

Guest Editorial

One cannot use the words peace and education without being influenced by the variety of meanings and emotions associated with them. We all have experienced education, and some of us the peace process.

Traditionally, education has been the process by which the youth learn the skills necessary to take their place in society. The process was, and is, adaptive. The traditional meaning of peace was either to re-establish equilibrium after a war was fought and won, or to maintain equilibrium in the face of an imminent outbreak of hostilities. Education was a task for the young; peace was a task for their elders.

With the development, in the mid-forties, of the technology that can split the atom, peace has become a "new" word in our language. Few, if any, of the traditional referents and symbols help us understand it. The threat to mankind embodied in the production, deployment, and possible use of nuclear arms is all-pervasive, and is not relieved by taking standard measures like producing weapons, and raising an army. In fact, the weapons we are producing add to the threat. New ways of thinking, new symbols must be internalized; new methods of diffusing conflict must be generated. And some of these new images are contained in terms like nuclear winter, radiation fallout, nuclear meltdown; some are formed by the Hiroshima and Nagasaki bombings, and the near-disasters of Three Mile Island and Chernobyl.

Because "making war" and "making peace" are still largely in the hands of the world's political, military, and industrial leaders, then peace education begins to identify a new population for the process. Surely Einstein was not referring to the children and youth of the world when he warned us that "the splitting of the atom has changed everything except our

modes of thinking, and thus we move towards unparalleled disaster." It is society's thinking that must be changed. But how?

Most of the articles in this issue of the *Journal* have been selected from the very large number of papers presented at the **International Conference on Peace and Security**, sponsored by the Faculty of Education of McGill University, and held in Montreal in 1986. The driving force for the conference and, by extension, for this special issue, springs from the awareness that our whole society must be involved in bringing about these changes in our modes of thinking. People from the media, the military, education, the family, medicine, and government assembled to shape new ideas for others and to be shaped by them in turn. In a real sense, the conference was a mind-bending event. This issue is an attempt to commit to written memory some of the ideas exchanged at the conference, and to extend its educational effort beyond the conference population.

What, then, is the role of the schools in peace education? If one accepts the idea that educating the young is helping them fit into an established pattern of behaviour, then we have a problem with peace education. In our society the issues are not clear, the values diverse. Claude Ryan cautions against "moralizing movements which wish to take into the schools all the fashionable crusades of the day." And Elizabeth Richards, in her *Debate About Peace Education* identifies the reason for much controversy in the area when she states that "there is no clear consensus regarding the focus, content, and methodology of peace education." Constructive efforts are being made to find ways of starting, in our schools, the education to live in peace. Curricula acceptable to our society at large are being developed. So, a beginning is being made. One such effort is the project being jointly implemented by the Wellington County and Waterloo County school boards, in Ontario. And, in all our efforts in this regard, we do well to recall Elie Wiesel's concern for the children. We must not relieve our own responsibility for working to change society at large by shifting that burden to them. The job that must be done immediately is the education of the general public, including its various leaders. Once this revolution is well underway, the place for peace education in our schools will come into focus.

W.L./L.P./H.S.

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