

ESPERANTO LEAGUE FOR NORTH AMERICA

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News (for English speakers) of the language problem and Esperanto as a solution.

THE SEARCH CONTINUES

for the perfect format for this newsletter. The last edition was set in the most radical of the formats with which the new *redaktoro* intends to experiment. This one is set in the most conservative.

A great many—probably most—editors and advertising men have become convinced that copy is read by more people from beginning to end when it is unjustified (set with a “ragged right edge”) as was the last edition, even when they say it looks “messy.” If unjustified columns are really easier to read, it may be because they allow words to be evenly spaced and break the monotony of too many straight lines. And if they are really significantly easier to read we should be using them, since getting read is what a newsletter is all about. Let the new *redaktoro*, R.T. Sandberg, know how you feel about the readability of this edition versus the immediately preceding one in terms of format only. Reread both editions from beginning to end and as close together in time as possible before responding. His address is 55 West Chestnut St., No. 702, Chicago, Illinois 60610.

The ideal newsletter format, besides being the most readable, should reflect the tastes of the typical member. But there are no typical Esperantists. In fact, it would be difficult to find a less homogeneous group than the *Esperantistaro*. Practically every social

class, every profession, every age group, every race, every political party, every nationality has Esperantists. In the United States alone, members of ELNA range in age from preschool to only five years short of 100, and their occupations include carpenter, student, professor of English, professor of Spanish, professor of German, mailman, salesman, engineer, chemist, accountant, lawyer, printer, professor of anthropology, professor of political science, professor of oceanography, aviator, secretary, banker, housewife, school administrator, artist, writer, doctor of medicine, to name only a few. What holds them all together in ELNA, for the most part, is a common conviction that everyone in the world should learn the same second language so that a language barrier will not prevent individuals from communicating directly, completely and effectively with one another, and the conviction that Esperanto is the best language for this purpose—by far superior to any of the national languages.

At least one reader would like to see some articles in Esperanto on these pages. This is not done for two reasons. First, the *ELNA-Bulteno*, another bimonthly publication, has an all-Esperanto text and is also mailed free to members. Second, the practice of printing certain items in Esperanto and other items in English tends—in the opinion of the *redaktoro*—to

give the false impression that Esperanto is the inferior of English in expressing many ideas and that Esperantists therefore also use English. (Most fluent Esperantists suspect that the opposite is true: that Esperanto can express practically all fine nuances of meaning more clearly and economically than English.) Among the people for whom this newsletter is designed are those who have never studied Esperanto, and for many such people Esperanto initially looks like nothing more than a series of incomprehensible words. Individual Esperanto words and phrases are interspersed throughout this newsletter when context or similarity to English equivalents makes their meaning reasonably clear.

As far as format itself is concerned, no more will be said in subsequent editions, but experimental changes will continue to be made for a short time. Continue to send in comments. Some format changes may be made in response to those comments.

Content, of course, is more important than format. Nevertheless, we want a format that will combine with content to make the most effective possible printed *propagandilo* for Esperanto in the USA.

A NEW ERA DAWNS

for ELNA as E. James Lieberman begins his three-year term as president. Some of the changes are reflected in this newsletter. How

much can be done—including an expansion of publications—depends largely on support received. If the Esperanto movement flourishes within the largest English-speaking nation in the world during the next few years, the movement toward world-wide human understanding will have advanced significantly. Details of ELNA membership and the benefits that accrue to members are on the final page.

The birthday of Dr. Zamenhof, the inventor of Esperanto, was celebrated throughout the world in December. The date was December 14, 15 or 16 in most places, but December 7 in Chicago in order to avoid conflict with Christmas social engagements. The speaker at the Chicago *Zamenhof-bankedo*, Duncan Charters of Indiana University, was introduced by D. Rex Bateman, president of the Esperanto Society of Chicago, as "one of the most creative young thinkers in the Esperanto movement."

Speaking in fluent Esperanto, Mr. Charters said that the 57th Universal Esperanto Congress in Portland, Oregon, in August had achieved the greater part of the goals set for it largely because of the efforts of the *Internacia Kongresa Komitato* and those who had helped the *komitato*. He pointed out that among the results of the congress has been a truly remarkable increase in interest regarding Esperanto on the part of both intellectuals and the general public—an interest that has culminated in the Esperanto seminar at the Modern Language Association meeting in New York in December.

This growth of interest has been very noticeable during the past 10 years, he said, and has been accelerated by the 57th Universal Congress. A number of outstanding linguistic experts have become much more inclined to study Esperanto seriously. Many professional linguists were of the opinion previously that Esperanto had yet to prove itself, but that is changing. They now recognize

Esperanto as a living language, although some of them still proclaim doubts about its future.

One of the reasons for the awakening of the serious interest of intellectuals in Esperanto, according to Mr. Charters, has been the replacement of simplistic and sometimes absurd claims for Esperanto with accurate, profound arguments. "When you use weak arguments, the only ones you convince are weak-minded people," he said. Sound arguments are much more likely to convince the person who will seriously study Esperanto.

"I guarantee you," he continued, "that when a person seriously involves himself with Esperanto, very seldom does he leave the movement thinking that Esperanto is not able to function. I know of no linguist who really learned Esperanto and afterward left the movement because he was of the serious opinion that Esperanto is not able to function. Many linguists, after the study of Esperanto, have come to the conclusion that Esperanto really works. The only linguists who have not done so were generally those who believed that there exists a better linguistic solution than the one presented by Esperanto. Often they create their own project or work for the project of someone else. Generally, although people who have really studied Esperanto may forsake the movement because they do not have time—have other interests—very seldom do you find one who abandons it convinced of the unsuitability of Esperanto as a means of international communication. That does not happen."

Mr. Charters referred to an article in the magazine *Clipper*, published by Pan American Airways, in which the statement is made that Esperanto at some point in the future will not be able to function because it is breaking into dialects—that already different Esperanto usages exist. This statement is false as far as those who have mastered Esperanto are concerned, he claimed. He pointed out

that one must distinguish between those who are learning a language and those who have mastered the language. To condemn Esperanto because Esperanto usage among students in one part of the world differs somewhat from the Esperanto usage among students in another part of the world is as ridiculous as to condemn French because students of French in the United States speak French somewhat differently than students of French in Russia.

He went on to point out that whether differences in usage among those learning Esperanto can be considered "dialects" is theoretical. As examples, he used word order and intonation. Because of the Esperanto accusative ending, word order has no effect on the meaning of an Esperanto sentence—on emphasis or ease of following the thought, yes, but on meaning, no. Beginners tend to follow the word orders of their national languages at first. As they gain experience, they tend to the international norm, which is the order in each case that makes for maximum clarity and effectiveness. Intonation (as the rising inflection at the end of an English sentence to indicate a question) has no meaning whatsoever in Esperanto. Those learning Esperanto use the intonations of their national languages at first when speaking Esperanto, and do so unnecessarily, but without impairing the meanings of their Esperanto sentences. Later, they tend toward the international norm, which is the norm that makes for maximum clarity and effectiveness.

Norman Cousins Refuses To Print Esperanto Rebuttals

The last edition contained a letter, inspired by an editorial in *World* magazine, from President Lieberman to the editor of *World*, Norman Cousins. In this letter, President Lieberman points out that the major non-Western languages resemble each other no more than they resemble French or Finnish, for example, and that the

adding of words from such languages as Korean and Zulu would therefore not really make Esperanto more universal than it already is. Words from such languages are less widely used than the words Esperanto has adopted. The letter says, "Laity and linguistic experts in Japan, Hungary, Finland, Korea—for example—understand these points; they have given notable support to Esperanto as the most practical tool of international communication, and as an effective bar against linguistic imperialism and the destruction of minority ethnic tongues. It is misleading to say that Asian and African scholars have argued against Esperanto without saying that other Asian and African scholars favor it." The letter goes on to point out that the impression given that Esperanto lacks a literature is misleading, since Esperanto has a most impressive literature that has been growing since 1887.

In response to this letter, Norman Cousins has written as follows: "Thank you for your letter, responding to the editorial on breaking the language barrier, which I have read with interest. I've no doubt that Esperanto can serve and is serving to surmount language barriers. Impositional and evolving considerations, however, incline me to believe that an official world language is sufficiently far into the future so that attentions should be directed to possible alternatives on a closer horizon—that will better serve the interim, ongoing needs.

"We've received a number of good letters on behalf of Esperanto; regrettably, all have been too long to include in our Letters-from-Readers pages.

"Again, my thanks for writing."

The reaction of President Lieberman is, "Regrettably the letters column is too short! I am disappointed that N.C. makes a 'final pronouncement' on Esperanto in his magazine and won't allow any rebuttal."

Beograd Is The Scene

of the 58th Universal Congress of Esperanto, which will begin on the coming 28th of July and end on the 4th of August. Beograd, one of the most modern and beautiful cities of Yugoslavia, has a population of about 1,200,000, about a quarter of whom are students. The 58th *Universala Kongreso* is unique in that its high protector—President Josip Broz Tito—studied Esperanto as a young student and still speaks it.

About 4,000 Esperantists from all over the world will probably be attending this *kongreso*, most of them communicating entirely in Esperanto. Observers at such congresses in the past have been amazed at how readily and naturally Esperanto fills the need for a complete means of communication between people who have no other language in common—and very effectively fills this need even when very complex subjects are discussed.

It is entirely possible for a person with no knowledge of Esperanto now to be fluent in Esperanto before the coming *kongreso* begins—something that is not possible for most people with most languages. Concerted study is necessary, but this study can be efficiently directed by either of two new courses that combine recordings with text. One consists of six cassette tapes and a text by William Auld and is available for \$32.00 from the Channing L. Bete Co., Inc., 45 Federal St., Greenfield, Mass. 01301. The other is a home study course in basic Esperanto, consisting of 14 LP records and a text, available from the Esperanto Information Center, Box 508, Burlingame, California 94010. Both of the courses are very attractively boxed and are of the highest quality. William Auld is considered by many to be the greatest of the living Esperanto poets.

The price of registering for the *Kongreso Beograda* is very modest, but the prices are scheduled to go

up, effective April 1. Right now, if you are not a member of the Universal Esperanto Association, the price is \$30.70 for you and \$21.50 for your spouse. If you are not more than 20 years old, the price is \$9.20; if you are a university student between 20 and 30, the price is \$15.15; and if you are blind, the price is \$12.30. Prices for members are \$26.05 for those without a subscription to the magazine *Esperanto* and \$21.40 for subscribers. The price for the spouse of any member is \$17.90. *These are the correct prices, just received directly from Armin F. Doneis, agent for the congress in the USA. Please disregard any other price information you may have received that conflicts with this.* Of course, the rate for a spouse applies only when both spouses register and one pays a regular price. Send your registration fees to Sinjoro A. Doneis, P.O. Box 105, Pharr, Texas 78577.

Group Travel Is Available

for those from the USA who will be attending the 58th *Universala Kongreso*. Two tours will be leaving J.F.Kennedy Airport in New York on July 26. One will return on August 9th and will cost \$699, the other will return on August 11th and will cost \$779. Both tours include round trip from New York, first class hotel rooms (twin beds, private bath) with breakfast and dinner each day, and guided tours of Beograd, Dubrovnik and Athens or Rome. Tour members will have a voice in the choice of cities outside Yugoslavia the group they are in will visit. For more information about these tours, contact the Esperanto League for North America, Box U, Brookline, Mass. 02146.

Instead of the ELNA Congress this year, a business meeting will be held at the JFK International Airport in New York from 2 P.M. to 5 P.M. on July 26, just prior to the departure of the flight that will carry the tour groups to Beograd. The original plans for a 1973 ELNA

Congress were cancelled because of the feeling that the UK is more important and it would be asking too much of the finances of most members to ask them to travel to two separate congresses. The meeting is being held in the framework of the Beograd Congress, but is being held in New York for the benefit of those who will not be traveling to Beograd.

Another International Congress of Esperanto will be held in North America this year, this one in Toronto, Canada, between July 30th and August 5th. Convened by the Sennacieca Asocio Tutmonda, the second largest of the international Esperanto organizations, this congress gives North American Esperantists their second opportunity in two consecutive years to attend an international Esperanto congress on their own continent. It will give an opportunity almost equal to the congress in Beograd for seeing—or rather hearing—Esperanto in action. For more information, write to Mark Starr, 39-40 47th St., Long Island City, NY 11104.

A New Bonus for ELNA Members has been announced by President Lieberman. Every member of ELNA will soon receive free of charge the pamphlet *Esperanto and Inter-*

national Language Problems: A Research Bibliography by Humphrey Tonkin, Associate Professor of English at the University of Pennsylvania. This publication normally sells for a dollar and is intended to provide guidance for high school, college and graduate students in the preparation of term papers on Esperanto and other subjects related to the language problem. Members who will not use it personally are urged to contribute it to their local public libraries. As soon as he pays his 1973 dues, each member also will receive a free subscription to the magazine *Kontakto* or the magazine *Oomoto* (whichever one he chooses). Those who have never been subscribers to the *Heroldo de Esperanto* are entitled to choose a free subscription to that biweekly newspaper instead. Membership classifications are: regular, \$8.00; husband-wife, \$12.00; sustaining, \$15.00; patron, \$25.00; and life, \$160.00. Every member of ELNA under 30 is also entitled to free membership in JEN, the international Esperanto youth organization. Please send your dues to the ELNA Treasurer, Mrs. H. Linker, 1414 Monroe Street, Walla Walla, Washington 99362.

Kontakto is the name of the magazine of the international Esperanto youth movement, but it

has material for all ages. *Oomoto* is a Japanese magazine containing articles in Esperanto on a wide range of subjects.

The Seminar on Esperanto and interlinguistics in December at the New York meeting of the Modern Language Association of America was attended by almost 50 scholars. The following six papers were read: Professor Howard P. French of the University of Southern Illinois, Carbondale, on "Esperanto and Academic Responsibility"; Professor Margaret Hagler of Lincoln Land Community College, Springfield, Illinois, on "Esperanto as a Poetic Medium"; Dr. William Solzbacher of the Voice of America on "The Use of Esperanto at Scholarly International Congresses: Facts, Problems, and Goals"; Professor Richard E. Wood of Louisiana State University, Baton Rouge, on "Pidgin and Creole Languages: Their Significance for Interlinguistics"; Professor Julius Balbin of Essex County College, Newark, New Jersey on "Is Esperanto a Romance Language?"; and Professor John F. Gadway of the University of Southern Illinois, Carbondale, on "Esperanto and the Crisis in Foreign Language Teaching." More will be said about each of these papers and Professor Hagler's paper will be printed in full in the next edition.

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