

# ELNA UPDATE

Issue 1, 1994

Esperanto League for North America

## WORLD LANGUAGE

### *THE ENGLISH PRINCE & HIS LANGUAGE*

Prince Charles encouraged his countrymen to learn more foreign languages. He doesn't plan to join them, however. Charles said he wished he could speak languages besides French and English, but at 45 he was too old to start becoming a linguist. Languages are "the things I failed to learn at a previous time," Charles said. "Unfortunately, I am getting to the stage where I can't remember anything." The prince urged Britons to learn other languages, particularly Japanese and Chinese. "It is not good enough to expect other people to conduct business in English," the prince said. (Associated Press; March 14, 1994)

## WORLD LANGUAGE PROBLEMS

### *FRENCH LANGUAGE DEFENDED AGAINST ENGLISH INCURSION*

The French government is considering a law to make use of French compulsory in advertising, announcements, conferences, on radio & television, and in work contracts. The government has not yet decided what penalties to impose for using a foreign word where a French equivalent exists, but the possibility of fines, even prison sentences, has apparently not been ruled out. In spite of the efforts of the Académie Française to dream up French equivalents to expressions such as "le corner" kick in football, such *franglais* may prove hard to stamp out. French business executives find "le cash flow" easier to use than "la marge brute d'autofinancement." Perhaps fining *franglais* users will help the government with its own cash-flow problem: its deficit. (*Financial Times* February 24, 1994)

### *.... AS IS HEBREW*

In the late 1800's, Eliezer Ben-Yehuda, an ardent Zionist and teacher, resuscitated biblical Hebrew into a modern language. He was adamant that everything here [in Israel] should be in Hebrew, and the first Zionist

immigrants shunned their native tongue, spoke Hebrew at home, and changed their names to Hebrew versions. But modern Israel is wired for foreign cable TV, and Israelis are compulsive travelers, so the language acquires words from other countries. The bastion against these foreign imports is the Academy of the Hebrew Language, a group of 45 linguists, writers and poets charged with safeguarding the language. One of their jobs is to invent new Hebrew words for things that did not exist in the days of Abraham. Instead of "jet lag," for instance, the academy prefers "ya'efet," derived from "tired." Instead of "country club," the academy suggests "mo'adon sadeh," literally "field club." But Israelis are stubborn. They keep using the English for many words, shunning the newly minted Hebrew hybrids. "We can say that 20 to 30 per cent of our words are accepted," not a very high batting average, acknowledged Gabriel Birnbaum, academic secretary at the academy. Some foreign words are too entrenched. They don't even try to fight "chocolate," "university," "logistics," or "OK," for example. "If it is in international usage, used more or less in all of European countries, we don't come up with a new word," he said. (San Francisco *Chronicle* March 13, 1994)

### *MASSIVE LANGUAGE EXTINCTION IN USA*

Just as many biologists are concerned about maintaining the world's biodiversity, linguists are worried about language diversity. Michael Krauss, a linguist at the University of Alaska at Fairbanks, estimates that about 10,000 years ago, there might have been some 15,000 tongues worldwide. Today there about 6,000 left. Krauss fears that the next 100 years will eliminate 90% of the remainder -- "a global catastrophe of loss of the planet's language diversity." Children are no longer learning 149 of the 187 remaining native languages in the United States, according to Krauss. One of the reasons Indian languages are declining in the United States is that the government planned it that way. In 1868, a federal commission on Indian affairs recommended that "their barbarous dialect should be blotted out and the English language substituted." The reasoning: "Through sameness of language is produced sameness of sentiment and thought... In process of time the differences producing trouble would have been gradually obliterated." Linguist Leanne Hinton of the University of California at Berkeley said she fears that although more tribes than ever

are trying to save their languages and cultures from death by assimilation, it is perilously late for many. "There's a whole generation of people who were basically raised to think through schooling that there was something wrong with their culture. Now there's a generation of people who feel there's something great about their culture - but they don't have it anymore." (San Francisco *Chronicle* March 27, 1994)

### ***ESPERANTO PROTECTS MINORITY LANGUAGE RIGHTS***

The International Language desires to give to people of different nationalities, who stand before one another as mutes, the ability to understand each other; but it in no way intends to mix in to the internal life of nations. To fear that the International Language will destroy the national languages is as laughable as to fear, for example, that postal service, which gives the ability to communicate to persons distant from one another, threatens to nullify spoken communication... Would anybody say that an increase in communication and cooperation between persons of the same country (with patriotic goals) in any way threatens familial love? In itself the International Language cannot weaken national languages; on the contrary, it will undoubtedly lead to their strengthening and full flowering. (L. L. Zamenhof; Paris, 1900)

### **ESPERANTO NEWS**

*The following proclamation was issued by Richard M. Daley, Honorable Mayor of the city of Chicago:*

WHEREAS, Sunday, February 20, 1994, marks the beginning of International Friendship Week; and

WHEREAS, International Friendship Week, which was initiated by Esperanto groups, will be celebrated simultaneously in dozens of countries worldwide; and

WHEREAS, Esperanto promotes worldwide friendship through the use of common words in European languages, and is the best documented, most promising attempt at forming a universal language acceptable to people of different cultures and background; and

WHEREAS, Esperanto also serves as a preparatory course for foreign languages because of its systematic, streamlined grammar; and

WHEREAS, the World Esperanto Association and the Esperanto Society of Chicago are working diligently to achieve international friendships, world peace, and the harmony through mutual communication; and

WHEREAS, three Chicago public schools (Louisa May Alcott, Carver Middle, and Scott Joplin) have led schools across the United States in Teaching Esperanto; and

WHEREAS, 1994 marks the 107th Anniversary of the Esperanto language:

NOW, THEREFORE, I, RICHARD M. DALEY, MAYOR OF THE CITY OF CHICAGO, do hereby proclaim February 20-26, 1994, to be INTERNATIONAL FRIENDSHIP WEEK IN CHICAGO, and encourage citizens of Chicago and worldwide to recognize and accept Esperanto as the world's second language.

Dated this 12th day of January, 1994.

(signed) Richard M. Daley  
Mayor

### **INTERNATIONAL CURRENCY & INTERNATIONAL LANGUAGE**

A recent issue of *World Coin Views* magazine (Jan. 17, 1994) included an editorial entitled "How do you say 'peace' in Esperanto?" Here is an excerpt from that editorial:

"We need to be reminded often that people around the world have more in common than differences. It was laudable to try to create a second language that did not implicitly denigrate cultures. An international currency is something the world has been trying to construct since we recognized what a loss the end of the gold standard in 1914 was. Sure, Esperantists are hopeless dreamers. Even if an international currency is somehow miraculously created, it will not be one envisioned by them. The important thing to remember, though, is that they still dare to dream such things. In the face of atrocities in Bosnia, tensions in the Middle East and a nuclear scare over North Korea, we need to be reminded that things can be better. Esperantists have the courage to be labeled a little eccentric. The world would be a better place if we all were similarly so."

### **NEWS OF OTHER PLANNED LANGUAGES**

The television show "Star Trek" features an alien race called Klingons. A language was created for their use in the movie "Star Trek III." Glen Proechel, a fluent Esperantist and a long-time ELNA member, has taught the Klingon language during two-week-long intensive sessions. He recently announced that a group of Klingon scholars is working on a translation of the entire Bible.

A new language has been created, and is being considered by members of the European Parliament. Glosa has a vocabulary of only 1,000 words, and can be learned in three days. With more than half of the EC administration costs going to translating and interpreting reports into 30 languages (sic), the language is seen by some as revolutionary. (*Union Jack* March 1994)

## POWER OF BABEL

The vast majority of international transactions today require the services of translators and interpreters, services which incur major economic and temporal costs. In 1992, the European Community (EC) allocated \$4.8 billion of its budget for administration. Of that sum, \$1.6 billion-- about a third-- paid the cost of translation between each of its nine official languages. The United Nations, with "only" six official languages, is also burdened by high translation costs. Multinational corporations and other enterprises engaging in transactions across borders must also rely on the services of interpreters. Studies have shown that linguistic interfaces are a retarding factor in the growth of firms, but common sense alone dictates that the more languages used in a transaction, the higher the translation costs and the fewer resources available to firms for alternative investment purposes. In addition, the linguistic discrimination inherent in the use of a national language at the global level colors international business negotiations. If one party is forced to use the language of the other, the transaction will take place on a playing field that is not level.

Despite large fiscal outlays for translation services that are meant to "democratize" the EC's lingual system, linguistic discrimination pervades the Community. English and French predominate within the institutions of the EC, particularly at the level of committees and work groups where only a few languages are used due to the unavailability of interpreters.

Umberto Eco, Professor of Semiotics at the University of Bologna, highlights the contemporary relevance of and need for Esperanto. Since the language is "very well constructed," with "no linguistic reason why it shouldn't work," Eco believes that the problem is "only a political one." He cites as a major factor "the egoism of governments," governments which in the past had little incentive to support an international language while they strove to promote their own national languages. But that "egoism" may now contribute to the success of Esperanto. "Soon governments will be ready to support an intermediary language, if only to hinder the strengthening of [a competitor's] language." (Excerpts from an article by Sara Su Jones, *Harvard International Review* Summer 1993)

## NEW FROM THE BOOK SERVICE

**ANTOLOGIO DE LA HEBREA POEZIO**, *Josef KOHEN-CEDEK*, ed. This rich anthology spans the great time-span from the Old Testament to still living poets. Many songs are printed with notated melodies. Index is bilingual Hebrew/Esperanto. 1987, 268p. Paper. Israel.  
ANT002 \$31.50/\$29.90

**ESPERANTAJ SINONIMOJ**, *Jaan OJALO*. This long-awaited thesaurus contains over 2200 entries, with an index of more than 5000. A must for all writers! 1993, 96p. Paper. Netherlands-Spain. ISBN 92 9017 047 6  
ESP040 \$10.00/\$9.50

**NEDERLANDO KONCIZE** *Div*. A richly illustrated booklet which covers many aspects of Dutch life. Useful as pre-travel guide. 1978, 48p. Paper. Netherlands.  
NED001 \$1.00/\$.95

**ŜIRPECOJ (ANSTATAŬ MONUMENTO)**, *Christian DECLERCK*. Poems about falling in love, being in love, and making love, arranged as a complete life history. 1991, 168p. Paper. Belgium. ISBN 90-71205-44-4  
SIR001 \$15.25/\$14.50

**TENDARAJ TAGOJ III**, *Stefan MacGILL*. Part three of a popular series of books for young teens, by the editor of "Juna Amiko". 1994, 76p. Paper. Hungary. ISBN 963 04 3957 3  
TEN003 TBA

**TEORIO KAJ PRAKTIKO DE LINGVO-INSTRUADO**, *Irena SZANSER*. Instruction method for learning languages, and quite a bit of linguistic theory to support it. 1992, 170p. Bound. Hungary.  
TEO001 \$16.75/\$15.90

**TOHUVABOHUO**, *Kajto*. The latest album of Esperanto's most popular band continues their tradition of presenting a programmed concert, rather than a mere collection of songs. Many songs are based on lyrics of William Auld. Booklet included. 1993, Netherlands.  
Cassette: TOH001 \$14.75/\$14.00  
CD: TOH002 \$19.95/\$18.95

### 1994 ELNA BOOK SERVICE CATALOG

This 28-page catalog details every item available from the ELNA Book Service. The Book Service catalog is sent to members and "Friends of Esperanto" at no cost. Non-members should send \$2.00 to ELNA Book Service. Those purchasing the catalog will receive a coupon worth \$2.00 off their next order.

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**ELNA Membership Benefits**

- A bi-monthly newsletter keeping you up to date on issues of importance to Esperantists
- The ELNA Book and Tape Service catalogs and the ELNA Membership List
- Discounts on most items carried by the ELNA Book and Tape Services
- The quarterly *ELNA Update* with information on the world language problem and Esperanto as a possible solution
- The satisfaction of contributing materially to the propagation of Esperanto in the U.S.A.

**Non-Member  
 "Friend of Esperanto"**

A "Friend of Esperanto" is not a dues-paying member of ELNA and therefore not eligible for the regular membership benefits. Instead, a "Friend" offers encouragement to the Esperanto movement by providing financial support. A "Friend" receives:

- Four issues of the *ELNA Update* via first-class mail. *ELNA Update* keeps you abreast of the world language problem and Esperanto as a possible solution
- The ELNA Book and Tape Service catalogs

**ELNA MEMBERSHIP FORM**

Please show the type of membership or support by an **X** in the appropriate brackets. All memberships are on a calendar-year basis, January 1 - December 31. For items marked (\*) we must have your birthdate.

*NOTE: Your address, telephone number and computer network address will be published in the yearly membership list unless you indicate otherwise here: Do NOT publish:  address  phone number  network address*

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**ELNA Membership Categories  
 1994**

- Individual ..... \$30.00
- Sustaining ..... \$60.00
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- Youth (\*Under 27) ..... \$15.00
- Limited Income ..... \$15.00

*Other Forms of Support*

- Friend of Esperanto ..... \$10.00
- Donation ..... \$\_\_\_\_\_

Return this form with payment to:  
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