

# ELNA UPDATE

Quarterly Newsletter published by the Esperanto League for North America  
P.O. Box 1129 • El Cerrito CA 94530 • USA

3/96

ISSN 1081-6224

## PRAGUE MANIFESTO OF THE MOVEMENT FOR THE INTERNATIONAL LANGUAGE ESPERANTO

We, members of the worldwide movement for the promotion of Esperanto, address this Manifesto to all governments, international organizations and people of good will; declare our unshakable commitment to the objectives set out here; and call on all organizations and individuals to join us in working for these goals.

For more than a century Esperanto, which was launched in 1887 as a project for an auxiliary language for international communication and quickly developed into a rich living language in its own right, has functioned as a means of bringing people together across the barriers of language and culture. The aims that inspire the users of Esperanto are still as important and relevant as ever.

Neither the worldwide use of a few national languages, nor advances in communications technology, nor the development of new methods of language teaching is likely to result in a fair and effective language order based on the following principles, which we hold to be essential.

**DEMOCRACY.** Any system of communication which confers lifelong privileges on some while requiring others to devote years of effort to achieving a lesser degree of competence is fundamentally antidemocratic. While Esperanto, like any language, is not perfect, it far outstrips other languages as a means of egalitarian communication on a world scale. We maintain that language inequality gives rise to communicative inequality at all levels, including the international level. **We are a movement for democratic communication.**

**GLOBAL EDUCATION.** All ethnic languages are bound to certain cultures and nations. For example, the child who learns English learns about the culture, geography and political systems of the English-speaking world, primarily the United States and the United Kingdom. The child who learns Esperanto learns about a world without borders, where every country is home. We maintain that education in any language is bound to a certain view of the world. **We are a movement for global education.**

**EFFECTIVE EDUCATION.** Only a small percentage of foreign-language students attain fluency in the target language. In Esperanto, fluency is attainable even through home study. Various studies have shown that Esperanto is useful as a preparation for learning other languages. It has also been recommended as a core element in courses in language awareness. We maintain that the difficulties in learning ethnic languages will always be a barrier for many students who would benefit from knowing a second language. **We are a movement for effective language learning.**

**MULTILINGUALISM.** The Esperanto community is almost unique as a worldwide community whose members are universally bilingual or multilingual. Every member of the community has made the effort to learn at least one foreign language to a communicative level. In many cases this leads to a love and knowledge of several languages and to broader personal horizons in general. We maintain that the speakers of all languages, large and small, should have a real chance of learning a second language to a high communicative level. **We are a movement for providing that opportunity to all.**

**LANGUAGE RIGHTS.** The unequal distribution of power between languages is a recipe for permanent language insecurity, or outright language oppression, for a large part of the world's population. In the Esperanto community the speakers of languages large and small, official and unofficial meet on equal terms through a mutual willingness to compromise. This balance of language rights and responsibilities provides a benchmark for developing and judging other solutions to language inequality and conflict. We maintain that the wide variations in power among languages undermine the guarantees, expressed in many international instruments, of equal treatment regardless of language. **We are a movement for language rights.**

**LANGUAGE DIVERSITY.** National governments tend to treat the great diversity of languages in the world as a barrier to communication and development. In the Esperanto community, however, language diversity is experienced as a constant and indispensable source of enrichment. Consequently every language, like every biological species, is inherently valuable and worthy of protection and support. We maintain that communication and development policies which are not based on respect and support for all languages amount to a death sentence for the majority of languages in the world. **We are a movement for language diversity.**

**HUMAN EMANCIPATION.** Every language both liberates and imprisons its users, giving them the ability to communicate among themselves but barring them from communication with others. Designed as a universally accessible means of communication, Esperanto is one of the great functional projects for the emancipation of humankind—one which aims to let every individual citizen participate fully in the human community, securely rooted in his or her local cultural and language identity yet not limited by it. We maintain that exclusive reliance on national languages inevitably puts up barriers to the freedoms of expression, communication and association. **We are a movement for human emancipation.**

The Prague Manifesto on the previous page is a document written, ratified and signed by hundreds of participants during the World Esperanto Congress this past summer. If its tenets were followed, many of the linguistic difficulties described in the pages of this newsletter, both in this and in previous issues, would disappear.—ed.

### **(not) Learning English in Japan**

Each year 250,000 Japanese take the hour-and-fifty-minute "Test of English as a Foreign Language" (TOEFL). With an average score of 490, the Japanese ranked 152nd out of 171 national groups in 1995. Japan trails nearly all industrial countries and most of its Asian neighbors, including China, which scored an impressive 549 out of a possible 677. For decades, Japan has displayed a national enthusiasm for learning English, with an English-language industry estimated at nearly \$5 billion annually. Almost every large bookstore in Japan has large displays of publications on learning English, and private English conversation schools can be found all over. English is also considered an essential subject at school. English classes are compulsory from seventh to ninth grade and most students study it until the twelfth grade, when they cram for college entrance examinations. Yet there is a large discrepancy between the national effort to teach English and the mediocre performance on the TOEFL, which is disheartening for Japanese leaders in education. "It's pathetic," said Ikuo Koike, professor emeritus at Keio University and president of Japan College Teachers Association. "I am very disappointed at the results- bordering on anger. You cannot explain away Japan's low scores." Experts like Professor Koike cite such factors as inadequate English education, Japanese sentence structure, Japan's inward-looking culture, and the island-nation's isolation as inhibiting people's ability to communicate with the outside world. The failure to establish solid communication lines with the English-speaking world can result in a clear cost. "Japan pays a significant diplomatic cost for not being able to communicate effectively in English," said Ryuhei Hosoya, a senior diplomat at the Japanese Foreign Ministry. "Very few top officers of the Government are able to handle business in English." Hosoya says the price Japan pays is often invisible, like not being able to build firm relationships with foreign diplomats, and losing access to informally conveyed information. (*New York Times* Aug. 4, 1996)

### **NATO wants allied military to converse in English**

Prospective NATO members do not need Western military equipment to join in the military alliance's operations. That was the message NATO commanders emphasized last week during a Partnership for Peace air exercise in Hungary. The 16 nation drill was the first such air operation in a nonmember country. Instead NATO expects commanders in new member countries to speak English and order changes to existing weapons systems so troops can communicate. "There's definitely a language problem," Vervoort said of cooperative East-West exercises. "We have to have a common language; and the common language is English." Hungary has established a language training program for selected officers and soldiers to help meet those demands. But the military is a long way from being able to conduct major operations in English. Hungarian military leaders have also emphasized English language training in future plans. "It's difficult for common action if we don't speak the same language...", said Romanian Lt. Cmdr. Laurențiu Simionescu. He said briefings take longer when commanders have poor English skills. (*The Budapest Sun* Aug. 1-7, 1996)

### **China to cancel use of English in news briefings**

English translations of Foreign Ministry's twice weekly news briefings are to be cancelled, despite widespread opposition from foreign media and diplomats. The news briefings are the only official contact journalists are given by the media-wary government. Foreign Ministry spokesman Shen Guofang said the move was "irreversible, ... I will only answer questions that are asked in Chinese. Of course, if you do experience insurmountable difficulty, then perhaps you could also ask questions in English, but the replies will be in Mandarin". The new regulations will come into effect on September 3 and have angered many foreign journalists, as many of them speak English but no Chinese. A lack of official translation will mean misinterpretations in the future. The move is seen by the foreign media as part of the emerging Chinese nationalism but China advises foreign journalists to drop their "chauvinist ideas" about language. (*China News Digest* [Global Edition] Sep. 2, 1996)

## NEW FROM THE BOOK SERVICE

- ĈU VI AŬDIS, KE...?**, *Katalin SMIDĒLIUSZ*. This combination of booklet and cassette tape is an excellent tool for mid-level Esperantists who wish to improve their abilities in aural comprehension. One listens to the short essays on the cassette and then takes the accompanying test in the booklet. The texts of the essays are also given in the booklet, so the student can also reinforce the linkage between the spoken and written forms of the language. Second edition 1994. 63p. 200x140. Paper. Hungary. ISBN 963 450 668 2  
**CUV003** **\$19.90/\$18.90**
- FLAGETOJ**. These small and brilliant-colored flags answer the constant request for an eye-catching identification symbol which does not require huge space. The golden borders, tassels and hanging-cord make this little flag especially attractive. 1996. 150x100. Romania.  
**FLA002** **\$7.60/\$7.20**
- IMPORTANT ESPERANTO RESEARCH WITH REFERENCES • FACTS TO PROMOTE THE INTERNATIONAL LANGUAGE**, *Wesley Edward ARNOLD*. This little booklet is crammed with facts gleaned from many years of study. All statements are carefully documented, using a broad base of resources. An excellent source of material for anybody spreading the word about Esperanto. 1996. 93p. 215x140. Paper. USA. ISBN 0-915935-14-7  
**IMP004** **\$10.00/\$9.50**
- MEMORLIBRO OMAĜE AL ANDREO CSEH**, *Katalin SMIDĒLIUSZ, ed.* Everybody who has any interest in teaching Esperanto by means of the Cseh method should become familiar with its inventor. This collection of short essays presents the man and the method in warm and personal vignettes. Published in recognition of the hundredth anniversary of Cseh's birth. Illustrated. 1995, 128p. 235x165. Paper. Hungary. ISBN 963 650 215 3  
**MEM001** **\$16.60/\$15.75**
- NIA AMERIKO**, *José MARTÍ*. Trans. Orlando E. RAOLA. This profound and thought-provoking essay presents an aspect of American history not revealed in U.S. schools—the point of view from Latin America. This elegant translation well reflects the high style of the original, which is considered a model of Spanish prose. 1996. 35p. 210x135. Paper. USA. ISBN 1-882251-18-1  
**NIA002** **\$5.00/\$4.75**
- PAŜOJ AL PLI ALTA ŜTUPO**, *LU Chuanbiao & WANG Hanping, ed.* This collection of short texts from *El Popola Ĉinio* comes from the rubric "Por Komencantoj", so it is well-suited for advanced beginners and intermediate-level students. The diverse themes and styles are sure to include something to please every reader. 1994, 196p. 135x120. Paper. China. ISBN 7-5052-0199-0  
**PAS005** **\$8.00/\$7.60**
- PEKINAJ VIDINDAĴOJ**. Trans. Mollum. This bilingual (Chinese & Esperanto) guide book would function quite well for a traveller planning to visit Beijing, or for the arm-chair traveller who would appreciate a great collection of splendid color photos which show the rich sites of this ancient city. 1989, 144p. 260x185. Paper. China. ISBN 7-5052-0044-5  
**PEK001** **\$24.00/\$22.80**
- PETER JAMESON'S SECRET LANGUAGE**, *Sylvan ZAFT*. A story for every ten- or eleven-year old boy or girl who would like to have their own secret language and everyone who ever was ten or eleven years old and wanted to have their own secret language. Includes a pronunciation guide and lists of words and affixes used in the story. An excellent gift for nieces, nephews, grandchildren, or even libraries! 1996. 152p. 215x135. Paper. USA. ISBN 0-9652549-0-9  
**PET002** **\$9.95/\$9.45**
- POŜKARTO SVISA 3**. Rolfo's artwork portrays the five elements: earth, air, fire, water and Esperanto! Vibrantly colorful and downright pretty. 1996. 150x105. Switzerland.  
**POS004** **\$.50/\$.45**
- POŜKARTO SVISA 4**. The letter "A" is the subject matter, but the result is quite amusing and unexpectedly brilliant. A real eye-catcher. 1996. 150x105. Switzerland.  
**POS011** **\$.50/\$.45**
- RUGDOMA SONGŌ**, *CAO Xueqin*. Trans. XIE Yuming. The first volume of one of the most important Chinese novels is now available in Esperanto! Yet this epic-scale work is much more than a novel, for it deals with the subtleties of Qing dynasty morals, philosophy, political intrigues, etc. Includes footnotes and genealogical tables to help the reader avoid confusion. Illustrated. 1995. 582p. 200x140. Bound. China. ISBN 7-5052-0235-9  
**RUG001** **\$26.00/\$24.70**

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