

BOOKS AND REVIEWS

Finally, based on past examples, two delegates are presented under fictitious names, imagination adding to the obscurities of greatest tragedy, the story of the concentration camps into which the ICRC delegates were unable to penetrate during the Second World War, except right at the end of the fighting in Germany.

It can be seen that this amply illustrated work, and which is aimed in the first place at the young, is intended above all to give a lively rendering, even by entirely imaginary dialogues and which should therefore be taken with a grain of salt, of the work of delegates who have served or who are still serving a humanitarian cause, often at the risk of their own lives. This indeed proves the power of the ideal animating them.

J. G. L.

PHILIP H. COOMBS: "THE WORLD EDUCATIONAL CRISIS"¹

Many are the Red Cross Society members which are asking themselves whether the time has not come to recognize the activities of the Junior Red Cross as an essential supplement to the work accomplished by the Societies' adult members, and that it is necessary to give youth a greater share of directional responsibilities in the field of education. For such Societies this book might well be of interest. It shows that man is not—or at least not yet—adapted to the times. It is true that on life's road one suffers from this only occasionally. Youth, however, which is about to set out, profoundly resents this new state of things. And, as the author points out, the world crisis in teaching or—to use a term of wider scope—education is due to a large extent to this fact that man is not adapted to his time.

This book was first written as a working document at the International Conference on the world crisis in education in the

¹ Oxford University Press, New York, London, Toronto, 1968.

United States in 1967. It was then revised in the light of events which occurred with varying impact in universities in most countries in 1968. Education must, of course, be on a national basis, but it cannot today be provided fully without inter-state exchanges. It has therefore, willy-nilly, become an undertaking which should be of equal concern to all nations and should demonstrate their solidarity.

In an analysis of the crisis, now on a world scale, through which education is passing, the author writes:

"The nature of this crisis is suggested by the words 'change', 'adaptation' and 'disparity'. Since 1945, all countries have undergone fantastically swift environmental changes, brought about by a number of concurrent world-wide revolutions—in science and technology, in economic and political affairs, in demographic and social structures. Educational systems have also grown and changed more rapidly than ever before. But they have adapted all too slowly to the faster pace of events on the move all around them. The consequent disparity—taking many forms—between educational systems and their environments is the essence of the world-wide crisis in education."

To overcome this crisis, teaching and society should be adapted to each other. Otherwise, the disparity will widen further until the framework of these systems and sometimes even of the societies concerned breaks. It could not be otherwise, for whilst educational needs, arising from national development, continue to grow and evolve, and the necessary requirements for education become ever more difficult to obtain, how can the problem be solved by increasing, by no matter to what extent, the resources available to schools?

The author's main objective was to propose suggestions and to examine "the organized process by which a society pursues education, and whether that process and its results can be made more relevant, efficient and effective within the context of that society". He also emphasizes the interdependence of educational systems throughout the world. A country may introduce masters, students, equipment, teaching assistants and new teaching methods from abroad into its educational system. On the other hand, it may

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export teachers, students, original programme ideas etc... which, in their turn, become the imports into other countries. Thus, there is a vast international educational circuit.

In conclusion, Mr. Coombs warns us:

"Whatever shape your educational system may be in, if others which must serve the vast majority of this planet's citizens are in a serious state of crisis, then no nation, however rich, can be exempt from the consequences. The educational crisis is everybody's business."

J. G. L.
