or of the local community enlarges children's social experience. It also helps to integrate the children's community into the larger community, when children are temporarily on holiday at a summer camp or leisure centre, for example.

The presence of parents, and more especially of grandparents, as voluntary companions can also do much to improve the quality of the atmosphere created.

As in the case of entering nursery school, the preparations made for a child's departure for a summer camp or leisure centre will determine whether or not the experience is fully successful.

In Strasbourg, a two-week holiday in the mountains was planned for the two classes of 'big' children at a nursery school. All the children took part in the preparations for departure. Even the smaller children made articles for the older ones to take with them, and took an interest in the things they packed in their suitcases. The older children had made all sorts of plans, and tried to imagine what it would be like once they arrived. The entire school knew their plans, and their departure was a moment of great adventure, not only for those leaving but also for those remaining, who could look forward to the day when they, too, would depart, once they were old enough.

Having been extremely well prepared by the parents and the school, the departing children lived through the moment of separation happily. There were no disconcerting incidents, for, in their imagination, the children had already anticipated the problems of life in a group. With their attention firmly focused on carrying out their plans, they did not experience a single unhappy moment throughout their stay, from which they derived many entirely new pleasures.

Children's leisure activities in fact call for stringent educational care. It is a pity, therefore, that so many children's shows, books and toys are merely the projection of adult fantasy and imagination, which have no real educational purpose, and which sometimes set out only to exploit the current situation of children and their desires.

Tougher laws should be introduced throughout the world requiring preliminary inspection of products designed for children's leisure activities. All too often, checks are confined to practical and regulatory matters concerning hygiene and security.

From the angle of education for peace, all products for games and leisure activities, whether shows, literature, records or toys, should be subjected to stricter regulations in all countries.

Firstly, parents, educators and professional child-workers should be encouraged to take part in the planning and production of products for children's games and leisure activities.

Secondly, finished products should only be allowed on the market only if they meet the standards that we have mentioned, viz:

they must not contain material favouring segregation based on race, social or cultural standing, age, sex, or physical condition;

they must not project stereotypes that give a false impression of certain human communities and their customs;

they must not extol violence or encourage aggressive behaviour.

These negative criteria will merely ensure that products for children do not run counter to education for peace. If positive aspects are also included, such as the encouragement of co-operation, friendliness, solidarity, open-mindedness, etc., they can indeed become instruments of peace.

And now the door is wide open for creative people, for although human ingenuity has so far been conspicuously well illustrated in the arts of war, it can also find expression in the arts of peace.

There is much work to be done in this field, and young children all over the world are looking to the most gifted people to take up the challenge.

POSTSCRIPT

In this work, we have tried to open up new horizons for education for peace and international understanding, from early childhood onwards. By tackling the issue at the deepest level, that of the child's approach to life and fundamental patterns of behaviour, we have been impelled to address ourselves to all those whose actions help to form the child's personality, i.e. parents, educators, administrators, professional childworkers, organizers of leisure activities, etc.

While we are aware that some of the points of view expressed in the work are original, we are also aware of its limitations. Only a small number of specialists have been consulted, and the examples given are deliberately restricted to those given by the persons taking part in the consultation, who accept full responsibility for the part they have played, a Certain unity of form and content is assured when the consultation is prepared and the work written mainly by one person, but this same fact may perhaps place limits on the diversity of possible approaches to the subject.

All the same, the authors feel that many readers from countries which do not figure in the work will recognize their own preoccupations, find an echo to their own problems, and discover many points of convergence with the research in which they are themselves engaged. We also hope that the present work will give fresh impetus and scope to their own personal experiments.

We do not regard this work as a completed project, but rather as the beginning of a larger study giving fuller coverage to the variety of ongoing

research projects in this field all over the world, and carrying present research a stage further.

With this in mind, the authors would be pleased to hear readers' comments, suggestions, and personal experiences in order to extend and amplify the work and give it more universal significance.

Such extension and amplification are vital if an increasingly effective answer is to be found to the present-day need to develop a more open, more human form of education, capable of sowing seeds for peace in the minds of children throughout the world.

Declaration of the rights of the child



1979
International Year
of the Child

- 1 The child shall enjoy all the rights set forth in this Declaration. All children, without any exception whatsoever, shall be entitled to these rights without distinction or discrimination on account of race, colour, sex, language, religion, political or other opinion, national or social origin, property, birth or other status, whether of himself or of his family.
- 2 The child shall enjoy special protection, and shall be given opportunities and facilities, by law and by other means, to enable him to develop physically, mentally, morally, spiritually and socially in a healthy and normal manner and in conditions of freedom and dignity. In the enactment of laws for this purpose the best interests of the child shall be the paramount consideration.
- 3 The child shall be entitled from his birth to a name and a nationality.
- 4 The child shall enjoy the benefits of social security. He shall be entitled to grow and develop in health; to this end special care and protection shall be provided both to him and to his mother, including adequate pre-natal and post-natal care. The child shall have the right to adequate nutrition, housing, recreation and medical services.
- 5 The child who is physically, mentally or socially handicapped shall be given the special treatment, education and care required by his particular condition.
- 6 The child, for the full and harmonious development of his personality, needs love and understanding. He shall, wherever possible, grow up in

The ten articles

the care and under the responsibility of his parents, and in any case in an atmosphere of affection and of moral and material security; a child of tender years shall not, save in exceptional circumstances, be separated from his mother. Society and the public authorities shall have the duty to extend particular care to children without a family and to those without adequate means of support. Payment of State and other assistance towards the maintenance of children of large families is desirable.

- 7 The child is entitled to receive education, which shall be free and compulsory, at least in the elementary stages. He shall be given an education which will promote his general culture, and enable him on a basis of equal opportunity to develop his abilities, his individual judgement, and his sense of moral and social responsibility, and to become a useful member of society. The best interests of the child shall be the guiding principle of those responsible for his education and guidance; that responsibility lies in the first place with his parents. The child shall have full opportunity for play and recreation, which should be directed to the same purposes as education; society and the public authorities shall endeavour to promote the enjoyment of this right.
- 8 The child shall in all circumstances be among the first to receive protection and relief.
- 9 The child shall be protected against all forms of neglect, cruelty and exploitation. He shall not be the subject of traffic, in any form. The child shall not be admitted to employment before an appropriate minimum age; he shall in no case be caused or permitted to engage in any occupation or employment which would prejudice his health or education, or interfere with his physical, mental or moral development.
- 10 The child shall be protected from practices which may foster racial, religious and any other form of discrimination. He shall be brought up in a spirit of understanding, tolerance, friendship among peoples, peace and universal brotherhood and in full consciousness that his energy and talents should be devoted to the service of his fellow men.

The Declaration was adopted by the General Assembly of the United Nations on 20 November 1959.
Written out for the Unesco Courier by David Brabyn, aged 7

SEEDS FOR PEACE
The Role of Pre-School Education in International
Understanding and Education for Peace

Illustrations

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